

Lady Eagles' Maxfield has breakout week **B1**



Leventis and Schultz set for school board Area 8 runoff



NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

The Sumter School District offices were the polling location for the Green Swamp 1 and 2 Precinct in Tuesday's special election for the new Area 8 representative on Sumter school board. Total voter turnout in the special election was just 4.72% with 366 votes.

Voter turnout was 4.72%; former senator earns 43.7% of total vote

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

It will be Phil Leventis and Keith Schultz in a runoff after the two garnered the most votes in Tuesday's special election for the Area 8 seat on Sumter's school board.

With four candidates in the race and no one receiving more than 50% plus one vote of the total votes, the runoff required for a candidate to get a majority of votes, and it will be on Tuesday, Feb. 25. Leventis won 43.72% of the vote — which included early voting and absentee mail votes — while Schultz took 19.4%.

A former member of Sumter School District's Board of Trustees, Schultz edged political newcomer Tom Montgomery by two votes for second place. Montgomery finished third with 18.85% of the vote.

Foxy Rae Campbell placed fourth with 18.03% of the vote.

According to Sumter County Voter Registration and Elections Office, there are 7,762 registered voters in Sumter School District's Area 8, and 366 voted in the special election. That is a voter turnout rate of 4.72%. Of the five precincts, Wilson Hall had the

SEE RUNOFF, PAGE A14

Sumter school board Area 8 candidates Keith Schultz, right, and Foxy Rae Campbell hug after all the election totals were compiled on Tuesday.

BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM



LEVENTIS



SCHULTZ

Early voting period will be Wednesday through Friday

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Like the school board special election, the upcoming runoff between Phil Leventis and Keith Schultz will also include an early voting period for registered voters in Sumter School District Area 8.

Three days of early voting will be available on Wednesday, Feb. 19, through Friday, Feb. 21, at Sumter County Voter Registration Office, according to county Voter Registration and Elections Director Pat Jefferson. Early voting hours each day will be 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SEE EARLY VOTING, PAGE A14



ZAC HOOKS / THE SUMTER ITEM

First reading on the demolition of Rodeway Inn, 226 N. Washington St., was approved by Sumter City Council on Tuesday, Feb. 4, due to its history of criminal activity.

Demolition of Sumter's Rodeway Inn approved

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

Demolition of the North Washington Street motel formerly belonging to a Church Street address was approved for demolition by Historic Preservation Design Review board on the afternoon of Thursday, Feb. 13.

The Design Review Board is a seven-member committee appointed by Sumter City Council, tasked with implementing design review for all exterior appearance and materials in two design review districts — Downtown Historic District and Hampton Park Historic District.

Concerning the demolition, a private applicant, 226 North Washington Street LLC, requested approval to move forward with a complete demolition and removal of Rodeway Inn. Design Review board only approved demolition of Rodeway Inn, as it is in the

SEE RODEWAY, PAGE A14

PAST IS PRESENT

Sumterite, Lincoln historian reflects on school, how people shaped our community

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

Sumter is a town layered with history. And rather than aggregated in textbooks, it's told through its people, its struggles and its triumphs.

But history is not a distant memory, a thing of the past. It lives and breathes, shaping the present. Few know this better than Deloris Pringle.

At 79 years old, Pringle carries the weight of Sumter's history with her. Born and raised on South Main Street, where her family home still stands, she is both a witness to and a product of a community shaped by leaders, movements and change-makers. She has seen firsthand how adversity faced by those who came before and walked with her paved the way for future generations.

Her own path began at Bates School, one of the several "feeder schools" that funneled students to the historic all-Black Lincoln High School. It was a time when school was more than a place of learning but a

SEE PRESENT, PAGE A15

Sumter's progress is looking good, say Sumter officials at Chamber retreat

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN
deirdre@theitem.com

The Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce held its annual retreat in Myrtle Beach this year from Friday, Feb. 7 to Sunday, Feb. 9, and this year came loaded with updates about local government, education and economic development.

With updates from Sumter County Council Chairman Jim McCain, Sumter Mayor David Merchant, Sumter School District

Superintendent William Wright Jr. and Sumter EDGE CEO Jay Schwedler, the retreat-goers left well-informed.

Here is what to know about what the entities that encompass Sumter have been doing this past year.

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

The district has had a busy past year full of achievement and opportunities for improvement. At the retreat, Wright gave an overview of what the school district

has been up to and what it plans to do in the coming year.

"Two years ago, almost three years ago now, when I first stood on this stage in Asheville [where the Chamber's retreat was that year], I told you that we'd get better every day," Wright said. "We've got some evidence that, while we're not where we need to be, we certainly are a better school district than we were July 1 of 2022."

SEE PROGRESS, PAGE A13

VISIT US ONLINE AT

the **Item**.com



DEATHS, B6

Anna Scriven Green
Charles James Johnson Sr.
Horace Earl Montgomery Sr.
Carolyn Bradford Mickens

Helen W. Felder Cook
David Leon Richardson
Janet Player Smith
David Chalmers Gamble

WEATHER, A16

RAINY WEEKEND

Cloudy with showers around on Saturday and at night; heavy rain and a storm possible on Sunday

HIGH 61, LOW 55

INSIDE

2 SECTIONS, 26 PAGES
VOL. 130, NO. 30

Best of Sumter
ballots A6-7
Classifieds B8
Lifestyle A5

Opinion A11
Puzzles A16, B3
Reflections A8
Sports B1

E-mail: pressrelease@theitem.com

Mayesville Presbyterian to present 3rd Rejoicings Series event featuring renowned pianist

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysa@theitem.com

For an evening of good music and great fellowship, Mayesville Presbyterian Church invites all to its upcoming event.

For the third event in its Rejoicings Series, a reboot of a series the church launched in 2015 until the COVID-19 pandemic brought it to a pause, Mayesville Presbyterian will host Australian jazz pianist Konrad Paszkudzki.

Since age 14, Paszkudzki has been wowing audiences, leading him to be named "Young Australian Instrumentalist of the Year" at 14. The following year, he was accepted into the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts in Perth, where he studied jazz piano. After graduating with a bachelor of music degree in 2007 at 18, he was awarded the Melville Toyota Scholarship for most outstanding graduating student as well as won the Generations in Jazz James Morrison Scholarship, making him the first pianist in the 20-year history of the competition to earn the prestigious award. He would spend the next two years touring with world-renowned jazz trumpeter Morrison while building his reputation as a leading jazzman in Australia.

In 2009, Konrad was offered a scholarship to the University of Miami and relocated to the United States for his studies. He received his master's degree in 2011, played with jazz orchestras in Los Angeles, led the house trio during a year-long residency at the coveted New York venue 54 Below, released several recordings, formed the Konrad Paszkudzki Trio and joined the John Pizzarelli Quartet, leading to more than 1,000 performances worldwide in a period of four years.

The Konrad Paszkudzki Trio would be featured with renowned jazz musician Wynton Marsalis at events for Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City in 2013. Marsalis described Konrad's playing and artistry as having "a pearly touch, a sense of history, a sense of drama, a love of the blues and an elegance which is borne of high-minded dedication."

In addition to touring and recording, Paszkudzki also serves as artistic director of Jazz at the Ballroom, a non-

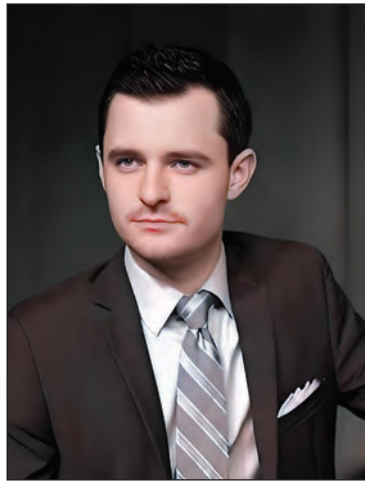


PHOTO PROVIDED

Australian jazz pianist Konrad Paszkudzki will perform at Mayesville Presbyterian Church's Rejoicings Series event Feb. 23.

profit organization committed "to keeping the American Songbook and swinging, classic jazz thriving" as well as providing audiences with one-of-a-kind experiences. Under his leadership, Jazz at the Ballroom has performed at prestigious venues nationwide. These performances have featured top musicians and renowned vocalists celebrating the rich history of jazz. And for Mayesville, it'll be no different, as he'll present an intimate performance of "The Great American Songbook."

"The Great American Songbook" is a body of work that features significant 20th-century American jazz standards, popular songs and show tunes by leading composers like George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Lerner and Loewe, Jerome Kern and Rodgers and Hammerstein. These names might bring to mind songs such as "My Sweet Embraceable You," "I Got a Kick Out of You," "Accentuate the Positive," "I Got Rhythm," "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and tunes from various Broadway musicals.

And you can experience it all on Sunday, Feb. 23, beginning at 4 p.m. in the church's sanctuary, 109 W. Sumter St. Admission to all events in the Rejoicings Series is free. A full schedule of events for Rejoicings Series is available on the church's website, mayesvillepres.org.

Donations are gratefully accepted, as the series is dependent upon donations for its development and continuation. Donations can be made at the door, by mail to P.O. Box 141, Mayesville SC 29104 or online at mayesvillepres.org.



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Drivers battle through snowy conditions on Jan. 22 in Sumter. According to the National Weather Service, it was the 13th-coldest January by average daily temperature in the Gamecock City and County.

Brrr! January 'got cold and stayed cold' in Sumter

13th-coldest January on record for Gamecock City and County, national meteorologist says

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Big temperature variances can be common in the month of February in the Midlands, and we are experiencing that now, but it was downright cold in January in Sumter.

National Weather Service meteorologist Leonard Vaughan, based in Columbia, shared current and short-term forecast conditions for the area and broke down for *The Sumter Item* on Thursday all the facts and figures about the coldest January in about a decade for the Gamecock City and County.

A warm start to February in the Midlands with three days in the low 80s was the result of the atmosphere trying to find some sort of balance after the chilly January. (More on January in a minute.)

Cooler temperatures have set in during the last week in the area, and we can expect continued swings in temperatures through February and into March, Vaughan said.

"Right now, we are going into kind of a cooler, wetter period, but that is generally common for this time of year," he said. "Our weather pattern will not get more 'normal,' so to speak, until we get into the later part of spring."

The immediate forecast is rain for both Saturday, Feb. 15, and Sunday, Feb. 16. Saturday's high temperature will be in the mid-50s in Sumter, while Sunday will reach the low 70s, according to the weather service. Monday, Feb. 17, and Tuesday, Feb. 18, will return to cooler and drier conditions locally with highs in the mid- to upper 50s.

Wednesday, Feb. 19, will be cool and wet with highs about 50 degrees. Vaughan added

that overnight lows in the timeframe will be in the 30s.

JUST HOW COLD WAS JANUARY?

Think about this one: Through the first 27 days of the month, overnight low temperatures were freezing (32 degrees or below) for 25 of those days.

The last four days of January were warmer and brought the average daily temperature up, and none of those days had overnight

lows of 32 or below, he said.

"The last part of the month really saved it from being a really cold month, according to historical figures," Vaughan said.

Still, it was the coldest January in Sumter and Columbia since 2014, based on average daily temperature. For Sumter, it was the 13th-coldest January on record since 1901, according to the weather service.

The average daily temperature in the Gamecock City and County in January was 40.2 degrees, which was 5.5 degrees below the 30-year historical average of 45.7.

The coldest Januarys on record for Sumter were in 1940 and 1977, according to the weather service's databases. Both of those years,

Sumter's average daily temperature was 35.7 degrees. For Bishopville, last month was the 10th-coldest January on record, Vaughan added.

There were two winter weather events in January for the Midlands. On Jan. 11, it was rain mixed with sleet for a few hours. Then, on Jan. 21 and into the next morning, Sumter had about 1.5 inches of snow at the City of Sumter water plant on Pine Street near Riley Park, he said. It marked three years since Sumter's last measurable snowfall.

Still, January was dry overall in the Midlands, according to Vaughan.

"Even though we had the snow, people might have thought we had a lot of rain in January, but it was kind of dry, believe it or not," he said. "The cold was really the big thing, and it was colder than we have seen for a while. It got cold and stayed cold."



A fountain is iced over on Jan. 22 in Sumter.

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

IS YOUR PAPER MISSING? ARE YOU GOING ON VACATION?

Call (803) 774-1258 or (803) 774-1231
Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

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.

To place a classified ad, call (803) 774-1231 or (803) 774-1258 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

TO PLACE AN OBITUARY

Obituaries must be submitted by a funeral home. Email obits@theitem.com.

REFUND POLICY FOR PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS (ENROLLED IN THE MONTHLY, QUARTERLY or annual EZ PAY PROGRAM)

Cancellations are effective only for future charges. You may notify us of your intent to cancel at any time, but the cancellation will become effective at the end of the billing cycle your notification is received. You will continue to receive the newspaper until the end of the billing cycle, including digital access. You may choose to discontinue receiving the newspaper immediately upon notifying us of your intent to cancel; however, your subscription account will not be canceled until the end of the billing cycle, and you will continue to have digital access during that period. You are welcome to donate your unused newspapers to the local schools if requested.

TO BUY A SUBSCRIPTION

Call (803) 774-1258 or (803) 774-1231 Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or online at www.theitem.com/subscribe.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Standard Home Delivery plus Digital Subscription:
WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY DELIVERED VIA USPS

One year - \$229.99; six months - \$119.99; three months - \$59.99; one month - \$19.99

Digital-only Subscription to *TheItem.com*:

One year - \$143; one month - \$12.99

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



NOW STREAMING ON YOUTUBE

Central Carolina Technical College recently revealed a vibrant, multi-purpose, blue gill-inspired sculpture as a call to action against the littering issues in our community, which extends to our wildlife and waterways. After loading trash into the sculpture, City of Sumter litter officers partnered with CCTC and USC Sumter on a litter walk for a cleaner community.

<https://youtu.be/AcmFjXLRITU>



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
SUMTER

A Palmetto College Campus

McLeod Health

BD partners with Sumter United Ministries Free Medical Clinic to help patients reach medical care

SUBMITTED

SUMTER — BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company employing nearly 1,000 associates across South Carolina, has partnered with Sumter United Ministries Free Medical Clinic to help eliminate transportation barriers to health care access for its patients. Sumter United Ministries Free Medical Clinic has received a grant from the BD Community Investment Fund, which issued a total of \$2 million in investments across 27 BD communities to support expanded access to preventative care, nutrition, housing and education.

Historically, underserved patient populations can face numerous barriers to health care — including access to reliable transportation for medi-

cal appointments. With this grant, Sumter United Ministries Free Clinic will be able to offer its patients transportation to and from appointments — free of charge — to support community members who are unable to independently access medical care when they need it.

“The core mission of the BD Community Investment Fund is to help expand accessibility to health care services for the most vulnerable patient populations in our hometown communities,” said Sien Avalos, director of Social Investing at BD and vice president of the BD Foundation. “With this grant, we look to help Sumter United Ministries Free Medical Clinic reach those in the community who need access to care most by eliminating a common, yet manageable obstacle to obtaining treatment and preventative care.”



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Volunteers and employees at Sumter United Ministries’ free medical clinic work during the coronavirus pandemic. SUM’s new partnership with BD will allow patients to get transportation to appointments for free when they need it.

“Sumter United Ministries is deeply grateful for our partnership with BD. Providing health care alone is not enough if people cannot access these essential services. Often, a broader range of support is needed to make a meaningful impact,” Mark Champagne, executive director at Sumter United Ministries said. “Thank you, BD, for your commitment to making health care accessible to our neighbors in Sumter.”

BD has been a longstanding

community partner in South Carolina for more than 50 years (opening its Sumter Plant in 1970 with 25 employees). Today, the company upholds its pledge to support the well-being of these communities and has invested in numerous local health and wellness nonprofits, including United Way, American Heart Association and Sumter Education Foundation.

ABOUT BD

BD is one of the largest global medical technology

companies in the world and is advancing the world of health by improving medical discovery, diagnostics and the delivery of care. The company supports the heroes on the frontlines of health care by developing innovative technology, services and solutions that help advance both clinical therapy for patients and clinical process for health care providers. BD and its more than 70,000 employees have a passion and commitment to help enhance the safety and efficiency of clinicians’ care delivery process, enable laboratory scientists to accurately detect disease and advance researchers’ capabilities to develop the next generation of diagnostics and therapeutics. BD has a presence in virtually every country and partners with organizations around the world to address some of the most challenging global health issues. By working in close collaboration with customers, BD can help enhance outcomes, lower costs, increase efficiencies, improve safety and expand access to health care. For more information on BD, please visit bd.com or connect on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/bd1/, X (formerly Twitter) @BDandCo or Instagram @becton_

SHS students spread cheer to rehabilitation center residents with Valentine’s cards

The Student Government Association Junior Class at Sumter High School delivered Valentine’s Day cards and treats to the residents at National Health Care Rehabilitation Center on Friday morning, Feb. 14. The service project was meant to strengthen meaningful connection within the community and to remind elders that, even if they may feel forgotten during this season, the students of Sumter High School hold them close in their hearts.

PHOTOS BY ZAC HOOKS / THE SUMTER ITEM



VOTE TODAY

in more than 300 categories.

vote
Jan. 29 - Feb. 26

www.theitem.com/bestof2025



BEST OF SUMTER

2025

2nd suspect arrested in connection to death of Stephen Collins in 2022

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

More than seven months after the first arrest was made after the two-year investigation into the death of 87-year-old Stephen E. Collins in 2022, a second man has been charged.



BROOKS

Earlier this week on Monday, Feb. 10, Mala'Kiy Raphel Brooks, 20, of Lexington, was charged with first-degree burglary and murder in connection to the death of Collins, according to Mark Bordeaux, public information officer with Sumter County Sheriff's Office.

Brooks was taken to Sumter County Sheriff's Office Detention Center, where he is being held without bond.

Collins was found deceased in his Edgehill Road residence from multiple gunshot wounds on July 8, 2022.

Two years later, it was announced that Elijah Keith Fleming was charged with murder. At the time, it was said Fleming and an accomplice entered Collins' home between July 7-8, 2022, armed with firearms intending to steal items, Bordeaux said. Collins was then shot several times while sitting on his couch.

Fleming is being held in Clayton County, Georgia, on another murder charge, Bordeaux said.

Sumter Sheriff Anthony Dennis thanked investigators from various agencies, including Sumter Police Department and from Lee, Kershaw, Lexington, Jasper and Beaufort counties in South Carolina as well as Clayton County Sheriff's Office and SLED.

"This is another example that this office will continue to be committed to bringing closure to victims and their families by bringing all those responsible to justice," Dennis said.

Manning man charged with desecration of remains after vehicle fire in December; manner of death unknown, investigation continues

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

Initially wanted for questioning, a Manning man has been charged after another man was found dead inside a burning vehicle in December 2024.



DINGLE

According to Tonyia McGirt, public information officer for Sumter Police Department, 27-year-old John Elliot Dingle, of Manning, turned himself in to police on Wednesday, Feb. 12, in connection to the death of 67-year-old Willis Samuel Jr.

Dingle was charged with third-degree arson and desecration of

human remains and booked at Sumter County Sheriff's Office Detention Center on a \$50,000 surety bond with location monitoring, McGirt said.

Before 2:20 a.m. on Dec. 31, officers and firefighters responded to a report of a car fire behind Eastwood Park apartment complex off Boulevard Road. Samuel Jr. was deceased inside the vehicle, McGirt said.

The manner of death has not been determined, and further autopsy results are pending.

An investigation is ongoing by Sumter Police Department, Clarendon County Sheriff's Office, SLED and Sumter County Coroner's Office to gather details that can determine how and why Samuels Jr. was killed.

Sleeping in church ...

I admit it — I have fallen asleep in church. When I was a child and we had church on Sunday nights, the preacher's voice seemed hypnotic. A few minutes into his message, I would be stretched out on the pew, lost in la-la land.

When I was home from college, late Saturday nights made for sleepy Sunday mornings. The summer I dated Miss Hardee County, we had been out late courting on Saturday, and I was supposed to sing in the choir the next morning. I made it in time, did my part for the choir special and then settled in for the sermon. I could not keep my eyes open. I went to the old standby position of folding my hands and bowing my head, hoping people would think I was praying. I was drifting off when Elmo Roberts, two seats over, cleared his sinuses. I thought I had snored and jerked my head up. My mother later told me she thought the Spirit had really spoken to me during the pastor's message.

People do funny things when they sleep in church. My Uncle Earl wore mirrored sunglasses in the choir every Sunday. He did not want people to think he was asleep during the sermon. No one told him when he fell asleep during the sermon; his head rocked back, and his mouth opened. He looked like a thirsty man trying to drink the rain.

I have seen more elbows thrown in church than in a roller derby. Most often, it is women elbowing their husbands who have been lulled to sleep by the sermon. Sometimes, when the el-bows are delivered, the men startle awake, look around and then try to pretend like they were listening the whole time.

There is an old joke about a preacher who was tired of a deacon falling asleep during every sermon. He decided to make an example of the old man. During a sermon, the preacher whispered, "Everyone who wants to go to heaven, stand up." Of course, the whole congregation stood except for the sleeping deacon. The preacher told the congregation to be seated, and then he bel-lowed, "Everyone who wants to go to hell, stand up." The old deacon, startled awake, heard the words "stand up" and naturally stood. He looked around and said, "Preacher, I don't know what we are voting for, but it looks like you and I are the only ones in favor."

My Uncle Bud had the best story of falling asleep in church. He was a little

boy, prone to wetting the bed. During one long Sunday night service, Granny stretched him out on one of the slat pews of Venus Baptist Church. About halfway through the service, my mother, Uncle Pete and Aunt Bill noticed a thin trickle of yellow liquid making its way forward on the uneven wooden floor. A flurry of giggles and pinches broke out until Granny noticed the growing stream. Then she started to giggle, too. I am sure the preacher noticed the commotion; perhaps he thought that the last joke he told was finally getting through.

People ask me from time to time if it bothers me when people fall asleep in church. I used to say, "No, as long as they are awake for the offering," but people started to think I was serious. I know for many people, Sunday mornings are the only time in the week they are still. Sure, I wish people would stay awake while I preach, but I would rather have them sleep in church than be awake in sin.

People occasionally tell me I am the first preacher who kept them awake. I used to think it was a compliment until one dear saint elaborated: "Your sermons are like a slow-motion train wreck. I just can't look away."

I was keeping my grandson not long ago. He was fussy. His parents instructed me this was a sign he was either hungry, needed a diaper change or was sleepy. I had taken care of the first two, so I knew he needed sleep. I put him in his swing, but he was having none of it. His fussing grew worse. I picked him up, put his head on my shoulder and started rocking him back and forth. His crying grew more intense. Finally, I put him down on my bed, put my arm under his head and pulled him close. He turned to me, and the crying stopped. His eyes closed, and his breathing became regular. He needed the safety of his grandfather being close to finally sleep.

It made me wonder about everyone who falls asleep in church. Are they finally close enough to their Heavenly Father that they feel safe enough to let down and relax in his arms? Maybe that is how we are supposed to live, asleep or awake.

Editor's note: This column is from the archives of the Rev. Dr. Clay Smith, lead pastor of Alice Drive Baptist Church in Sumter. Email him at claysmith@adbc.org.



The Rev. Dr. Clay Smith

CENTRAL CLINIC OF CHIROPRACTIC

Vote for us! Best Chiropractor

Dr. Shannon Reitzer, D.C. | Dr. Jordan Reitzer, D.C.

11 E Calhoun Street, Sumter, SC, 29150
www.centralchiropracticsumter.com

(803) 757-1700

Sumter's Best Floral Company

A Ring Around The Roses

95B MARKET STREET • SUMTER
934-8000 | www.aringaroundtheroses.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING AND PRIMARY

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF SUMTER

Candidate Filing Period:

A special candidate filing period for S. C. House District 50 will open at noon on Friday, February 7, 2025, 12:00 a.m. noon and closes on Saturday, February 15, 2025. 12:00 noon. Any candidate seeking a political party's nomination for this office must file during this period with the County Board of Voter Registration and Elections.

Filing Locations:

Sumter County Board of Voter Registration and Elections: 129 E. Liberty Street Sumter, South Carolina 29150

Filing Hours:

Weekdays: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 15, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Filing Form: The Statement of Intention of Candidacy & Party Pledge (SICPP) form required for filing is available in the "Candidate Information" section of scvotes.gov and at the county voter registration and elections office.

Filing Fee: The filing fee for this office is \$ 147.33 Filing fees are paid at the time of filing by candidates seeking nomination. Filing fee checks should be made payable to the appropriate political party.

State Ethics Filings: Candidates are required to file a Statement of Economic Interests and a Campaign Disclosure online with the State Ethics Commission at <http://ethics.sc.gov>. Failure to file these documents may result in a candidate fine but will not disqualify a candidate from the election. Contact the State Ethics Commission for more information.

Notice of Primary:

If at the close of filing a party primary is necessary to determine the party nominee (multiple candidates file for one party's nomination), a primary will be held on Tuesday, April 1. Any necessary runoffs will be held on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Any person wishing to vote in these primaries and runoffs must be registered by Sunday, March 2, 2025. Voter registration by mail applications will be accepted if postmarked by Monday, March 3, 2025.

At 9:00 a.m. on the day of the primary and day of the runoff, the County Board of Voter Registration and Elections will begin its examination of the 1 absentee ballot return envelopes at the County Voter Registration & Election Office located at 129 E. Liberty Street Sumter, South Carolina 29150.

On Thursday, April 4, at 10:00 a.m. the County Board of Canvassers will hold a hearing to determine the validity of all provisional ballots cast in the primary. On Thursday April 6, at 10:00 a.m. the County Board of canvassers will hold a hearing to determine the validity of all provisional ballots cast in the runoff. These hearings will be held at the County Voter Registration & Election Office located at 129 E. Liberty Street, Sumter, South Carolina 29150.

The following precincts and polling places will be open during any necessary primaries and runoffs from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.:

Precincts	Polling Place
Rembert	Rembert FireStation
Hillcrest	Hillcrest Middle School
Oakland Plantation 1	Oakland Primary School
Dalzell 1	Hillcrest Middle School
Oswego	Crestwood High School
Mayesville	Mayesville Fire Station
Salem	Rule Fire Station
St. John	Shiloh Community Center
Thomas Sumter	Hillcrest Middle School

Man's need for speed makes wife want to hit the brakes

DEAR ABBY: My husband is an adrenaline junkie who loves high speeds and fast cars. I am the opposite. I hate riding in fast cars, on roller coasters or anything adrenaline-related. I have explained to him many times that I don't enjoy going fast in his super-fast car, yet he keeps asking me to go with him. I'll do it sometimes, but I hate it. If I refuse to accompany him, he feels rejected. I have tried saying it nicely, but he keeps insisting I go on fast drives with him. I don't know what to do anymore. Please help.

SLOWER IN THE U.K.

DEAR SLOWER: You have already expressed your feelings. Your husband has chosen to ignore them. If you prefer not to ride with your adrenaline junkie spouse while he puts pedal to the metal ... DON'T GO! If he pouts because you are terrified, the problem is his. Stop making it yours.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I had dinner with some friends, a married couple. After dinner, we left the restaurant a few minutes apart and, as we were walking to our car, I told my husband the wife was "really intense and sometimes a lot to handle." I didn't realize they were still within earshot. My husband pointed out that they probably heard me, but I'm not sure. Can I do anything? I don't want to apologize if she didn't notice or take offense. But she IS really intense and may be angry.

OOPS! IN OREGON

DEAR OOPS! Cross your fingers and wait it out. You will know whether you owe her an apology the next time you or your husband try to invite them out. If you're lucky, she

didn't hear you. Next time, wait until you're safely in your car to unsheathe your claws, pussycat.

