



Sumter Little Theatre celebrates 85 years A18

CONTACT US

Information:
(803) 774-1200
Advertising:
(803) 774-1246
News:
[pressrelease@
theitem.com](mailto:pressrelease@theitem.com)
Sports:
sports@theitem.com

INSIDE

Arts and
entertainment A18
Education A14
Military A12
Puzzles A30
Reflections A29
Religion A15
Sports A24

VISIT US ONLINE AT

theITEM.com

General election 2024 Sumter results

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
US POSTAGE PAID
SUMTER, SC
PERMIT NO. 92
POSTAL CUSTOMER



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

A voter prints a ballot at the Memorial Park precinct on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5, in Sumter. See Sumter election results on A5.

JEWELRY  **WHOLESALE**

41 E. Wesmark Blvd. • 803-778-1031
Special Financing Available



Impact's goal is giving access to critical information

Since 2005, more than 3,200 print newspapers have disappeared. They continue to vanish at a rate of more than two per week, including 130 in the past year alone.

In their place, news deserts emerge. As of the newly released 2024 State of Local News Project, an annual analysis of the local news industry that tracks the closures, mergers and emergence of outlets, there are 206 counties across the United States that do not have access to any source for local news. Sumter is one of the 1,561 counties with only one news source.



Kayla Green

news source, its residents have less access to critical information needs. Simply put, they know less about what's going on around them. Whether it's information about candidates in an upcoming election or whether it's coverage of policy decisions being made in city council and school board meetings

That's us.

"The local news crisis isn't just about the loss of local outlets; it's also about the diminution of community coverage," an introduction from the report's leaders says.

When a community does not have a local news source, its residents have less access to critical information needs. Simply put, they know less about what's going on around them. Whether it's information about candidates in an upcoming election or whether it's coverage of policy decisions being made in city council and school board meetings

or recaps of high school sports, lists of upcoming events you can bring the family to or profiles on people and organizations, the more you know, the more you can make informed decisions for you and your family. The more you know about your community, the more likely you are to find connection to it.

The state of local news is scary when you look at the numbers. But I also ask that you look at the previous paragraph you just read. All of those are examples of actual articles you can find inside this edition of *The Sumter Item Impact*.

Though we do need to make money to pay our staff and bills, we feel so strongly about the importance of the

communities we serve having access to critical (and often even fun) information that we continue to send this monthly paper directly to more than 28,000 households and businesses in Sumter complimentary to readers. This is thanks to the people who promote their businesses through us and those who subscribe to *The Item*, giving them full access to everything we produce across mediums.

Thank you for reading this paper. If you support a business you see advertising on these pages, thank them next time you visit, too. If there is something you want to see covered in this paper, you can always email me at kayla@theitem.com. We're all better if we work together!

OSTEEN

PUBLISHING COMPANY
Established 1894

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

Vince Johnson
PUBLISHER
vince@theitem.com

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

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

Melanie Smith
ASSISTANT EDITOR
melanie@theitem.com
(803) 774-1293

HOW TO REACH US

TO PLACE A NEWSPAPER AD

To place an ad, call (803) 774-1242, (803) 774-1274 or (803) 983-0786 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or email advertising@theitem.com

Impact Item Sales Reps

Karen Cave
karen@theitem.com
(803) 774-1242

Devin McDonald
devin@theitem.com
(803) 983-0786

Mark Pekuri
mark@theitem.com
(803) 464-8917

The Sumter Item is published each Wednesday and Saturday by Osteen Publishing Co., 36 W. Liberty St., Sumter, SC 29150, and delivered via USPS. Major holiday delivery may be altered due to USPS schedule.

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



Your community
news source

www.theitem.com

the
**Sumter
ITEM**



Thank You

We appreciate your service and welcome you to our community. Please feel free to call me at 803-778-2471 if I can ever assist you with any South Carolina state government issues.

**House Speaker
Rep. Murrell Smith**



126 N. Main Street, Sumter, SC 29151
Paid For By Murrell Smith for House

Government

3 non-election government headlines from the past month to know

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN

deirdre@theitem.com

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES TWO PROJECTS, \$12.5 MILLION TO GO TOWARD WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Sumter City Council approved \$12.5 million to go toward upgrades to Water Treatment Plant Five at 545 W. Wesmark Blvd. at a city council meeting Tuesday, Nov. 5.

The money for the upgrades will come from ARPA funds, SCIIP grant number: A-23-C194 and utility reserve funds.

Council also approved a procurement resolution for a ditch improvement project at Railroad/Lawton Circle for \$194,984 with money for the project coming from the Stormwater Fund.

BJ'S WHOLESALE APPROVED TO COME TO ALICE DRIVE

A new retailer has been approved to come to Sumter: BJ's Wholesale Club. With a business model similar to

Costco or Sam's Club, the retailer was approved by Sumter City Council at a regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 15 to come to 1475 Alice Drive.

A BJ's representative, Brittany Bowers, said the project is tentatively projected to be completed by 2026 if everything goes accordingly.

SUMTER HOLDS ITS 11TH-ANNUAL VETERANS DAY PARADE, CEREMONY

On Monday, Nov. 11, Sumter hosted its annual Veterans Day Parade followed by the recognition of 35 local veterans.

Sumter County has about 13,000 veterans, according to Sumter County Veterans Affairs Director Valerie Brunson.

Col. Kevin Hicok, 20th Fighter Wing commander, was the keynote speaker for the event, and he was preceded by Sumter Mayor David Merchant, who read a proclamation.

This year's lineup included several local JROTC groups, local clubs and local high school bands among other



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

The annual Veterans Day parade and ceremony was held in downtown Sumter on Monday, Nov. 11, bringing the community together to honor those who've served. See more photos on A20.

groups unique to Sumter who threw candy into the crowds and handed out mini American flags. In total, the parade lasted about an hour.

After the ceremony, attendees and

veterans were encouraged to transition to the back lawn of the old courthouse where more than 45 vendors were giving away information and free food to veterans.

100

Years
ANNIVERSARY



Serving the Sumter Community for 100 Years.
Founded in 1925-2025.



Hill Plumbing
& electric company, inc.

803.773.6689 | 438 N. Main St | Sumter, SC 29150

hillplumbingandair.com

HEATING & AIR SERVICES • PLUMBING SERVICES
WATER HEATERS • MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

2024 GENERAL ELECTION

Penny for Progress capital sales tax

- √ In favor
- Opposed

U.S. House of Representatives, District 6

- √ James E. Clyburn, D
- Gregg Marcel Dixon, UNC
- Michael Simpson, LIB
- Duke Buckner, R
- Joseph Oddo, ALN

U.S. House of Representatives, District 5

- √ Ralph Norman, R
- Evangeline Hundley, D

S.C. House of Representatives, District 64

- √ Fawn Pedalino, R
- Quadri Bell, D

S.C. Senate, District 35

- √ Jeffrey R. Graham, D
- Mike Jones, R

S.C. Senate, District 36

- √ Jeff Zell, R
- Kevin L. Johnson, D

Sumter mayor

- Foxy Rae Campbell
- Reginald Evans
- Travon Frank Adams II
- √ David Merchant

Sumter City Council, Ward 4*

- √ Lynn R. Kennedy
- Lucy Mahon
- Jimmy Davis
- √ Gene Weston
- Scott Burkett

Sumter County Council, District 1

- Angus McDuffie, R
- √ Carlton B. Washington, D

Sumter County Council, District 5

- √ Vivian Fleming-McGhaney, D
- Shery White, R

Sumter County Council, District 7

- √ Tasha Gardner-Greene, D
- Michael Leviner, R

Sumter school board, Area 1

- √ Brian L. Alston
- Daniel Patrick Palumbo

Sumter school board, Area 2

- Chris Patten
- √ Brittany English

Sumter school board, Area 9

- √ Bonnie S. Disney
- Desaray S. Ross

* Runoff will be held Nov. 19.



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

A voter casts a ballot at the Memorial Park precinct on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Countdown to BLACK FRIDAY

No minimum to finance!
EZ monthly payments!
Start a new account or
Ask to "add-on" to
your existing account

Nintendo Switch \$499

Children's Gaming Tablet \$119 each

Tabletop Arcade \$249

ARCADE UP 3 GAMES INCLUDED

MS. PAC-MAN

Galaga

Dig Dug

3 MONTHS OF XBOX GAME PASS ULTIMATE INCLUDED.™

ROG Ally Gaming Console

your choice \$599

your choice \$699

Playstation 5

Metaquest

www.Kimbrells.com

2 GREAT LOCATIONS:

Kimbrell's Furniture
49 S Main St. Sumter,
SC 29150
803-775-2331

Kimbrell's on Broad
1070 Broad St. Sumter,
SC 29150
803-848-4100
NOW OPEN SUNDAYS

Election 2024

Sumter County voters pass penny tax by 61% margin

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN
deirdre@theitem.com

Sumter County voters passed the Capital Projects Penny Sales Tax referendum by a margin of 61.1% in favor and 38.9% opposed.

It is poised to bring in \$125 million for 30 projects during the next eight years.

"With the penny coming, everything is gonna get exponential," Sumter Mayor David Merchant said. "It's gonna help our community grow, help quality of life for our citizens, help bring jobs and just improve Sumter all around."

The Penny Sales Tax will see an additional charge of 1% of the sales tax imposed on items within Sumter County, not including fresh groceries, gas, prescription drugs and medical supplies. The tax will last for no more than eight years.

This year, every precinct,

except Rembert, Horatio and Furman, voted majority in favor of the tax. In Horatio, there was a tie with "yes" and "no" votes garnering 155 votes each. In Rembert, 532 voters were against the tax and 495 were in favor — a difference of 37 people. Furman was against the tax by one vote with 486 voters for the tax and 487 against it.

Merchant described the penny passing as a "landslide" victory.

After narrowly not passing when it was last on the ballot in 2022, Sumter Economic Development, or Sumter EDGE for short, worked to inform voters about the sales tax ahead of time with more than 70 speaking engagements across the county.

"It was highly organized with almost every available means of advertising, whether it be radio, social

media, signs and really any avenue we could think of," Chairman of the 2024 Penny for Progress board Ed Bynum said. "Our speakers bureau was extremely important because they got out in front of different groups in the community, and I think that made a big difference."

The first Penny Sales Tax was approved by voters in 2008, and when it came back onto the ballot in 2014, it again saw favor with Sumter voters. In 2022, for the first time since the Penny Sales Tax was proposed, voters turned it down. Some think this was because of the wording of the penny question on ballots. This election year, Sumter EDGE released the ballot question early and put the actual word "penny" within the header of the question to avoid confusion.

"There's been incredible progress in Sumter, particu-



ALAYSHA MAPLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Chairman of the 2024 Penny Board Ed Bynum speaks at a party to celebrate the Penny Sales Tax passing by a large margin.

larly over the last 20 years. Downtown has made a huge comeback. There's new retail, new homes and new industry bringing high-paying jobs," County Council Chairman Jim McCain said in a statement sent to *The Item*. "We have a lot of momentum, and we think Team

Sumter is positioned very well for more growth. Penny 1 and Penny 2 saw over \$160 million reinvested in our community; Penny 3 will add almost another \$125 million. New projects will get underway next spring, and we will keep everyone updated on our progress."

Runoff is Nov. 19 for Sumter City Council Ward 4 race between Weston, Kennedy

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN
deirdre@theitem.com

The race to see who will be the next Ward 4 representative on Sumter City Council will go to a runoff, as no candidate secured a majority of votes to win outright on Nov. 5.

Gene Weston earned the most votes, securing 24.68%, or 584 votes, followed by Rebecca Lynn Kennedy, who got 22.36%, or 529 votes. They will face each other in a runoff race Nov. 19.

"We've worked hard to get to where



KENNEDY



WESTON

we are, and we're going to get up again tomorrow and continue to work hard and try to earn people's votes. I really appreciate everyone who came out and voted, and our work's not over. I wanna appreciate you again in two more weeks," Weston told *The Sumter Item* on election night.

Kennedy said, "I've been praying about this ever since I've started running for council, and that's my prayer every morning and every night before I go to bed, that if this is the Lord's will that I serve the community in the capacity of a councilman,

I'm gonna do my best that I can do, and I really wanna support the citizens of Sumter."

Weston is the owner of the construction company Burgess-Brogdon Building Supply in Sumter, where he was born and raised. He has been back in the city for 30 years, and his priorities include decreasing crime and improving economic development. He ran for the City Council Ward 4 position once before in 2000, the year former Mayor Joe McElveen was first elected before serving 20 years.