DEAR ABBY: I need to live with someone because I'm on the verge of being homeless. I have been in homeless shelters, and I have also lived alone, but I can't do that again because it causes my anxiety and depression to act up.

I just started talking to this guy. We are starting to

like each other, but we haven't met in person, and I am wondering if you think I could move in with that guy after a month?

NEEDS SHELTER IN ARIZONA

DEAR NEEDS SHELTER: No, I do not! It would be a huge mistake to move in with anyone you have known for only a month. If you think staying in a shelter until you can get on your feet and be independent causes your anxiety and depression to act up, it would be nothing compared to living with a stranger who might be abusive. As you stated, you haven't even met this person yet. A gamble like this is very risky, and I don't recommend it.

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

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby -- Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

'Hansel and Gretel' is reimagined by Stephen King, Maurice Sendak

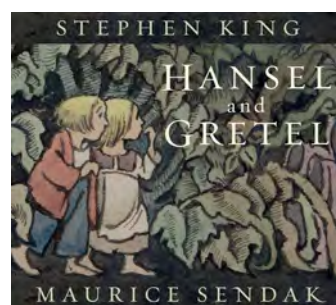
BY HILLEL ITALIE
AP National Writer

An upcoming edition of "Hansel and Gretel" combines the dark and singular talents of two literary giants who apparently never met: Stephen King and the late Maurice Sendak.

HarperCollins Publishers announced Thursday that the King-Sendak re-imagining of the famed Brothers Grimm tale about two lost children in a frightening forest is scheduled for Sept. 2. King's words will be complemented by sketches Sendak drew up for set and costume designs for a 1997 production of the Humperdinck opera adaptation.

The book was initiated by the Maurice Sendak Foundation. King, author of "The Shining," "Carrie" and other horror classics, said he decided to agree to the project after seeing Sendak's illustrations.

"Two of his pictures in particular spoke to me: One was of the wicked witch on her broom with a bag of kidnapped children riding behind her; the other was of



HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS VIA AP

This cover image released by HarperCollins Publishers shows "Hansel and Gretel" by Stephen King and Maurice Sendak.

the infamous candy house becoming a terrible face. I thought, "This is what the house really looks like, a devil sick with sin, and it only shows that face when the kids turn their backs. I wanted to write that!" King said in a statement issued through HarperCollins.

"To me, it was the essence of this story and, really, all fairy tales: a sunny exterior, a dark and terrible center, brave and resourceful children. In a way, I have been writing about kids like Hansel and Gretel for much of my life."

Representatives for King say he has no memory of meeting Sendak, although King has expressed admiration for the musical "Really Rosie," a Sendak-Carole King collaboration.

Lynn Caponera, the Sendak foundation's executive director, said in a statement that she thought King ideal because outside of the Grimms, "he's the master of scary stories and a wonderful writer to boot."

Sendak, who died in 2012, spoke about Hansel and Gretel around the time he was working on the opera. In an interview published in the 2003 book "The Art of Maurice Sendak," he called the fairy tale "the most profound" of the Grimm canon.

"Generally speaking, most of Grimm is about heroic children. 'Hansel and Gretel' are the most heroic of them all," said Sendak, known for "Where the Wild Things Are," "In the Night Kitchen" and other children's favorites. "It's the toughest story in the world, and people are afraid of it, yet it's famous because it's so truthful."

Hear insights on tracing genealogy at Feb. 17 meeting of genealogical society

SUBMITTED

Mary Francis "Frankie" Nesbitt will speak at the membership meeting of Sumter County Genealogical Society at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17, in the fellowship hall of Swan Lake Presbyterian Church, 912 Haynsworth St.

Nesbitt will share her journey as a genealogist as she discusses how anyone can start their genealogy quest without knowing much and shares the insights she learned that lead to a better "understanding a lot more about our line — where we came from, how we got here, why we came ... and now having connections with cous-

ins we never knew we had."

Refreshments will be served after the speaker's presentation.

The society meets monthly from September through May. Visitors are welcome to attend. Admission is free to the public. Interested persons can join the society. Membership includes four newsletters during the year and free use of Sumter County Genealogical Society Research Center. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual membership and \$35 for a family. Readers can call the society's research center for additional information at (803) 774-3901.



Archway Academy

South Carolina's Premier Early Education Programs



Celebrating
40 Years of
Excellence



Vote for us!

- Customer Service
- Preschool
- Summer Camp
- Child Care Center

- After School Program
- Locally Owned Business
- Best Place to Work






BEST OF SUMTER
2025

803-773-6480
803-773-4300
www.Archway.Academy



AUTO & TRANSPORTATION

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

BUSINESS

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

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

Community

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

EAT & DRINK

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

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

EDUCATION

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

HOME & FINANCE

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

Manufactured House Dealer _____
 Mortgage Lender _____
 Moving Company _____
 New Home Construction Company _____

 Nursing Home _____
 Painters _____
 Plumbing Supplies _____
 Pool Company _____
 Pressure Washing Company _____
 Propane / Gas Company _____
 Property Management Company _____

Real Estate Agent _____
 Real Estate Appraisal _____
 Real Estate Closing Attorney _____
 Real Estate Company _____
 Real Estate Inspector _____
 Roofing Company _____
 Senior Care _____
 Tax Preparation _____
 Window Cleaning _____

MEDICAL

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

Outpatient Surgery _____
 Outpatient Therapy Clinic _____
 Pediatric Practice _____
 Physical Therapist _____
 Plastic Surgeon _____
 Podiatrist _____
 Prosthetics Company _____
 Private Ambulance Service _____
 Psychiatrist _____
 Sleep Center _____
 Speech Therapy _____
 Urgent Care _____
 Behavior Health _____

PROFESSIONALS

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

SHOPPING & COMMERCE

Antique Store _____
 Appliance Store _____
 Arts and Crafts Store _____
 Bookstore _____
 Boutique _____
 Bridal Shop _____
 Carpet / Flooring Store _____
 CBD Retailer _____

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

BEST OF THE BEST

Best Boss _____
 Best Customer Service _____
 Best Local Industry _____
 Best Locally Owned Business _____
 Best New Business (opened in 2024) _____

 Best Place to Work _____

THE BIGGEST BEST OF SUMTER.

The Scoop on BEST OF SUMTER 2025:

1. VOTE DAILY at TheItem.com/BestOf OR vote through your print ballot. Deadline for voting is Feb. 26.
2. Winners with the most votes will be announced at the BEST OF SUMTER 2025 – The Red Carpet Event - Tuesday, April 29 and in the Sumter Item's glossy BEST OF SUMTER magazine on May 3.
3. Winners will receive a BEST OF SUMTER window cling and framed photo recognition.
4. Winners will be invited to attend the BEST OF SUMTER red carpet event in April!

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

REGISTRATION BALLOT

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

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Email: _____



REFLECTIONS

Jewish settlers play important role in Sumter

Relections celebrates the writings of Cassie Nicholes with another of her contributions to Sumter history,



Sammy Way
REFLECTIONS

the Jewish settlers. *The Sumter Item* archives (articles and photos) and additional information provided by Nicholes were used in this research. Due to the length of this piece, it will be presented in two parts.

“Observance of the Centennial of Congregation Sinai was held on April 4, 1976, actually two years after the 100th anniversary of the first Jewish organization in Sumter. Jewish settlers came to Sumter from Charleston in the first days of the village of Sumterville, circa 1801. According to the late Herbert A. Moses, one of Sumter’s outstanding historians, the first permanent settler was Mark Solomons, who came from Charleston between 1815 and 1820.

“The booklet ‘The Early Minutes of the Sumter Society of Israelites,’ published in 1936 by Moses, gives information regarding activities of the first Jewish organization in Sumter, organizations which were the beginnings of Congregation Sinai. The first minutes recorded were of ‘an adjourned meeting’ of the Sumter Hebrew Benevolent Society held on April 17, 1881, at the office of C.H. Moise, Esq.

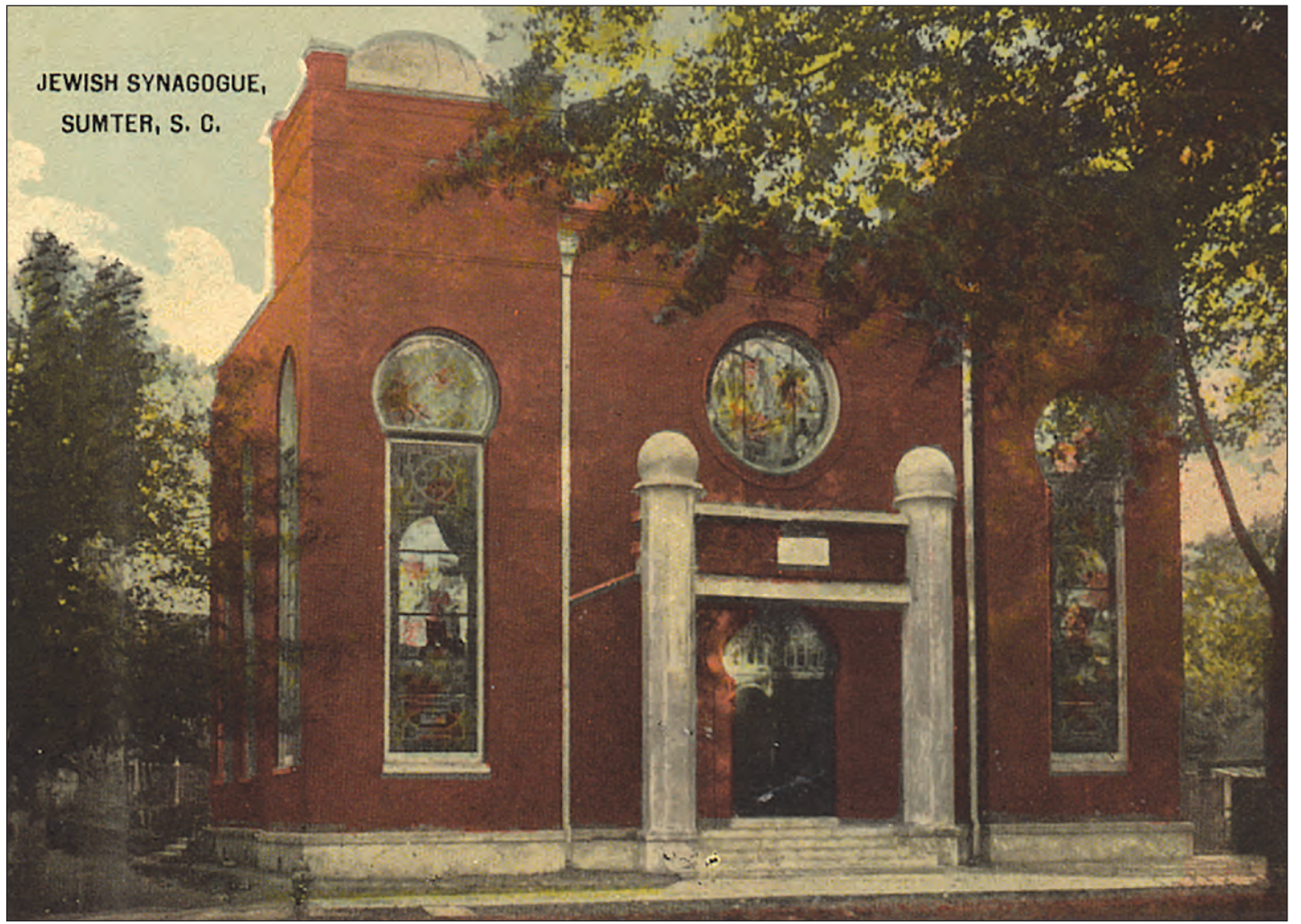
“Prior to the 1881 meeting, another group purchased two acres of land in 1874 from John H. Furman, trustee, for a Jewish cemetery by a representative of a group known as the Hebrew Cemetery Society (or Burial Society). This action took place seven years before the Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed. According to the minutes found in Moses’ booklet, those present for the meeting in addition to C.A. Moise were the following: D. Rosendorf, A. Morris, Abe Morris, Altamont Moses, M. G. Ryttenberg, B.J. Barnett, E. W. Moise, A.D. Moses, H. Goldstrom, Abe Ryttenberg, A.C. Phelps, E.W. Moise Jr., H.D. Moise, C.H. Moise Jr., J.E. Suares, Harry Ryttenberg, Perry Moses, M. Furstenberg, Herman Schwerin, Dr. Ed Solomons, Horace Harby, Marion Moise and Isaac Sulzbacher.

“On April 27, 1881, a committee from the two societies met to consider a merger. Representing the Burial Society were M.E. Cohen, A. A. Solomons and C.H. Moise; representatives for the Benevolent Society were E.W. Moise, Horace Harby and Altamont Moses. It was agreed that the two would merge as The Hebrew Benevolent Society, and on May 2, less than a week later, the cemetery property was transferred to the Benevolent Society.

On May 1, 1881, the following officers were elected: C.H. Moise, president; Altamont Moses, vice president; J.E. Ryttenberg, secretary; B.J. Barnett, treasurer.

Soon a committee reported that the Masonic Hall had been rented for use of the society for its meetings. For many years, work of the society covered a wide range of activities. Committees were initiated for Moral Improvements, Finance, Charity, Visiting the Burial Cemetery and Intellectual Improvement.

“Although no resident leader was available to train the young people until Rabbi David Levy of Charleston visited the society, one class,



This postcard shows the Jewish synagogue, Temple Sinai, in Sumter. Jewish settlers came to Sumterville about 1801 and established a congregation. The brick synagogue replaced a wooden one and was dedicated in 1913.

trained in Sumter, was confirmed with a Charleston class in 1891. Levy came to Sumter for perhaps a year or two, leading services and assisting with a Sunday School. Thus began the formation of a regular congregation which later called a resident leader and built a place of worship.

“In 1885, the same Sumter Society of Israelites was assumed by the Jewish residents of Sumter, and on Dec. 7, 1891, this society received a charter from the clerk of court. The following are recorded as members: Altamont Moses, Marion Moise, M.G. Ryttenberg, Horace Harby, E.W. Moise, Abe Ryttenberg, V.H. Phelps, A.C. Phelps, Irving A. Ryttenberg, Louis Morris, Harry Morris, Henry Weinberg, H. Schwerin, I. Strauss, R.H. Moise, A.L. Moise, I.H. Moses Jr., H. Ryttenberg, Louis Lyon, Moses Green, Joe Strauss, Gabriel Levy, H.J. Harby, C. D. Schwartz, Isaac Schwartz, D. Rosendorf, B.J. Barnett, H.D. Barnett, H. Karesh, H. Manheim, F.M. and M. Levi.

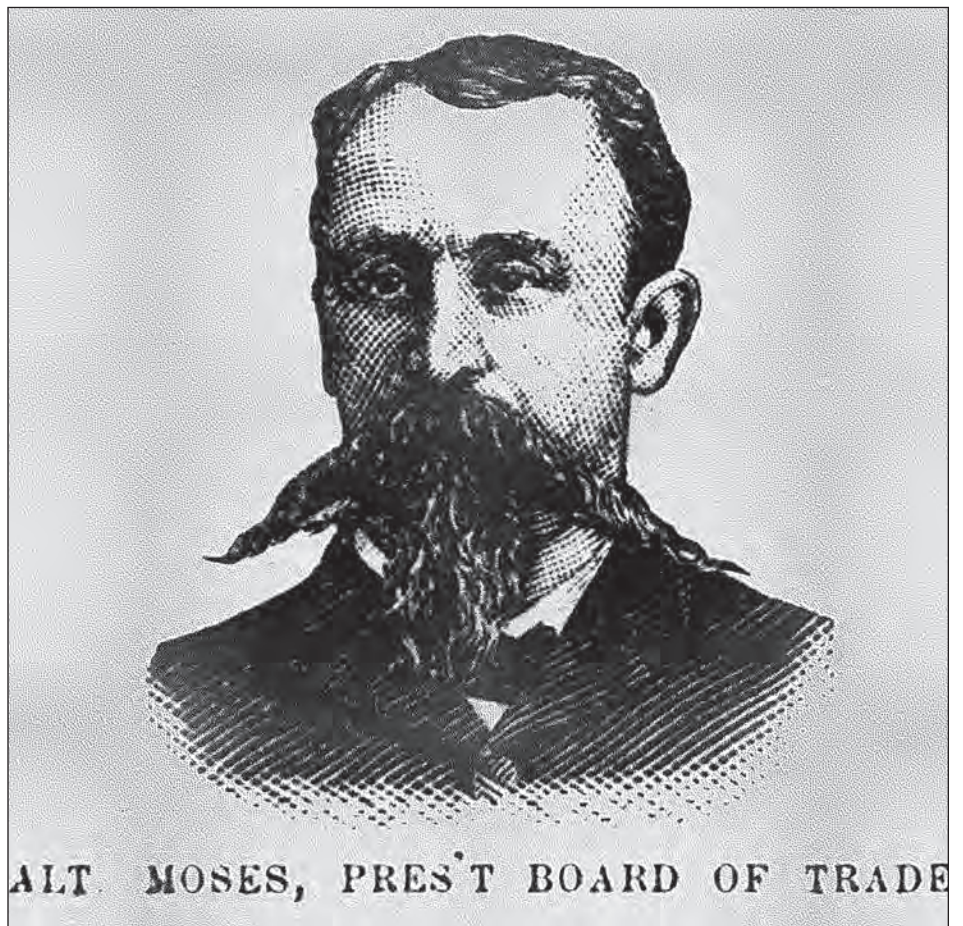
“The first synagogue, a wooden structure, was built on the corner of Hampton Avenue (then Republican Street) and Church Street. The lot was purchased from Anna J. McCall in December 1891. Desirous of a more spiritual life for their congregation, the members called Rabbi Jacob Klein in 1904 to be their regular rabbi and live within the community. After serving four years, he was followed by Rabbi David Sessler, who remained two years before being followed by Rabbi David Klein. Having served seven years, Rabbi R.F.K. Hirsch succeeded him.

“Rabbi Hirsch served the congregation for 10 years; he was followed by Rabbi J.I. Freund, who remained only two years. Freund was succeeded by one who served the congregation with devotion for many years, Rabbi Samuel R. Shillman. In 1949, Rabbi J. Aaron Levy came as the rabbi and remained until his retirement; Rabbi Edward Miskin then served for a short time.

“On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 10, 1972, Rabbi Anshalom Magidovitch was installed in an impressive service. Lending able assistance in the leadership of the congregation have been dedicated presidents and other officers. Among those serving through the years as presidents are W.M. Levy, M.M. Weinberg, George



The A. A. Solomons family sits for a portrait. A. A. Solomons was recorded as a representative with the Burial Society in 1881. The group merged with the Benevolent Society.



Altamont Moses was a representative with the Benevolent Society in Sumter and was elected vice president after the group’s merger with the Burial Society.

D. Levy, Harold Moise, Martin Rosefield, Julian Levy, Jack Addlestone, Isidore Denmark, David D. Kramer, Roger Ackerman and Herbert Rosefield.

“The congregation grew, and the wooden synagogue was replaced by a brick structure which was dedicated in 1913. In 1907, two-and-a-half acres were added to the cemetery property; in 1942, other property was acquired.

In 1960, property at the south of the synagogue, a lot 70 by 160 feet, was added to the holdings of the congregation, and in 1971, an 84- by 165-foot lot was added at the east. An addition to the synagogue was the Barnett Memorial Building, given as a legacy from Mrs. J.E. Barnett of Manning in 1932. This structure contains an assembly room and a stage. At the back is a kitchen built in 1956.”

ALL OUR STORES
will be
CLOSED
SATURDAY
September 12th
on account of
JEWISH NEW YEAR

ALPERT'S BEN E. NESS THE HUB
THE RACKET HARRY SIEGEL
PHILADELPHIA SHOE SHOP
NEW YORK SHOE SHOP
JACK'S DEPT. STORE
THE CASH DRY GOODS STORE
BRODY'S DEPT. STORE
HENRY P. MOSES CO.
UNION CLOTHING CO.
THE LEADER DEPT. STORE
THE BOSTON STORE

Will be open for business after 5:45 in the Evening

This advertisement for closures during Jewish New Year was published on Sept. 11, 1931.

Hawaii is known for its rainbows, but why?

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii's regular sunshine, short rain showers and clean air come together to create some of the planet's best conditions for viewing rainbows. They're such a frequent sight that a University of Hawaii professor calls the state the "rainbow capital of the world."

Right now it's the winter rainy season in the islands, which means the odds of seeing a rainbow are even higher than usual.

Rainbows emerge so often in Hawaii they've become popular symbols of island life. Pictures of them adorn buildings, the sides of public buses and appear on standard vehicle license plates. University of Hawaii sports teams are even named after rainbows.

"For me, rainbows really signify hope and new beginnings," said Liane Usher, the president of the Children's Discovery Center in Honolulu, which features rainbows on its exterior wall and in its exploration rooms. "I can't ever help but smile whenever I see a rainbow after the rain."

Here are some things to know about rainbows in Hawaii.

WHERE CAN I FIND RAINBOWS?

Rainbows form when raindrops refract sunlight into a spectrum of colors. The brighter the sun, the clearer the rainbow.

Look for them when it is both sunny and raining at the same time. They will appear opposite the sun. They will seem larger and higher in the sky in the early morning and late afternoon, when the sun is lower on the horizon.

Steven Businger, professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, says the archipelago's



trade winds bring many small showers with enough blue sky between them for the sun to shine through.

Hawaii's clean air also helps. Other places tend to have more air particles from dust, pollen and cars. Conditions improve further during Hawaii's rainy season, which lasts from October through April.

"Hawaii has maybe the best rainbows on the planet," Businger said.

Businger created an app called RainbowChase to help people find rainbows in Hawaii.

Rainbows are so prevalent that there are about 20 names for them in the Hawaiian language, according to a Manoa website, including distinct words for rainbow fragments and those that sit low on the horizon.

WHAT ROLE DO RAINBOWS PLAY IN NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE?

Rainbows represent divine or supernatural power in Native Hawaiian tradition.

Sam 'Olu Gon III, senior scientist and cultural adviser at The Nature Conservancy in Hawaii, said rainbows are considered a symbol of Kane, one of the four main gods in Hawaiian tradition. Traditionally, the closer one got to a rainbow, the more likely they were to encounter a supernatural force, or an extremely powerful or chiefly person, he said.

In one centuries-old story, a rainbow appears over the secluded home of a Hawaiian princess for four straight days. Another emerges above the ocean when her suitor arrives, a man so strong his punch pierces an opponent's chest like a spear.

To Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, a teacher and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, a rainbow signals an "aumakua," which is a deified ancestor or a family or personal god.

"When those of our loved ones go before us, they precede us in life and they leave us in this realm. They are able sometimes to show their presence," Wong-Kalu said. "The rainbow is one of those ways."

Rainbows let her know spiritual protection is present and that she is loved and watched over, said Wong-Kalu, who is also known as Kumu Hina.

WHEN DID RAINBOWS BECOME SYMBOLS OF ISLAND LIFE?

Rainbow imagery decorates everything from buildings and restaurant facades to athletic uniforms.

The Hawaii men's athletic teams are called Rainbow Warriors and the women's teams are Rainbow Wahine, using the Hawaiian word for women. The teams are called 'Bows' for short.

The origin of the rainbow mascot dates to New Year's Day in 1924. Hawaii

was locked in a scoreless tie against the visiting Oregon Aggies when a rainbow appeared over the field. Hawaii scored soon after and reporters began calling the team the Rainbows, according to the book "Hawaii Sports: History, Facts and Statistics."

WILL CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT RAINBOWS?

When Kimberly Carlson was a professor at Manoa, she saw a rainbow outside her apartment window that made her wonder how climate change would affect them.

Now a New York University environmental studies professor, she's studied the impact over the next century.

Her team's analysis, published in a paper two years ago, predicts Brazil, the Mediterranean and parts of Central Africa will have fewer rainbows by 2100. They found places that currently get lots of snow, but that will instead receive more rain, will likely see more rainbows. Alaska falls in that category.

Scientists believe rainbows will continue to be plentiful in Hawaii, but in the coming decades, longer dry spells might lead to fewer rainbows on the arid, leeward sides of the islands, Businger, the atmospheric sciences professor, said. Maui and the Big Island might be particularly affected, he said.

The singular experience of glimpsing a rainbow makes them worth studying, he said.

"Rainbows are a cultural touchstone for us. They cause us to stand still and for a moment, forget about the past and the future," Businger said. "We are really in the moment when we see a spectacular rainbow, and that's a rare experience in our busy lives."

Winter sowing in upcycled containers creates stronger seedlings in spring

BY JESSICA DAMIANO

Associated Press

It's either time — or nearly time — to start seeds indoors for the upcoming growing season, depending on where you live. But what about starting them outdoors, despite the frozen ground, whipping winds and, perhaps, snow cover?

Im gearing up to sow tomatoes, beets, herbs and zinnias, among others, in a couple of weeks. But instead of allowing all of them to take over my kitchen counter and spare bedroom for the following six to eight weeks, I'll be starting some seeds outdoors.

Winter sowing is an easy, low-maintenance technique for planting seeds in miniature, makeshift greenhouses that you can make yourself from upcycled materials. And it may even be better than nurturing seeds indoors.

Left to their own accord, seeds would drop to the ground in late summer or autumn, survive winter, then germinate when the soil and air temperatures are optimal. So why not mimic nature by creating your own, albeit somewhat controlled, version of the process?

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Forget the heat mats and grow lights. The only materials and equipment you'll need for winter sowing are suitable containers, potting mix and seeds.

Any food-safe container with a lid that can hold roughly 3 inches of potting mix will do. Plastic milk and water jugs are popular choices, as are takeout containers and clamshell salad packages.

If using plastic jugs, poke holes in the bottom for drainage, then cut them roughly in half horizontally, but not all the way through (allow a section to remain connected to serve as a hinge).

If using shallow, lidded containers, also poke a few holes in their lids for ventilation. For jugs, holes in the top aren't necessary; instead, you will be leaving their caps off.

Add 3 inches of moistened seed-starting mix to shallow containers or the bottom halves of jugs. Avoid using garden soil, which is too dense for seedlings and may harbor pathogens that could threaten their health.

CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

Not all plants are suitable for winter sowing. Heat lovers, like my tomatoes and zinnias, are best started indoors (or outdoors after the danger of frost has passed) because their sprouts are too tender to withstand low temperatures.

But cold-tolerant herbs, such as parsley, sage and cilantro;

cool-season vegetables like spinach, kale, broccoli, beets, lettuce and cauliflower; hardy perennials, such as milkweed, black-eyed Susans and cone-flowers; and tough annuals, like pansies and snapdragons are all good candidates.

NOW FOR THE SOWING...

Plant your seeds in the mix, following the depth recommended on their package labels, and snap on container lids or, if using jugs, use duct tape to affix the top and bottom sections back together.

Use a permanent marker to label each container with the type of seed sown within it. You might think you'll remember which is which come spring, but trust me — you won't.

Group containers together in a sunny spot that's somewhat protected from wind, such as against a wall, and leave them be. Snow and rain will water

them naturally, and the freeze-thaw cycles of the great outdoors will aid their germination.

Seeds germinate when they're good and ready. They don't follow calendars but instead respond to daylengths and temperatures. When seedlings are about 2 inches high and freezing temperatures no longer threaten, remove container lids (or detach the top halves of jugs) during the day to acclimate them to the weather. Cover and reseal the containers at night, when frost could damage or kill them.

When the danger of frost has passed in your horticultural zone, your seedlings will be ready for transplanting into the garden or pots. Since they'll already be hardened against weather conditions, they will be more resilient and vigorous than their indoor-sown counterparts.



Milk jugs are repurposed as mini greenhouses for winter seed sowing in Westchester County, New York. ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dental Team
of Sumter
Vote for us!
**Best Dentist Office, Cosmetic Dentist,
Individual Dentist, Customer Service &
Place to work in Best of Sumter**

VOTE FOR US
Car & Truck Accessories, Auto Parts & Customer Service

AUTO PARTS

4494 Broad Street 816 S. Guignard Dr.
803.494.4444 803.778.1841

YOUR FULL LINE PART STORE WHERE YOU GET IT ALL!
PARTS • AUTO PAINT MIXED TO MATCH • HYDRAULIC HOSES MADE HERE

VOTE
for us in Best of Sumter.

AIR SOLUTIONS
HEATING AND COOLING

**Best Customer Service, Best Boss,
Best Locally Owned Business, Air
Purification Company and Air &
Heating Service**

Services

- HVAC Sales and Service
- Tankless Water Heaters
- Dryer Vent Cleaning
- Indoor Air Quality
- Duct Cleaning

2190 Storage Road
803.469.6950
www.airsolutionssc.com

DeSantis signs sweeping immigration laws for Fla.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Associated Press/Report for America — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a sweeping package of immigration laws on Thursday aimed at carrying out President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda.

Republicans say the laws put Florida — long a haven for immigrants — on the leading edge of conservative-controlled states working to leverage state and local resources for federal immigration enforcement.

As Trump supporters in state capitols across the country race to deliver on the president's signature issue — despite concerns from immigrant advocates — lawmakers in Florida are teeing up a potential fight with the courts as they advance a provision that critics argue is unconstitutional.

Florida's new legislation mandates the death penalty for immigrants in the U.S. without legal authorization who commit capital offenses such as first-degree murder or child rape. It's a provision that goes above and beyond Trump's executive orders.

A RIFT BETWEEN LAWMAKERS AND DESANTIS

DeSantis approved the bills after legislative leaders brokered a compromise that settled a weeklong standoff among the state's top Republicans over how best to support Trump's sweeping crackdown on illegal immigration.

"Today, the Florida Legislature has passed the strongest legislation to combat illegal immigration of any state in the entire country," DeSantis said before signing the bills and handing a Sharpie to each of the legislative leaders standing behind him. "We are ahead of the curve on ending the illegal immigration crisis."

But the tensions pitting allies of the president against DeSantis — who dared to challenge Trump for the nomination — may not evaporate, as the term-limited governor is widely expected to have presidential aspirations in 2028.

"Ultimately this is a win for Donald Trump. Because that's what this is all about," said Republican Sen. Joe Gruters, a sponsor of the bills and a key Trump ally.

But the process was bruising, with DeSantis blasting lawmakers' previous proposals as "weak" and a "betrayal" of conservative voters.

"There's still hurt feelings," Gruters said, "on all sides."

FLORIDA BILLS SET ASIDE NEARLY \$300 MILLION FOR IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

\$298 million would be allocated to hire more than 50 new law enforcement officers focused on immigration, plus grants to equip and train local agencies, bonuses for officers who assist in federal operations and reimbursement for leasing detention facilities.

The proposal also mandates the death penalty for immigrants who commit capital offenses while in the country illegally. Democrats and civil rights advocates say that provision is unconstitutional, citing previous Supreme Court precedent.

The laws would increase penalties for all crimes committed by immigrants in the country without authorization and would create a new crime of entering the state after coming to the U.S. illegally.

As part of the compromise, lawmakers did away with a previous proposal to strip the governor of much of his emergency powers on immigration.

A provision that drew bipartisan criticism repeals a law

that allows Florida students who are in the country without legal authorization to qualify for in-state tuition at public colleges and universities.

GEORGIA AND ALABAMA ADVANCE RESTRICTIONS

Lawmakers in other southern states are passing their own bills aimed at furthering Trump's immigration crackdown.

The Alabama Senate on Thursday swiftly advanced its own slate of proposals, which would allow jails to hold people to verify immigration status; require jails to collect DNA from unauthorized immigrants in their custody; end the state's recognition of driver's licenses from other states that are issued without proof of citizenship; and make it a felony to bring an undocumented immigrant into the state.

"If you come to the country legally, if you come into Alabama legally, then these bills don't affect you," said Republican Sen. Wes Kitchens, a sponsor of one of the bills.

The bills now move to the Alabama House over the opposition of Democrats, who accused Republicans of "grandstanding."

Jasmin Hernandez-Alamillo, the daughter of Mexican immigrants and a recent graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said she's concerned the proposals will lead to racial profiling in traffic stops — and said the measures make her rethink living in the state.

"I don't necessarily want to be part of a state that is going to continually perpetuate this negative sentiment around marginalized communities," Hernandez-Alamillo said.

Also on Thursday, the Georgia Senate passed a bill allowing local governments to be sued if they don't cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

The bill would strengthen a Georgia law passed last year after Venezuelan immigrant Jose Ibarra, who authorities say entered the U.S. illegally, murdered 22-year-old University of Georgia nursing student Laken Riley. That law mandates law enforcement agencies cooperate with federal officials in identifying and detaining undocumented immigrants — and punishes them if they don't.



A worker grabs a chicken to slaughter inside a poultry store in New York on Feb. 7.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Some people didn't know they had a bird flu infection, study of veterinarians suggests

BY MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK — A new study shows that bird flu has silently spread from animals to some veterinarians.

The study published Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention echoes two smaller ones that detected evidence of infection in previously undiagnosed farmworkers. In those studies, several of the infected workers remembered having symptoms of H5N1 bird flu, while none of the veterinarians in the new paper recalled any such symptoms.

The new study is more evidence that the official U.S. tally of confirmed human bird flu infections — 68 in the last year — is likely a significant undercount, said Dr. Gregory Gray, an infectious disease researcher at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

"This means that people are being infected, likely due to their occupational exposures, and not developing signs of illness and therefore not seeking medical care," Gray said. He said it shows that officials cannot fully understand bird flu transmission by only tracking people who go to medical clinics with symptoms.

STUDY SUGGESTS BIRD FLU CASES ARE UNDERCOUNTED

CDC researchers went to an American Association of Bovine Practitioners veterinary conference in September 2024 in Columbus, Ohio. They recruited 150 vets from 46 states to fill out a questionnaire and agree to have their blood drawn. None said they had suffered red eyes or other symptoms associated with bird flu.

Testing found three of the vets, or 2%, had evidence of antibodies to H5N1 infection. All three worked with dairy cattle, as well as other animals. None said they'd worked with a herd that was known to be infected, although one had worked with a flock of infected poultry.

Gray and some colleagues did a study last year of 14 dairy farmworkers and found two, or 14%, had evidence of past infections. Both had experienced symptoms

but were never diagnosed.

Another study published last year by the CDC checked 115 dairy workers. The researchers found that eight of them, or 7%, had evidence in their blood of recent infection. Half recalled feeling ill.

The studies were far too small to use as a basis to provide a solid estimate of how many undiagnosed human infections are out there, Gray said. But even just a very small percentage could translate to hundreds or thousands of Americans who were infected while working with animals, he noted.

That's not necessarily a reason to be alarmed, said Jacqueline Nolting, an Ohio State University researcher who helped CDC with the latest study.

Available studies suggest people who are infected mount antibody responses and may develop natural immunity, which is "good news," she said.

However, if the virus changes or mutates to start making people very sick, or to start spreading easily from person to person, that would be "a completely different story," Nolting said.

EXPERTS URGE CAUTION AROUND ANIMALS

The H5N1 bird flu has been spreading widely among wild birds, poultry, cows and other animals. Its escalating presence in the environment increases the chances people will be exposed, and potentially catch it, officials have said.

Right now the risk to the general public is low, the CDC says. But officials continue to urge people who have contact with sick or dead birds to take precautions, including wearing respiratory and eye protection and gloves when handling poultry.

"No one's really questioning that the virus has been moving around the country more than has been reported," said Keith Poulsen, director of the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

He said he expected to see stepped-up information reminding veterinarians across the country to protect themselves with gloves, masks and other equipment to halt infection.

SUMTER OUTDOOR & EQUIPMENT

VOTE FOR US!

Best Golf Cart

www.theitem.com/bestof2025/#/gallery/476909334

FEBRUARY BATTERY SPECIAL

6 volt \$119⁹⁹ w/exchange
8 volt \$124⁹⁹ w/exchange
12 volt \$209⁹⁹ w/exchange

FREE LOCAL PICKUP & DELIVERY

1050 S. Pike W. Sumter, SC 29150
803-469-3300
sumteroutdoorequipment@gmail.com

Archway Academy

South Carolina's Premier Early Education Programs

Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence

Vote for us!

- Customer Service
- Preschool
- Summer Camp
- Child Care Center
- After School Program
- Locally Owned Business
- Best Place to Work

BEST OF SUMMER 2025

803-773-6480
803-773-4300
www.ArchwayAcademy.com

VOTE FOR US - BEST AUCTION COMPANY

LIVE & ONLINE AUCTIONS

AUCTIONS **AUTO SALES** **REAL ESTATE**

- WEEKLY ONLINE AUCTIONS
- MONTHLY GUN AUCTIONS
- REAL ESTATE SERVICES
- AUTOMOTIVE SALES

(803) 840-0420
DINKINSAUCTIONS.COM

1945 MYRTLE BEACH HWY., SUMTER
MYRTLE BEACH, SC 29153

We get you | award-winning service

Please vote for us in these categories:

PLACE TO WORK

CUSTOMER SERVICE LOCAL CELLULAR
INTERNET PROVIDER IT COMPANY
CABLE/SATELLITE HOME SECURITY

ftc.net | 888.218.5050

BUYING GOLD EVERY DAY

Paying Top Dollar in Sumter

JEWELRY WHOLESALE

41 E. Wesmark Blvd. • 778-1031

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

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

H.D. Osteen 1904-1987
THE ITEM

Margaret W. Osteen 1908-1996
THE ITEM

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



OPINION

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

Jacqueline B. Osteen CO-OWNER

Graham Osteen CO-OWNER

Kyle Osteen CO-OWNER

Jack Osteen CO-OWNER

Vince Johnson PUBLISHER

COMMENTARY

Why were hopes of the 1990s dashed?

As one who shared the hope, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, that representative government, guaranteed liberties and global capitalism laced with some measure of welfare state protections would spread across the globe, I naturally look back over the intervening long generation and ask what went wrong.

In the 1990s, it seemed to many that the vision of Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History and the Last Man" would prevail. Not that bad things would never happen again. Fukuyama's more subtle thesis was that after the debacle of communism, there was no intellectually viable alternative to some combination of political democracy and market capitalism as the means to a decent society.

But the past three decades have seen the vitality of politically viable alternatives — China's dictatorial and Russia's authoritarian state-directed capitalism, the oppressive clerical regimes of Shiite Iran and various Sunni Muslim states. By Freedom House's sophisticated measures, 2004 saw a high point in global freedom, which has been in decline ever since.

How to explain this trend, the opposite of what I hoped for and predicted? As I have reflected on this question, I've fallen back on an article I wrote in 1993 for Irving Kristol's Public Interest, in which I identified four types of political parties. Two were based on European conflicts over religion: Religious parties favored established churches, and liberal parties favored the separation of church and state.

Two others, socialist and nationalist, had their beginnings in attempts to rally the masses in the failed European revolutions of 1848, appealing to their working-class interests or their folk national yearnings.

Structural features — the Electoral College, the single-member House and Senate seats — push American politics into a two-party system in which both are incentivized to

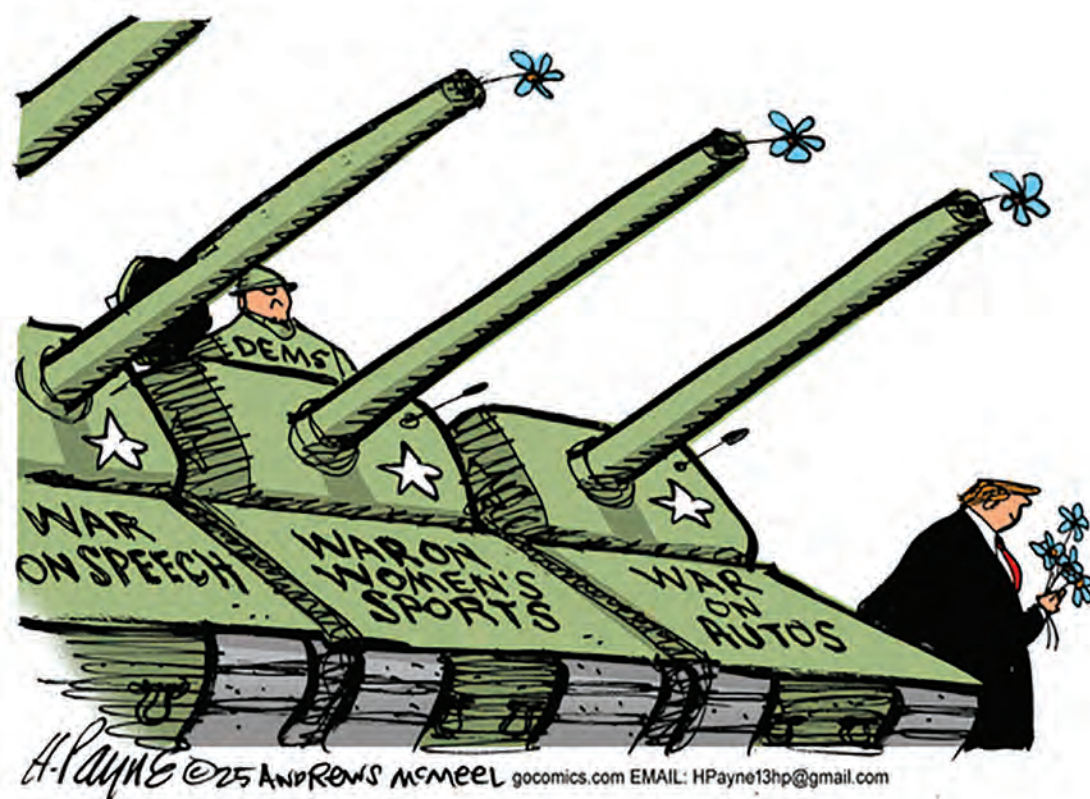
amass 50% majorities in what has always been a culturally and economically diverse nation. So America's political parties, operating in a unique republican framework and under democratic rules that predated Europe's, have partaken of each of these four impulses in varying degrees.

In my Public Interest article, I argued that religious parties tend to fade out in nations with no majority faith, liberal parties tend to collapse as their characteristic skepticism leaves them yielding to violent opposition parties, and socialist parties tend to peter out because, at some point, socialism fails to work. Parties that endure, I argued, were, in some major respect, nationalist.

American politics over the past 30 years provides some confirmation. The market-respecting liberalism of former President Bill Clinton's Democratic Party yielded to the woke socialism of former Presidents Barack Obama's and Joe Biden's. The religious emphasis and market economics of the Reagan-Bush Republican Party yielded to the demotic nationalism of President Donald Trump's. And Trump won, despite lawfare persecution, a significant and possibly enduring victory over the Democrats' woke socialism last November.

My conclusion in 1993 and, tentatively, now is that nationalism is the glue that holds parties and nations together. The republican nationalism of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, the democratic nationalism of Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln, and the nationalism of the two Roosevelt presidents, who remain vivid figures 116 and 80 years after leaving office.

The problem we have encountered over the last 30 years is that other countries' nationalisms are not like America's. It turns out that neither the leaders nor the masses in Muslim nations have much interest in electoral democracy, market capital-



ism or the rule of law.

It turns out that the leaders of Western Europe, traumatized by the horrifying wars of the first half of the 20th century, seek a transnational harmony that overrules nations' democratic electorates and smoothes market capitalism with regulations. In reaction, Britain voted to leave the European Union in 2016, as the formerly (under Tony Blair) liberal Labour Party split into socialist and Scottish National parties, and the long-dominant Conservatives into high-education Conservatives and the Trumpish Reform UK party.

In the 1990s, there was reason to hope that Russia was moving toward democracy and that China, despite the Tiananmen Square massacre, would move away from repression and toward convergence with rules-based market economies. Instead, Russian President Vladimir Putin grabbed power from the flailing Boris Yeltsin, and Chinese President Xi Jinping jailed one rival and abolished his predecessors' term limits. Putin has been in power for 25 years, almost as long as Joseph Stalin's 29, while Xi has been in power for 13 years, about half as long as Mao Zedong's 27.

Putin has been following a nationalist policy that dates back not only to Stalin, but also to the czars, expanding Russia's power outward from Muscovy in every direction — though not as far in Ukraine as he hoped and expected. Xi evidently sees China as its emperors did for 2,000 years, as

the greatest nation in the world, unfortunately recovering from a hundred years of humiliation by Western powers and Japan.

Something similar has been happening in Mexico. Economic integration with Mexico and replacement of its one-party authoritarian rule by democratic rotation in office and the rule of law was the goal of the North American Free Trade Agreement, pushed in the 1990s by Presidents George H.W. Bush and Clinton, and Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, who grew up on a ranch facing the Lower Rio Grande. NAFTA was ratified, the economies converged, and, as I witnessed, the opposition party ended 71 years of Institutional Revolutionary Party rule in July 2000.

But Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, elected in 2018, has reinstalled one-party rule and government control of the economy, and his handpicked successor, Claudia Sheinbaum, was elected with 61% of the vote. AMLO, as Obrador is universally known, managed to reach accommodations with Trump, and Sheinbaum has as well. But Mexico remains culturally distant, with uncertain property rights and opaque governance despite its geographic proximity.

One lesson seems to be that national character matters and that it is more a product of deep-seated history than of recent American policy initiatives. It pops up even when you don't expect it and can't be transformed by paper guaran-

tees.

Another lesson is that America, with its unique Constitution, fashioned in 1787, revised in 1865-70 and, arguably, again in 1937-41, is indeed exceptional — and that American exceptionalism is a wine that does not travel.

A third lesson is that the hopes of the 1990s were not totally dashed. Eighty-five years ago, in 1940, a time when some current leaders, such as Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA), were living, Adolf Hitler and Stalin were allies in command of or with their allies holding most of the landmass of Eurasia, opposed actively only by Great Britain, whose air force and navy were stretched to the limit.

Representative government, guaranteed liberties and global capitalism laced with some measure of welfare state protections are much better off today than they were then, thanks in large part to the leadership at the time of the British nationalist Winston Churchill, the American nationalist Franklin Roosevelt and the French nationalist Charles de Gaulle — something to keep in mind as we bewail our current discontents.

Michael Barone is a senior political analyst for the Washington Examiner, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and longtime co-author of The Almanac of American Politics.

© 2025 CREATORS.COM

COMMENTARY

What are you reading?

The well-informed person spends several hours each day reading something. We read books, magazines, papers, blogs and a ton of online materials. We read fictional, nonfictional, novels and a whole lot of junk. We are inundated with reading opportunities minute by minute. The well-informed person is that person who reads constantly. However, given the pool of information available, we are constantly trying to determine which ones are credible. We have to fact check and cross reference practically everything we read and especially that which we hear.

This world has become one big game of who can become the wealthiest and who can control the continent on which they live. Most people assume leadership, almost unanimously, to improve their net worth and to diversify their portfolios. The manager of a company possesses a certain number of benefits, but the president of a company receives more benefits. The higher a person climbs the ladder

the more benefits accompany the position. Too often, the person at the top of the food chain begins to transform into a greedy control freak. Every individual who finds themselves in a position where the people they report to have fallen victim, by choice, to an egotistic self-centered leader should carefully read the signs of the time.

Reading the signs of the time requires effort and dedication by each of us. We live in a very dynamic world that can leave us behind quickly, thus making it imperative to not just read, but to read the handwriting on the wall. This is a phrase often used in conversation, simply meaning, how could you miss that? People often utter incomplete sentences which point to what they really wanted to say.

I am reminded of one Old Testament prophet named Daniel. We are living in a similar time like that of Daniel and King Belshazzar. Daniel wrote, "They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers



Sam Livingston

of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote," Daniel 5:4-5. Let's examine the text. Most of us would have been busy kissing up to the king, drinking and chewing on the fat at every statement he made. We would have sobered up when we saw the handwriting on the wall. Our attention would have been solely on the hand that was writing and not what was being written before our very eyes. The king and his thousand lords were praising the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone. These items were perhaps the top commodities of their time, each of which had a god with representation.

When we look at these metals today, who are the lords and/or countries sitting at the table? Which country is among the top producers in the world? The leaders are, Gold: China, Australia and Russia. Silver: Argentina/Mexico, China and Bolivia. Iron: Australia and China. Aluminum: China and

India. Platinum: South Africa and Russia. Mercury: China and Mexico. When we look at fossil fuel and gas, China and India lead in coal, and the U.S. and Russia lead in natural gas and petroleum. After presenting this list, the handwriting on the wall is becoming a little clearer. China, Russia, Mexico, Peru and the U.S. dominate when it comes to which country produces the most natural commodities (These positions can change depending on who collected the data.). These are the countries at the table making decisions for the world. Who are the people at the tables making the calls? You guessed it, the billionaires. Guess who is not at the table? You guessed it again, you and me.

We must spend more time at the feet of the Lord in prayer and fasting asking for the abilities to read the handwriting on the wall for the people who are depending on us. The top leaders of this world have been fueled by greed and control for decades; "we the people" have been left by the wayside. The ability to jump on board is becoming almost impossible. What are you reading?

Sam Livingston is pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Manning.

PROGRESS

FROM PAGE A1

Achievements

— Alice Drive Elementary School is a finalist for the 2025 Palmetto's Finest Award, which Wright called one of the most prestigious awards in the state. The school is one of five elementary schools in the state to make it to the finals. The election came after extensive evaluations by a committee of fellow educators and Palmetto's Finest winners. The application process included elements on student achievement, instructional programs, professional learning communities and school culture.

— After the accreditation agency Cognia evaluated Sumter's schools, it was determined they did well enough to receive a 2025 Innovation and Impact Award — a significant recognition of Sumter's commitment to excellence.

— Sumter High School and Lemira Elementary School have advanced to level-two judging for the 2025 Riley Award, which means they are making the School Improvement Committee honor roll.

— Sumter Adult Education recently earned five statewide awards at the South Carolina Education Fall Institute.

— Sumter Career and Technology Center's culinary arts management program has become accredited by the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation. It also won the 2024 Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School Award for excellence in career and technical education.

— Crosswell Drive Elementary, one of the most impoverished schools in the district, Wright said, has been named a 2024 National Blue Ribbon Beacon school.

— Robert Easley, a teacher at Hillcrest Middle School, was recognized as the Upper Coastal Region Teacher to Watch by the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education.

— Jessica Flowers, Manchester Elementary School librarian, was recently named the Pee Dee School Librarian of the Year.

— Numerous students from Sumter's middle and high schools have been selected and continue to be selected for All-State Choir, All-State Band and All-State Orchestra.

— Cherryvale Elementary School recently earned Unified Champion School Status, meaning it is showing a commitment to inclusivity.

— Hillcrest Middle School's Team Orbit Pioneers made live contact with an astronaut aboard the International Space Station.

Updates

— Metal detectors are now installed at every school with at least one school resource officer or armed guard at each location throughout the district.

— Support services for students have been expanded by partnering with nine community mental health agencies.

— Sumter School District now has more than 90 community partners who enrich student experiences daily.

— Sumter School District is now involved in more than 25 community outreach initiatives in order to make a lasting impact on students outside the classroom.

— Three new hands-on, technical opportunities are available to students: the Pilgrim's STEM Explorer, a cybersecurity bus and the StarLab portable planetarium.

— The district's general fund balance continues to grow.

— The district now has one of the lowest teacher turnover rates in the region and has made significant progress in reducing vacancies.

Looking to the future

While there are many things the district has implemented and achieved this year, there is always more to be done. Below are some of the district's goals for this year.

— The district aims to increase student proficiency by at least 6% across all schools, all classrooms, every year, including this one.

— Reduce the number of below-average and unsatisfactory schools.

— The district will continue to evaluate and support Sumter's most challenged schools, ensuring they have the necessary resources for student success.

— There are plans to develop human resources by expanding

recruitment efforts to talent with Sumter and beyond.

— The assessment of classroom allocations, staffing and bus routes is planned to take place to improve efficiency and maximize resources.

— The district is preparing to redefine professional development to ensure district staff is equipped to meet the needs of today's learners.

— A full review of bus routes to enhance services for students and families is to take place. Wright said the district is committed to transportation efficiency, though they are not "there yet," he said.

— The district has seen a reduction in infractions with students and plans to continue evaluating and updating the code of conduct as necessary.

Alongside the above plans, Wright said addressing facility needs is not just a goal but a necessity and one the board will be attending to this year. They will begin by using the FAIR acronym. The F stands for Facilities; the A for Assessing and Analyzing; I is for Inspection and Investment; and the R is for Replacement, Restoration and/or Repurpose.

"We know that a student's environment, just like ours, shapes their learning experiences, and so unfortunately our school buildings, even including our three newest buildings, average 68 years old."

Because South Carolina Department of Education does not provide facility assessment assistance, the school board intends to update its 2018 facility assessment itself.

"Small town, big dreams is more than a thing. It is a mindset, and when you invest in our schools, when we invest in our schools, we invest in the promise of tomorrow," Wright said. "When we support our educators, we empower them to inspire greatness, and when we work together, I promise you there is no limit to what we can achieve. No matter where we are today, we can build a future that exceeds expectations."

SUMTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Sumter County Council Chairman Jim McCain gave general updates on a multitude of county projects at the retreat. These ranged from the county's achievements to in-progress projects.

— Emergency Medical Services Director Kent Hall launched an in-house program last January known as the EMT academy, an apprenticeship designed to foster a homegrown talent pool of men and women who want to serve their community. The first class resulted in 17 certified EMTs and nine in a current class who are on track to graduate in March.

— Last fall, Shiloh Communi-

ty Center was chosen as one of 18 senior and community centers in the state to receive a telehealth cart. This allows seniors in Sumter's rural areas to have virtual doctor's visits.

— Money from the American Rescue Plan was used to pave five of Sumter's busiest recycling centers to better serve Sumter's residents and improve the efficiency of the centers.

— The paving portion of the second Penny for Progress wrapped up last summer, including many rural roads. Other rural roads were also paved in the past year with County Transportation Committee funds. There are plans for further roads to be paved with ARPA money.

— New AstroTurf was installed at Patriot Park, calling for less maintenance and creating a quick turnaround time between games. There are 37 tournaments planned to take place at the park this year, with one already being completed. There are plans to expand the park in the future with a "miracle park" for special-needs children and an amphitheater.

— The boat launch at Pack's Landing was expanded and improved with ARPA money last year. There are now plans to pave the roads that lead into the landing.

— Sumter County Library has been under the support of Sumter County Government since last fiscal year, as it makes more sense for budgeting and future plans, McCain said.

— Sumter Voter Registration and Elections office saw historic voter turnout for the presidential election last fall. Sumter Voter Registration and Elections office moved to Magnolia Place, at 129 E. Liberty St., and also houses three state offices: the Department of Juvenile Justice; the Department of Probation, Pardon and Parole; and Clemson Extension.

— At the end of January, two new antennas were installed on the Wedgefield-Stateburg water tower and the tower in Shiloh. The antennas will collect from about 1,200 high-tech water meters.

— New wells will be dug in the coming weeks, and there will be several upgrades to Sumter's water system.

— The county was awarded \$10 million from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority, and it matched it with \$2.6 million in ARPA money.

— At Sumter County Airport, the 18,500-square-foot concrete apron (the area between the hangar and the taxiway and the runway) was reconstructed.