Kennedy has lived in Sumter her whole life and has had a hand in various Sumter events during her time as

an event manager for the City of Sumter — a title she held for 17 years but is now retired from. One of Kennedy's main projects if elected will be revamping neighborhood watch programs in Ward 4, and she has put a heavy emphasis on the importance of knowing one's neighbors.

In third place came Lucy Mahon, who ended the night with 20.46%, or 484 votes, followed by Jimmy Davis, who got 17.79%, or 421 votes, and Scott Burkett, who got 14.33%, or 339 votes. There were nine write-ins.

The winner of the runoff will succeed Councilman Steve Corley, who did not run for reelection after serving two terms on council.

Merchant wins 2nd term as mayor

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN

deirdre@theitem.com

The City of Sumter will see the same leader at its helm for the next four years, as David Merchant won enough votes to secure a victory outright Nov. 5.

Merchant's 57.91% of the vote between four candidates, or 8,818 votes, avoided a runoff situation because he earned a majority of the votes. It



MERCHANT

will be Merchant's second term.

"We just feel positivity prevailed in the city of Sumter [on election night] and just a positive message, trying to move Sumter forward, and in our race we're excited

about the confidence that voters have in me for four more years," Merchant told *The Sumter Item* Tuesday night. "We're excited about the confidence [voters] have in the penny and the excitement that we have moving forward with the success of the penny [on election night], so just positive messages all around prevail."

Before becoming mayor in 2020, Merchant served two terms on city council under former Mayor Joseph McElveen. In his time as mayor, Merchant has put his focus on the Manning Avenue and North Main Corridor project — a project that has been in the works throughout Merchant's first term and is set to begin construction next year. Throughout his campaign for a second term, Merchant has said that he has "unfinished business" he wants to see through, such as the above-mentioned projects.

Foxy Rae Campbell, who ran against Merchant in 2020 as well, came in second with 26.2% of the vote, or 3,990 votes. T. Frank Adams II came in third with 7.83% of the vote, or 1,192 votes, followed by Reginald Evans, who got 7.51% of the vote, or 1,143 votes.

There were 85 write-ins.

2 county council members will keep seats, and Gardner-Greene will succeed Baten

STAFF REPORT

Sumter County Council will have two returning council members and a new member who will take the seat of a longtime councilman who didn't run for reelection.

Democrat Carlton Washington won reelection to the District 1 seat for Sumter County Council in the Tuesday, Nov. 5, general election.

He earned 66.88% of the vote, or 3,849 votes, over Republican opponent Angus McDuffie, who got 33.03%, or 1,901 votes. There were five write-in votes.

Democrat Vivian Fleming-McGhaney also secured another term on council and will be the District 5 representative for Sumter County Council.

She earned 61.11% of the vote, or 3,730 votes, over Republican opponent Shery White, who got 38.81%, or 2,369 votes. There were five write-in votes.

"I do want to thank my constituents



FLEMING-McGHANEY



GARDNER-GREENE



WASHINGTON

for the trust that they've placed upon me, and I do feel like it was just a lot of people, regardless of party affiliation or whatever they are, they are trusting me to represent them on that county council, and I'm willing to do that to be vigilant and to see the need of all the people and to always know what their concerns are because absolutely indeed, whatever their concerns are, they are also my concerns, then I'll look beyond that and just see what the needs are. I just give all my praises and glory to God, who is the one who appointed me to be a servant to his people," Fleming-McGhaney

told *The Sumter Item* on election night.

Democrat Tasha Gardner-Greene will succeed Councilman Eugene Baten, a Democrat who did not run for reelection, as the District 7 representative for Sumter County Council.

She earned 59.31% of the vote, or 3,251 votes, over Republican opponent Michael Leviner, who got 40.63%, or 2,227 votes. There were three write-in votes.

"I would like for us now to move forward from [election night] to build a better Sumter working together with all of District 7," Gardner-Greene said. "Those that voted for me and those that didn't, now we can come together and do the work to make the changes that we need here in Sumter. I would also like to tell Michael [Leviner] he ran a good race and that I'm looking forward to meeting with him and even his constituents so that we can all sit together to make a better District 7 in Sumter."

Sumter supports Harris, but candidates on both sides get majority votes at national, state levels

BY KAYLA GREEN

kayla@theitem.com

Sumter County voted blue on the presidential ballot for the 2024 general election and was more split on the congressional and state level.

With a 74.1% turnout, 51.85% of Sumter voters who filled in the presidential race supported Kamala Harris, equating to 23,386 votes, over 46.98% who chose former President and now President-Elect Donald Trump, or 21,192 votes. Independent candidates and

write-ins earned between 0.09% and 0.43%.

Among all voters, 58.6% voted down the Democratic straight party ticket, and 40.6% voted down the Republican straight party ticket.

Sumter voters supported incumbent winners District 5 Republican U.S. Rep. Ralph Norman, District 6 Democrat U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn and District 29 Democrat state Sen. Gerald Malloy. A 26-vote edge went to Republican Jeff Zell, who unseated 12-year District 36 state Sen. Kevin Johnson.



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

Election signs are collected for storage at Sumter County Voter Registration and Elections office on election night, Tuesday, Nov. 5, after polls closed.

Democrat Graham wins S.C. Senate 35 seat; Zell flips S.C. Senate 36 seat

STAFF REPORT

Democrat Jeffrey Graham has secured the position of state senator for District 35 after all results were certified on Friday, Nov. 8.

The district covers parts of Sumter, Lee, Kershaw and Richland counties.

Graham, a Camden resident, earned 52.18% of the vote, or 25,279 votes, over Republican opponent Mike Jones, who got 47.66%, or 23,093 votes. There were 17 write-ins.

Sumter County supported Graham by 56.06%, or 9,964 votes, over voters who chose Jones at 43.79%, or 7,782 votes.

Lee County supported Jones by 56.72%, or 1,835 votes, over voters who chose Graham at 43.18%, or 1,397 votes.

The candidates were vying to succeed Sen. Thomas McElveen, who announced earlier this year he would not run for reelection for a fourth term. When he first ran and won in 2012, he was the youngest South Carolina senator at the time.



GRAHAM



ZELL

Republican Jeff Zell has ousted long-time S.C. Sen. Kevin Johnson for the District 36 seat, which represents parts of Clarendon, Sumter, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties.

It was a close race. Zell, who is currently the Area 8 trustee on Sumter County's school board, secured 50.6% of the vote, or 25,609 votes, over Johnson's 49.28%, or 24,943 votes. There were 61 write-ins.

Sumter County voters almost split even on their support for the candidates, with 49.99% voting for Zell, or 12,512 votes, and 49.9% voting for Johnson, or 12,489. There were 26 write-in votes.

In Clarendon County, voters chose Zell by 55.32%, or 8,787 votes, while 44.56% voted for Johnson, or 7,078 votes. There were 20 write-ins for the race across the county.

Zell said he is happy with the campaign he and his team ran that "maintained a positive approach and never resorted to negativity."

"I want to thank my family and

friends for all their support and encouragement, as well as my supporters, both open and silent. I also want to express my gratitude to Sen. Johnson for his long service to the community. I promise to build on his successes for all our citizens," Zell told *The Item*. "My goal is to represent our district fairly and honorably. I work for God and the people of the 36th District, not for lobbyists or special interests. I will always remember that. Thank you to all the citizens who voted for me. For those who didn't, I will spend the next years proving to you that I am serious about positively affecting our community. We will address the persistent problems in this area and work with anyone of good faith to find meaningful and lasting solutions, from education reform to reducing violent crime and creating economic pathways to success. Without question, the status quo is no longer acceptable, and I will pursue real change with vigor! I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help our neighbors to the fullest extent of my capabilities. That is my promise."

Johnson said he and his team felt like

he had a "good shot, but we'll move on." "We ran a good race, but the voters have spoken, and we respect that. I don't have a problem with that," Johnson said.

He said though he wasn't planning for this, he has been a public official almost "all my adult life, so maybe it's time for me to get some rest." He said he has enjoyed serving in various positions amid its ups and downs.

He posted on Facebook on election night, "Well, after serving on several boards and commissions, 12 years on the school board, six years on city council, 11 years as mayor, one term in the S.C. House and 12 years in the Senate, we came up short in the election today. The voters have spoken, and I respect that. I am thankful for all of the support that I had over the last almost 40 years, and I am proud of the work that I/we did. I am even more thankful to have had the opportunity to work with some great people, especially 'Team Johnson'. Now it's time to catch up on some rest and enjoy some me time."

The Item will provide coverage of how Zell's school board seat will be filled.

OFFERING MEDICARE COVERAGE



CREECH • RODDEY • WATSON
INSURANCE

25 E. Calhoun Street
Sumter, SC 29150

117 S Brooks Street
Manning, SC 29102

803-775-1168

CRWINS.COM

Devin Rice

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Medicare Oct. 15-Dec 7

Healthcare Marketplace 65 & under Nov. 1-Jan. 15



**STATE
TREE SERVICE**

**For all your residential and
commercial tree needs**

803-773-1320
statetree.net

Free Estimates

2 Sumter school board trustees keep seats after election, 1 challenger wins back his Area 1 seat

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com



ALSTON DISNEY ENGLISH

Two Sumter School District Board of Trustees members will keep their seats after defeating their challengers, and a former member will retake his area's seat after defeating the member who won more votes than he did two years ago.

Bonnie Disney secured the votes to serve another term as the Seat 9 representative for Sumter County's school board. According to official results, which were certified on Friday, Disney secured 66.29% of the votes, or 1,843 votes, over Desaray S. Ross' 32.84%, or 913 votes. There were 24 write-in votes.

"I'm just very pleased," Disney said of her win. "I feel like our school board is going in the right direction. I feel like we are comfortable with our superintendent and we know our strengths, we know what we need to do to improve,

and we just need to all be on the same page. ... We also need to make sure that we're doing everything we can to keep our teachers and students safe and make our district one of the shining stars in the state, and we can do that. There's no question we can. We just all need to pull together and work as a team, and I look forward to being part of this team."

Disney was appointed by the legislative delegation to fill an at-large seat in 2017. She ran and lost in the general election in the district's former Area 6 race before winning a term in 2022, which was changed to a two-year term

because of redistricting and to stagger future races and replacements.

She was recently selected by her fellow school board trustees to serve as chairwoman after the Rev. Ralph Canty stepped down from the leadership position.

Brittany English also secured another term as the Area 2 representative for Sumter County's school board.

She earned 76.96% of the vote, or 2,522 votes, over opponent Chris Patten, who got 22.46%, or 736 votes. There were 19 write-in votes.

"God favored me in spite of my enemies. Thank you, Area 2," English told *The Sumter Item*.

In the first upset of the Nov. 5 election locally, Brian Alston won enough votes to become the Area 1 representative for the school board, earning 58.37% of the vote, or 1,828 votes, over Daniel Palumbo, who earned 41.03% of the vote, or 1,285 votes.

There were 19 write-in votes. "Thank you, Area 1. Because of you, I am. Let's work together to put students, staff and communities first!" Alston texted *The Sumter Item* Tuesday night.

Alston lost in 2014 and 2016 for the state House District 50 seat and served a term for the Area 1 seat on the school board after winning in 2018. Palumbo beat him for the seat in 2022.

Though saddened by the results, Palumbo is happy about the accomplishments during his term, from active shooter plans to retaining teachers.

"There's other things in the near future, better opportunities to where I can serve this community even better," Palumbo told *The Item*. "It's not over yet. You can't get rid of me, so I will be around."

Tallies were certified on Friday, Nov. 8.

Disney, English and Alston will be sworn in on Monday, Nov. 18, at 6 p.m.

Thank you for voting us Best Automotive Repair 6 years in a row!

- Oil Changes
- Tune-Ups
- Computer Diagnostics
- Tires
- AC Service
- Brake Service & Repair
- Wheel Balance
- Starters
- Radiators
- Shocks & Struts
- Belts and Hoses
- Alignments

Call Today! (803) 773-3379 www.newmansautomotivesumter.com
1109 Florence Hwy Sumter, SC, 29153

Holiday Deals

We get you | Gift Ideas

Offers valid Nov. 11 - Dec. 31

Buy any iPhone and get an **iPhone 15** 128 GB for **\$9.99**

PLUS - 20% off wireless accessories

Buy any eligible iPhone on the FTC Freedom Plan, 2-year contract, or eligible upgrade and get an iPhone 15 128 GB for \$9.99. New line activation (or eligible upgrade) and a 2-year contract is required on the second device, and both lines must be on the same account. Activation fee: up to \$36/line. Other restrictions may apply. While supplies last. Offers end December 31, 2024.