— Sumter County is in its second year of adopting Rafting Creek Elementary School, which entails county employees having lunch with and interact-

ing with the students. They began by taking part in the Lunch Buddies program and have since then given out toys at Christmas and read to the children.

— Sumter County Public Works will be hosting a Stash the Trash Event on March 22.

Penny for Progress Updates

— Emergency radios have already been purchased and are being programmed.

— Priority projects will include the engineering and design phase of projects.

— Sumter Fire Department and EMS will be at the forefront.

— Tax collections will begin on May 1.

— The referendum approved up to \$40 million in bonds in order to get a jump start on projects.

SUMTER CITY GOVERNMENT

Sumter Mayor David Merchant gave updates on what the city has been up to in the past year, including progress on litter cleanup and upgrades.

Demolition and Safety Updates

— The abandoned Community Hospital has been demolished.

— Rodeway Inn near downtown Sumter is in the process of being prepared for demolition.

— There were 24 demolitions in 2024, and the city now has U.S. Rep. James Clyburn funding for 150 more. A U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham demolition grant is also in the works. In total, this could supply funding for the demolition of 300 dilapidated structures.

— Flock cameras and blue light cameras have been added throughout town. There are now more than 175 cameras around the community, and some of them are able to be moved around.

Litter

— Nine individuals have been issued litter citations and will be tasked with picking up litter.

— 1,194 volunteers helped pick up litter in 2024, and they collected more than 63,000 pounds of litter and more than 2,400 tires.

— The Love Where You Live poster contest had winners from Liberty STEAM Charter School, Alice Drive Middle School and Lakewood High School. This initiative promotes a litter-free and clean community.

— The city held its second curbside junk removal program this year and collected 588,000 pounds of junk compared to last year's 1.2 million pounds, showing that the free curbside junk removal is working.

Updates to water, trash collection

— A new 1-million-gallon elevated tank is under construc-

tion, and a new well and water lines will be put in the same location.

— A 500,000-gallon elevated tank is being added off Quandry Road. The plant off Wesmark Boulevard is being expanded to have the capacity of 6 million gallons of water a day, when it previously had the capacity of 4 million gallons a day.

— The city has added new side-loading garbage trucks to its arsenal, and the new rules are to keep your garbage bin's handle toward the house.

Park updates

— Memorial Park is undergoing improvements to its walking trails and playground, and it has new bathrooms coming soon.

— The Palmetto Tennis Center has new clay courts.

— The Prisma Health Shot Pouch Greenway recently added the "Prisma Health" to its name following a partnership with Prisma Health.

— The greenway will soon have ground broken on its Broad Street trailhead with a playground and food truck pavilion. Its second phase will involve a skate park and bike pump track.

— South Sumter Art Park opened last year.

— The Tuskegee Memorial Monument at Veterans Park came to life last year, and phase two will take place this year, involving the addition of a bronze statue of the Tuskegee Airmen with their flight suits, as well as additional informational plaques, landscaping and benches.

— Ground has been broken on Westend Park, and it will include basketball courts, a playground and walking trails.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sumter EDGE CEO Jay Schwedler gave statistics on Sumter's economic status, with plans for even more economic projects this year.

— In 2024, Sumter Economic Development worked on 41 projects, a number that has steadily gone up through the years.

— \$25 million worth of infrastructure

— Sumter County has 90 manufacturers and \$60 billion worth of payroll in the manufacturing sector.

— Sumter is one of the smallest Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the country but is 14th in the country in workforce labor growth.

— Sumter's gross domestic product growth is at \$5.8 billion.

— Sumter EDGE has been involved in \$2.7 billion of capital investment.

— There are 6,000 permitted homes in the county right now.

"Our people are what makes us the best community in South Carolina," Schwedler said.

RUNOFF

FROM PAGE A1

largest turnout at 8.6% and 165 voters, and Leventis won 56.4% of that vote.

The Ebenezer 2 precinct at Ebenezer Middle School, not far from Dalzell, had just two voters for less than 1% turnout.

A former state senator for 32 years from 1980 to 2012, Leventis took 160 of the 366 total votes. He would have needed 24 additional votes in the race, or 184 total, to avoid a runoff.

The open seat on the nine-member school board will be a shortened, two-year term. The person elected will serve the remaining two years of Jeff Zell's term, who had to resign after he ran for and won the state Senate District 36 seat in the November 2024 general election.

School board seats are non-partisan races in Sumter County.

Sumter County Voter Registration and Elections Director

Pat Jefferson said results were certified Thursday with no changes and are now official.

Regarding voter turnout, Sumter County has not had another special election in at least the last four years — dating back to November 2020 — to compare the turnout rate of 4.72%, according to Jefferson.

She added that turnout for a special election is always slim after a November general election.

"They (candidates) must get out and beat the bushes, knock on doors and ask for voters' support," Jefferson said.

MORE FROM THE CANDIDATES — LEVENTIS AND SCHULTZ

In the November 2022 Sumter school board Area 8 race, Leventis also advanced to a runoff from a four-candidate race and said he expected to do well again in the special election. He added on Wednesday that his campaign is not over.

"It's just back to work now because I still believe strongly in the success of the school district and continued improvements," Leventis said. "I am already making contacts and plans to try to make it as public as possible that there is a runoff, and it does matter."

Schultz said he is "extremely pleased" to make the runoff — even by the slimmest of margins over Montgomery — and especially with such a low voter turnout.

He added he wanted to thank his fellow candidates for running clean campaigns, and he is happy with that.

Like Leventis, Schultz said his work will continue.

"I am going to continue barnstorming, door knocking, politicking, try to greet everybody who I can greet and try to reach as many of the 7,800 registered voters that there are in Area 8 over the next two weeks and see where that goes," he said. "That is my plan."

In the upcoming runoff, any registered voter in Area 8 is eligible to vote, whether they

voted in the special election or not, Jefferson added.

SCHULTZ WANTS A DEBATE

On Wednesday — the day after the election — Schultz said he wants to debate Leventis before the Feb. 25 runoff on who is more qualified to serve in the Area 8 seat under any forum available.

"I think the Area 8 voters — now that we are down to two candidates — deserve to be able to see us outside and in the public and speak. And I would be prepared to debate him."

After speaking with Schultz, *The Sumter Item* called Leventis about the debate challenge.

The former legislator said he would need to think more on the matter and that he is unsure if the idea has value.

"Keith was in office for many years, and there is a record that he has to defend," Leventis said. "I have been in office for many years, and I don't know if that is anything but an effort to see if he can get more name recognition

because the vote last night was not broad, but those who did go out spoke.

"I don't know if that would be of any particular value because Keith goes to school board meetings all the time and makes comments, and that's fine. But the responsibility of being on the board when he was there led to someone else being elected. So, I have got to think that over and give that some thought."

Leventis added he thinks Schultz's debate challenge is "a clever approach to free publicity."

"Neither Keith nor I are youngsters," he said. "Each of us has a work history and a history in public office. That should speak for itself. Just saying 'Let's talk about it now' can't change that, and so I think that it's important to ask people to look at what we've done and how we've done it. That could be more important than what we are trying to say now that we think might be viewed in different ways."

RODEWAY

FROM PAGE A1

board's Hampton Park Historic Overlay District; the remainder of the property, which includes OYO Hotel, is not, according to Helen Roodman, director of the city's planning department.

The applicant's request for demolition cited the motel's condition is "a threat to public safety" as well as a "loss of architectural integrity." To be approved for demolition, planning staff must find that the structure meets one of the four criteria: public safety hazard, loss of architectural integrity, loss of structural integrity and economic hardship. Planning staff determined the structure met the applicant's aforementioned reasons for demolition.

The Sumter Item's Freedom of Information Act request of incident reports related to violent crimes to the 226 N. Washington St. address during the last five years showed 14 reported incidents; Sumter Police Department clarified those incidents range from shootings to assaults with weapons (knives, machete, closed fists, etc.). The most recent incident was the fatal shooting of 28-year-old Raekwon Owens. A 25-year-old Sumter woman was injured and a second woman was present during the shooting but was not injured. Two men, Tevon Guess and Melvin Belle, were arrested and charged with murder and two counts of attempted murder, according to Sumter Police Department. Belle was also charged with possession of a weapon by a convicted felon and possession of a weapon during a violent crime, the department added.

As for loss of architectural integrity, in 2020, the property owner was approved to paint the exterior of the building. Otherwise, the planning staff determined there were no architectural characteristics worth preservation or restoration.

Rodeway Inn, built in 1965, is a two-story, concrete-block building at 20,929 square feet. It was built as an expansion to OYO Hotel. Both businesses are closed.

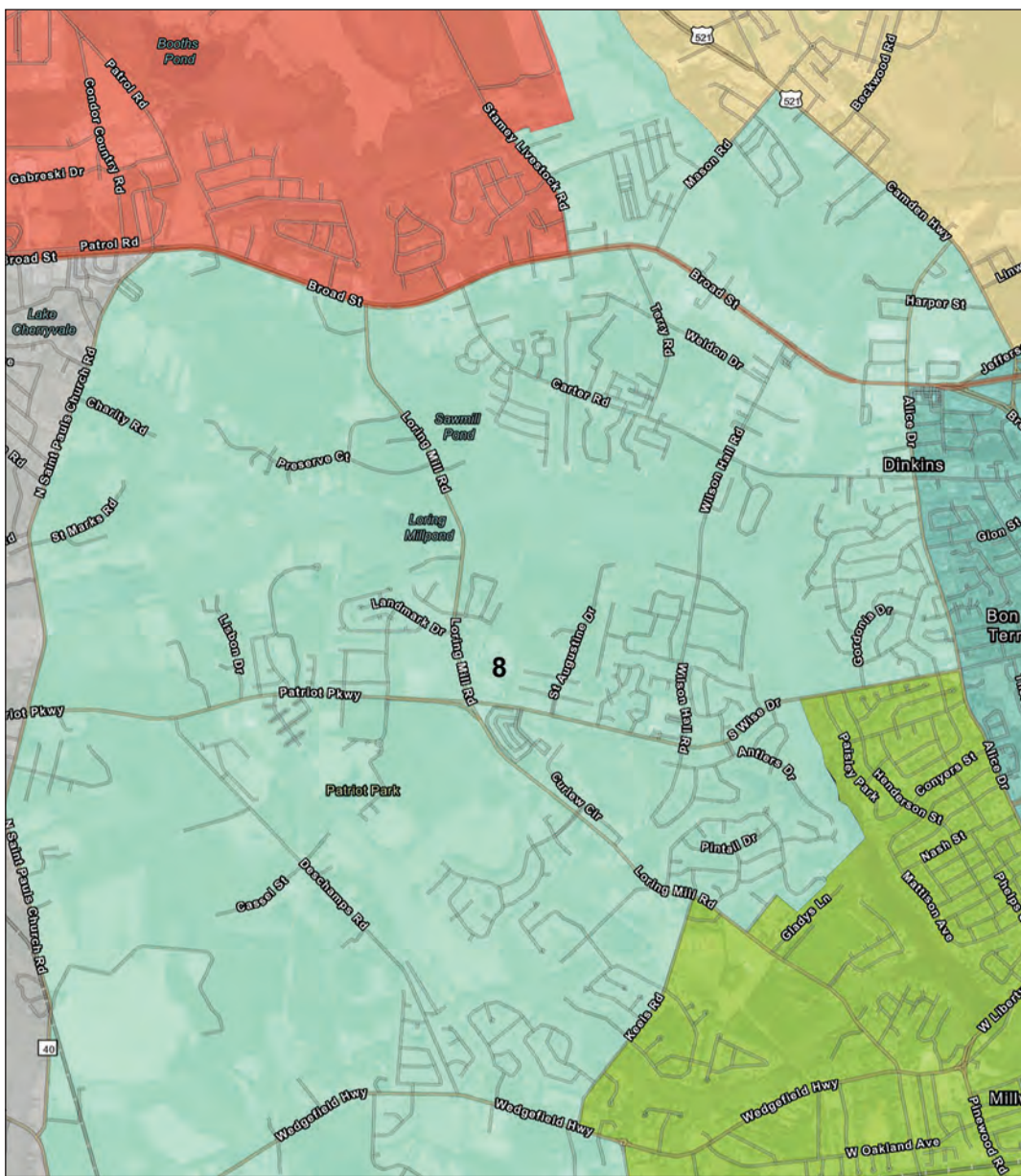
Rodeway has changed names many times during the last 15 years, including Econolodge, Palmetto Inn, Ramada Inn and Holiday Inn.

There are no plans for the property after demolition, according to the applicant.

There were a few residents of the Historic District area who spoke in favor of the demolition at the meeting but with suggestions on how far it should go.

"Whoever it is that's suggesting that this be taken down, I wish you'd expand it a little bit further to the other facilities that are associated with it because people jump that wall and come into my property on a regular basis," one resident shared. "It's just a nasty place, so I am encouraging you to consider this, approve this, and let's get it done quickly."

When questioned on whether the demolition will affect crime in the area, Roodman explained that without a place to inhabit, the current population on the property will no longer be there.



Area 8 in Sumter School District includes the western and northern portions of the City of Sumter. Major roadways include Wilson Hall Road, Loring Mill Road, Patriot Parkway and others.

EARLY VOTING

FROM PAGE A1

The voter registration office is at 129 E. Liberty St. (Magnolia Place) in downtown Sumter. The facility is also the former offices of *The Item* newspaper.

According to Jefferson, any registered voter in Area 8 is eligible to vote in early voting next week or the Feb. 25 runoff, whether they voted in the special election or not.

Area 8 in Sumter School District includes the western and northern portions of the City of Sumter. Major roadways include Wilson Hall Road, Loring Mill Road, Patriot Parkway and others.

Before making the trip to vote, if registered voters are unsure if they reside in Area 8, they can call the county voter registration office on Tuesday, and staff will verify if they are eligible. The office's phone numbers are (803) 436-2310, -2311, -2312 and -2313.

Jefferson said new county voter registration cards were mailed last year and the school areas, or districts, are located on the bottom of the card on the left side.

Sumter school board seats are nonpartisan races in Sumter County.

VOTE FOR US!
Best roofing company & best locally owned business

WE OFFER commercial, industrial, and residential roofing, custom sheet metal & fabrication.

Southern Roofing Services

785 N. Wise Drive
803-773-8221

VOTE US
Best Painters

Jon Sill's
CUSTOM PAINT WORKS

Commercial & Residential
803-464-2480
sumterpaintman@yahoo.com

VOTE FOR US
HEALTH CARE INSURANCE
HOME & AUTO
LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
INSURANCE AGENT

25 E. Calhoun, St. Sumter, SC
803-775-1168
www.crwins.com

CRW INSURANCE
CREECH • RIDDY • WATSON

VOTE
Hill Plumbing & Air
for Best of Sumter

HILL PLUMBING & AIR
- SINCE 1925 -

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

Heating & Air • Plumbing • 803-773-6689

Lady Eagles' Maxfield has breakout week on way to Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week

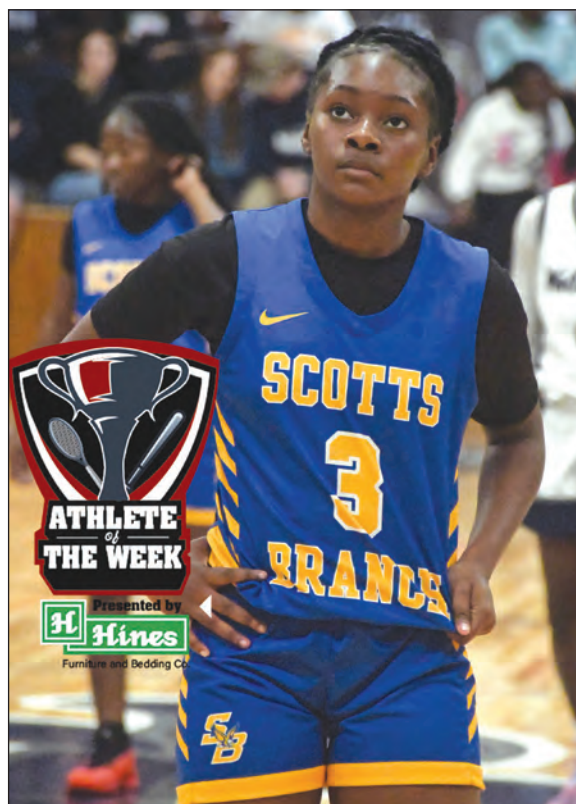
BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Scott's Branch forward Trayiona Maxfield may just be an eighth-grader, but she didn't play like one last week. The Lady Eagle put on a show as Scott's Branch hit the home stretch of its season, including a career-high 27 points in a win over Cross. Maxfield helped the Lady Eagles finish the regular season with a soft landing, winning three straight games to put a

bow on a second-place finish in Region V-1A, earning Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week honors in the process. "I played my heart out, and I appreciate everyone who voted for me," she said. "It's really tough, especially for an eighth-grader." Scott's Branch head coach Lucinda Stukes saw Maxfield turn a corner after a blowout 76-10 loss to No. 1 Military Magnet, the top-ranked team in SCHSL 1A, to close out January. Maxwell then scored 18

in a loss to Baptist Hill when they were without some key contributors and carried that momentum into a three-game winning streak to close out the regular season. "It helped her to see that she could turn it on a little bit and there are things she can do to help the team be better. That was a real turning point for Tray, that weekend after the storm," Stukes said. "We only scored 10 points at Military

SEE AOTW, PAGE B4



Scott's Branch forward Trayiona Maxfield scored a career high 27 points against Cross on her way to Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week honors.

TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Clarendon County closes out its regular season as Manning, East Clarendon face off

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The regular season came to an end on Thursday for Clarendon County rivals East Clarendon and Manning. The Monarchs will now turn their attention to the postseason after surviving one of the most difficult regions in the state. Both East Clarendon squads and the Lady Monarchs, meanwhile, shift their focus to the offseason.

MONARCHS ROLL

The Manning boys wrapped up their regular season with a resounding 74-43 win over the Wolverines. The game was back and forth for most of the first half, but the Monarchs started to break away at the end of the second quarter. They carried a 39-28 lead into halftime before running away with things after the break.

For Monarch head coach Shawn Johnson, this was the cherry on top of a strong regular season, in which Manning finished 16-5 and will go into the playoffs ranked No. 5 in SCHSL 2A. They're slated to face off with Woodland, the No. 4 seed out of Region VI-2A, in the first round of the playoffs. "We've got a good Woodland team coming to Manning, so we're just trying to play everybody so everybody can get some floor time and we can keep trying to get better," Johnson said after nine Monarchs scored in the win. "We played a terribly good conference. Our region was tough. Lake City, Marion and Mullins ACA (Atlantic Collegiate) and (East Clarendon) is not bad. That's what we had to do."



Manning's Jeffery Caesar shoots a layup against East Clarendon on Thursday.

All four playoff teams from the region were ranked at one point in the season. Atlantic Collegiate is the top team in the classification heading into the playoffs and handed Manning two of their three region losses. The Monarchs split with No. 6-ranked Mullins during the regular season and earned a home playoff game in the process.

"The size and shooting we have in our region prepares us (for the postseason) because we've seen it," Johnson said. "We're going to continue to lean on that. We're not afraid."

Manning's depth has been key all season, as they've had a slew of dif-

ferent players step up throughout the season. On Thursday, star guard Jeffery Caesar took center stage, scoring 26 points. His two three-pointers in the third quarter helped Manning build a lead they would not relinquish. Taivon Carter and Tyler Green each had 11, while Lovell Stevenson had 10. That's the group that Dr. Johnson is confident will carry the Monarchs to success in the postseason.

"We're going to lean on Jeffery Caesar, Taivon Carter, our seniors," the Manning head coach said. "We play a lot of young players, so we're going to lean on our seniors to get



East Clarendon's Cherish Cochran (12) drives against Manning on Thursday.

where we need to be."

WOLVERINES GROW THROUGH TOUGH SEASON

The East Clarendon boys, meanwhile, end their season with a 6-18 record after a challenging winter. The Wolverines battled injuries to some of their top players and couldn't find a way to push over the top in their brutally difficult region.

Thursday's loss was an encapsulation of East Clarendon's season. They showed spurts of excellent play, but once things started to slip away, they couldn't keep pace with the veteran squad from Manning.

SEE CLARENDON, PAGE B5

Lee Academy grinds out region title with comeback win

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

When Lee Academy entered the fourth quarter of their matchup with Conway Christian on Tuesday, it looked like their dreams of a region tournament championship were toast.

The Lady Cavs looked up at the scoreboard and saw a 14-point deficit in a defensive battle, but they weren't ready

to call it a night. Lee Academy fought tooth and nail despite their three biggest stars stuck in foul trouble and managed to pull out a 38-36 win. Now, the Lady Cavaliers get a little extra time to recover from the stressful win, as they earned a first-round bye in the SCISA 2A state playoffs after claiming both regular season and region tournament titles in Region I-2A.

"They've been the cardiac

kids all year. Like I told the girls, 'You're amazing, but you're giving me heart failure,'" joked head coach Kim Langston. "For the people watching the game, it was a great game as far as the excitement of it. I would dare to say that I don't think anyone has been down that far with that little time and come back and won. It didn't look good. It looked grim, but they hung in there and kept fighting and

kept chipping away.

"As I told them today, anybody who's teaching in a private school isn't making a whole bunch of money, and I wouldn't trade my job for anything in the world just because of when that buzzer went off and they knew they won, the looks on those faces, the elation on those faces was worth it all."

Lee Academy pulled off the comeback despite Karagan

Melton fouling out midway through the fourth quarter. Mazie Tomlinson and Jameson Collins were each sitting with four fouls of their own, which made it difficult to apply pressure, as Conway Christian sat on the ball to kill the clock. Lee switched from a zone defense back to man-to-man in an effort to apply some pressure, and the

SEE TITLE, PAGE B4

Celebrating over 50 years serving the Midlands!
Sumter's headquarters for quality home furnishings and bedding

LA Z BOY Serta RESTONIC Beautyrest KINCAID

See The Difference. Feel The Comfort.

H Hines
FURNITURE & BEDDING

SUMTER'S BEDDING HEADQUARTERS

3602 Broad St. Ext • Sumter, SC • 803-494-2300

Thomas Sumter hosts first B-team region championship, boys claim title

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Thomas Sumter athletic department is always trying to find new ways to provide new opportunities for its student-athletes of all ages. This year, the Generals got creative with B-team basketball.

The Generals hosted their first Region I-3A B-team region tournament on Saturday, Feb. 1, giving their younger athletes a chance to experience postseason basketball for the first time. For Tanner Brunson, the school's athletic director and head coach of the boys B-team, it was a no-brainer.

"It gives the middle school kids something to play for. With middle school sports, that last game hits, and that's it," Brunson said. "One thing that we've really stressed in the athletic department is teaching these kids how to win and to compete."

The boys team consisted of Brody Olson, Sanjay Hester, Hadrian Hughey, Ashton Pierce, Thomas Dahlstrom, AJ Hawkins, Aiden Pierce, Jay Langford, Cody Hancock, Aerial Casares, Jordan Oliver, Myers Wilkes and Lawton Hill. That group ranged from sixth-graders to eighth-graders and absolutely dominated all season long in an undefeated year. They held four teams to single digits and won the region tournaments with 39-23 and 33-10 wins over Calhoun Academy and Orangeburg Prep. They added wins over Ragin Prep and Holly Hill to close out their season last week.

"They're a special group," Brunson said of his team. "The cool thing about that group and me having the op-

portunity to be their head coach, they legitimately care about each other and the process. I told them from Day 1, 'To truly be successful, you have to fall in the process versus the result. You work for the result, but you have to enjoy the work to get there.' That group took that in stride. They're a talented group naturally, but when you combine that with unbelievable work ethic, you can do some incredible stuff."

"That group is going to set the world on fire if they stay together and work the way that they want to. They have the ability to do some special stuff."

The girls were also excellent, finishing with a 9-3 record and a 3-2 mark in the region. The team, coached by Head of School Ben Herod, defeated Calhoun 16-5 in their first tournament game before losing a hard-fought battle with Orangeburg Prep 22-17 to finish as runners-up. That squad included Bella Tisdale, Addison Conyers, Hailey Finan, Silver Blackmon, Daniella Barnes, Hadley Herod, Jenna Ray, Harper Stines, Avery Kate Herod, Alexis Connel, A'leigha Nelson, Karsyn Allen and Mary Margaret Reid.

"With our girls program, even going back to the BJ Reed days, the idea was built around the fact that we might not win the battle that day, but we're going to win the war. You are never going to truly out-work us, and our B-team girls team reflected that a lot," Brunson said. "With them, I got to be a fan and watch them grow. That team grew every day. There was not a day where you could say they took a step



PHOTOS PROVIDED
The Thomas Sumter boys B-team basketball squad celebrates after claiming the region championship on Feb. 1.

back; they progressed and worked and worked and worked.

"To my knowledge, that is the most successful B-team girls team we've ever had, at least in my time associated with the school, and I'm technically in Year 17 if you count the 11 as a student. They had a terrific season."

This success continues the growth that the Generals have looked to build across athletics. Varsity softball and soccer made their returns to Thomas Sumter last year. They upgraded their weight room in the fall, and this just carries that momentum forward.

"First and foremost, we want our kids to understand that we care about them and we want to expand their opportunities for development," Brunson said. "In today's society, people do revolve around the idea of 'Look good, play good' mentality, so upgrading the weight room, for instance, shows that we have a focus on improving this athletic department, better these athletic programs and better our athletes, period. We want to keep our kids



The Thomas Sumter girls B-team basketball squad celebrates after finishing second in their region tournament on Feb. 1.

engaged and excited and kind of at the edge of their seats at all times because the more excited they are, the more be-

lief that they have that we're committed to them, the better opportunity they have to grow."



STAY IN THE GAME WITH EXPERT ORTHOPEDIC CARE

MCLEOD ORTHOPAEDICS CLARENDON

Locations in Sumter & Manning
Accepting New Patients | 803-433-3065

the Sumter ITEM SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL	
TUES. FEB. 11 LEE ACADEMY @ CONWAY CHR. GIRLS 38-36	TUES. FEB. 11 DARLINGTON @ CRESTWOOD BOYS 50-48 GIRLS 55-47
TUES. FEB. 11 LOWCOUNTRY @ SB EAGLES BOYS 39-68 GIRLS 6-70	WED. FEB. 12 C.A. JOHNSON @ LEE CENTRAL BOYS 56-52 GIRLS 42-61
TUES. FEB. 11 LAKE CITY @ MANNING BOYS 58-66 GIRLS 48-50	THU. FEB. 13 LAKWOOD @ CRESTWOOD BOYS 52-64 GIRLS 42-50
TUES. FEB. 11 HARTSVILLE @ LAKEWOOD BOYS 43-72 GIRLS 47-48	THU. FEB. 13 MANNING @ E. CLARENDON BOYS 74-43 GIRLS 28-51
TUES. FEB. 11 MIDLANDS @ LEE CENTRAL BOYS 38-60	THU. FEB. 13 SUMTER HIGH @ WESTWOOD BOYS 63-59 GIRLS 19-58



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

[f Like us on Facebook](#)

Dental Team of Sumter

803.494.8466
5635 Broad Street Ext. Sumter, SC 29150
(on the corner of 378 & 441)
www.DentalTeamofSumter.com

AREA ROUNDUP

Crestwood bounces back from lone region loss to beat Lakewood

STAFF REPORT

The Crestwood basketball teams closed out their regular seasons on Thursday with a Sumter County rivalry matchup with Lakewood. The Knights finished with a sweep of their rivals, bouncing back from a pair of losses to Darlington on Tuesday.

The Knights, ranked No. 3 in SCHSL 4A, suffered their lone loss in Region V-4A play on Tuesday, falling to Darlington 50-48. A slow start hurt Crestwood, which scored just 19 points in the opening half. Xzavier Johnson led the team with 14 points, while Shannon Davis added 11 and Teon Tindal had 10.

They came out with a vengeance on Thursday, scoring 20 points in the opening quarter against Lakewood on their way to a 64-52 win. Tindal went off for 25, while Davis added 25 in the victory. Pop Cato had 15 to lead the Gators, while Cedric Cisse scored 11.

The Lakewood loss came after a 72-43 blow-out of Hartsville on Tuesday. Cisse led all scorers with 21, while Cato added 16, Darius Franklin added an 11-point, 10-rebound double-double and Carlos Franklin chipped in with 10.

Lakewood won the girls game 50-42, bouncing back from a 55-47 loss to Darlington on Tuesday. Lakewood, meanwhile, was coming off a 48-47 win over Hartsville where Makayla Cisse had nine and both Lauryn Nesmith and Shareanna McFadden each had eight.

The lower-state brackets for 4A were finalized on Friday. The Knights are the second overall seed in the lower state and will host South Aiken on Monday, while Lakewood travels to region foe Wilson. On the girls side, Crestwood and Lakewood both earned at-large bids. Lakewood travels to North Augusta, the top seed in the lower state, on Tuesday, while Crestwood travels to Gray Collegiate.

LEE CENTRAL SPLITS WITH C.A. JOHNSON

The Lee Central basketball teams hosted C.A. Johnson on Wednesday, splitting the matchups.

The No. 4 Lady Stallions took home a 61-42 win to stay perfect in region play. My’Keriyah Holmes led the way with 17 points, while Serenity Williams added 12, Kiyonna Austin had nine and Hannah Reames scored eight.

The boys fell 56-52 to drop to 6-9 in region play. Omari Rampasard and JuJu Davis led a balanced scoring lineup with 10 points each in the loss, as a late push from the Stallions fell short. Chuck Harry added nine.

The loss came after a 60-38 win over Midlands STEM on Tuesday. The Stallions used a 17-point second quarter to break away for the



TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Crestwood’s Teon Tindal scored 25 points in a win over Lakewood on Thursday.

win. Sinatra Rembert led the team with 12, while Rampasard had 10 and Demarius Gregg added eight.

SCOTT’S BRANCH SWEEPS LOWCOUNTRY

The Scott’s Branch basketball teams hosted Lowcountry Leadership on Tuesday, sweeping the matchups to close out their regular season.

The Lady Eagles ran away with a 70-6 win. Siara Lundy led the way with 19 points, while Trayiona Maxfield added 15 and Janiah Gibson had eight. Saniya House chipped in with seven.

The boys cruised to a 68-39 win. Nigel Lawson had 18, while Dayvon Bannister scored 12. Nyren Bowman added nine, while Trayvon Bannister chipped in with eight.

SCISA BOWLERS SHINE

SCISA bowlers wrapped up their season this week with the individual state tournament, with Wilson Hall, Laurence Manning, Thomas Sumter and Lee Academy all thriving.

The individual success came after the Wilson Hall girls and boys each claimed team titles last week. Laurence Manning finished as the co-ed team champions. The Thomas Sumter girls were the state runners-up.

This week, Laurence Manning’s Sydnie Vohs was the girls individual champion after shooting a 550. Her teammate, Charlotte Baker, was the runner-up after shooting a 417, while Wilson Hall’s Addie Geddings finished third with a 381. Thomas Sumter’s Mary Grace Hilditch finished fourth by shooting a 367. Thomas Sumter’s Sophia Fackelman also earned all-state honors.

On the boys side, Bradley Dukette of Thomas Sumter finished second with a 613, while Lee Academy’s Gavin Barfield finished third with a 600. Wilson Hall’s Carson Geddings and Laurence Manning’s Leland Mitchum also earn all-state honors.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

South Carolina forward Joyce Edwards (8) shoots against Florida forward Eriny Kindred in Columbia on Thursday, Feb. 13.

Edwards scores a career-high 28, South Carolina bounces back from loss with 101-63 win over Florida

COLUMBIA (AP) — Freshman Joyce Edwards scored a career-high 28 points as No. 4 South Carolina bounced back from its loss at No. 3 Texas last week with a 101-63 blowout of Florida on Thursday night.

The Gamecocks (23-2, 11-1 Southeastern Conference) pulled away early, up 36-15 after one quarter, and cruised to their 71st straight win at home and their 17th in a row over the Gators (12-13, 3-8).

Edwards surpassed her previous best of 21 points set against Alabama last month. It was a welcome performance by the team’s leading scorer, who had a combined 15 points in South Carolina’s previous two games.

Te’Hina Paopao finished with 14 points including four of the team’s eight 3-pointers. She also had seven rebounds and led the Gamecocks with seven assists, her best showing against an SEC opponent in two seasons in the league.

Liv McGill led Florida with 15 points.

TAKEAWAYS

Florida: The Gators picked the wrong time

to play the Gamecocks, who had been itching to get back on the court since their 66-62 loss to No. 3 Texas last Sunday. Florida shot just 30.6% in the first two quarters as South Carolina poured it on.

South Carolina: It was a good performance in preparation for another big one Sunday against UConn, which has been an annual event for the two powerhouse programs.

KEY MOMENT

Paopao put this one away with three 3-pointers in the game’s first five minutes as the Gamecocks took a 17-8 lead.

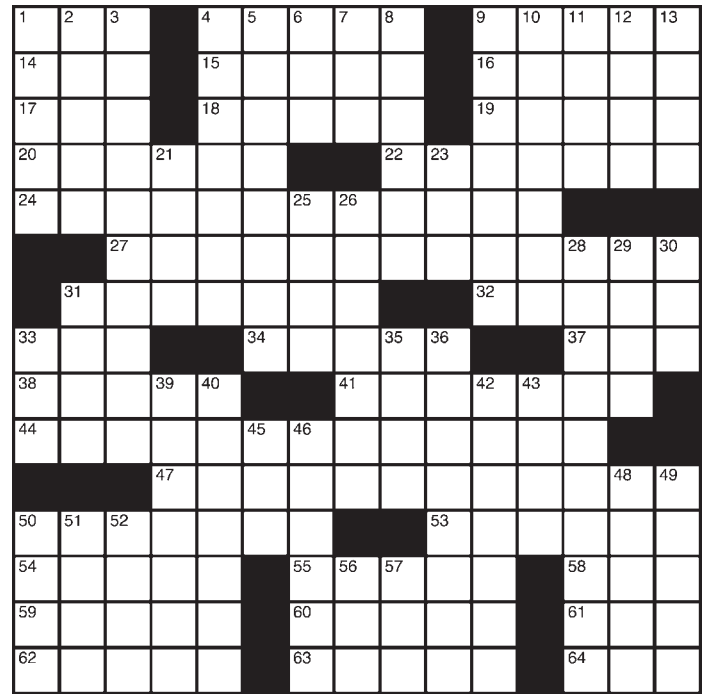
KEY STAT

South Carolina reached the 100-point mark for a second time this season. It defeated Oklahoma 101-60 on Jan. 19.

UP NEXT

Florida returns home to play Mississippi State on Sunday. South Carolina plays its last non-conference game when it hosts No. 7 UConn on Sunday.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Trap
4 DOMS symptoms
9 Icy
14 Address on a business card
15 Go toe-to-toe
16 Engage in a numbers game?
17 Spy-fi org.
18 Low member of a quartet
19 Out
20 Frying medium
22 Like art with hazy provenance, perhaps
24 Pulitzer- and Tony-winning musical whose cast consists of Usher and his Thoughts
27 Tactic that fails to deliver the goods
31 Frying medium
32 "Huzzah!"
33 Ultra hi-___
34 Flair
37 "How cute!"
38 Home___
41 Soundproofing aids
44 "Does this sound like a joke to you?"
47 Slowest competitive swimming style
50 Strike for an umpire?
53 Gadgets in Yondr pouches
54 Basic font
55 HS class for aspiring pre-meds, perhaps
58 "That can be arranged"
59 "I wanna try!"
60 Mushroom variety
61 Polish brand
62 En___
63 Mate's response?
64 Capitalize on

Down

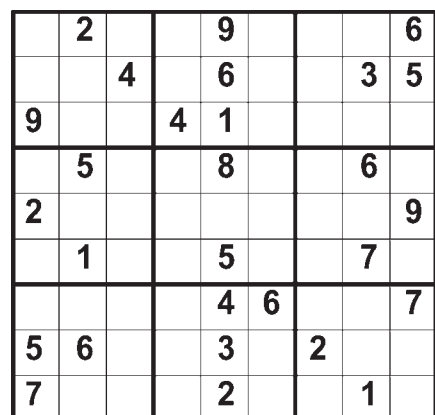
- 1 Joshua tree, e.g.
2 Artistic displays at the Met
3 Like a diet rich in phytonutrients
4 Applaud
5 Social media hashtag for nourishing one's inner neatnik
6 Sparks of "Queer as Folk"
7 Subj. for some refugees
8 "Auld Lang Syne" opener
9 Mysterious
10 Warmwater fish
11 Working hard
12 Wrap after a spa treatment
13 "Wednesday" werewolf
21 Voiced
23 Refusals
25 Result of crunch time?
26 Interweaves
28 "Don't even try to pin the blame elsewhere"
29 Female whales
30 Know-___
31 Do for a while?
33 Softball stat
35 Roller on a golf course
36 Word in some crunchy cereal names
39 Vlogging equipment
40 Maker of Perfect Pairings pies
42 Cause of a bumpy ride
43 Nice bit of cash?
45 Drag queen Bianca ___ Rio
46 Charcuterie slice
48 Doesn't spoil
49 Polish brand
50 Emollient
51 Gray___
52 Turns down
56 Capitol fig.
57 Amigo

JUMBLE

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

Jumble puzzle grid with words CNIME, NILDB, MEEYZN, GTUFOH. Includes cartoon and instructions for the word game.

SUDOKU



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

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solution grid and a list of answers for the Jumble puzzle: MINCE, BLIND, ENZYME, FOUHT, ENZYME.

TITLE FROM PAGE B1

change worked. The Lady Cavs were able to pull down some critical rebounds and get the ball out in transition, whittling the deficit down throughout the quarter. With just over a minute left to play, Lee Academy was clinging to a one-point lead. A free throw pushed that lead to 38-36 with 34 seconds to play. Conway was able to get a few shots off in the final seconds, but the Lady Cavs snagged a rebound with seven seconds left and fired off an outlet pass to run out the remaining time, sealing a victory.

“We started rebounding, and Jameson started getting out into the flat and asking for the ball, and the ball finally started going in for us,” Langston said. “It wasn’t like we weren’t trying; the ball wouldn’t go in. The rims were a little bit more flexible than ours at home. By the grace of God, we came back and won.”

Tomlinson finished with 14 points in the win, earning tournament MVP honors in the process. Melton and Collins each added eight to lead the charge with Collins also earning a spot on the all-tournament team.



COURTESY OF CAVALIER ATHLETICS

The Lee Academy girls basketball team poses with their trophy after winning the SCISA Region I-2A region tournament championship with a win over Conway Christian on Tuesday.

“They’re amazing,” Langston said. “Sometimes stressful but amazing.”

Langston loves this young bunch of Lady Cavaliers, who are all underclassmen this season. She has four juniors in Tomlinson, Sara Bell, Zana Brazell and Raylee Catoe to go

with two sophomores, three freshmen and a pair of middle-schoolers. This young bunch will now wait and see who they’ll face in the opening round of the playoffs, as they’ll meet the winner between Cathedral Academy and Our Lady of the Rosary

on Monday.

“I can’t remember us ever having a first-round bye, so this is huge,” Langston said. “I can’t relay how proud I am of this group. They have been with me from the word ‘go.’ Mazie was my manager; she started in the third grade, and

the other kids have been with me since they started playing JV. To see them grow and get to this point just makes it all worth it.

“I have no idea what the Lord has planned for us, but we’re just going to take it day by day and see what happens.”

AOTW FROM PAGE B1

Magnet, but she was getting more aggressive about getting to the basket that Friday night, and then we had to turn right back around and go back to Charleston that Saturday morning, and I had a conversation with her and one of our other guards, and Tray just said, ‘OK, Coach, I hear you.’ She’s been working hard ever since.”

Those losses lit a fire under Maxfield and her teammates. The Lady Eagles didn’t want to whimper into playoffs on a down note.

“I’m very proud of my team because we really came far,” Maxfield said. “I was just ready to score. I’ve got to lock in for me to score, and when I get the ball, I know what I’m about to do.”

Scott’s Branch started this winning streak with a 49-28 win over Bethune Bowman. Maxfield didn’t get off to a great start, but she found her groove to the tune of 14 points, which led the team in the victory.

“When we were warming up, in my head I was like, ‘We’re about to get this big W, we’re about to win.’ I was confident, everyone was happy and smiling,” Maxfield said. “When it got to the first quarter, I started doing badly, but in the second quarter, I started hyping up. When I get sad, it turns on the team and makes the team sad, so I started scoring and started hyping myself up.”

Scott’s Branch was able to beat Bethune-Bowman on the back of lockdown defense, which has been their calling card all season long. That continued in a 50-21 win over Cross before crushing Lowcountry Leadership 70-6 on Tuesday to close out the regular season.

“Our defense is crazy,” Maxfield said simply. “I feel like we’ve got the best varsity defense in the state. Nobody can beat our presses. Nobody can beat that. Every possession we either get a jump (ball) or get the other team to turn the ball over.”

The game against Cross was truly Maxfield’s coming-out party. She went off for 27 points, most of which came after halftime. She attacked the basket with unrelenting effort, and it turned into an impressive offensive performance.

“I was hyping the team up, but in the first quarter, I was playing soft, and I couldn’t get any scores,” she said. “In the second quarter, I started scoring and said, ‘Oh my God, I’m really proud of myself.’”

“It was driving to the basket. I can hit a little hesi(tation) or something like that because their defense wasn’t really like that, but no one is topping our defense, so I could really take them to the basket.”

Stukes was impressed to see her eighth-grader find that new gear, especially in a game where she didn’t get out to a perfect start.

“I told her, ‘You don’t have to go backwards, you don’t have to defer, just do what you do and play your game,’” Stukes said. “She makes mention of the game we went down to Lakewood (in December), and she took a couple of hard licks. She said she knew she could do it from then. She’s prepared for this moment, this postseason. She’s primed and ready to go. She’s very, very young in one sense, but on the court, she’s super mature, and I’m really proud of her for that.”

“She just has to continue to be fearless. She has never said she’s nervous. It’s just keeping that fearlessness, that toughness and have that wherewithal to keep going. At some point, she may have to say, ‘Y’all have to get on my back, let’s go.’ And she can do that.”

That win was a confidence booster for Maxfield, who followed that performance with another 15 points against Lowcountry Leadership to wrap up the regular season. The Lady Eagles now prepare to host Lake View in the first round of the playoffs on Tuesday. While they fell out of the South Carolina Basketball Coaches Association rankings after their two-game losing streak, they’re planning to carry some great momentum into the postseason and quiet any haters.

“I’m just really proud of my team. Who knew we would make it this far? I mean, I knew, but no one else did,” Maxfield said. “We like to win, and we practice hard every day. Coach has us in that gym. That’s the best coach ever; she just makes sure we’re all right. Of everything in the world, I just like to win.”

“We’ve got something to prove.”

Sumter High gears up for postseason as Gamecocks upset Westwood; girls lose Ross

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The last week of the season was a roller coaster for Sumter High.

The Gamecock boys started with a blowout loss to Ridge View, the No. 1 team in SCHSL 5A DI, before bouncing back with a 63-59 win over Westwood, which is ranked No. 9 in 5A DII.

The girls, meanwhile, had a nightmare week. At the end of a 66-37 loss to Ridge View, the Lady Gamecocks lost their leading scorer and only returning starter from last year’s state championship team, Araina Ross, to injury. She won’t be able to suit up any time soon after landing awkwardly and injuring her leg, leaving a young SHS squad without their biggest star as the playoffs near.

The SHS boys opened the week with a tough loss to Ridge View. They hung around early but struggled to find offense without starting point guard Daveon Thomas to facilitate the offense. Eli Britt and Nick White each scored 12 to help spark the offense at times from behind the arc, but they didn’t get the same scoring punch from BJ Brown, who was tasked with being the primary ball-handler for most of the night. He finished with eight.

“I knew it was going to be a long night for us. Our starting point guard came in on Friday before the Blythewood game with the flu, and we only have one true point guard. Not having him is just tough for us,” head coach BJ Brown said. “We had to find another way to play, and that’s just hard. (BJ Brown) is our next-best ball-handler, and we kind of lost him as a scorer tonight because he had to have the ball in his hands. It’s just something we have to adjust to, but one good thing about tonight was that our young guys had a chance to get better.”

The Gamecocks are young, which was highlighted when they had no one to celebrate on senior night against Ridge View. But that young group battled back on Thursday and put on a show. BJ Brown went off for 29 points, three rebounds and three assists as Sumter High finished the regular season on a high note. They used a big fourth quarter to outlast Westwood. Wesley Lyles added nine points and six rebounds, while White had another nine points. All four of Sumter High’s leading scorers on the week were sophomores.

Their playoff picture won’t be finalized until Saturday, but SHS expects to be the No. 6 seed in 5A DI and will likely face Wando at home to open the postseason on Monday.

“Every night we step on the floor, we have to get better. We want to go out here and fight,” Coach Brown said. “We started to get rolling here getting into the playoffs. We had some guys out with the flu and COVID, and that’s kind of set us back because



Sumter High’s BJ Brown, right, shoots against Ridge View on Tuesday.

PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM



Sumter High’s Araina Ross, left, handles the ball against Ridge View.

we’re not the kind of team that can afford to lose guys, but it was good because it gave us other guys to look at. I’m proud of my guys and their effort.”

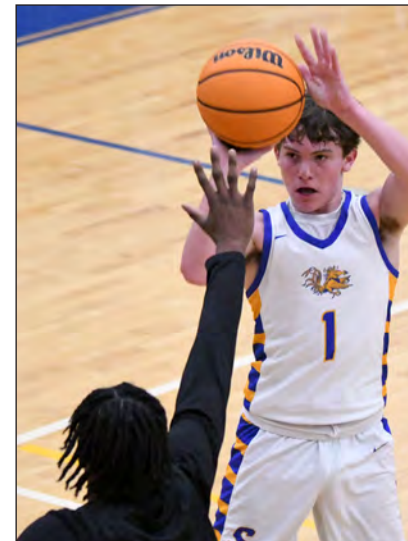
For the Lady Gamecocks, the loss of Ross is monumental. She kept the Lady Gamecocks in striking distance until halftime against Ridge View, but the Blazers broke away after halftime. Sumter High was held scoreless for the first six minutes of the second quarter as Ridge View stretched its lead to 38-21.

Ross’ injury came with 2:33 left to play, as she landed underneath the basket and immediately cried out in pain. For a Sumter High squad short on experience, losing Ross is a tough pill to swallow.

“We’ve just got to grow up, but I can’t fault them, they played hard,” head coach Jeff Schaffer said of his team. “You’ve got to have someone else step up to the plate.”

The Lady Gamecocks had just one healthy senior to celebrate on senior night and are now relying on a very young group as they prepare for the playoffs. Thursday wasn’t the ideal first step, as they lost to Westwood 58-19. A’Niyah Myers, one of two middle-schoolers for SHS, led them with eight in the loss. Ross was one of four freshmen on a very young Lady Gamecock team.

“I can’t really fault them for



Sumter High’s Eli Britt shoots on Tuesday.

the effort; a lot of this is being young and not having the fundamental skills that they need, blocking out, good passes, being able to shoot the basketball a little better than we can shoot it,” Schaffer said. “They’re young. You kind of have to keep them pumped up to play and keep their focus on where the prize really is. We knew this was going to be a struggle this year because we were going to be so young, but we’re building for down the road.”

Sumter High should be at home to open the postseason, but their brackets will not be finalized until Saturday.



PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Manning's Aysia Moore handles the ball against East Clarendon.



East Clarendon's James Gamble shoots a layup against Manning.

CLARENDON

FROM PAGE B1

"It was a crazy year. We had injuries happen, football injuries that slowed us down with Whit (Nesbitt) getting hurt. If you'd asked me in November, they didn't touch the floor together until Tuesday night," head coach Patrick Kelly said. "This region doesn't play around. If there's a better basketball region, there can't be many tougher than this. We're just undersized, and we get out-rebounded. I told the locker room that I can't make them taller, but we can make them stronger and faster. It was a wild year with a lot of learning."

Freshman James Gamble kept East Clarendon in Thursday's game early. He hit two threes and had 14 points in the opening half but managed just four points after the break. He was the only Wolverine in double figures. While East Clarendon had some important senior leaders in Nesbitt and Darius McCray, this was a young group that was thrown into the fire.

"They learned with their feet on the fire. That's a tough way to learn," Kelly said. "There was some frustration; they don't want to sit, and I don't want them to sit either, but I don't want to give them nightmares, PTSD every time they step on the court. I had two freshmen, and they got a lot of playing

time this year, and they're tough kids. The rest of them were sophomores coming off the bench. They won't be young next year."

LADIES WRAP UP SEASON

East Clarendon ran away with a dominant 51-28 win over Manning, but both teams saw their seasons come to an end on Thursday night.

The Lady Wolverines were able to end on a high note, getting 21 points from Cherish Cochran as they cruised to victory. EC had a young squad after graduating some critical seniors last season, so there were some bumps and bruises, but head coach Demetress Adams-Ludd was proud of her team's growth.

"I am satisfied of our team's maturity this season. We started off with a fairly new roster and a huge role to fill from last year's dynamic seniors," she said. "Our team stayed committed to enduring this tough season and process. We found small goals to conquer daily. The final product of that shift in perspective has helped us become better in our play as the season progressed."

One of the true bright spots down the stretch was Cochran, who found her rhythm offensively in a region that finished with four Top 10 teams in SCHSL 2A.

"Cherish Cochran has been

a key in running our team, as well as being an offensive threat," Adams-Ludd said. "Her dedication this summer and work ethic has been on display this season. We have a strong coaching staff, including skill development coach Gianne Fleming, who has supported our kids in elevating their skills."

But Cochran wasn't the only standout for EC. Adams-Ludd saw growth across the board with a group that will return all but two players next season.

"Overall, we have seen tremendous improvement from Kierstin Woods, who has been a consistent post player," the East Clarendon head coach said after finishing 5-14 on the season. "It is very helpful to utilize her size to protect and finish around the rim. Payton Hanniford, a first-year varsity player, brought double-figure rebounding, which is pure heart and tenacity. Along with Cherish, guards like Bailey Hicks and Tymani Cooper have brought their speed and ball-handling abilities to the varsity level this season. Not to mention defensive stoppers like Addison Fleming, Courtney McFadden and Shae Lee, who are

always up for a challenge in our defensive schemes. Hailey Robinson, a senior, was a good sixth man for our post until she endured a season-ending injury.

"I look forward to the continued growth of our team and program this season. Although our win column doesn't reflect our success, our kids have learned so much about perseverance. Those life lessons are a part of the sport but will be a virtue for our team and coaches in life."

Manning head coach Justin Johnson was singing a similar tune after the game. The Lady Monarchs finished 5-18 on the season but were in striking distance of victories several times in this challenging region. Heart-breaking losses like a 51-44 defeat to No. 6 Kingstree and 43-41 loss to No. 7 Atlantic Collegiate were a few examples of growth for a team that included two middle-schoolers and just three seniors.

"The biggest thing for me is that we improved as we went along and, in region play, we played everyone within two or three possessions at some point. That tells me we're knocking on

the door," Johnson said. "We've got a lot of kids that played big minutes coming back next year, so we're going to try to build on that and get some momentum coming into next season ready to go."

Senior Tahirah Wellington led Manning with nine points in their loss to EC, while sophomore Aysia Moore added seven and junior Tamia Watson scored six. Johnson loved the growth he saw from eighth-grader Ameerah Conyers. Johnson will now get a full offseason with this group, which he's excited to see.

"I thought Aysia Moore came along as the season progressed and started to figure out how to get to the basket to find some scoring opportunities. She led us in scoring through region play. Ameerah Conyers to step up to varsity as an eighth-grader, it's a learning curve, but I felt like she handled it fairly well," Johnson said. "Taniya Johnson became very steady for us at the point guard position, though she was out to-night due to COVID. And Tamia Watson these last three weeks of the season has been absolutely phenomenal."

Kid's Corner

Math game

Test your math skills

	+		=	<input type="text"/>
	+		=	<input type="text"/>
	+		=	<input type="text"/>
	+		=	<input type="text"/>
	+		=	<input type="text"/>

ANSWERS: 4, 6, 2, 3, 9

ESSENTIALLY LOCAL. AUTHENTICALLY SUMTER.

the Sumter ITEM

Instagram, Facebook, YouTube icons

Listen Today

Blitz, News, the Item

Local podcasts for local people. From sports to community events, stay tuned to the Item's podcasts.

YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!

GLASSDOCTOR[®]

HOME • AUTO • BUSINESS

We fix your panes![®]

805 N. Wise Dr
Sumter, SC 29153
803-795-4312

www.glassdoctor.com/sumter-sc

i'm lovin' it[®]

Buy a Happy Meal or a Mighty Kid's Meal and GET A FREE COOKIE

WANT TO IMPROVE SALES?

Call an Item sales representative to advertise in our many publications!

 KAREN CAVE (803) 774-1242 karen@theitem.com	 DEVIN MCDONALD (803) 983-0786 devin@theitem.com	 MARK PEKURI (803) 464-8917 markp@theitem.com
---	---	--

the Sumter ITEM

piggly wiggly

4 Locations To Serve You Better

"Investing In Our Futures by Promoting Literacy For Our Kids"

Newton doubles down on saying Panthers had 'locker room of losers' prior to drafting him

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN

Associated Press

Former Carolina star quarterback Cam Newton doubled down on recent comments that the Panthers had "a locker room of losers" before drafting him with the No. 1 overall pick in 2011, saying his remarks were "aggressive" but "true."

Newton said during Thursday's "4th and 1 with Cam Newton" podcast that he was referring to the team's performance as a whole and not individual players.

"When did we become so sensitive," Newton said. "When did we become so sensitive to really speaking what the reality is? A locker room full of losers? Aggressive, but it's true."

Several former teammates,

including star receiver Steve Smith Sr., took exception to comments Newton made during an appearance on a podcast featuring University of Colorado wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter leading up to the Super Bowl. He spoke about the pressures Hunter might face if he's drafted with the No. 1 overall pick this year.

Newton told Hunter he has "no way of impacting the game the way a quarterback does" and added: "I went into a locker room of losers. Just honest. Guys didn't know how to win; guys didn't know how to prepare. They didn't take themselves serious to realize we was 2-14. There was a lot of 2-14 in the mentality of those guys."

Those comments didn't sit well with Smith, the most pro-

ductive receiver ever to wear a Panthers uniform and one of 15 finalists for the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame. A member of that 2010 team, he made his feelings clear through several posts on X.

"53 man locker room - 1 = 52 losers. Wow... breaking news to 89," Smith tweeted along with an angry-face emoji.

Newton said he has "no quarrel" with Smith and understands why he took exception. But he wasn't backing down.

"I'm not specifically talking about those guys," Newton said on his podcast. "I'm talking about the culture that was there prior to me coming into the locker room — and it was a losers' mentality."

Newton said the Panthers still had it his first two seasons



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Carolina Panthers teammates Steve Smith, left, and Cam Newton, right, seen during a game in 2013, have been sparring back-and-forth about the team's culture over the last week.

when they went 6-10 and 7-9. He also said needed to learn how to win in the NFL.