FTC
ftc.net | 888.218.5050

Learning and the brain

The Hollowdays

“We are the hollow men / We are the stuffed men / Leaning together / Head-piece filled with straw.”

— T.S. Eliot (*“The Hollow Men,”* 1925)

It is already Christmas at Starbucks. They may call it the “holidays,” of course, just one more way of extracting all the caffeine (i.e., authenticity) and profundity of the Christmas mystery, whether about Santa or Savior. We skipped Thanksgiving and gratitude.



Brent Kanef

Not a big moneymaker, I guess. Peace and satisfaction are the aroma of gratitude, and smells are free, which is not good for business.

I still bought my cup of coffee because I had essays to grade, but I was reminded of

Eliot’s poem — we’d read it in class just days before — about the “stuffed” men, the men who have forgotten something essential, the men who I might call “homo economicus” (“economic man”) or “homo voluptarius” (“self-indulgent man,” a “devotee of pleasure”), men convinced that genuine peace is achieved by scratching every itch. Whoever decorated that Starbucks tried to stuff me full of straw, meaningless trinkets, bells and whistles, all manufacturing desire, luring me in like the sirens singing the promise of fulfillment.

In “Dopamine Nation: Finding Balance in the Age of Indulgence,” psychiatrist Anna Lembke reveals that, paradoxically, “hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, leads to anhedonia. Which is the inability to enjoy pleasure of any kind.” This might explain why stores continue to go overboard during the holiday season. The more pleasure we experience, the harder it is to generate the same pleasure. Think “super size” on the menu. Or “let’s make that a triple cheeseburger.” Our brains are primed for rewards (e.g., dopamine), and though we might complain that Sumter doesn’t have a Target yet, there is very little that, if we desire it, we can’t

get here; and if we can’t get our pleasure through eating or drinking, we have an endless catalyst on our social media feeds. We scroll to generate desire and then discover what we always wanted, what will finally fulfill us, if we only press “buy now.” To what ends will people go to distract themselves from their desperate sense of emptiness? How many of us are on this “hedonistic treadmill,” sprinting to our next dopamine hit, forever wanting, forever desiring, forever seeking that which is already ours?

Historian Yuval Noah Harari recently said, “If you don’t know the truth about your life, you waste your life trying to solve the wrong problems.” If we don’t know that we are actually “homo sapiens” (“wise humans”) or that an intimate relationship with a higher power or purpose is what actually satiates the endless and empty cravings, then we will spend a lifetime focused on the transactions that we believe will satisfy.

In schools, this has looked like the traditional grading system. While it has done much for order and discipline, traditional grading has done little for developing a lifelong love of learning. In many ways, grades make schools transactional, not transformational (i.e., you do these tasks, the teacher rewards you with a treat ... classic behaviorism — think carrots and sticks). For that reason, I have a love-hate relationship with grades. As an English teacher, I have seen how the threat of a grade has killed a love for reading. How can, for example, a student sit with and experience and enjoy Eliot’s “The Hollow Men” when they know, at some point, I am going to grade their understanding of the poem? There is always already a humming anxiety that precludes genuine satisfaction, the joy of being transformed by a piece of art. It’s not that that never happens, it’s just rare. And reading is one of the major, though not only, ways we can disrupt our commitment to the “hedonistic treadmill.” Reading slows us down; is not always immediately gratifying; requires us to make an effort, and if it’s a good book, points us toward the eter-



nal truths. When you read a good book, you are confessing to the world that you take yourself seriously, not as an economic cog or an insatiable pleasure-hound, but as a seeker of the greatest on offer.

Recently, *The Atlantic* published two articles about reading, and they aren’t positive: “Why Kids Aren’t Falling in Love with Reading” (Katherine Marsh, 2023) and “The Elite College Students Who Can’t Read Books” (Rose Horowitz, 2024). Both articles cite similar problems: Common Core curriculum that pushes “informational” texts and shorter passages. As Marsh argues, “reading analytically seems to be squashing the organic enjoyment” of students. But students must prove their reading skills on standardized tests, so apparently, there’s no getting out of it. We have an education system that makes students dislike reading because their experience with reading is transactional, and they have been convinced that the greatest reward for reading or learning is a grade.

Curiously, neither Marsh nor Horowitz include the fact that for many schools, the primary mission is to prepare students for the economy (“homo economicus”), which makes reading a transactional decision (i.e., does this lead to me getting a job?), and if the school is college-prep, then the admissions standards (test scores and GPAs) precipitate the transactional nature of their educational system. Nor do they mention that if the adults

teaching the books are not passionate about what they teach — if they have not been transformed by their own learning! — then it’s hardly the child’s fault for not seeing the value in reading a book. Consider Thomas Wolfe’s infamous passage about his Greek teacher:

They engaged him in long debates: as he ate his lunch, he waved a hot biscuit around, persuasive, sweetly reasonable, exhaustively minute in an effort to prove the connection of Greek and groceries. The great wind of Athens had touched him not at all. Of the delicate and sensuous intelligence of the Greeks, their feminine grace, the constructive power and subtlety of their intelligence, the instability of their character, and the structure, restraint, and perfection of their forms, he said nothing.

He had caught a glimpse in an American college, of the great structure of the most architectural of languages: he felt the sculptural perfection of such a word as *γυμνασιον*, but his opinions smelled of chalk, the classroom, and a very bad lamp — Greek was good because it was ancient, classic and academic. The smell of the East, the dark tide of the Orient that flowed below, touching the lives of poet and soldier, with something perverse, evil, luxurious, was as far from his life as Lesbos. He was simply the mouthpiece of a formula of which he was assured without having a genuine belief.

The reality is that our brains will suffer a transactional education system — many have done so and eventually hated their schools for it — just like they will suffer a transactional holiday season that is solely about stuffing ourselves with food and drink and gifts. The great wind of learning or the great wind of mystery does not have to sweep our skins; our brains can be hijacked by systems that promote the immediate and not the eternal. Our schools can convince students that, like Starbucks, the best things in the world are the short, dopaminergic hits we get when we decrease the space between desire and consummation, that all this life boils down to daily transactions.

Or not.

Kanef is the headmaster of Wilson Hall in Sumter.

HERE FOR ALL YOUR AUTO SERVICE NEEDS!



64 YEARS IN BUSINESS AND STILL MOVING FORWARD!

BRAKES • TIRES • BATTERIES

NAME BRAND TIRES. GENUINE FORD PARTS

FORD CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS SERVING SUMTER AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY SINCE 1961.

WE APPRECIATE ALL OUR LOYAL CUSTOMERS AND FRIENDS.

Military welcome. Ask about our military special discounts



Schedule a test drive today!

773-1481

1-888-979-2533

950 N. Main Street • Sumter, SC • www.mclaughlinford.com



U.S. Air Force Maj. Taylor "FEMA" Hiester, F-16 Viper Demonstration Team commander and pilot, below, and retired Lt. Col. Charles "Tuna" Hainline, Air Force Heritage Flight Foundation P-51 Mustang pilot, fly in formation during the Wings Over Houston airshow at Ellington Airport on Oct. 27. The Air Combat Command demonstration team works closely with the Air Force Heritage Flight Foundation to create a unique demonstration for the U.S. Air Force past and present, exhibiting the professional qualities the Air Force develops in the people who fly, maintain and support these aircraft.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN MEGHAN HUTTON

Vipers over Houston

BELOW: U.S. Air Force Maj. Taylor "FEMA" Hiester, F-16 Viper Demonstration Team commander and pilot, taxis in front of the crowd during the Wings Over Houston airshow at Ellington Airport on Oct. 27.



FRASIER TIRE SERVICE

Announcing A New Location

In Charleston at 1802 Meeting St.



NOW 4 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

1802 Meeting St. Charleston, SC 29405 854-214-6001	310 East Liberty St. Sumter, SC 29150 803-773-1423	1613 Bluff Road Columbia, SC 29201 803-254-5087	7164 Cross County Rd. North Charleston, SC 29418 843-552-5055
--	--	---	---



Come see us for all your tire, auto service, and truck needs

Serving you for 50 years •
www.FrasierTire.com

Thank you for
voting us
Best of Sumter!



BEST Luxury Auto Dealer
7 YEARS IN A ROW!

Serving Sumter and surrounding areas since 1993

Bilton
LINCOLN & PRE-OWNED

70 W. Wesmark Blvd. • Sumter
www.biltonlincoln.com
803-773-7339



LONG-TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

In **Sumter, Clarendon,
Kershaw & Lee** Counties

JOIN US!

SANTEE LYNCHES
Area Agency on Aging

ahester@slcog.org
803-774-1979

- 18+ Be 18 Years or Older
- Complete Training
- Clean Record
- Volunteer 2 Hrs/Week



U.S. Air Force Maj. Taylor "FEMA" Hiester, F-16 Viper Demonstration Team commander and pilot, performs a high-speed pass with pyrotechnics during the Wings Over Houston airshow at Ellington Airport on Oct. 27. The pilot has excellent flight control of the F-16 through its "fly-by-wire" system. Electrical wires relay commands, replacing the usual cables and linkage controls.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN MEGHAN HUTTON

BONANZA

Flea Market

1048 Bonanza Crossing Rd. • Manning, SC
Hours: Th-F 10-5 • Sat 8-4 • Sun 12-5

803-460-0014 • bonanzafleamarket@aol.com

Come See Our New Building
Now 15,000 sq.ft.



Like Us on 

IF YOUR SUIT IS NOT BECOMING, YOU SHOULD BE COMING TO MAYO'S SUIT CITY!



SERVING SUMTER SINCE 1998

MAYO'S SUIT CITY

1121 Broad St. Suite 11 Wesmark Plaza
www.mayosuits@gmail.com • 803-773-2262




SHOP. DONATE. VOLUNTEER. CHANGE A LIFE.



Sumter Habitat for Humanity



SCAN ME

DISCOUNT VOUCHER

VALID 11/15/24 - 12/19/24

812 S. Guignard Dr. Sumter
803-934-9749
habitatsumter.org

10% off

YOUR PURCHASE
Limit One (1) coupon per customer per day.
*Some Exclusions Apply

DISCOUNT VOUCHER

VALID 11/15/24 - 12/19/24

DISCOUNT VOUCHER

VALID 11/15/24 - 12/19/24

DONATE. VOLUNTEER. BUILD. AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Education

Liberty STEAM expanding, Sumter teachers get bonus, cellphone ban set, Wright gets contract extension

LIBERTY EXPANSION UNDERWAY IN MALL

Construction on Liberty STEAM Charter School's expansion in Sumter Mall is ongoing, with the school in "demo mode" as drywall is going up.

Rodney Thompson, chair of the public charter school's Finance Committee, told the school's Board of Directors at their meeting Oct. 28 that construction will gradually take over parts of the mall through March 31, 2025. The school will acquire an additional 65,270 square feet in the building, nearly half of the mall's current space. LSC will be paying about \$1 million a year in rent.

In a three-phase, three-year project, the school will have full buildout of its junior academy in 2027 with vacant space for the addition of eighth grade in 2028. The first phase will add space for fifth grade and extra space at the school, just in time for the first day of school Aug. 4, 2025. — *Alaysha Maple*

TEACHERS TO GET ONE-TIME BONUS

Sumter School District's Board of Trustees unanimously approved a one-time, district-wide employee incentive for teachers on Oct. 30, with amounts ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 depending on an employee's eligibility.

Full-time district employees employed, hired and/or board approved on or before Oct. 1 will be eligible for the full \$1,000, but those who were hired after Oct. 1 will receive half of that, \$500.

In the same vein, part-time district employees who were employed, hired and/or board approved on or before Oct. 1 will be eligible to receive \$500, and those who were hired after Oct. 1 will be eligible to receive \$250.

This will include district employees who are on family and medical leave alongside long-term substitutes and food service substitutes who work every day.

In total, the cost of the incentives is estimated to be \$2.6 million. — *Deirdre Currin*

STUDENT CELLPHONE BAN BEGINS JAN. 6

For two months, Sumter School District Board of Trustees has been working on the district's cellphone policy, and at a school board meeting Wednesday, Oct. 30, the policy was finalized. Beginning Jan. 6, students will not be allowed to access their phones or other personal electronic devices during the school day.

School boards throughout the state have been working on creating their own cellphone policies after South Carolina Department of Education's board approved a statewide cellphone policy in early September this year.