Things started to come together in 2013, when Carolina went 12-4 before losing to San Francisco in the divisional round. The 2015 team went 15-1 and made the Super Bowl, with Newton winning league MVP honors that season.

"Is it me saying that, 'Oh

when I came, I made everything (better)?" he said. "No. I never said that. What I said was if you're getting drafted No. 1, you're going to a bad football team. That's facts. And that's the point that I was trying to tell Travis Hunter. You see what I'm saying? For me, everybody is so taken aback, like, 'Oh, Cam said this.' Bro, it's the truth. It's the truth."

Gear up for the 67th Daytona 500 on Sunday

BY DAN GELSTON AND MARK LONG

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Welcome to the Daytona 500!

Maybe you're new to the sport, have a casual interest or are just coming around to the edge-of-your-seat wrecks, the thrilling finishes and the stars that make up the Daytona 500 field.

Daytona Beach became the unofficial "birthplace of speed" in 1903 when two men argued over who had the fastest horseless carriage and decided to settle things in a race on the white, hard-packed sand along the Atlantic Ocean.

Since then, the region has become a motorsports mecca, and the first Daytona 500 was held Feb. 22, 1959, in front of a crowd of more than 41,000. They watched 59 cars race for a purse of less than \$70,000, and the finish was so close it took three days to determine Lee Petty had edged Johnny Beauchamp.

So much has changed since then, in technology and terminology, and there's plenty to catch up on ahead of Sunday's edition — the 67th running of "The Great American Race."

NBA Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is here (he bought a race team in 2020) and so is four-time Indianapolis 500 champion and "Dancing With The Stars" winner Helio Castroneves.

So let's wave the green flag (we'll get to that below) and take a crash course on some of the basic names and terms to know for the Daytona 500.

FORMER DAYTONA 500 WINNERS

The field is littered with past winners, starting with 2024 champion William Byron. Ricky Stenhouse Jr. (2023), Austin Cindric (2022), Michael McDowell (2021), Austin Dillon (2018) and Joey Logano (2015) are all in the field.

Jimmie Johnson is a two-time winner (2006, 2013). Denny Hamlin could become the third driver ever with at least four Daytona 500 victories. He won in 2016 and then went back-to-back in 2019 and 2020.

So who has the most wins?

Richard Petty won seven times, and Cale Yarborough has four. Jeff Gordon, Dale Jarrett and Bobby Allison have three each.

WHAT IS DRAFTING?

Drafting at superspeedways is paramount. It's a technique in which two or more cars race bumper-to-bumper to reduce aerodynamic drag and create more speed together than they would alone. NASCAR Hall of Famer Junior Johnson used the science to perfection to win the 1960 Daytona 500.

HOW FAST ARE THE CARS GOING?

They are traveling about 190 mph but could be going in excess of 200 mph. NASCAR, however, mandates cars use tapered spacers to reduce the amount of air flowing into engines — thus limiting horsepower and speed. The power-sapping safety measure was first installed after Bobby Allison's car, traveling at 210 mph, went airborne and tore through the catchfence at Talladega Superspeedway in 1987. The car came dangerously close to landing in the grandstands.

WHAT IS THE BIG ONE?

It's a wreck. OK, not just a wreck, but THE wreck that destroys cars, alters the outcome of the race and puts drivers in danger.

There was a scary one in 2020, with Ryan Newman's terrifying tumble that nearly killed him on the final lap of the race. The wreck started when Newman hit the wall, bounced back into traffic and was drilled by another driver. His car flipped, landed on its roof and skidded to a halt in a harrowing, heart-stopping show of sparks and flames.

NASCAR fans and fellow competitors feared the worst for Newman, but the 2008 Daytona 500 winner walked out of the hospital 48 hours later holding hands with his daughters.

Byron went on to win last year, even after Hendrick driver Alex Bowman hit his car from behind and it caused Byron to sideswipe Brad Keselowski and trigger a 23-car crash that caused a red flag that lasted more than 15 minutes.

SOME DAYTONA 500 HISTORY

NASCAR's most prestigious race started as a much shorter version on a nearby beach. Drivers raced partially on sand and partially on an adjacent highway. The first 500-mile event in Daytona happened in 1959. Two years later, the Daytona 500 moniker was adopted and is now considered one of racing's most well-known events.

WINLESS IN THE DAYTONA 500

Getting to victory lane at Daytona requires as much luck as it does skill. It's the main reason why four former series champions — Kyle Busch, Brad Keselowski, Kyle Larson and Martin Truex Jr. — have never won NASCAR's most storied race. Busch is 0 for 19 in the 500. Keselowski is 0 for 15. Larson is 0 for 11. And Truex is 0 for 20.

Hall of Famers Tony Stewart, Rusty Wallace and Mark Martin are the most notable drivers to never win the Daytona 500.

WHICH MANUFACTURERS RACE IN NASCAR?

NASCAR currently has three manufacturers: Chevrolet, Ford and Toyota. Dodge spent decades in the sport before pulling out at the end of the 2012 season because of economic challenges. Dodge also was out between 1977 and 2001. Chevy and Ford have been in NASCAR since its inception, with Toyota joining in 2007.

NASCAR'S RACING ROYALTY

Richard Petty and the late Dale Earnhardt, both seven-time series champions, are two of NASCAR's most iconic stars.

The 87-year-old Petty, who won a record 200 races, remains an ambassador at Legacy Motor Club. Earnhardt died during a last-lap crash at the 2001 Daytona 500, creating a pivotal move toward better safety in a sport that had endured plenty of death.

FUN WITH FLAGS

There most common ones waved by the flagman are:

Green flag: Used to start or restart a race.

Yellow flag: Slow down. Often waved because of an accident or other debris on the track that must be cleared before the race can resume.

Red flag: Stop. The track is no longer safe.

Checkered flag: Waved when a driver crosses the finish line and wins the race.

With tears flowing, Earnhardt Jr. gets another shot at Daytona 500 as team owner

BY DAN GELSTON

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. blinked back tears as the moment hit him at Daytona International Speedway — a track bursting with triumph and tragedy for his family — that he was, with a country star and a NASCAR champ in tow, back in the Daytona 500.

"I can't believe that we get to race on Sunday," Earnhardt said. "I just can't believe it."

Believe it, Junior.

Long NASCAR's most popular driver as he built a Hall of Fame racing career in the intimidating shadow of his father, Earnhardt and his JR Motorsports team celebrated Thursday night at the track where he both won two Daytona 500s and suffered the loss of his father on the last lap in the 2001 race.

"Daddy loved Daytona," Earnhardt said. "Loved winning here. Just loved to win any race here. He loved to add to that number whatever it was (34 total). Gosh, I loved coming here as a kid. Just a lot of great memories. So when he passed away, I had to make a decision, I had a career in front of me and I was coming back multiple times. I had to figure out a way to be OK with it."

Earnhardt knew only joy and gratitude at the track as JR Motorsports and reigning Xfinity Series champion Justin Allgaier qualified for the season-opening "Great American Race" and secured their Cup Series debut with their performance in a 150-mile qualifying race at Daytona.

Earnhardt bearhugged and headlocked all his crewmembers, friends and family — that includes his race team partner, sister Kelley Earnhardt-Miller — as he climbed down the pit box and snaked his way to pit road. His lips quivering, hands shaking before the race, Earnhardt clutched Allgaier in pure bliss as the dream of moving up to the elite Cup Series level became a reality under the lights at Daytona.

"Man, we have kind of tried to downplay how badly we want to race in the Cup Series," Earnhardt said. "At least I have. It's one of those things where you're like, if it's meant to be, it's meant to be."

Outside of two full seasons a decade ago, the 38-year-old Allgaier never made a serious run at a Cup career but found new life in NASCAR's second-tier series. He has 25 career wins and won his first Xfinity title last season. He finished second in 2020 and 2023 and blossomed into one of the most popular drivers during his 14 seasons on the Xfinity series.

None of those accomplishments right now hit quite like racing in the Daytona 500 with Junior.

"This one means more than I could ever imagine," Allgaier said. "It's going to be really fun."

Added Earnhardt-Miller: "In our DNA is to earn it, and that's how we were brought up with Dad. I think everything that we do, you put that hard work in, and it feels better to earn your success."

Normally a beer drinker (Budweiser Select 55 is his favorite), Earnhardt might have to do cheers to his good fortune with some "Tennessee Whiskey."

JR Motorsports made a run at Daytona in large part because of a partnership with Grammy Award-winning artist Chris Stapleton. Allgaier, who has two previous Daytona 500 starts, and his No. 40 Chevrolet are sponsored by Stapleton's whiskey label, and the singer was expected to attend the Daytona 500. There's more star power inside the car, with the Chevy powered by a Hendrick Motorsports engine.

Earnhardt was crushed after the race team — one of nine open teams trying to fill the final four spots in the Daytona field — failed to lock in a spot the previous night in qualifying.

"I didn't really know exactly how badly I wanted to do this or wanted to be a part of something like this until we started going through it," he said. "Yesterday was just so tough to understand, something as simple as being eight-thousandths too slow was really hard to understand. It's hard to accept. I've just been sitting here all day thinking about how badly I wanted this for all of us."

Earnhardt won two Daytona 500s, in 2004 and 2014, and 26 races overall. But he never won a Cup championship or came close to matching the achievements of his late Hall of Fame father, Dale, who won seven titles and was known as "The Intimidator."

It might have been easy for Earnhardt's professional successes through the decades at Daytona to get swallowed by the grief following his father's death.

"I probably need a psychiatrist to describe it," he said to laughter.

Candid as ever, the 50-year-old Earnhardt insisted he's learned to accept his dad's death as part of the long arc of life rather than grounds to forever blame and hate the famed track.

"I knew that it wasn't the track that took him. I knew that wherever he was, he still felt the same about Daytona," Earnhardt said.

"So, I've embraced it. Him losing his life in this property brought this property closer to me. That doesn't work the same with other people and tragedy, but for me, knowing I had to keep coming here, I made some peace with it, embraced the track and loved it."

Earnhardt loves Daytona, too.

As the tears flowed, it was conceivable to think Earnhardt might not have ever loved it more.

"We get to push a car on the grid Sunday for the first time ever," Earnhardt said. "In the biggest, most important race that I've ever known. And I can't wait."

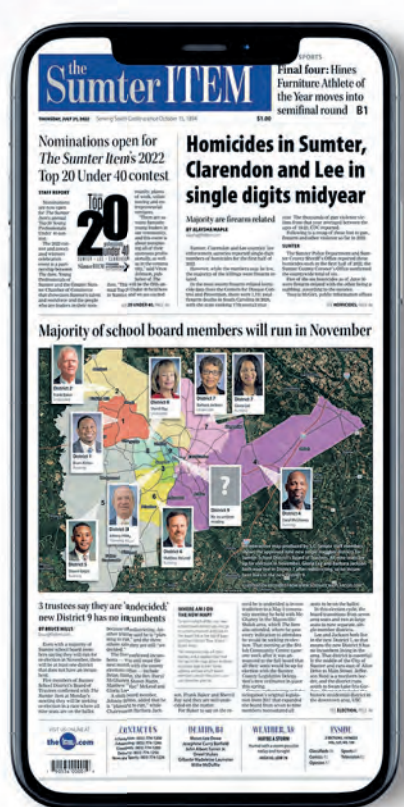
Our Commitment

To connect. To inform. To build a better Sumter.
We are the microphone. You tell the story

Essentially local. Authentically Sumter.

the Sumter ITEM

Sign up for The Sumter Item's free email newsletter.
www.theitem.com/newsletter



Here's My Card



Carolina Caregivers
 "A Helping Hand for Those You Love."
803-236-3603
Wendy Felder
 Owner



Jimmy Jordan Plumbing Service
 Repairs and New Installation
 1936 Pinewood Road
 Sumter, SC 29154
 803-506-2111
 Over 20 years experience
 Cell: 803-397-6278

PATRICK BEAN
 Store Manager



FRASIER TIRE SERVICE INC
 310 E. Liberty Street
 Sumter, SC 29150
 (803) 773-1423 - Fax (803) 778-1512




Tamiko Robinson
 Realtor®
 www.HomeAdvantageRealty.com
 7163 Saint Andrews Road
 Columbia, SC 29212
 Cell 803.336.4500
 Office 803.567.5300
 Tamiko@homeadvantagerealty.com



Imparts LIMITED
 9 N. Main St.,
 Sumter (Downtown)
 Store: 803-773-1908
 Cell: 803-491-7122

**SOUND/VISUAL SYSTEM SALES,
 INSTALLATIONS & RENTALS FOR
 CHURCHES AND MORE!**

**STUDENT INSTRUMENT SALES
 & RENTALS**

More than 40 years serving communities

J&T's Local Moving and More, LLC
 "Saving time & money with no worries"
 Over 20 years of experience

64 Wilder Street
 Sumter, SC 29150
 803-236-4008 or 803-773-3934

Jamie Singleton
 Owner



*Free Estimates
 *Moving (Home & Office)
 www.jtslocalmovingmore.com



TIN LIZZIES
 803-774-0349
105 E. Wesmark Blvd.
 Hours:
 7:00 am-2:00 pm
 (Tues.-Sat.)

www.KelleyConstructionOfSumter.com

Established 1997 Licensed / Bonded LLC

KELLEY CONSTRUCTION
 BEST OF CLARENDON 2024
 ROOFING SEAMLESS
 CONTRACTOR GUTTERS
803-494-4200



B's Health Food Store
 663 Bultman Dr.,
 Sumter 29150
 Mon-Fri 10-530
 Closed Saturday & Sunday

Excel Alterations
 SAME DAY PANTS HEM

202 Broad St.
 Sumter, SC
 10am - 5:30pm
 Monday - Friday

DanielWealthManagement.com




Interior Design * Kitchen & Bath Design * Custom Cabinetry * Custom Window Treatments * Blinds * Shades * Shutters * Wallpaper
803-774-0406
 gallery406interiors.com
 Inside C & A Carpet, 990 S. Pike W., Sumter



Commercial/Residential Electrical Contractor licensed & insured

- New Construction
- Renovation
- Ceiling Fans
- Outlets / Switches
- Interior / Exterior lighting
- Panel Upgrades
- Rewiring
- Service Hookup
- Security Cameras and more...

Contact Us Today for a Free Estimate
 2315 Whiporwill Dr Sumter, SC 29154
 (803) 406-4478
 www.varner-electric.com

Voted Best of Sumter Year after Year for Tires, Oil Change & Tow Truck



Come see your Home Town Boys! or visit us at acenparkertires.com

ACE PARKER TIRE
 930 N. LAFAYETTE DR. • SUMTER
 775-1277 • ACEPARKER@FTC-I.NET
 SERVING SUMTER & THE SURROUNDING AREAS FOR 44 YEARS!

Tim's Tree Service
803-968-1076

Stump Grinding • Tree Removal
 Storm Damage Removal • Trimming
 Topping • Bucket Truck Service
 Lot clearing • Firewood

We Take 'Em Down For Ya

TIM NEWMAN
 FREE ESTIMATES
 LICENSED & INSURED



ASPEN STORAGE
 SELF STORAGE UNITS FROM 450-680 SQ. FT.
 2580 TAHOE DRIVE SUMTER, SC 29150
 803-774-7368 • WWW.TAHOESTORAGE.NET

SHOW YOUR CARD!
 YOUR BUSINESS COULD BE DISCOVERED BY PEOPLE ALL OVER THE TRI-COUNTY AREA FOR MINIMAL COST TO YOU.




Want to improve sales?
 We can help with that.

DEVIN MCDONALD
 MULTIMEDIA SPECIALIST

- Print Ads
- Magazines
- Digital Ads
- Video

CALL TODAY
803-983-0786
 devin@theitem.com



**TO ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS ON THIS PAGE
 PLEASE CALL 803-774-1212 FOR MORE INFORMATION!**



6 Steve McQueen is 'Bullitt' in classic police thriller



7 Misinformation overload: Political thriller 'Zero Day' questions role of truth



7 Pitch perfect: Relive the 2024 MLS season during all-new 'Onside' docuseries

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Horoscopes 2
 Now Streaming 2
 Puzzles 4
 TV Schedules 5
 Top 10..... 6
 Home Video 7
 Comics 8

The Summer Scene

February 15 - February 21, 2025



Live from New York: 'SNL' celebrates half century of late-night comedy

BY DANA SIMPSON

From baby boomers to Generation Z, if you grew up in or currently live in North America, chances are you have at least heard of "Saturday Night Live." First airing on NBC as "NBC's Saturday Night" in October 1975, the sketch comedy darling changed its name to "Saturday Night Live" following the 1976 cancellation of rival variety series "Saturday Night Live with Howard Cosell" on ABC.

Roll on 50 years to 2025, and the iconic improvisational comedy series celebrates half a century of laughs with a weekend-long celebration on NBC. Beginning with its regularly scheduled late-night episode on Saturday, Feb. 15, the festivities reach a pinnacle on Sunday, Feb. 16, during a three-hour prime-time special featuring musical guests, celebrity appearances and returning cast members. Both events can also be streamed on Peacock.

While the 50th anniversary special was officially announced this past fall, NBC's press team has done a fabulous job of keeping the scheduled programming a surprise for its viewers. As of writing, no specifics have been released as to who will be hosting (or if indeed any one person is), which musicians will perform or who from the 50-years-worth of cast will return to star again. That said, if the show's 40th anniversary is any indication of what's to come this February, fans of the series

are in for a laugh-laden treat.

When "SNL" reached its 40th anniversary celebration in February 2015, it gave audiences one of the series' most highly regarded performances in popstar Miley Cyrus' rendition of Paul Simon's "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover." Backed by a full band that included "SNL" cast member Fred Armisen ("Portlandia") on tambourine, the performance helped to solidify Cyrus as a legitimate musician as she shifted her image away from that of a young Disney Channel star.

There to witness the groundbreaking performance was a crowd packed with celebs including 50 Shades franchise star Dakota Johnson, pop icon Taylor Swift ("Cruel Summer"), singer/actor Justin Timberlake ("Friends with Benefits," 2011), Star Wars film franchise creator George Lucas and Hollywood royal Steven Spielberg ("Jurassic Park," 1993), among others.

Ten years later, the list of celebrities attending "SNL50," as it has come to be called, will likely look a bit different, but there is no doubt that the event will be one for the books. With a current series cast that counts Chloe Fineman ("Search Party"), Ego Nwodim ("Mr. Throwback"), Sarah Sherman ("Nimona," 2023), Bowen Yang ("Wicked," 2024), James Austin Johnson ("A Complete Unknown," 2024), Andrew Dismukes ("The Second Best Hospital in the Galaxy"), Mikey Day ("Is It Cake?"),

Heidi Gardner ("Shrinking"), Michael Longfellow ("Good Burger 2," 2023), Devon Walker ("Everything's Trash") and Marcello Hernandez ("The Improvisor," 2022) among its main cast members, alongside the series' longest-running cast member Kenan Thompson ("Kenan & Kel"), the comedy keeps coming half a century after the show's inception.

Of course, a part of what makes "SNL" such a success is the nurturing guidance of its creator and executive producer Lorne Michaels. Also well-known for his involvement in "30 Rock" and "The Kids in the Hall," and for writing the 1986 cult-classic buddy comedy "Three Amigos!," Canadian-born Michaels has been a part of "SNL's" magic from the very beginning, leading the variety series to 103 Emmy wins to date and more than 300 nominations. Now 80, Michaels is starting to give thought to who will take up the mantle when he steps down.

"We're doing the 50th anniversary show in February of '25," Michaels told Entertainment Weekly on the red carpet at the 2023 Emmy Awards. "I will definitely be there for that, and definitely be there until that, and sometime before that we'll figure out what we're gonna do."

Don't miss what may well be the funniest weekend of 2025 when "Saturday Night Live" celebrates 50 years laughs, live on NBC and Peacock.



PROFESSIONAL
HEATING COOLING

361 Myrtle Beach Hwy.,
 Sumter, SC 29153

773-6010 OFFICE

Contact Us Today for a
FREE ESTIMATE
 on a New Unit!

The Better Choice
 for Quality Service
 & Installation

Emergency
 Service
 Available



Military & Senior Discounts
 Preventative Maintenance



Horoscopes

The luckiest signs this week:

CAPRICORN, AQUARIUS AND PISCES

ARIES
It's important to weigh the pros and cons before making a decision. You may also come across tricky questions without clear answers. This could leave you feeling a bit confused.

TAURUS
Get ready to tackle a bunch of important tasks this week, both at work and in your personal life. Once you check off everything on your to-do list, you'll feel deep satisfaction knowing you've taken care of all the responsibilities you've been putting off.

GEMINI
Big household projects are on the horizon. Your love life could be recharged and take a turn after a deep conversation. A new addition to the family could be on the way!

CANCER
Get ready for an action-packed week! You'll have to put in extra hours at work or handle demanding family responsibilities before you can kick back and relax.

LEO
Whether you're renovating or decorating your home, you'll manage to negotiate advantageous rates that will increase the value of your home. When it comes to your career, don't hesitate to advocate for the raise you deserve.

VIRGO
Unexpected expenses may arise this week. If you need to take out a loan, don't worry. You'll be able to negotiate terms that will benefit you.

LIBRA
This week isn't going to be the peaceful one you were expecting. Instead, it'll be filled with exciting activities and adventures. You'll have a blast!

SCORPIO
Exciting changes are happening in both your professional and personal life. It's important to find ways to unwind and de-stress so you can fully embrace all the amazing opportunities coming your way.

SAGITTARIUS
You'll expand your social circle, both in person and online. You'll find like-minded people to join you at art workshops, yoga sessions or other exciting wellness activities.

CAPRICORN
Your boss will offer you an attractive promotion. Despite being pressed for time, you'll eagerly embrace exciting new projects, whether they're related to work or your personal life.

AQUARIUS
It's time to plan a trip or getaway! You'll be eager to organize a get-together and celebrate with friends. Get ready to explore a new spiritual journey and invest in your personal growth.

PISCES
An unexpected event might shake up your peace. Lean on those close to you for support. They'll help you rediscover the joys of life. Learning to open up and trust more could bring positive changes to your life.

New Streaming Movies & Shows



"Reacher" - Season 3 (Feb. 20)
Returning for more action-packed adventure, this new season is based on the 7th book in Lee Child's global best-selling series, "Persuader." This time, Reacher (Alan Ritchson) must go undercover to rescue an informant held by a haunting foe from his past. Anthony Michael Hall, Sonya Cassidy, Brian Tee, Johnny Berchtold, Robert Montesinos, Daniel David Stewart and Olivier Richters join the cast.



"A Thousand Blows" - Season 1 (Feb. 21)
This series, set in the perilous world of illegal boxing in 1880s Victorian London, comes from the mind of Steven Knight, acclaimed creator of the global hit series, "Peaky Blinders." When Hezekiah Moscow (Malachi Kirby) finds himself thrust into the vibrant and violent melting pot of post-industrial revolution London's East End from Jamaica, he finds himself drawn into the criminal underbelly of the thriving boxing scene, he meets Mary Carr (Erin Doherty), leader of The Forty Elephants — the notorious all-female London gang — as they battle for survival on the streets.

Word Search

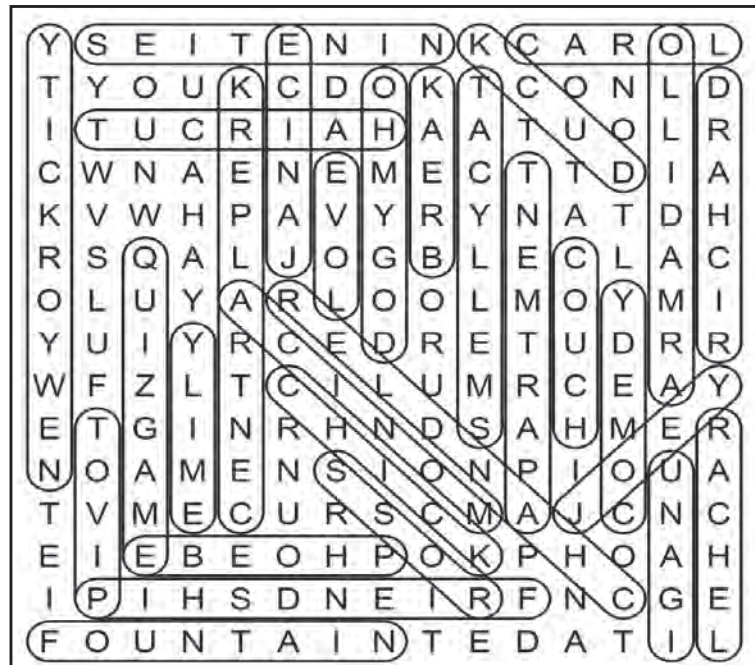
Y S E I T E N I N K C A R O L
T Y O U K C D O K T C O N L D
I T U C R I A H A A T U O L R
C W N A E N E M E C T T D I A
K V W H P A V Y R Y N A T D H
R S Q A L J O G B L E C L A C
O L U Y A R L O O L M O Y M I
Y U I Y R C E D R E T U D R R
W F Z L T C I L U M R C E A Y
E T G I N R H N D S A H M E R
N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

Friends

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| APARTMENT | COMEDY | JOEY | PIVOT |
| ARMADILLO | COUCH | LOVE | QUIZ GAME |
| BREAK | DUCK | MONICA | RACHEL |
| CAROL | EMILY | NEW YORK | RICHARD |
| CENTRAL | FOUNTAIN | CITY | ROSS |
| PERK | FRIENDSHIP | NINETIES | SMELLY |
| CHANDLER | HAIRCUT | OH MY GOD | CAT |
| CHICK | JANICE | PHOEBE | UNAGI |

Listen Today
Local podcasts for local people. From sports to community events, stay tuned to The Item's podcasts.
www.theitem.com/podcasts
the item podcast network

SOLUTION



Thank you for voting us Best of Sumter!

BILTON

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

VOTE TODAY

in more than 300 categories.

vote
Jan. 29 - Feb. 26

www.theitem.com/bestof2025

the Sumter ITEM
BEST OF SUMTER
2025

Where all the top choices can be found in one place!

NETFLIX



REACH
your
AUDIENCE

Newspaper

- Print & Digital**
- Newspaper delivered Wednesday & Weekends
 - Weekend money-saving coupons**
 - Unlimited Access to TheItem.com
 - Unlimited Access to our daily e-Edition
 - Unlimited Access to videos and podcasts from Studio Sumter
 - *Included with newspaper delivery.



Magazine

- Over 10 magazines published a year
- Majority of magazines distributed in the newspaper
- Options to reach Sumter, Lee, Clarendon and Kershaw.
- Local business distribution



Video

- 30-60 second broadcast ready commercials specifically for your business.
- Sumter Today video segments
- Video sponsorship
- Help promoting your video through the Item's social media.



"Ted 2" (Feb. 16)

Life has changed drastically for thunder buddies John (Mark Wahlberg), now a bachelor, and best pal Ted (Seth MacFarlane), now married to the woman (Jessica Barth) of his dreams. Problems arise when the couple decide to adopt a child, but the law declares Ted to be property and not a person. Angry and dejected, the lovably foulmouthed teddy bear must now seek legal help from a young lawyer (Amanda Seyfried) and a legendary, civil-rights attorney (Morgan Freeman) to get the justice he deserves.



"Magic of Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point" (Feb. 17)

A new story is unfolding on the Bahamian island of Eleuthera, where locals and Disney Imagineers collaborate on an ambitious mission: create a sun-soaked cruise destination that is also a sustainable celebration of Bahamian culture, prioritizing the local people and wildlife. Trek, dive and dance with the team bringing Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point to life as opening day approaches.

Q&A: Simon Helberg

BY JAY BOBBIN

Q: What's Simon Helberg up to now? And can he really speak all those languages?

A: Simon Helberg, who played the multilingual Howard Wolowitz on "The Big Bang Theory" until its end in 2019, rushed to learn French to get a role in the 2021 musical drama "Annette." But other than that and some high school Latin, he only speaks English.

The "Annette" story is even more complicated than it sounds. After more than a decade on one of the biggest sitcoms of all time, he decided to make a hard turn toward art films. That's when he heard about "Annette," a script being worked on by the highly decorated French director Leos Carax ("Holy Motors," 2012). Helberg told Vulture.com that Carax wanted him for the role but could only hire him if he was a European citizen (for funding purposes). So, long story short, he hurriedly jumped through all sorts of hoops, including hiring a tutor to learn French, in order to get French citizenship.



THE SUMTER ITEM STORE

Functional meets fabulous with these Sumter Item gift ideas.

ESSENTIALLY LOCAL. AUTHENTICALLY SUMTER.
www.TheItem.com/store

Shelly A. Lundberg
Certified Public Accountant

- Audits • Reviews • Compilations
- Business • Individual • Non-Profit
- Tax Planning & Preparation
- Business Start Up Consultation
- Bookkeeping & Payroll Services

Personalized Service and Attention You Deserve
2630-B Hardee Cove, Sumter, SC slundbergcpa.com 803-469-7300

Looking to promote your business?
YOUR AD COULD BE HERE

Learn more by contacting advertising@theitem.com

WE PAY TOP DOLLAR

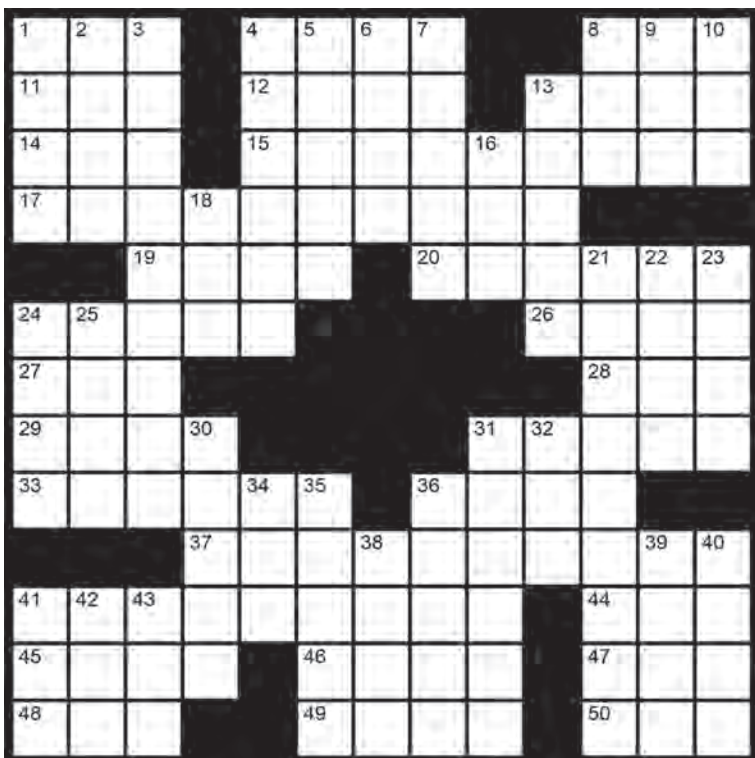
We buy Diamond, Sterling Silver flatware & Unwanted Jewelry



Big T Jewelers
Established in 1969

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

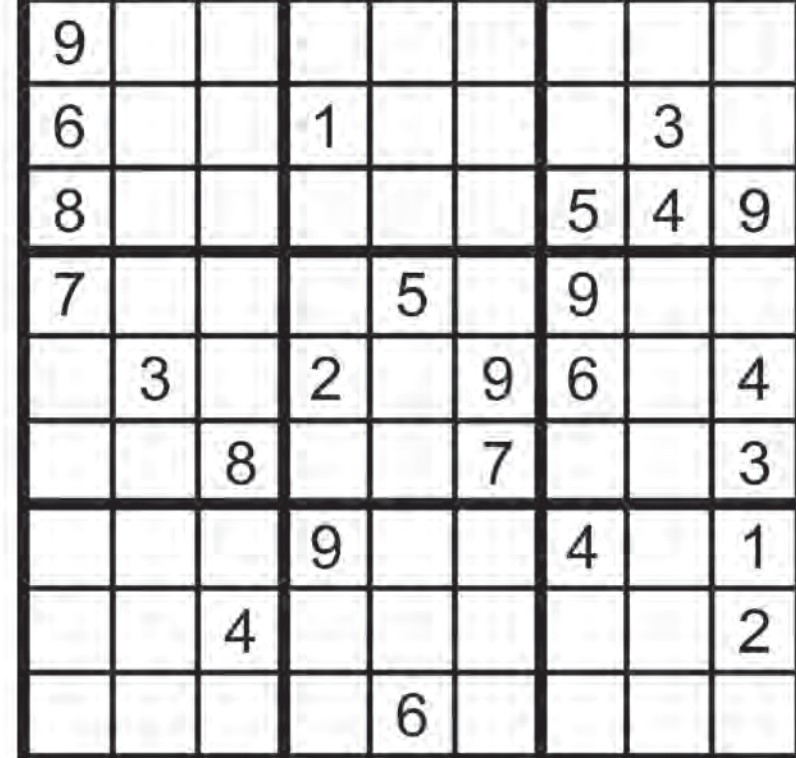
Crosswords



- Across
1. "Oh, god, that feels good"
 4. Barbecue entree
 8. Adept
 11. Constrictor
 12. Creme cookie
 13. Varsity letter earner
 14. Jazz style
 15. Comic with an eponymous TV show from 2001-06
 17. Donald Trump series, with "The"
 19. Nostalgic time
 20. Turn
 24. Break up the romance
 26. "Better Call ____"
 27. Signature Obama legislation: Abbr.
 28. Variety
 29. They're caught on beaches
 31. Not quite a B-minus
 33. Walk nonchalantly
 36. Delicate
 37. Bart's grandpa
 41. "M*A*S*H" setting
 44. Home of "The White Lotus"
 45. One of five Norwegian kings
 46. "____ Toon Adventures"
 47. Alley ____
 48. Darn
 49. Mellows
 50. Diminutive
- Down
1. "Dancing Queen" quartet
 2. Embroidery stretcher
 3. Ron Howard series
 4. Urch of "Vegas"
 5. Papas of "Zorba the Greek" (1964)
 6. Ernie's "Sesame Street" pal
 7. Video game hedgehog
 8. Little dog, for short
 9. Color TV pioneer
 10. Thunder, on scoreboards
 13. Boos
 16. Post-E.R. place
 18. Charles, for one
 21. Jon Stewart's show
 22. Corker
 23. The "E" of B.P.O.E.
 24. All ____
 25. Scholastic sports grp.
 30. Eisenhower's old European command
 31. Some Toyotas
 32. Narc's find
 34. "____ Daba Honeymoon"
 35. Busybody
 36. Radio host Hansen
 38. Draft
 39. Cousin of a bassoon
 40. "Uh-uh"
 41. Levels
 42. "Hooray!"
 43. Cold and wet



Sudoku



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

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

SOLUTION

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



WANT TO IMPROVE SALES?

Call an Item sales representative to advertise in our many publications!



KAREN CAVE
(803) 774-1242
karen@theitem.com



DEVIN MCDONALD
(803) 983-0786
devin@theitem.com



MARK PEKURI
(803) 464-8917
mark@theitem.com



Coming Soon



"The Americas" (Peacock — Feb. 24, Limited Series Premiere)

This nature series showcases the wonders, secrets and fragilities of the world's greatest supercontinent. Using cutting-edge technology, it uncovers never-before-seen behavior and highlights the extraordinary, untold wildlife stories that will deeply connect with millions around the world. The series brings new species, intimate courtships, dramatic deep sea hunting and some of nature's strangest stories to the screen — even a frog that seems to defy death every day. Crews travel to the Atlantic coast, Mexico, the Wild West, the Amazon, the frozen North, the Gulf coast, the Andes, the Caribbean, the West coast and Patagonia.

LOW FLAT FEES FOR LEGAL DOCUMENTS

General Durable Powers of Attorney, Health Care Powers of Attorney and Living Wills (Declaration of Desire for Natural Death) - Plus Written Documentation Explanations. Glenn Givens has lots of experience with these documents and has given multiple speeches on these topics.

Call Glenn at (803) 418-0800; ext. 108 for Details

GLENN F. GIVENS, ATTORNEY

Kolb & Givens, Attorneys at Law, LLC
107 North Main Street Sumter, SC 29150 803-418-0800



PO BOY'S TREE SERVICE LLC

TREE CARE

- TREE TRIMMING
- TREE REMOVAL
- STUMP GRINDING



SERVICES

- LAND CLEARING
- MULCH
- FORESTRY MOWING

FREE ESTIMATES

OVER 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE LICENSED & INSURED

803-469-7606

SUNDAY EVENING SP=Spectrum FTC=Farm DTV=DirectV MOVIES SPORTS KIDS FEBRUARY 16, 2025. Table with columns for channel, SP, FTC, DTV, and time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30). Rows include programs like WIS News 10, Chicago P.D., ABC World News, To Be Announced, America's Funniest Home Videos, Shifting Gears, Saturday Night Live, etc.

MONDAY EVENING SP=Spectrum FTC=Farm DTV=DirectV MOVIES SPORTS KIDS FEBRUARY 17, 2025. Table with columns for channel, SP, FTC, DTV, and time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30). Rows include programs like WIS News 10, Last Man Standing, ABC World News, Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy!, The Bachelor, etc.

BROWN'S FURNITURE & BEDDING advertisement. Includes a photo of a bedroom with a bed, a lamp, and a chair. Text: BROWN'S FURNITURE & BEDDING, 803-774-2100, 31 West Wesmer Blvd., Sumter, SC. Logos for Amazon, Discover, Mastercard, Visa, and BrownsFurnitureofSumter.com.



Steve McQueen is 'Bullitt' in classic police thriller

BY JAY BOBBIN

"Bullitt" is legendary for its midpoint car chase through the streets of San Francisco, but there's also plenty else to recommend about it.

The Peter Yates-directed 1968 police drama gets another of its frequent Turner Classic Movies showings Wednesday, Feb. 19, as part of a "31 Days of Oscar" tribute to films with Academy Award-winning editing (it won that honor). However, it remains most famous as one of the best examples of title star Steve McQueen's particular brand of screen cool, as he plays the self-styled title cop chosen to protect a witness for an ambitious politician.

Robert Vaughn (who also shared credit with McQueen in 1960's "The Magnificent Seven" and 1974's "The Towering Inferno") is also great as said politician, who's outwardly charming but slyly cold-blooded in seeking to advance his own agenda — so he isn't very pleased when a would-be killer gets to the witness before the latter can testify, leaving both him and one of Bullitt's colleagues in very bad shape.

With tenuous support from their boss (Simon Oakland), Bullitt and his partner (McQueen pal and frequent co-star Don Gordon) seek those responsible ... leading to the car chase referenced earlier, for which

auto enthusiast McQueen spent quite a bit of time behind the wheel himself. That's much of why the result is so exciting, since one clearly can see it's actually McQueen doing the driving.

Another terrific chase caps "Bullitt," set near and across the runways of the City by the Bay's airport — and one only can marvel at the shots of McQueen ducking under moving planes, at a time when it had to be done for real without inserting an actor via computer-enhanced imagery. (Almost 30 years later, a similar pursuit between Al Pacino and Robert De Niro in "Heat" served as something of a homage.)

Jacqueline Bisset's role in "Bullitt" is somewhat thankless, as the actress has said herself ... the girlfriend who tries to prompt the cop to rethink his career choice. Two co-stars who fare much better: Robert Duvall as a cab driver who proves helpful to Bullitt in retracing the witness' earlier steps; and Georg Stanford Brown, later a regular on television's "The Rookies" and a director of note, as a doctor whose skills are questioned by Vaughn.

Though it's nearly 60 years old, "Bullitt" remains much fresher than many movies of more recent vintage in its genre. That's one of the true tests of a classic, and "Bullitt" passes it. And then some.

Best TV POLICE CHIEFS MOVIES

BY JAY BOBBIN

Chief Dan Mathews (played by Broderick Crawford on "Highway Patrol," syndicated, 1955-59): While Clancy Brown joins the ranks of TV police chiefs as the father of two detectives in "Good Cop/Bad Cop" — premiering Wednesday, Feb. 19, on The CW — the gruff Mathews was the embodiment of a law-and-order figure as far as early television was concerned.

Chief Robert Ironside (Raymond Burr, "Ironside," NBC, 1967-75): Being in a wheelchair didn't stop this San Francisco cop's crime-solving knack.

Capt. Adam Greer (Tige Andrews, "Mod Squad," ABC, 1968-73): Three young rebels worked under cover for this rugged officer.

Capt. Barney Miller (Hal Linden, "Barney Miller," ABC, 1974-82): A wry sense of humor certainly helped this New York precinct leader.

Capt. Frank Furillo (Daniel J. Travanti, "Hill Street Blues," NBC, 1981-87): An evenhanded, sensible approach fueled this officer's dealings.

Chief Bill Gillespie (Carroll O'Connor, "In the Heat of the Night," NBC/CBS, 1988-95): As in the Oscar-winning movie, this sly Southerner observed more than others suspected.

Chief Clancy Wiggum (voice of Hank Azaria, "The Simpsons," Fox, 1990-present): Springfield isn't any safer under this humorously inept officer.

Capt. Donald Cragen (Dann Florek, "Law & Order," NBC, 1990-93; "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," NBC, 1993-2014): Low-key yet firm, this superior was a quintessential New York cop.

Lt. Anita Van Buren (S. Epatha Merkerson, "Law & Order," NBC, 1993-2010): Cragen's successor in the original iteration of the series had a manner similar to his, but some cases upped her passion for justice. (Merkerson returned to executive producer Dick Wolf's universe as hospital administrator Sharon Goodwin on NBC's still-running "Chicago Med.")

Capt. Jim Brass (Paul Guilfoyle, "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," CBS, 2000-14): This detective oversaw the nuts and bolts of cases while others delved into forensic angles.

Assistant Police Chief Will Pope (J.K. Simmons, "The Closer," TNT, 2005-12): His personal past with interrogator Brenda Leigh Johnson (Kyra Sedgwick) sometimes colored their dealings, but Pope largely kept things professional.

Commissioner Frank Reagan (Tom Selleck, "Blue Bloods," CBS, 2010-24): Sometimes too much by the book in the view of others, the NYPD's top man ultimately — and always — had the backs of his officers, including his sons.



In times like these everyone is looking for
Bargain Buys!



GUNS

"Make Your Dollars Go Further at Reliable Pawn Shop"

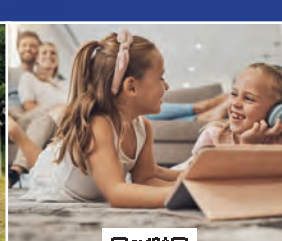
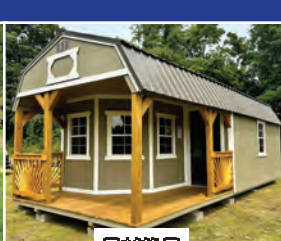
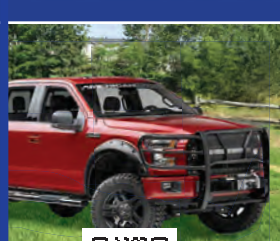
Monday-Friday 10am-5:50pm; Saturday 10am-4:50pm

THANK YOU FOR MAKING US #1

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

VOTE FOR US IN FOUR CATEGORIES

Dixie Products & Dixie Carpets



Car & Truck Accessories

AUTO/Car & Truck Accessories



Storage Buildings

BUSINESS/Storage Buildings



Carpet & Flooring Store

SHOP/Carpet & Flooring Store



Flooring Installation

HOME/Flooring Installation company

NO WORRIES,
Call Sumter's
#1 Blondes.
Real help.
Real fast.



Dixie Carpets

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





Misinformation overload: Political thriller 'Zero Day' questions the role of truth

BY SARAH PASSINGHAM

The divisive political landscape we find ourselves living through these days can feel stranger than fiction. Proving the idiom true is a new, eerily timely, six-episode limited series "Zero Day," premiering Thursday, Feb. 20, on Netflix. Robert De Niro ("Killers of the Flower Moon," 2023) stars as former President George Mullen, who is pulled out of retirement to head the precedent-setting Zero Day Commission.

When a cyberattack is carried out against the United States, it causes several disasters and country-wide chaos, killing thousands of citizens on what becomes known as Zero Day. Following the tragic events, President Evelyn Mitchell (Angela Bassett, "Damsel," 2024) calls on the former president to lead an investigation into who is responsible for the attacks.

Whether outside forces or homegrown terrorists were behind the fatal plot, the many voices willfully spreading disinformation make Mullen's job incredibly complicated. To get to the bottom of it, the former president surrounds himself with as trustworthy a team as he can in the ambitious world of American politics.



Jesse Plemons ("Kinds of Kindness," 2024) stars as Mullen's former aide Roger Carlson, brought back to work for the commission. Also joining the investigation are political strategist and Mullen's former chief of staff Valerie Whitesell (Connie Britton, "Dear Edward") and Department of Justice lawyer Carl Otieno (McKinley Belcher III, "Ozark"), who serves as lead investigator for the Zero Day Commission. Lizzy Caplan ("Fatal Attraction") is progressive congressional representative Alexandra Mullen and daughter of the former president, while Joan Allen (Lisey's Story") is former first lady and nominee to the federal bench, Sheila Mullen.

Also starring in "Zero Day" are Matthew Modine ("Stranger Things") as speaker of the house Richard Dreyer; Bill Camp ("Presumed Innocent") as CIA Director Jeremy Lasch; Gaby Hoffmann ("Transparent") as Silicon Valley billionaire Monica Kidder; Clark Gregg ("Snowpiercer") as Robert Lyndon, another billionaire with a penchant for manipulating politics; and Mark Ivanir ("Mayor of Kingstown") as intelligence operative Natan.

Dan Stevens ("Cuckoo," 2024) portrays Mullen's most vocal critic, political talk show host Evan Green, complete with the faux-blue collar look of real right-wing propagandists. Though the series was developed before the most recent U.S. presidential election came to pass, some of the events of the series bear a striking resemblance to real circumstances that arose during the campaign — notably, Mullen questioning his own competency as he begins noticing signs of cognitive decline.

Series co-creator Eric Newman ("Griselda") spoke to Vanity Fair in November about the upcoming series, revealing that he and fellow co-creator Noah Oppenheim ("Jackie," 2016), former president of NBC News, sought to confront the country's relationship with the truth in "Zero Day," tuning into Americans' imaginings of the future.

"It feels like it could happen. Based on how you feel about the election, this is either going to be an aspirational story about people who can find their way to the truth, even when it's really hard, or a cautionary tale of the perils of the deep state and absolute power corrupting absolutely," Newman said. "For me, it's a little bit of both."

Pitch perfect: Relive the 2024 MLS season during all-new 'Onside' docuseries



BY CAROLINE COLLCUTT

"Go beyond the pitch with the personalities that power MLS" (per Apple TV+), during the eight-part series "Onside: Major League Soccer," premiering Friday, Feb. 21, on AppleTV+.

From shocking, game-changing debuts to stunning performances from seasoned professionals, the 2024 MLS season had plenty to offer its fans: MLS history was made when 14-year-old Cavan Sullivan took to the pitch, becoming the youngest player in MLS history; "Raquinho" stole hearts while being chased around Subaru Park; Lionel Messi made assist after assist after assist; European stars crossed the pond to play in U.S.A.; and the L.A. Galaxy became MLS Cup champions for the first time since 2014. The gameplay was fast and biting, and the drama — both on the pitch and off — was ceaselessly captivating for all fans tuned in.

Celebrating a year with unrivaled energy, this one-of-a-kind series offers "unprecedented access to players, coaches and teams," according to an official synopsis given by Apple TV, "[taking] fans through the most compelling storylines, adrenaline-pumping moments and captivating personalities of the 2024 MLS season, from preseason all the way to the 2024 MLS Cup final."

In the official "Onside" trailer, David Beckham (owner of the Inter

Miami CF), Tim Parker (defender, New England Revolution) and the aforementioned Cavan Sullivan (midfielder, Philadelphia Union) are revealed to be three of the personalities followed. As key moments of gameplay are shown, intertwined with clips from players' personal lives, Beckham shares: "This is a massive moment to have exceptional players playing in this country. But this league, it's a tough league."

Parker then agrees, adding that "as you get older, it gets harder."

From a talented team of executive producers — including Academy Award winner James Gay-Rees ("Formula 1: Drive to Survive"), Emmy winner Paul Martin ("Make or Break") and Hillary Olsen ("Faceoff: Inside the NHL") — and showrunner Steve Rankin ("Naked and Afraid"), "Onside" comes as part of Apple's ongoing partnership with MLS, joining the likes of other unscripted, straight-from-the-pitch series such as "Messi Meets America," "Messi's World Cup: The Rise of a Legend," "Real Madrid: Until The End" and "Super League: The War for Football."

With more sure to come — as the 2025 MLS season kicks off the following day, Saturday, Feb. 22 — Apple debuts its latest soccer-obsessed series, "Onside: Major League Soccer," Friday, Feb. 21, on Apple TV+.

View from the Couch



"NOSFERATU"

Writer-director Robert Eggers' widely acclaimed melodrama, a remake of a classic 1922 thriller, puts twists on the Dracula legend. Bill Skarsgard ("It") plays a Transylvanian count whose vampirish tendencies ultimately mean trouble for a newlywed couple (Nicholas Hoult, Lily-Rose Depp) when the husband tries to arrange a property sale for the count. The wife has a connection to the supernatural world from her childhood, adding to a dark scenario that threatens to end badly unless a professor (Willem Dafoe, who also worked with Eggers on 2019's "The Lighthouse" and 2022's "The Northman") well-

BY JAY BOBBIN

versed in mysticism can intervene in time. Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Emma Corrin also are in the cast of the saga, which makes good use of foreboding locations in such sites as Prague and Romania. The physical look of the film, achieved by cinematographer Jarin Blaschke — who earned one of the picture's four current Oscar nominations — also is a major element. An extended cut that adds several minutes to the theatrical version is included. DVD extras: "making-of" documentary; audio commentary by Eggers; deleted scenes. **** (R: AS, N, P, V) (Also on Blu-ray, 4K Ultra HD and Digital)

"THE SOCIAL NETWORK"

To mark its 15th anniversary, director David Fincher and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin's 2010 drama about the creation of Facebook gets a home-video relaunch in a 4K Ultra HD Steelbook edition. Jesse Eisenberg plays Mark Zuckerberg, then a college student who developed an online sensation with the social site that has become a regular destination for countless users internationally ... though twin brothers (both played by Armie Hammer, thanks to extremely smooth visual trickery) alleged that their idea for such a site had been taken. Andrew Garfield also stars as Zuckerberg's principal colleague in launching Facebook, with Justin Timberlake as a self-proclaimed entrepreneur who contributed related ideas and support. The Sorkin

script cleverly moves back and forth across the story's timeline; Max Minghella, Rashida Jones, Brenda Song and Dakota Johnson also appear. **** (R: AS, P) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"THE ORDER"

Known for the variety in his projects, Jude Law sees action — quite literally — in this thriller inspired by the true story of an FBI agent's pursuit of a white supremacist group. The lawman played by Law has hopes of taking things easier by relocating to Idaho after his work on two high-profile cases, but it doesn't work out that way as a deputy (Tye Sheridan) drags him into a missing-person investigation that has ties to the activities of a group apparently involved in a variety of crimes. Nicholas Hoult, who will be seen as Lex Luthor in this summer's "Superman" movie, portrays the ring's leader; Jurnee Smollett, podcaster Marc Maron and Odessa Young also are among the co-stars. *** (R: AS, N, P, V) (Also on Blu-ray and Digital)

"CROSSING DELANCEY"

The strong fan base for director Joan Micklin Silver's 1988 romantic comedy now earns it Criterion Collection treatment on Blu-ray and 4K Ultra HD, with Amy Irving in a charming performance as a bookstore worker who has preconceived notions of the type of relationship she should be in ... making things challenging for the pickle salesman (Peter Riegert) who tries to court

her. Her interest goes instead, at least initially, to a smooth-talking author (Jeroen Krabbe). In the one movie she made, stage actress Reizl Bozyk is a joy as the Irving character's grandmother. Sylvia Miles, John Bedford Lloyd, Rosemary Harris and (without the "Hyde" in his billing here) David Hyde Pierce also are featured. Susan Sandler adapted the script from her play, and she comments in an included documentary, along with Irving and Riegert. *** (PG: AS, P)

"PANIC ROOM"

Making its 4K Ultra HD debut, director David Fincher's 2002 thriller casts Jodie Foster as a recent divorcee who seeks refuge — along with her daughter (Kristen Stewart) — in the supposedly secret title room of their New York brownstone they've just moved into, after several intruders (Forest Whitaker, Jared Leto and country music's Dwight Yoakam) break in. The would-be thieves know what they're looking for, and it's in the panic room, forcing the mother and daughter to get creative with everything they have at their disposal to foil the felons and save themselves. Interestingly, Nicole Kidman originally was cast in Foster's role, but had to leave because of an injury (but her voice is heard on a phone call); then, filming was suspended when Foster became pregnant. *** (R: AS, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"PEARL IN PARADISE"

Adventure is as much a part of the formula as romance in this entry in a new "Hallmark 3-Movie Collection," casting Jill Wagner — who has gotten acclaim for her much tougher performance in the Paramount+ series "Lioness" lately — as a photographer who embarks on a search for a particular pearl in Fiji. She conducts the hunt with a not-as-enthusiastic novelist played by Kristoffer Polaha, who also worked with Wagner in the "Mystery 101" series of cable movies. The same mix of love and intrigue applies to the other two pictures in this set: "Legend of the Lost Locket," with Natasha Burnett and Viv Leacock; and "For Love & Honey," featuring Andrew Walker and Margaret Clunie. *** (Not rated: AS)

Coming Home Soon
"AMADEUS: THEATRICAL CUT"
(4K ULTRA HD) (FEB. 25)

"GLADIATOR II" (MARCH 4)

"KRAVEN THE HUNTER"
(MARCH 4)

"RED ONE" (MARCH 4)

"THE PENGUIN: SEASON ONE" (MARCH 18)

"TULSA KING: SEASON TWO"
(MARCH 18)