For Sumter's school board, one of the main goals was to put as little burden as possible on the teachers who must enforce the policy. They also aimed to make the policy accessible to all grade levels from kindergarten to 12th grade.

When the school day starts, students will be required to have their devices within their book bags, where they must stay for the remainder of the day. The policy does not apply to students while on school buses or at athletic events, though field trips can be decided upon at the school level.

Students who are volunteer firefighters or part of an emergency organization may carry their phones with written approval from the district superintendent

or his or her designee, and the committee added that approval from the student's commanding officer will also be viable.

Those who violate the policy must have their phone picked up by only a parent or legal guardian at the end of the school day. — *Deirdre Currin*

WRIGHT GETS CONTRACT EXTENSION

In a 5-4 vote with stability in leadership as a key factor, Sumter School District's Board of Trustees gave Superintendent William Wright Jr. a three-year contract extension on Oct. 21.

The extension for Wright through June 30, 2028, came as an outcome of his overall satisfactory evaluation for his second year as superintendent that was completed and with his initial contract set to expire in eight months.

Those voting in favor of the three-year extension included board Chairwoman Bonnie Disney, Matthew "Mac" McLeod, Daniel Palumbo, Shery White and Jeff Zell. The four trustees voting against the extension included Shawn Ragin, former Chairman the Rev. Ralph Canty, Brittany English and Tarah Johnson.

Wright is the district's fifth superintendent, when including an interim leader who served two years, since 2011 and when two districts in Sumter County were consolidated into one. — *Bruce Mills*

AIR SOLUTIONS
HEATING AND COOLING

Services
HVAC Sales and Service
Tankless Water Heaters
Dryer Vent Cleaning

Indoor Air Quality
Duct Cleaning

Sumter ITEM
BEST OF SUMMER
2024

2190 Storage Road
803.469.6950
www.airsolutionscc.com

Religion

Let us treat each other with love, respect regardless of who we voted for

I don't know about you, but I am weary from the election season. I imagine there are others who feel this way. We are weary from more than a year of attack ads. We are worn down by the tone, the rhetoric, the nastiness. Our country is divided, and we have resorted to calling each other names. This runs counter to everything that my mom and dad taught me when I was growing up.

Where is the civility? Can we get it back? Can we relearn how to treat our neighbors as we want to be treated? I am still relatively new to town; how do you think I would be received if I were rude to everyone I met?

Can we all agree that we are tired and weary and we need to get "back to



Pastor Stewart Rawson

the basics"? More than 30 years ago, a very thoughtful minister named Robert Fulghum wrote an essay called, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." I think it is time to get back to the Rev. Fulghum's message. This is what he wrote: "These are the

things I learned:

- Share everything.
- Play fair.
- Don't hit people.
- Put things back where you found them.
- Clean up your own mess.
- Don't take things that aren't yours.
- Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Flush.

— Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

— Live a balanced life — learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

— Take a nap every afternoon.

— When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.

— Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

— Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup — they all die. So do we.

— And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned — the biggest word of all — LOOK."

"Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane

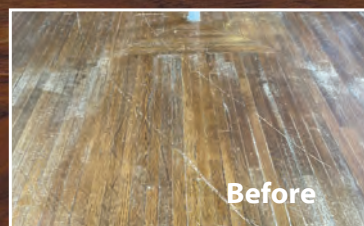
living."

"Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or government or your world, and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all — the whole world — had cookies and milk at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. ... And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together." (Robert Fulghum, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten", 1990)

My hope and prayer for each of us is that we can treat each other with love and respect regardless of what we believe or who we voted for. Let's get back to the basics.

The Rev. Dr. Stewart Rawson is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Sumter.

The Quick No Sanding Solution To Beautiful Wood and Tile Floors



Before



After

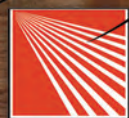


Before



After

Hardwood
Engineered
Cork
Bamboo
Tile
Linoleum
VCT
Vinyl
Granite
Slate
Terrazzo
Brick
Porcelain
Saltillo Floors



Mr. Sandless®

Quick, Clean and Certified Green!

www.mrsandless.com

Owned locally by
Chip & Zan Bracalente

Call for a Free Quote:
803-795-8770

**Most Jobs
Finished in
6-9 hours**

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church celebrates 150 years of worship in Sumter

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN

deirdre@theitem.com

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church has withstood the turn of two centuries, displacement, a fire and, most recently, a global pandemic. Though the church has changed appearances, locations and pastors, it remains as alive as it was 150 years ago when it was founded.

“We are so proud that our church is still in its original community and doing well,” lifelong church member Drefus Williams said.

The story of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, founded in 1874, begins in a way that mirrors the stories of many other Southern, historically Black congregations that were founded after the Civil War. During this time, if enslaved people were allowed to go to a church, they were made to sit in a segregated section on the balcony and away from white congregants. New Bethel’s congregants split from Bethel Baptist Church, which built a gallery for slaves to worship in 1840. This split was a result of rising tensions during and following the Civil War, making it unsafe for Black citizens to travel for fear of being captured or killed by roaming soldiers.

From 1874 to 1906, New Bethel was located on the Nettles Plantation, and in 1906, the church was rebuilt. However, in 1925, a fire burned the church to the ground, leading worshippers to spend a two-year period attending worship services at a schoolhouse. In 1927, the church was rebuilt, and in 1976, the church was rebuilt once more. The 1976 iteration of the church is the one still in use today, and it is at 3249 U.S. 15 South.

Throughout the 150 years the church has been around, attendance has gone up and down: down with hardships such as the fire and The Great Depression, and growing in the late '40s, early '50s as well as in 1927 after the church was rebuilt following the fire.

Williams said the key to the church’s longevity is the strong Black women who have kept the church alive.

This November, New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church will officially turn

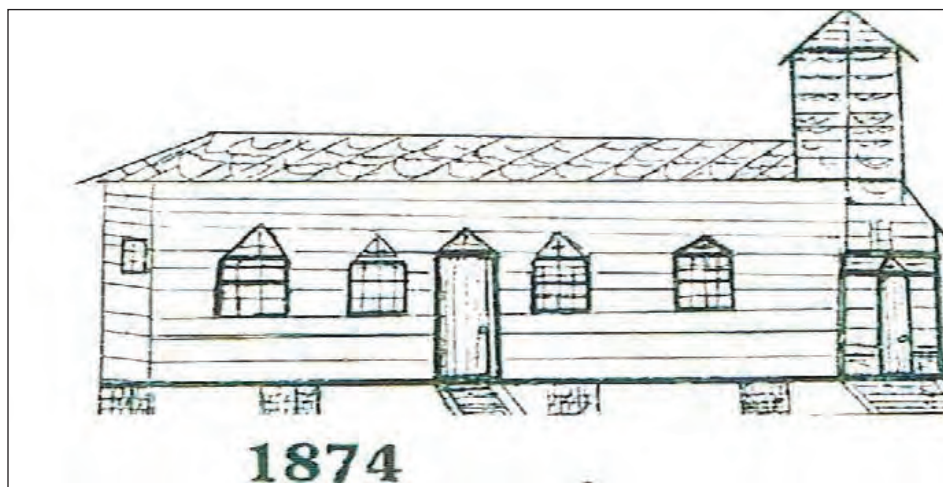


PHOTO PROVIDED

A blueprint shows New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church when it was founded in 1874.



This is the schoolhouse that New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church worshipped at after their church building burned down in 1925.

150 years old, and the congregation is prepared to celebrate. On Saturday, Nov. 16, and Sunday, Nov. 17, the church anniversary celebration will take place on church grounds. Saturday will feature a decades fashion show planned by the church youth, and it will showcase clothing beginning in the 1940s and going up. Attendees can also look forward to a historical presentation on Saturday that will teach the congregation how their community lived without the modern conveniences

of today.

“This 150th anniversary is all about getting the family back together again; we want the families to come together and worship again and be happy because I’m looking forward to seeing a lot [of church members],” lifelong New Bethel member Lula Burns said.

Sunday will include a worship service as usual, and that afternoon there will be a homestyle dinner.

Current church members who come to church every week, those who can



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

A crane operator removes a steeple from New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in 2017.



This picture of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church shows when the building was made of wood. Today a new church building stands, made of sturdier materials.

rarely make it anymore and those who are past members are all invited to partake in the church’s fellowship.

“I’m excited about the 150th anniversary because it shows perseverance; that’s what really pleases me,” the Rev. Willie Wright Jr. said. “The biggest thing about us coming together for the anniversary, I want to see the tremendous fellowship, the people coming together.”

Thanks for voting **Capers Lee** Best Individual Dentist 2 YEARS IN A ROW!



Family Oriented • Warm, Friendly Atmosphere
Painless Experience • Crowns • Smile Enhancement • Preventative Care

Come visit the Dental Team family!

Dr. R. Capers Lee & Dr. Hunter Lee



 **Dental Team**
of Sumter 

803.494.8466

5635 Broad Street Ext. Sumter, SC 29150
(on the corner of 378 & 441)

www.DentalTeamofSumter.com



 Like us on Facebook

Arts & entertainment

85 years of magic

Sumter Little Theatre's legacy lives on in the eyes of creatives across the county

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE

alaysha@theitem.com

It all began as a simple gathering, a group of hopeful souls in Sumter meeting on a September evening in 1939 with a shared idea: to build something new, a place where their town's stories could come to life. The announcement in the local newspaper was modest, almost matter of fact. A Little Theatre was forming, where "good plays of various types" brought to audiences by local talent given the chance to shine would be presented at "reasonable prices."

No one could have known then how this small vision would grow into a cornerstone of the community.

Eighty-five years later, Sumter Little Theatre is a place where generations of creatives have gathered to build legacy and a family. For longtime members Traci Quinn and Heather Osborne Turner, who have each spent decades under its lights, the theater holds more than memories — it holds their hearts.

Quinn, instead of braving the bright lights on stage, helped manage those lights her first few years at the theater,



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Steve Libby of Shaw Field in the role of brassy, brave Dizzy Davis, hero of "Ceiling Zero," gets a laugh from other members of the cast with one of his lines in 1942, one of the plays that year by the Little Theatre group. In the photo besides Libby are, from left, Milton Starr, Miriam Reed, Robert Phillips and Frances Haynsworth. John Goldsmith of Shaw Field directed.



Selena McCoy as Jeannine and David Abrams as Conrad act out a scene from "Ordinary People," the May 1989 production at the Sumter Little Theatre.



The Little Sisters of Hoboken took the stage at Sumter Little Theatre in October 2011. From left, the actresses are Dot Lawson, Sue Fienning, Ann Wilson Floyd, Michelle Blassengale and Anne Galloway. Eric Bultman directed the family friendly musical comedy, "Nunsense."

SLT FROM PAGE A18

getting her start with “Best Christmas Pageant Ever” as a teenager.

“I had come to see shows before, but I had no idea what the process was like, and I just fell in love with it ... when I got involved, I was just like, I want to do this all the time,” Quinn said. And so, she did.

The idea under the helm of the late SLT Executive Director Katie Damron was you worked your way up, Quinn explained. Whether it be moving furniture, working lights, helping build or break down the set, painting the night away, all the way down to sorting screws, the theater worked as a family, depending on one another, trusting each other and respecting everyone has a vital part — no matter how big or small, in front of or behind the curtain — in bringing these productions to life.

Now, as a director, it’s amazing to witness how those very people who were timid techs and shy stagehands walk out on stage to a packed house and shine.

“I’ve sat in an audience and cried watching somebody really fall into a role. And there have been times when that didn’t happen til opening night,” Quinn expressed. “All during rehearsal time, I’ve been encouraging and ‘Let’s try this’ or ‘What would happen if you did that,’ and then all of a sudden, you’re in the audience and the lights come on, and that person just does it and just falls into it.”

A production that came to mind was “Sweat.” Quinn, for the first time in February 2024, tried her hand at directing a drama, choosing Lynn Nottage’s production to do so. The cast earned a standing ovation on its opening night as audience members cheered and wiped tears brought on by the impactful performance. Quinn said it took constant encouragement and many rehearsals for some cast members to fall into their roles, ones completely removed from their everyday demeanor. The magic only happened when those house lights went up.

Turner, who starred in Quinn’s production, witnessed such magic firsthand and attested it still renders her speechless, just like when she was a little girl. The wonder in her eyes as she reminisced about watching her father on the SLT



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Andrew Schwartz, right foreground, leads members of the cast of “Cyrano” in a swordfighting class in preparation for Sumter Little Theatre’s production of the famous Edmund Rostand play in 2017.

stage, the memory of the little live mouse in his pocket a favorite among many as she watched him train for their appearance in *Dracula* — the entire experience fascinated Turner, then and now. The family would move away for a short time, during which the theater went dark in 1985. After its reopening the following year, Turner knew there was nowhere else she’d rather be.

She graced the stage numerous times, in starring roles or supporting her fellow cast members, and always found solace in fostering community. Which is why she was trusted with the reins around 2004 to direct “*Canterbury Tales*” — a production Damron directed years before. In the years since, she’s directed dozens more shows, no genre spared. Through Damron, Quinn and the many phenomenal directors and actors before her, Turner learned the responsibility of donning that quaint stage is not to be taken lightly.

“Whatever you do, whether you’re playing a character [or directing], you have a responsibility to the

character, you have responsibility to the playwright, you have responsibility to the other actors on stage,” she explained. “It’s more than excitement and [self] expression; it’s a commitment.”

What has kept that commitment alive for more than eight decades can be summed up into one word.

“Connection — that is home to me,” Quinn said. “When you can connect with other people and you’re collaborative and you all want the same thing; there’s not much else like it in the world.”

The theater has connected itself to generation after generation, its magic being threaded into the lives of young actors, directors, playwrights, stagehands and audiences who all want to see the small yet mighty theater — home, as many lovingly call it — thrive. It’s not meant to sit in darkness, for its house lights harness much more magic when they’re all aglow.

Now, celebrating 85 years of magic, the theater has brought tear-jerking shows, like “*Sweat*” and “*Next to Normal*,” and

knee-slapping humor, in productions like “*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*.” But it’s also bringing in the talent of the next generation. Young actors and actresses are slowly but gracefully taking the reins of the shows, bringing fresh ideas and inclusive initiatives for both the theater and community to enjoy. If their passion and persistence are anything like the fire they bring to the stage, this theater has a long, bright and creative future ahead — Quinn and Turner are sure of it.

“It’s the magic of this place that makes everybody want to be [here],” Quinn expressed.

“We constantly want to grow, and we realize to grow, we have to take all the great things that have been given to us over the years and then also be open to a world that is constantly changing ... Katie is the legacy, and now we’ve kind of moved along in her footsteps, and now they [the next generation] have taken off, and that’s the beauty of it,” Turner said. “And to think, it all started in 1939.”

Sumter honors veterans with annual events



PHOTOS BY ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

The annual Sumter Veterans Day parade and ceremony were held in downtown Sumter on Monday, Nov. 11, bringing the community together to honor all those who've served the United States. Several veterans were chosen to receive a flag and certificate honoring their service on the old Sumter County Courthouse steps during the ceremony.



WE PAY TOP DOLLAR

We buy Diamond, Sterling Silver flatware & Unwanted Jewelry

Big T Jewelers
Established in 1969

520 West Boyce Street • Manning, SC 29102
Monday - Friday 9am-6pm (803) 435-8094

WH

THE FUTURE GOES HERE

WilsonHall.org

Events

Enjoy holiday activities and events in Sumter and Clarendon with your family and friends this season

SUMTER COUNTY

The Sumter County Museum's **26th Annual Carolina Backcountry Oyster Roast**, presented by Prisma Health, is the perfect chance to have all-you-can-eat oysters, barbecue, chili, collards and more while enjoying time with others. The museum's largest annual fundraiser will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, at the museum, 122 N. Washington St. A wide selection of beverages including beer, wine and soft drinks will be available. Music will be provided by HeyBo. Cost is \$50 for members and \$75 for non-members. Purchase tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/34jznu97>.

Celebrate the holidays with South Carolina Ballet's annual production

of **Nutcracker**, which will be performed this year at Lakewood High School's theater because of renovations at Patriot Hall. This beloved classical play is perfect for anyone, from children to adults. Matinee is on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 3 to 5 p.m., and the evening show is the same day from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Buy tickets at www.tickettailor.com/events/southcarolinaballet.

Sumter Community Concert Band invites the community to enjoy its annual **Christmas Concert** on Sunday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. The free concert with festive instrumental music will be held at USC Sumter's Nettles-Schwartz Auditorium, at 200 Miller Road.

SEE **EVENTS**, PAGE A22



Sumter's Fantasy of Lights display will be switched on for the season at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1. Kids can visit Santa at Santa's Village and take in more than a million lights depicting movie characters, animals (including swans, of course) and much more.

SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

COMPLETE FLOORING SERVICES & WATER RESTORATION

M&M Carpets, Inc.

SALES • INSTALLATION • CLEANING

We offer both residential and commercial carpet!

1285 Peach Orchard Rd. • Sumter, SC 29154
(Behind Shaw AFB)
803-494-2100 • Cell: 803-972-3758
Monday - Friday 9am - 6pm

Carolina Charm

THE LITCHFIELD COMPANY

CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

The Litchfield Company proudly joins the esteemed Christie's International Real Estate Network, enhancing its real estate offerings amidst robust demand in the Lowcountry.

Lake Marion Realty
803.433.7355
6 N. Brooks Street,
Manning, SC

Wyboo Sales Office
803.478.3337
2538 Players Course Drive,
Manning, SC

LitchfieldByTheLake.com

EVENTS FROM PAGE A21

Don't miss out on South Carolina's largest free Christmas lights display beginning with the opening-night ceremony of the annual **Swan Lake Fantasy of Lights** at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1, at the Visitors Center, 822 W. Liberty St. (in the case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held at the Heath Pavilion, 165 Garden St.). Through Dec. 31, visitors to Swan Lake Iris Gardens can see the gardens come alive with more than 1 million lights. The light display will be open Sunday-Thursday until 9 p.m. and Friday and Saturday until 10 p.m. The event is designed as a drive-through, but visitors are allowed to park to take photos. Access to the walking trails is closed after dusk. Lights are displayed along the main parking lot area to the gardens, along Liberty Street and along Garden Street (enter at Liberty Street and exit onto Oakland Avenue). No parking is allowed along Garden Street; however, parking will be available in the lot across from the Heath Pavilion. Santa's Village, located in the Heath Pavilion, is a part of the holiday celebration. Children can write letters to

Santa and take photos with the big guy (bring your own camera). Enjoy a variety of holiday music and entertainment each night. Food, hot cocoa and other holiday treats will be available for sale on site. Santa's Village will be open from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6; Saturday, Dec. 7; Friday, Dec. 13; Saturday, Dec. 14; Friday, Dec. 20; and Saturday, Dec. 21. Admission to both Fantasy of Lights and Santa's Village is free. For more info, call the Visitors Center at (803) 426-2640.

The **Holiday Tour on the 240th birthday of The Ruins** in Stateburg on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., offers a visit throughout the main floor of The Ruins, with docents on hand to point out architectural embellishments and the many beautiful and intriguing pieces of original furniture. The inside and outside of the house will be decorated with natural arrangements and greenery that would have been used in the 1800s. The grounds will showcase many exhibits from various periods, including Revolutionary-era weapons with periodic mortar firing, a museum of 19th-century tools and household items, a few beautiful Model A cars, Native American dancing by the Sum-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY PAT SUMMERVILLE

Parts of The Ruins in Stateburg will be open to the public during a holiday event on Saturday, Dec. 7.

ter Cheraw Tribe, the surprising history of Stateburg and its homes and history exhibits by Sumter County Museum and Temple Sinai. The Ruins is one of the few remaining historic homes in the Stateburg area of Sumter. The land was purchased from Thomas Sumter, a hero of the Revolutionary War. The original 40'x45' house was built in 1784 by John Mayrant, a sea-faring hero who served with John Paul Jones in the same war. It was expanded several times with the final and most lavish one by Videau Marion

Singleton and her husband, Robert Marion DeVeaux, in 1838. The address for The Holiday Tour at The Ruins is 1257 Barnwell Drive, Sumter. There is no admission fee for the event.

The Evening Optimist Club will hold its annual **Sumter Christmas Parade** at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8. The theme for the 2024 Christmas Parade is "Believe."

Join Sumter County Museum, 122 N. Washington St., for a special **Tea with Jackie** themed book event celebrating the release of Dawn Tripp's new historical fiction novel "Jackie" and honoring the life of Jackie Kennedy Onassis at noon Thursday, Dec. 5, at the museum, 122 N. Washington St. According to the museum's website, "'Jackie' is the story of a woman who forged a legacy out of grief and shaped history even as she was living it a deeply private person with a nuanced, formidable intellect. It is the story of a love affair, a complicated marriage and the fracturing of identity that comes in the wake of unthinkable violence." Ticket options: event only, \$10 members, \$15, public; and

SEE **EVENTS**, PAGE A23

LOW PRICE GUARANTEE! FREE DELIVERY

Visit our website and start building your very own OLD HICKORY building today!
OLDHICKORYBUILDINGS.COM







OLD HICKORY

BUILDINGS & SHEDS



AUTHORIZED DEALER

A TRADITION OF QUALITY • THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE DETAILS



Dixie Products

1255 N. Lafayette • Sumter 775-4391
 Current Hours: 8:30am - 5:00pm Monday - Friday



RELIABLE PAWN SHOP

Est. 1946

In times like these everyone is looking for

Bargain Buys!



POWER TOOLS

Monday-Friday 10am-6pm; Saturday 10am-5pm
THANK YOU FOR MAKING US #1

33 West Liberty Street • Downtown Sumter • 18 N. Brooks Street • Downtown Manning
www.reliablepawnshop.com

EVENTS FROM PAGE A22

event and book, \$30 members; \$35 public. All tickets include admittance to event and refreshments. Books can be signed at event. Additional books will be available for purchase. To purchase tickets, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3n7n263z>.

CLARENDON COUNTY

Save the date for **Hope Health's Golf Classic** on Thursday, Nov. 21. The four-man captain's choice tournament will be at Wyboo Golf Club, Manning, and includes brunch, shotgun start and awards afterward. Awards will be given for longest drive and closest to the pin, and mulligans will be available for purchase. Register for mulligans or as a sponsor at <https://tinyurl.com/seh33kpe>. All proceeds go to the Compassionate Care Fund. For more details, contact Charlee Rhodes at crhodes@hope-health.org.



Don't miss out on the Clarendon Pilot Club's homemade biscuits, perfect for the holidays. The club's **annual bake sale** is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 26, from 4 to 6 p.m. at The Presbyterian Church at Manning, 233 N. Brooks St. Club members will be selling cakes, pies, cookies, casseroles and their "Famous Homemade Biscuits."

Celebrate the season with the **Parade of Lights** in downtown Manning on Sunday, Dec. 1, at 5:30 p.m. Contact City Hall for more information at (803) 435-8477. Inclement weather date is Tuesday, Dec. 3.

St. Matthias Church's **Christmas Days Bazaar** is Saturday, Dec. 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church, 9 N.

Dukes St., Summerton. Start your Christmas shopping and find crafts, home-baked goodies, casseroles, homemade soup and cornbread, boxed dinners available for takeout and a Resurrection Table. Vendors are invited to sell their crafts for \$40 a table inside the Parish



PHOTO PROVIDED

Eileen's Café serves food during a previous Soups, Stews and Sweets event in Manning. This year's event will be Thursday, Dec. 5.

Hall. Contact Rebecca at (803) 238-5420.

Soups, Stews and Sweets is back for another year. The holiday "sip and stroll" event is Thursday, Dec. 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. starting at Weldon Auditorium and continuing along historic Brooks Street in downtown Manning. You'll be able to sample the best soups, stews and sweet dishes from the local culinary scene, according to Jennie

Lee of Clarendon County Chamber of Commerce. Featured restaurants generally include The Lily Café, Orchard Café, Lucy's Traditional Southern Bakehouse, Catering for All Occasions, Eileen's Café, Burger Chick and Chick-fil-A of Manning. Tickets are \$35 and are available at the chamber of commerce, 19 N. Brooks St., Manning, or by reaching the chamber at (803) 435-4405.

BLACK FRIDAY STARTS EARLY AT

Wally's Hardware



AL IN STOCK CASE KNIVES



**20%
ALL OFF**

BAYOU DEEP FRYERS



\$499⁰⁰
Model #13187
• 4 Gal
Stainless Fryer

\$369⁰⁰
Model #13266
• 2.5 Gal
Stainless Fryer

PROFESSIONAL TOOL SETS



\$89⁰⁰
Model #16947

\$105⁰⁰
Model #CTK150

WHILE SUPPLIES LASTS

1291 Broad St. Ext. • Sumter, SC Open: Mon-Fri. 8am - 5:30pm • Sat. 8am - 2pm **469-8531**

Exp 12/31/2024

Sports

Basketball coaches adjust to extended football season

BY TIM LEIBLE

tim@theitem.com

Basketball coaches across South Carolina spent the first week of November gearing up for the start of their season, but this winter comes with some new reservations.

While basketball coaches are used to waiting for a few football players to wrap up their season before hitting the hard court, things are a little different this year. The South

Carolina High School League added an extra week to the football season because several programs across the state were sidelined by Hurricane Helene.

One week doesn't seem like a huge deal, but for basketball coaches who traditionally have to wait a few weeks to have large portions of their roster, that extra time is critical.

SMALL SCHOOLS HIT THE HARDEST

While most basketball programs will be affected by the extra time, some get hit harder than others.

Over at Sumter High, Bryan

Brown isn't overly concerned. Most of his roster doesn't play football, though he'll be waiting for a handful of players to wrap up on the gridiron. On top of the number of athletes, Brown is used to the football team holding onto his players for a few extra weeks with deep playoff runs, so this isn't exactly a new concern.

"It is definitely something that comes with the territory. It's not something we can stop from happening," Brown said.

"We have a really good football team, and every year we expect them to go deep into the playoffs, and it's no different this year. We're expecting it. I told my guys the other day that we hope we don't see them until sometime

in the middle of December. We just adjust to it, and it's business as usual."

While Brown is used to waiting for players, the SCHSL 5A Division I state championship won't be played until Dec. 13. If the football team makes a run to the title game, the basketball team wouldn't be at full strength until they're playing in a Christmas tournament. Those



ADAM FLASH / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Sumter High head coach Bryan Brown, center, and the Gamecocks aren't overly concerned by the extra week of football because most of the SHS basketball team isn't busy on the gridiron this fall.

players would miss all four county rivalry games against Crestwood and Lakewood, with the final matchup against the Gators slated to be played a day after the state championship game.

"We always look forward to our football guys coming in. They're definitely needed; they bring toughness. It's definitely tough for us knowing we're going to lose that extra week, but we're in a better situation than a lot of other schools," Brown said. "Luckily, we have 10 guys this year (that don't play football), so we're kinda solid. We're going to miss them until they get here, but we're going to root them on as they finish a strong season."

The smaller schools are hit far harder than 5A powers. At schools like Scott's Branch, Manning, East Clarendon and Lee Central, the football team makes up a majority of the basketball roster, so those coaches can be stuck in a waiting period.

Up in Bishopville, head basketball coach Xavier Harry also coaches the quarterbacks and defensive backs on the football team, so he's running double duty throughout November. If the Stallions make a run in the 1A playoffs, those stresses could carry into December.

"I'm trying to prioritize both sports," Harry said. "What helps it out is you've got to have some good assistant coaches, and I have a good group of assistant coaches. I can put out the game plan for the day and trust them to follow through with it, but I also want to be there so the kids can hear instructions from me, as well. I'll get the basketball kids for workouts, and once my staff comes in, we'll go over what needs to be done for the day. Then I'll go out and do my part with football, and once I'm done with football, I come back in and catch the back end of basketball."

"That's what I've been doing

in September and October, but it gets a little more tedious during the season."

At Scott's Branch, Kevin Miller previously served as an assistant football coach, but his attention is solely focused on basketball this season. While that's certainly a blessing, he's extremely shorthanded on the basketball court. At a 1A school like Scott's Branch, he only has about four full-time varsity basketball players, one of which is a player new to the Eagles. The rest of his team is out on the gridiron gearing up for the first round of the playoffs.

"I feel like they're taking advantage of us," Miller joked with a hearty laugh. "I understand they still have a season to get in. At Sumter High, they don't share athletes as much as us 1As, but my basketball team is the football team, so putting things a week behind actually puts me a month behind."

SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE A25

BASKETBALL

FROM PAGE A24

TIMING

The timing of the extra week is a bit of a blessing for coaches like Harry. The first week of November was supposed to be the first round of the playoffs. That's also when tryouts start. Because the Stallions didn't have a matchup to prep for in football, it was a bit easier to split his time.

"We wanna make sure our guys are healthy on the football side, so we're not going as hard this week. We're covering fundamentals on the football side," Harry said during the bye week.

"That gives me some extra time to focus on basketball and evaluating the players that are trying out for the program. It's beneficial in that aspect."

While the specific timing of the bye week is nice, the timing for the rest of the season is extremely rough for 1A schools. Scott's Branch and Lee Central are both in large regions. Their regions are larger because many of the schools only have a few sports. For football, the region is a little larger than most but not extreme. In basketball, the Stallions are in a nine-team region. Scott's Branch has 10 schools to deal with in Region V.

With that many region games, Lee Central and Scott's Branch can't wait until the calendar turns to 2025 to start region play if they want to play each team twice. In fact, the Stallions will start region play on Dec. 3 against McBee before playing C.A. Johnson on Dec. 6. Even if the LCHS football team doesn't make it all the way to the 1A championship game, Harry needs to give his football players a chance to rest before the season starts, so he could be shorthanded for games that will determine his team's playoff chances.

"We have to come out of the gates playing meaningful games," Harry said. "All games are meaningful, and you want to get something out of them, but the region is different. You want to win the region and play as many playoff games at home as possible. We have a good football team this year, so I'm expecting to not have those guys until the middle of December."

At Scott's Branch, the Eagles can luckily wait until January to start region play. They will instead only play each of their region foes once, the lone



NICH PITTS / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Lee Central's JuJu Davis is one of the players the Stallion basketball team will have to wait for as he finishes the football season.

exception being Bethune-Bowman, whom they are slated to face twice.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

While the football players handle their business on the gridiron, there will be more opportunities for new players to shine on the court.

At Lee Central, Harry knows what to expect out of football players like JuJu Davis, Chuck Harry, Omari Rampasard, Jadin Price and Demarius Gregg. While they'll need time to recover from a full football season, they're generally known commodities.

"I'm very confident when they come over, there's not going to be a big learning curve," Harry said. "Those guys were committed over the summer. I put the game plan in over the summer, so they have the basics. There will be a couple extra add-ons, but they know what we want to do. They're going to be fine; it's just going to be about getting in basketball shape and shaking off the rust."

The same can be said at Scott's Branch, for the most part. While they're young, star football players like Nyren Bowman, Quintin Jackson and Danny Ragin, to name just a cou-

ple, have been a part of the basketball program for the Eagles for a couple of years. That eases the transition quite a bit.

"The good part about it is that last season, we had a very young team, so a lot of those guys got acclimated to our style of play," Miller said. "We'll be real green coming in this season. They had a good summer workout with the younger guys, and they meshed well."

But while they're gone, young players will have a chance to prove they're worth a spot in the rotation. Harry is especially looking forward to seeing freshmen Montavious Holmes and Sinatra Rembert get a chance to compete in scrimmages and early games more than he originally planned. The Stallions will get their first chance to work against other teams in a jamboree at Camden on Nov. 16 before scrimmages the following week. They won't have any football players available for those matchups.

"I've got three seniors, but everyone else is underclassmen, so they're going to get reps, and they're going to see what varsity is like," Harry said. "A lot of kids say, 'Coach, I'm ready to

play varsity.' Guess what, this is the year we're going to see if they're ready for varsity like they say they are.

"Some of the guys that were penciled to be JV guys, if they come in and do well in practice and tournaments and jamborees, they might stay up on the varsity level. They have to take advantage of the situation. It's going to make them better players and us better coaches."

Miller doesn't have the same depth of basketball players this fall, so scrimmages and their Thanksgiving tournament will be a struggle. But he doesn't plan to cancel any opportunities to compete.

"I'll take those five guys and play as hard as we can," Miller said. "I'm going to take those boys out there and let them have as much fun as possible."

"It's definitely going to give me a chance to look at somebody who wouldn't be in my scope at first. That's happened at practice already. It's bringing the old coaching thing back out, focusing on fundamentals and skill instead of having someone out there that's a little more polished."

For Miller, the best benefit to being without football players is the chance to be more hands on with JV players. He hopes that can help lay a foundation that can pay off down the road.

"It gives me more time to be hands on with the younger kids, which is helpful for my future later on," the Eagles' coach said.

CARRY OVER SUCCESS

The basketball coaches are also hopeful their football players can carry some momentum onto the court. While the Eagles have been extremely successful on the court under Miller, making four consecutive state championship game appearances before last season, the football team has struggled quite a bit. This fall, things have changed, and they're headed into the postseason with confidence. Miller hopes some of that swagger can carry over to the hardwood.

"I'm glad for them to have some type of success. It's a blessing that they'll come in with that air about themselves," Miller said. "The curse is knocking off that rust. That's the big thing. Nyren was a big part of what we did last year along with Jordan (Kind, who graduated), and it takes a little while to get that stop and go out of them from football to a more continuous flow."

WRIGHT WAY PLUMBING

3425 Thomas Sumter Highway,
Dalzell, SC 29040
803-499-4108

SPECIALTIES:

- REPAIRS
- REMODELING
- WATER HEATERS
- TANKLESS WATER HEATERS
- BACK FLOW TESTING & REPAIRS
- WATER & SEWER LINE REPAIRS
- NEW INSTALLATION
- NEW CONSTRUCTION (RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL)
- SEWER & DRAIN CLEANING
- CAMERA & JETTING SERVICES



43rd Annual Turkey Trot 5k Thanksgiving Day

Register online or in-house

Packet pick-up @ the YMCA
Wednesday, November 27
12:00 - 7:00 pm

Sumter Family YMCA
510 Miller Road, Sumter
www.ymcasumter.org



CALL FOR YOUR TOUR TODAY!

JUST LISTED
Park Place - 1140 Boardwalk St.
4 Bed 3 Bath | 2557 sq ft | Split Floor Plan

Advantage Realty Group Inc.
REALTOR
Susan W. Osteen

2573 Broad Street • Sumter, SC
803-491-4220



Imports Limited

Proudly serving for more than 44 years

Craig Singleton (MBA)

Sound & Visual Systems | Sales | Installations | Rentals
Pro Audio Projection & Camera Systems
Musical Instruments | Pianos | DJ Equipment & Lighting | Speakers | Microphones | Drums & More!

9 N. Main Street, Sumter (Downtown)
Store: 803-773-1908 Cell: 803-491-7122
www.IMPORTSLIMITEDSC.com



Give any ordinary room
a fresh modern look

Interior Design,
Kitchen & Bath Design,
Custom Cabinetry,
Blinds, Shades,
Shutters & Wallpaper

gallery
INTERIORS LLC

*Design for Beauty,
Comfort & Function*

Rebecca B. Compton, ASID, CKD, NCIDQ
gallery406interiors.com

Located inside C&A Carpet 990 S. Pike West | 803.774.0406

OWNER BETTIE STOVER
Mon-Fri: 9AM - 5PM • Sat: 9AM - 2 PM
35 W. Liberty Street / Sumter
(803) 773-7283

Gibert's DRUG STORE

COMPLETE PRESCRIPTION SERVICE



cm
CONNIE MORSE
REAL ESTATE
REALTOR®, ABR, GRI

803.934.6958
sumteragent@gmail.com

RE MAX SUMMIT 2900 Broad St. • Sumter, SC 29150

I Make it Happen... You Make it Home!!!



www.KelleyConstructionOfSumter.com

Established 1997 Licensed / Bonded LLC

KELLEY CONSTRUCTION

ROOFING SEAMLESS
CONTRACTOR BEST OF CLARENDON 2024 GUTTERS

803-494-4200

Senior Citizen's Discount and AARP

Evans Residential Services

✓ EPA 608 certified ✓ 20 years in residential repairs

- Heat pump and HVAC repair service
- Air Conditioning and Heating

Work: 803-847-4271 Roland Evans, owner

\$75 off Repair



GOLDEN KERNEL PECAN CO.

Gift Packages & Pecan Pies

We Sell 15 Flavors of Pecans

803-968-9432

15 Colony Square
741 Bultman Dr. Sumter, SC 29150



SHOW YOUR CARD!

YOUR BUSINESS COULD BE DISCOVERED BY PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTY AREA FOR MINIMAL COST TO YOU.

Moving & Storage Solutions
Dream Homes
Beauty Your Yard

We have everything you need to enhance your landscape with healthy grass, fresh florals and unique garden accents for spring. Stop in today!

Grigg's Lawn & Garden
1234 Main Street • Anytown
000-000-0000
www.namewebsite.com



**TO ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS ON THIS PAGE
PLEASE EMAIL ADVERTISING@THEITEM.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

Recapping fall season away from the gridiron in tri-county

BY TIM LEIBLE

tim@theitem.com

The fall season is beginning to come to a close in the tri-county. The South Carolina High School League football playoffs begin Nov. 15, and we're two weeks into the SCISA football postseason, which wraps up with a weekend of championship games Nov. 22-23.

Outside of SCHSL cross country, which hosts its state qualifying races the weekend of Nov. 16-17, the fall season is done away from the gridiron, so here's a look at how the local programs fared.

SCISA CROSS COUNTRY

The highest achievement in the tri-county this fall, at least so far, came in SCISA cross country.

The Wilson Hall boys won a SCISA state title, while their girls finished as runners-up in 4A. In 3A, both the boys and girls from Thomas Sumter finished as state runners-up.

The Barons were anchored by a record-breaking performance from Caulder Williamson. He set a new school record with a time of 15:49.08, finishing seven seconds behind Heathwood Hall's Jack Wilcox to claim second in the race.

As a team, they beat John Paul II by just one point thanks to an eighth-place finish by Trip Hunt, an 11th-place finish from Abel Ayres, a 17th-place finish from Ben Rabon and a 33rd-place finish from Gavin Getz, who beat his previous personal best by more than a minute to clinch the title.

The girls shined, too, as Molly Jones broke her own school record for the second time this year with a time of 18:47.56. Mary Ellen Thorne and Emmie Williamson, who finished ninth and 10th, respectively, would've each broken the previous school record with their electric performances, which both came quicker than 19:22. Mary and Jane Foley rounded out the scoring lineup in 16th and 24th to lead Wilson Hall to the second-place finish as a team.

The Thomas Sumter girls finished second behind Kelsey Martin, who finished fourth overall with a time of 21:44.29. Behind her, Skylar Spilker finished 13th, Annie Boss placed 14th, Keira Anderson finished 16th, and Abbie Fisher finished 22nd.

For the boys, Nate Livingston led the runner-up finish by placing fourth with



PHOTO PROVIDED

From left, Sumter High's Gabriel Kirkhart, Jack Easton, Anthony Benenhaley, Jordan Hewett and David Vizcarra snap a photo during warmups at the SCHSL 5A Division I state meet.

a time of 17:52.20. He was followed by Ty Fisher in 12th, Ashton Pierce in 13th, Wyatt Swinehart in 21st and Henry Sturkey in 23rd.

SCISA GOLF

Another highlight came in SCISA golf, where Laurence Manning's Summer Carey finished second overall. She shot a 154 to finish as the state runner-up. As a team, Laurence Manning finished fifth, as Carol Ann Briggs shot 189 to finish 17th, followed by a 218 from Olivia Danback and a 222 from Anna Kate Beane to round out the scoring lineup. Campbell McInnis added a 263.

Wilson Hall finished just ahead of LMA as a team, placing fourth. Aviana Hicks finished in a tie for seventh by shooting a 171, just three strokes ahead of teammate Mary Katherine Dutcher in 10th. Frances Mac Elmore shot a 206, while Olivia Russell rounded out the scoring lineup with a 219.

SCHSL GOLF

Sumter High had their own excellent golf season, making it to the 5A Division I state championship for the first time in program history. The Lady Gamecocks finished in 11th as a team, shooting 785 across the two-day tournament. SHS was led by Jaylen Berry, who finished the first day with an 87 before shooting a 91 on the second day to shoot a 178. Mia Turner followed with a 189 across two days, improving by three strokes in her second round. Selah Berry shot a 205, while Kelly Gristwood shot 213 and Emme Bauer shot 283.

SCHSL VOLLEYBALL

The local public schools officially saw

their seasons come to an end on Nov. 5, as East Clarendon was the last squad standing in the tri-county.

The Lady Wolverines finished second in Region VI-2A and opened the playoffs with a hard-earned 3-1 win over Woodland by scores of 25-22, 26-24, 23-25, 25-19. But EC had their hands full in the second round, traveling to North Central to face a squad that had lost just one set all year. They fell 25-10, 25-9, 25-15 to wrap up their season with a record of 9-10.

Four other SCHSL programs made the playoffs but made first-round exits. Sumter High traveled to Cane Bay in the 5A Division I playoffs, falling 25-14, 25-18, 25-20 to end their season with a record of 7-14.

Lee Central had the closest battle, falling to Horse Creek Academy after starter Kiyonna Austin suffered an injury during warmups. All three sets were close, but they ultimately fell 25-23, 25-18, 26-24.

Crestwood traveled to Aiken, calling 25-11, 25-15, 25-9.

Manning closed their season with a loss to Philip Simmons 25-1, 25-3, 25-5.

SCISA VOLLEYBALL

Four SCISA volleyball teams made it to the state tournament; Clarendon Hall elected to opt out of the final tournament of the year.

Wilson Hall finished 0-2 in a stacked SCISA 4A. The Barons fell to Ashley Hall 9-25, 25-20, 15-25 before suffering a 25-18, 25-16 loss to Ben Lippen.

In 2A, Lee Academy went 2-2, beating Holy Trinity 25-16, 20-25, 25-21. They fell to Laurens before beating Faith Christian 25-16, 25-19. Their season ended with a loss to Charleston Collegiate.

Thomas Sumter went 0-2, falling to Pee Dee Academy 25-14, 25-17 before falling to Greenwood Christian 25-9, 25-17.

SWIM

The Sumter High and Wilson Hall swim programs both had excellent performances in their respective state championships.

The Gamecocks brought a relay team for the first time in ages. Their relay team, which swam the 400 free and the 200 medley relay, placed 13th and 15th in SCHSL 5A Division I.

The biggest highlight was Jordan Hewett, who finished third in the 500 free and eighth in the 200 free. Anthony Benenhaley added eighth-place finishes in both the 100 butterfly and the 100 breaststroke. Both of them swam the relays with Gabriel Kirkhart and Jack Easton.

The Wilson Hall boys finished third as a team at the SCISA state championships. They were also led by a Hewett, Jordan's younger brother Jacob. He broke his own school record in the 200 individual medley, winning the state title by more than six seconds with a time of 2:00.35. He also won the 100 breaststroke state title while swimming on the school record 400 free relay team with Logan Schumacher, Stirling Tindal and Cliff Bath. That group finished third. The 200 free relay team finished second.

Other highlights included Bath finishing third in the 100 free, Shumacher finishing fourth in the 100 butterfly and fifth in the 200 free, Banks Smith finishing eighth in the 40 free and Tindal placing sixth in the 100 backstroke.

The Lady Barons were led by Mary Ellen Thorne's 10th-place finish in the 100 back and 10th-place 400 free relay team.

TENNIS

Manning was the lone local tennis team to win a playoff match, beating Hampton County 4-3 before falling to Williston-Elko 5-1. Tori Billups, Bridget McCabe and Tori McCabe all earned singles wins against HC, while Mary Esther McCabe and Autumn Grigg won in doubles. The doubles pair provided the lone win against W-E.

East Clarendon fell to McBee 4-3 in the first round.

In SCISA, Wilson Hall lost to Porter-Gaud 5-1 in the first round.

Entertainment

'Smile 2' is best horror film this year

Horror remains a central dynamic of structural importance of inspiration and passion with my love for cinema. The conceptual basis of mysteries of the unknown bringing forth levels of authentic fear in the form of live-action storytelling is a fascinating device. Whether it is featuring mythological monsters, paranormal activities, fictional killers or exploring deeper layers of the unknown, horror has endured in creative and innovative ways.

Aside from the standard over-the-top slasher films I grew up watching, my favorite approach of the genre is the ability of homing in on intense atmospherics. Relying on what the mind alone can create is a far more terrifying experience than a physical revelation. The unknown in and of itself is a frightening factor, as it presents myriad questions. From my point of view, sitting alone or staring into a darkened space fills me with dreaded fear.

"Smile 2" is the sequel to the sleeper hit of the same name released in 2022. The idea behind the story brings the story of an unseen entity without a name, consuming its victims in front of a horrified witness. Suddenly the possessed victim transforms into a physical representation of a catatonic vessel wearing a chilling, disturbing and deceptive smile before committing a horrific act of violence.

Parker Finn revitalized the

horror genre with a fresh and invigorating story offering more than simple violence, gore and blood. He crafted a particular horror universe, forcing the audience to challenge their own perception of what is real or imagined. The first installment surprised me with its intense atmosphere and unique and innovative tactics of jump scares, and what has improved with horror is the quality of acting. Past horror films brought the stereotypical standard affair of cheesy, hammy and less-than-impressive performances. In

"Smile," on the other hand, the lead actors/actresses must sell the story with their performance, by being able to convincingly portray an array of realistic emotions. The sequential scenes solely focus on the lead, presenting themselves to the audience as vulnerable characters gradually breaking down through the process of a violent psychosis. The formless entity haunts the existence of Skye Riley during her attempt at a musical and personal comeback after a series of unfortunate events. She is portrayed by British actress Naomi Scott. Riley's physical, musical and artistic persona was inspired by pop star Lady Gaga. As I stated before, every sequence from "Smile" hinges on her carrying the story with realistic expressions and reactions to the level of horror subjected to the character. "Smile 2" has the most powerful, intense and raw acting from Scott I have ever watched on the big

screen. It is refreshing having a horror film whose main showcase is the impressive, quality acting. Scott's performance is without a doubt an amazing insight into capabilities as a talented actress.



JEFFREY MAYER / MEDIAPUNCH / IPX

Naomi Scott and Parker Finn at the "Smile 2" U.S. premiere on Oct. 14 at the Paramount Theater in Los Angeles, California.

screen. It is refreshing having a horror film whose main showcase is the impressive, quality acting. Scott's performance is without a doubt an amazing insight into capabilities as a talented actress.

Finn uses every resource at his disposal by expanding the lore of the "Smile" entity with ever-increasing haunting imagery and heavy atmospheric tension, sending chills down the spine. My favorite moment from the feature is an interesting sequence that brought back memories of a recurring nightmare from my childhood.

The scene in question illustrates creative camera techniques and lightning usage with focusing on various sounds, shadows and leaving much of the revelation to the imagination of the audience. Admittedly it is difficult articulating the details without

venturing into spoiler territory.

The beginning of "Smile 2" sets the pace for what eventually follows as a journey far more horrific than its predecessor. Finn's character development for his horror conceptual pieces present far more likable, interesting and dynamic components of the audience feeling sincere sympathy as the entity itself relishes in the complete and total annihilation of its prey.

I appreciate how the film manages to make me question from my perspective if the terrifying visuals are real or simply imagined. Very few horror films have managed to create that successful formula of challenging the audience in thinking outside of the box. "Smile 2" offers a far more introspective, raw and maddening study into full elements of the unknown of an entity

that has no limits.

Overall, this film is the best horror feature presentation of 2024 in my eyes. I will place it above "Longlegs" as my favorite for 2024. For those heavily invested in a horror film that offers exhilarating thrills, scares and haunting atmosphere, this is absolutely one for the ages. If anything, "Smile 2" could have had an extra 20-30 minutes added on without it feeling redundant in the slightest. My rating is an enthusiastic two thumbs up and 10/10 reaction. A highly recommended feature.

Side note: It is imperative to watch the first film to fully understand the continued expanded lore of the "Smile" entity.

To watch Isaiah Ridley's movie reviews online, find him @Izzy's Cinematic Escape on YouTube.



Isaiah Ridley

Recollections of Sumter's historic homes, Part II

Relections revisits the growth and development of fledging Sumter and several of its historic homes. Many of these treasures no longer exist but once



Sammy Way
REFLECTIONS

added to the beauty and culture of our community. The data and pictures used to prepare this piece were obtained from *The Sumter Item* archives, and the writings of

Dr. Anne King Gregorie were also consulted. Part I of this two-part series featured historic homes that still exist in the area. Read Part I at www.theitem.com/reflections.

Dr. Gregorie noted that "... By the year 1824, the tiny village of Sumterville consisted of only a dozen houses; however, during the 1840s, several dwellings were constructed." The houses pictured graced the landscape of Sumter, and these structures remain today.



C. T. Mason home



Greenswamp home



The Lemmon House still exists on the corner of Haynsworth and Church streets.



The McQueen house still exists on the corner of Hampton Avenue and McQueen Street.



Haynsworth/Bultman house



The McLaurin house is on Salem Street.

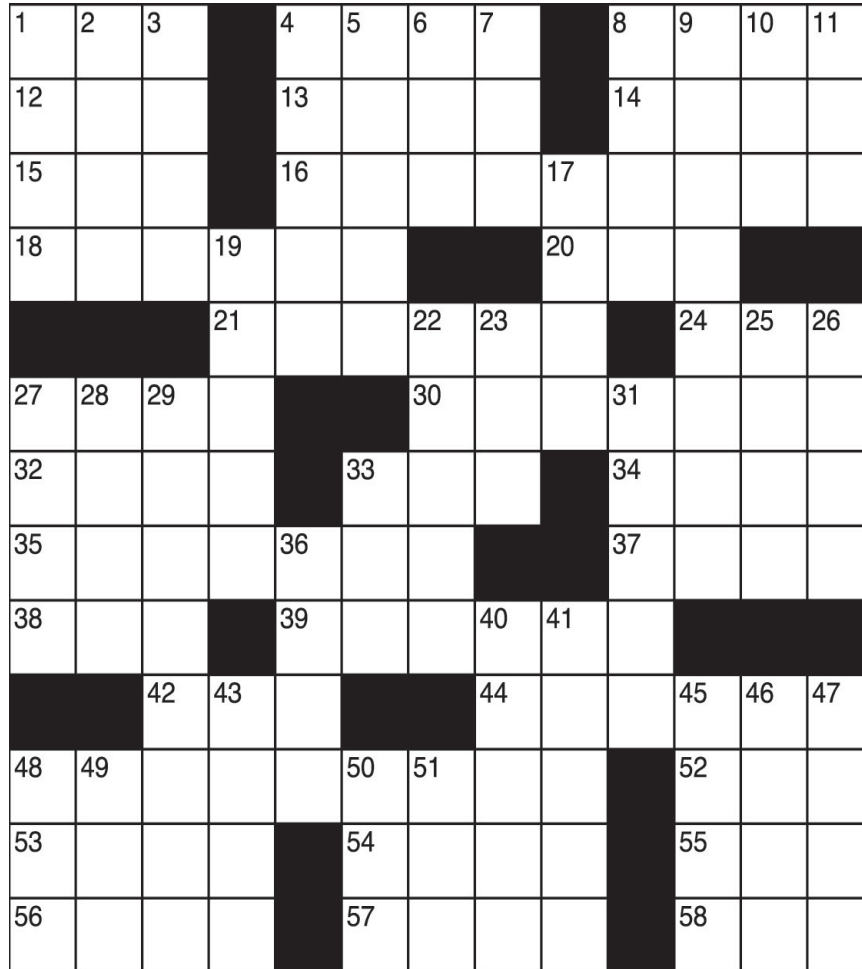


The O'Donnell House faces East Liberty Street.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Work in the garden
4. Pulp
8. Sleeveless garment
12. Building vine
13. Tennis's Arthur
14. Notion
15. Charge for service
16. Doctor
18. Boot part
20. Court divider
21. Unwanted creatures
24. "_____ a Wonderful Life"
27. Computer input
30. At the beach
32. Golden calf, e.g.
33. Stir-fry vessel
34. Over again
35. Coffee machine
37. Takes advantage of
38. Dangerous curve
39. Quit
42. Afternoon affair
44. Tangled
48. Fulton invention
52. Woodsman's tool
53. Ventilates
54. Twist one's arm
55. Crib
56. Cowboy country
57. Below-average grades
58. Home for a pig



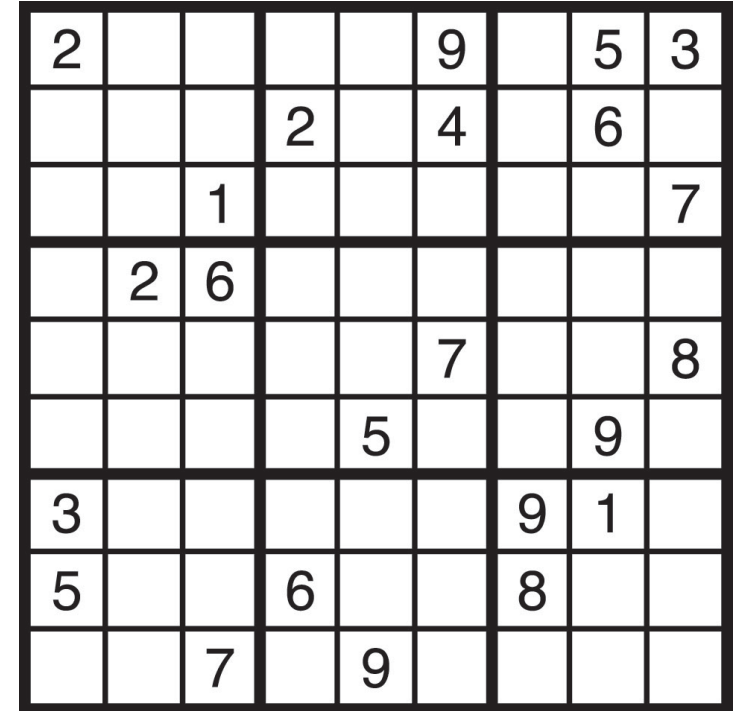
27. Horrible
28. Fusses
29. Bread-browning appliances
31. Appear as a ghost
33. Itty-bitty
36. Streetcar
40. Mirror reflection
41. The Pearly _____
43. Dawn direction
45. Flaps
46. Freeway sign
47. Hold back
48. Carpenter's blade
49. Bond
50. Comedian Abbott
51. Mine deposit

SOLUTION



COPYRIGHT 2024, PENNY PRESS

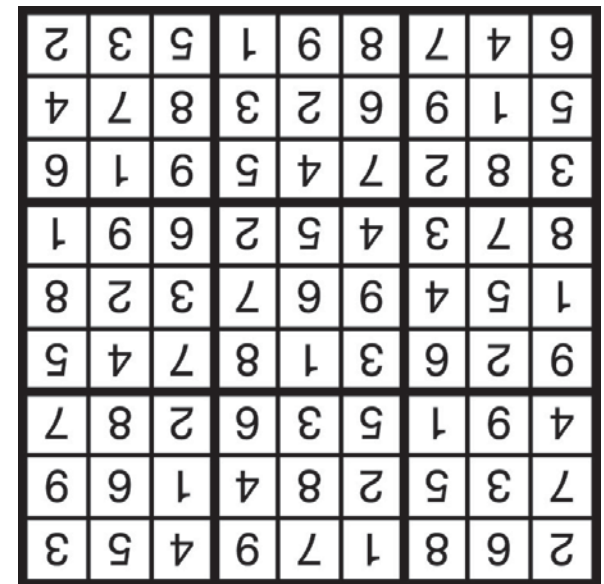
SUDOKU



HOW TO PLAY:

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once. Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: you must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column or 3x3 box.

SOLUTION



Social Security Matters

Senior worries about Social Security benefits being taxed

BY RUSSELL GLOOR

National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens



Russell Gloor

DEAR RUSTY: I am past my Social Security full retirement age, and I am still working. I am married, and we file our income tax jointly. My husband is 64 and is not working now, but he may, or may not, be able to work in the next year or so. At what point will my Social Security benefits be taxed, if I decide to take them now?

WORRIED ABOUT TAXES

DEAR WORRIED: Many Social Security recipients are surprised to find that their benefits may be considered taxable by the IRS, so I welcome the opportunity to clarify this topic for you.

Whether your Social Security benefits are taxable depends on your overall combined taxable income for your

IRS tax filing status. Taxation of Social Security benefits for a married couple (filing jointly) depends on your combined income as a couple, which is called your “Modified Adjusted Gross Income” (MAGI) by the IRS.

Your MAGI consists of your normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on your IRS tax return, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

If your MAGI (filing jointly) exceeds \$32,000, then 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes taxable, but if your MAGI as a couple exceeds \$44,000 then up to 85% of your received SS benefits becomes taxable (at your standard IRS tax rate). Note

that these tax thresholds are less for those who file their taxes as a single — e.g., for someone whose IRS filing status is “single,” half of their Social Security benefits become part of their taxable income if their personal MAGI is over \$25,000, and up to 85% of their SS benefits are taxable if their individual MAGI is over \$34,000.

Another factor often misunderstood is that only a portion of SS benefits are added to your income amount taxed by the IRS. The amount added — somewhere between 50% and 85% of the SS benefits received during the tax year (depending on your MAGI) — becomes taxable income at your normal IRS tax rate.

So, in your case, if you claim your SS benefits now and your combined income (your MAGI) exceeds the above levels for a married couple, then a portion (either 50% or up to 85%) of your SS benefits received during the tax year

will be included in your income taxable by the IRS. Note, too, that it is possible to have income tax withheld from your Social Security benefits by submitting IRS form W-4V to your local Social Security office. You can download this IRS form at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4v.pdf.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.



Bostic Insurance Agency, Inc.
Charles Bostic, JR. Agent
 704 Bultman Drive

Corner of Bultman and Wise Drive, Sumter

I am a second generation State Farm agent, continuing the legacy started by my father, Bo Bostic. He established his agency in Sumter back in 1965 and ran it until his retirement in 1985.

In 1984, I opened my own agency in Sumter, becoming the third one in the area at that time. It’s amazing how quickly 40 years have passed!

My father, who served in the Korean war, eventually settled in Mullins, SC and worked at Martin hospital. It was there that he had his insurance with a State Farm agent named Doc Capps. Doc played a significant role in my father’s life and introduced him to the State Farm organization.

The Bostic family has a long-standing reputation of serving Sumter. My daughter, Lauren Locklear, works for Gateway Mortgage in Sumter, and my son, Charles (Chas) III, owns and operates AmeriSpec inspection company, providing home inspections in Sumter and the surrounding counties.

I have truly enjoyed serving Sumter and the surrounding areas for the past 40 years, and I have no plans of slowing down. You can find my office located on the corner of Bultman and Wise Dr, where my team, with over 68 years of combined experience, is ready to assist you with all your insurance needs.

We eagerly look forward to seeing you and providing you with top-notch service.

Charles Bostic, Jr. Agent

803-775-8371

charles@bosticagency.com

Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary

Wild **NEW** Styles

THE PERFECT SOUTHERN GIFT for the Man in your Life!

Mojo Old Row Carhartt

Carhartt Clothing

Hoodies, Pants, Flannels, Jackets, T-Shirts & Hats!

HUGE SELECTION

25% OFF

XTRATUF Boots

Mens, Womens & Kids

\$39.99 each

Mojo Rippler

HW2443

Duck Calls

HUGE SELECTION

PRIMOS AVERY

REG. \$389.99

\$349.99 each

Frogg Toggs Grand Refuge Hunter Bootfoot Wader

Mossy Oak Bottomland 2GRH011800

frogg toggs

World Famous Sports Camo Quad Folding Chair

• Mossy Oak Bottomland pattern

Also available: World Famous Sports "Big Boy" Chair with 350lb. capacity Reg. \$39.99 SALE \$29.99

REG. \$19.99

\$14.99

QAC500

REG. \$229.99

\$169.99

Hornady Fireproof Keypad Safe

- 49 lbs.
- Protective Carpet Interior
- 16ga Steel Body
- 1400°F - 30 min. fireproof rating

H95407

Yeti Drinkware

NEW COLORS & STYLES

YETI

\$399.99

Turtle Box Waterproof Portable Speaker

- 25+ hours of battery life
- Hi-fidelity stereo sound

TURTLEBOX

\$899.99

Recteq Bullseye Deluxe Black Edition Wood Pellet Grill

RTB380XBE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29

BLACKFRIDAY

40 W. Wesmark Blvd., Sumter
OPENS AT 6AM

110 N. Brooks St., Manning
OPENS AT 6AM

350 Pinewood Rd., Sumter
OPENS AT 8AM

320 W. Liberty St., Sumter
OPENS AT 8AM

222 N. Church St., Lake City
OPENS AT 8AM

Savings all weekend long!

Prices valid Wednesday, November 13 - Saturday, November 30

40 W. Wesmark Blvd., Sumter
803-773-3397

350 Pinewood Rd., Sumter
803-774-2275

320 W. Liberty St., Sumter
803-773-9381

110 N. Brooks St., Manning
803-435-2651

222 N. Church St., Lake City
843-374-4000

ShopSimpsons.com



NOT ALL ITEMS AVAILABLE AT ALL LOCATIONS.



Simpson ACE
HARDWARE & SPORTS