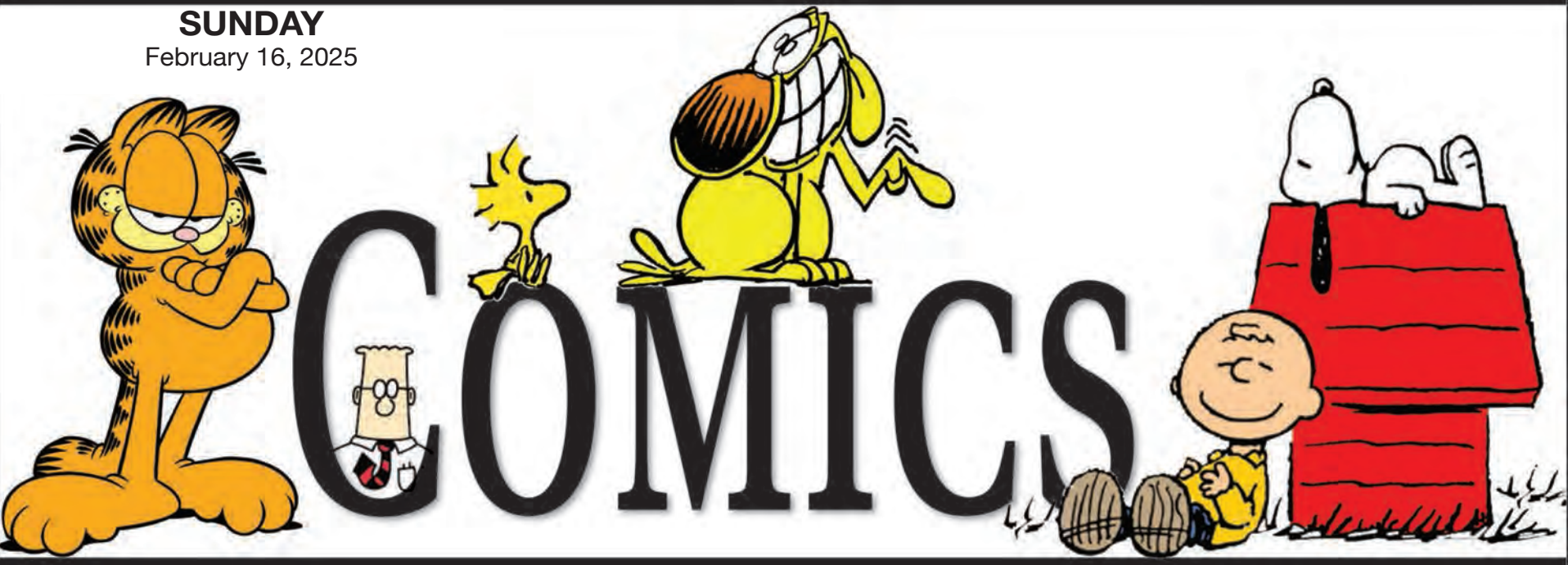
AS Adult situations
P Profanity

Family Viewing Ratings

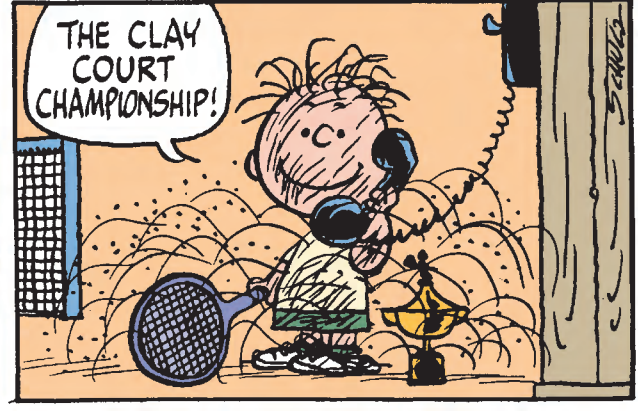
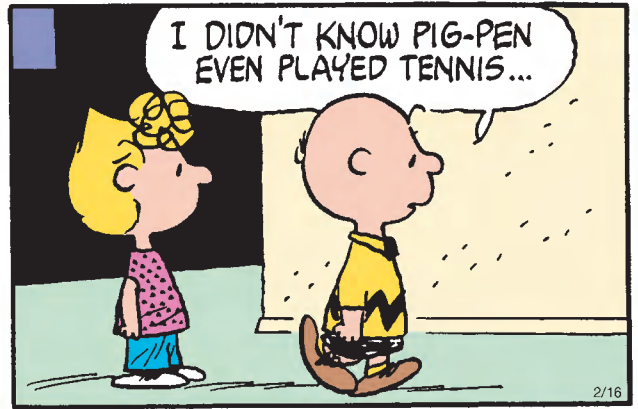
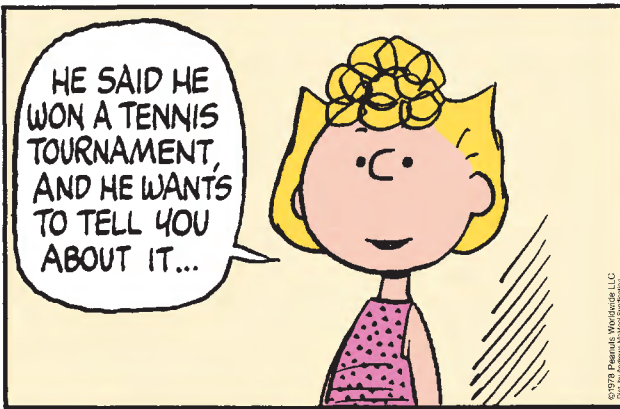
V Violence
N Nudity

GV Graphic Violence

SUNDAY
February 16, 2025

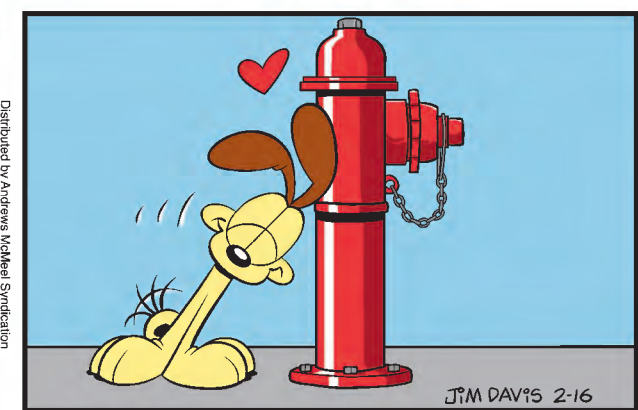
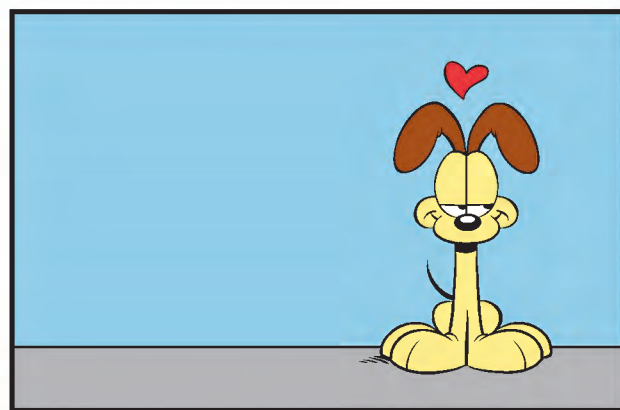
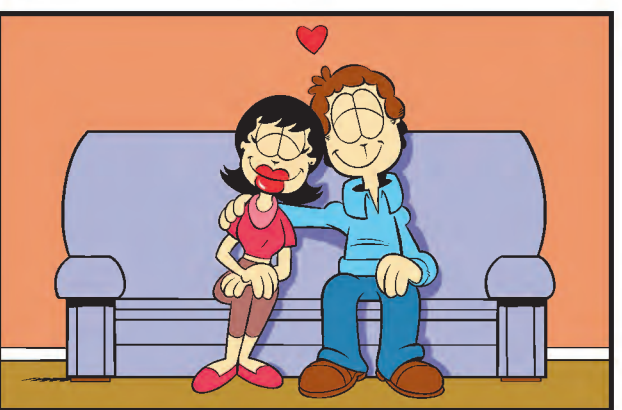
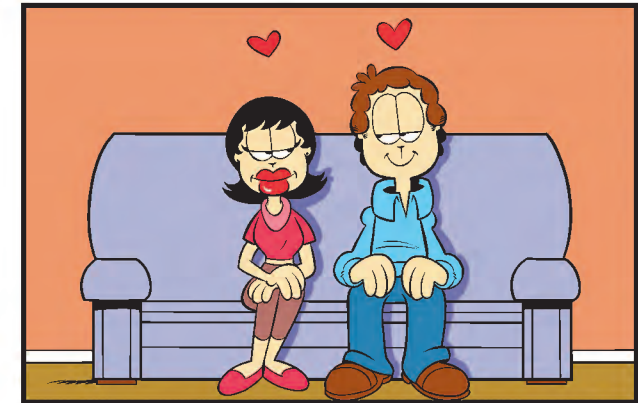
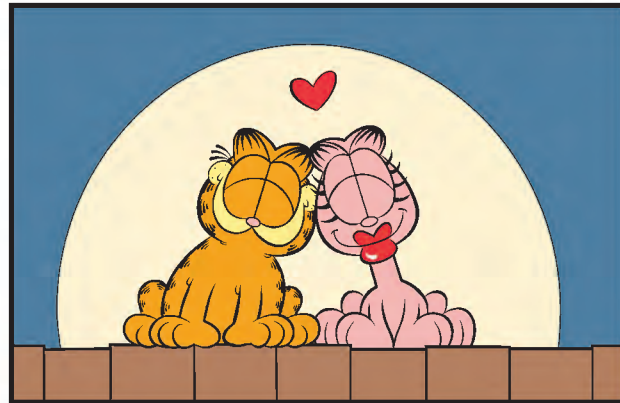
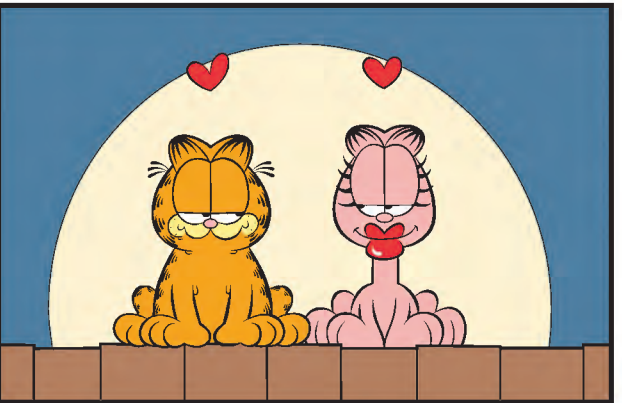


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



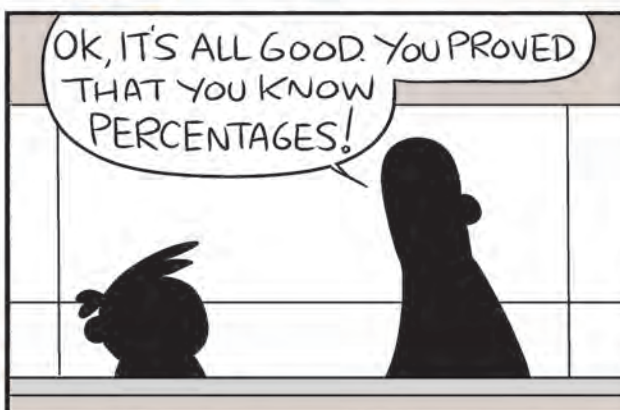
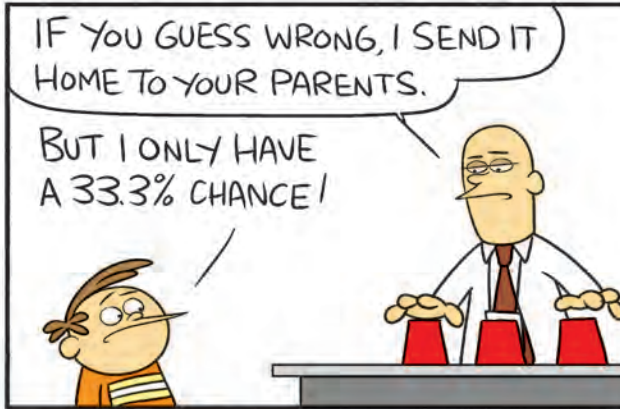
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



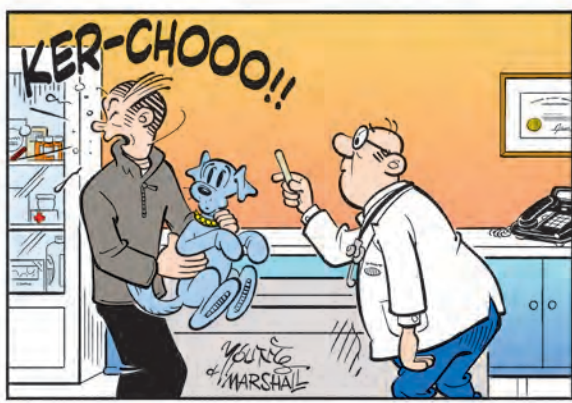
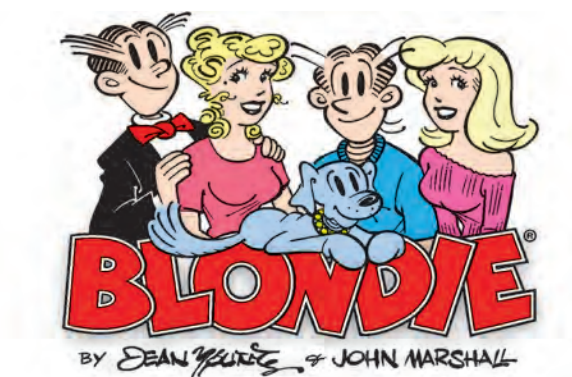
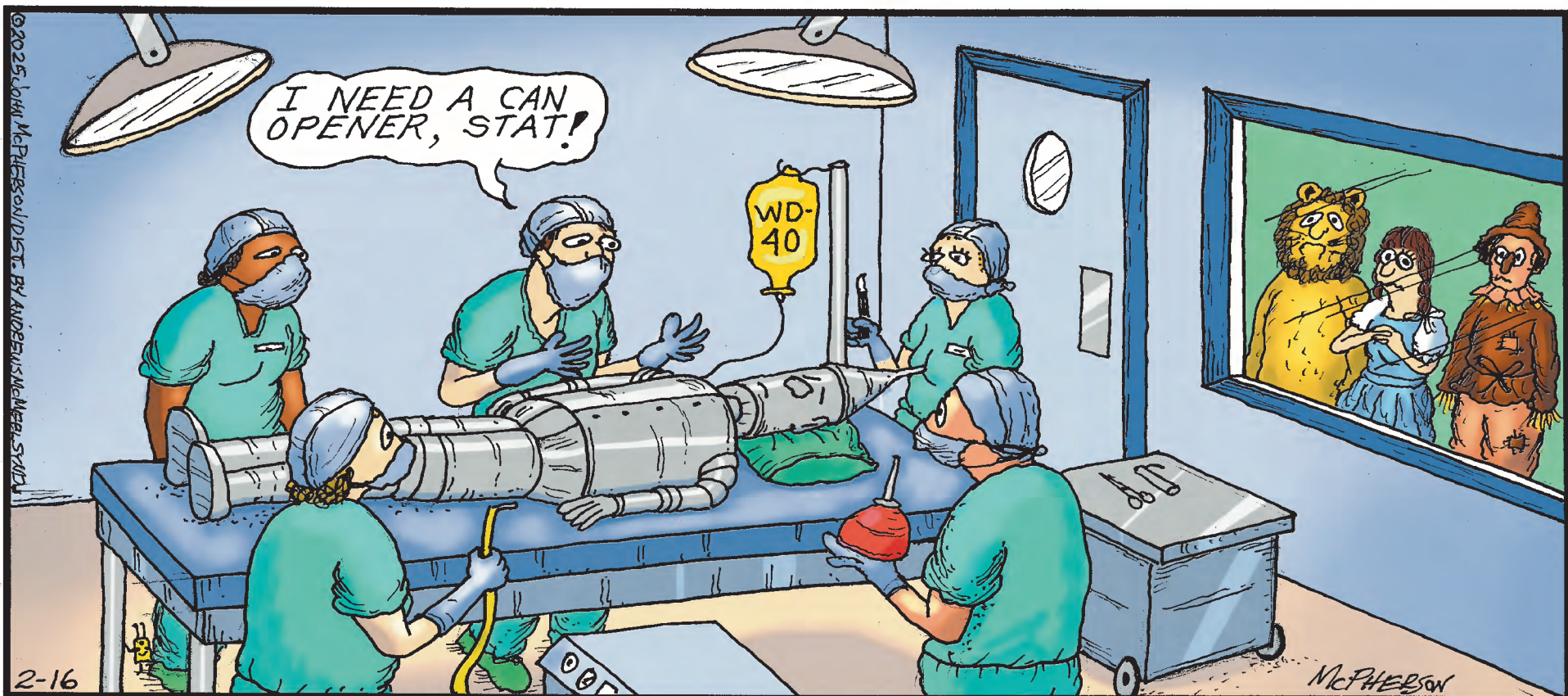
TAKE IT FROM THE TINKERSONS

BY BILL BETTWY



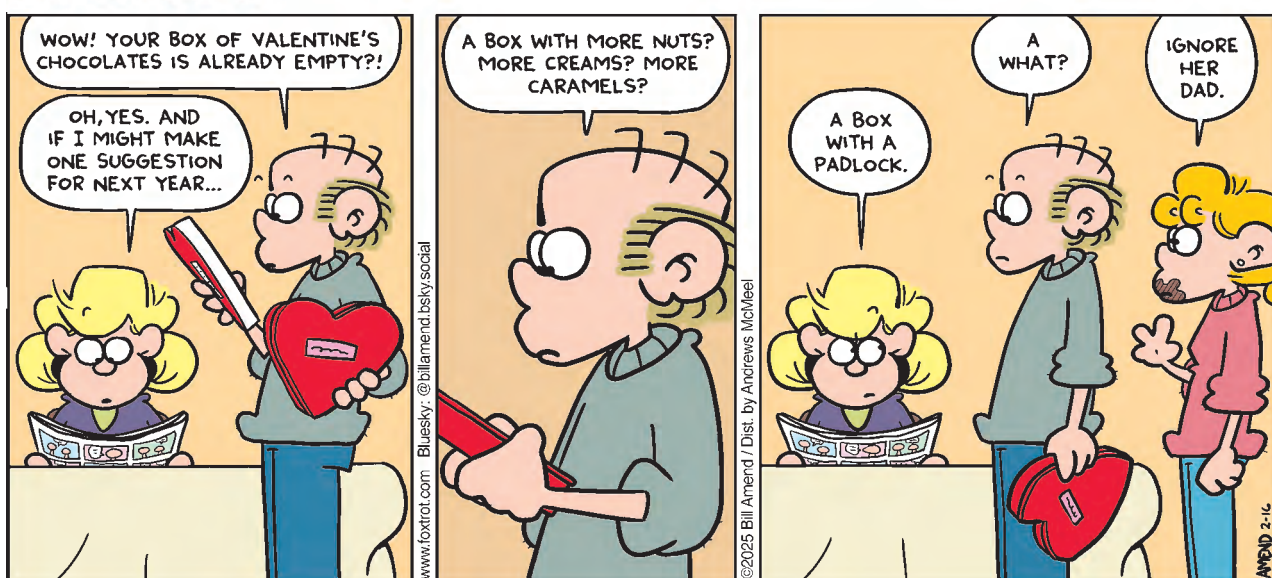
CLOSE TO HOME

BY JOHN McPHERSON



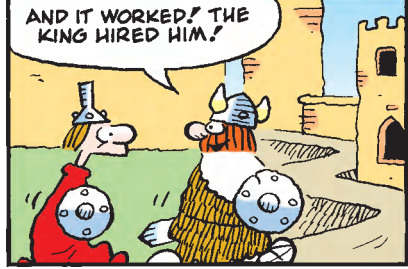
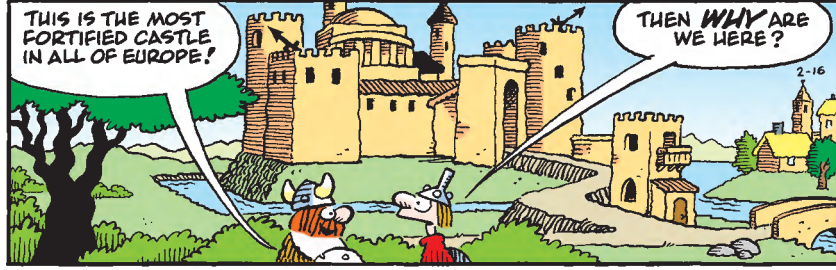
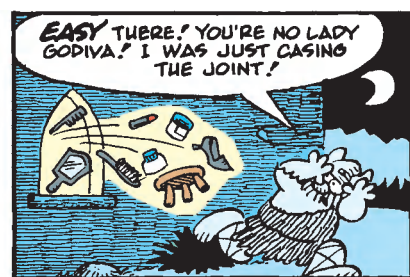
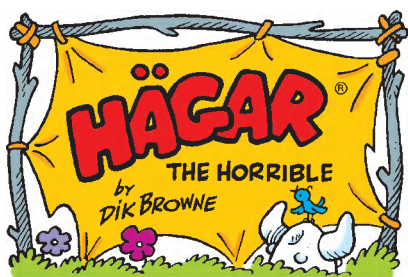
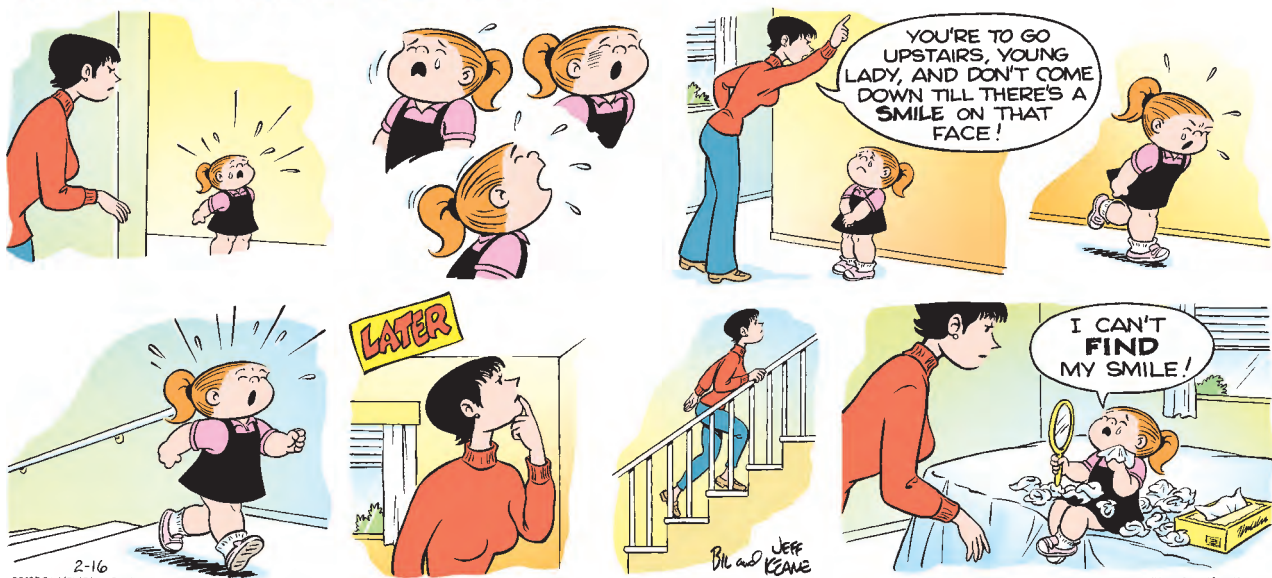
FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



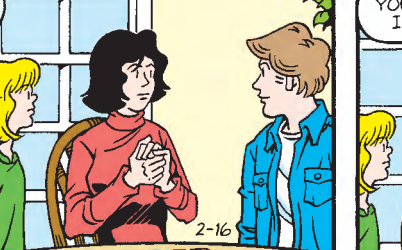
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

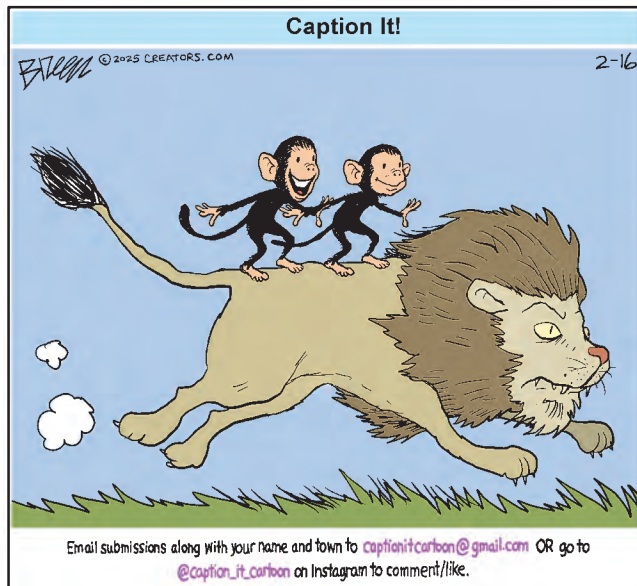
By Bill Keane



SALLY FORTH

BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE





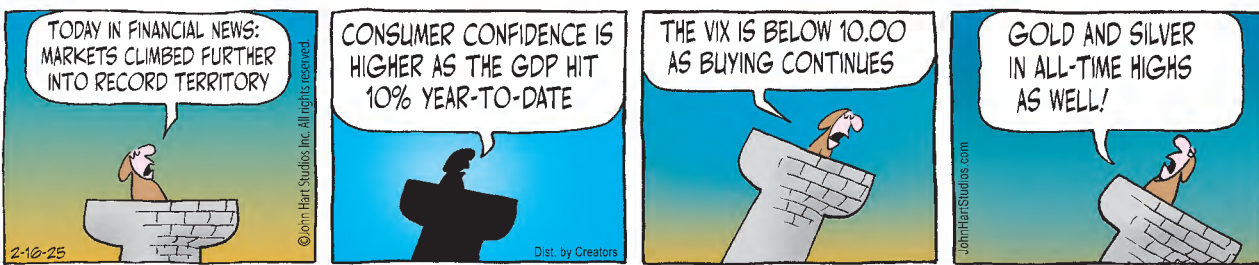
FRANK AND ERNEST



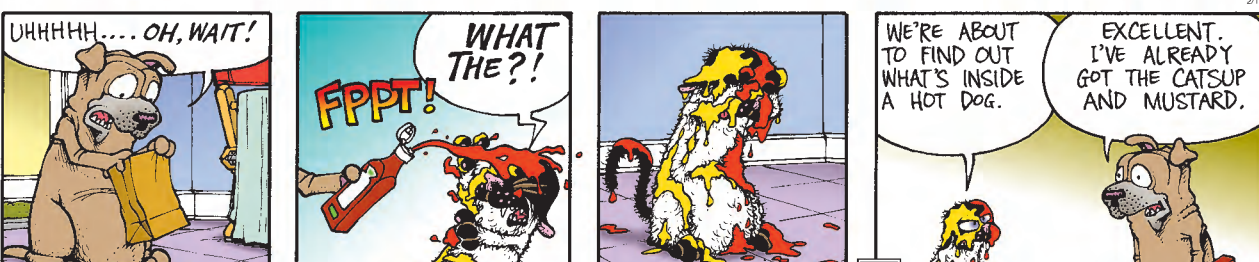
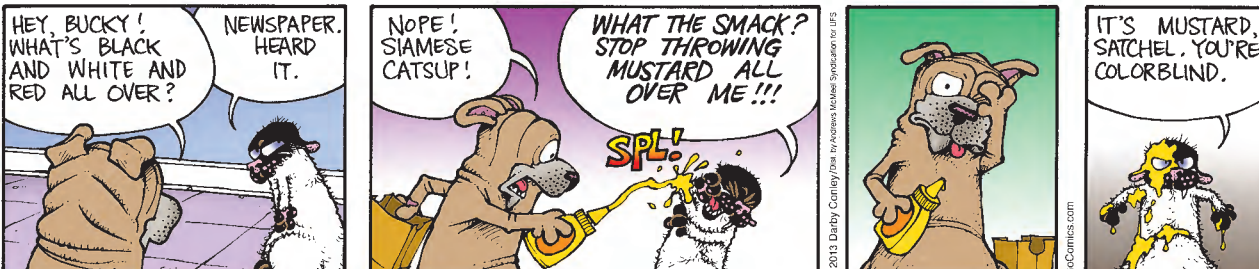
THE BORN LOSER



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS

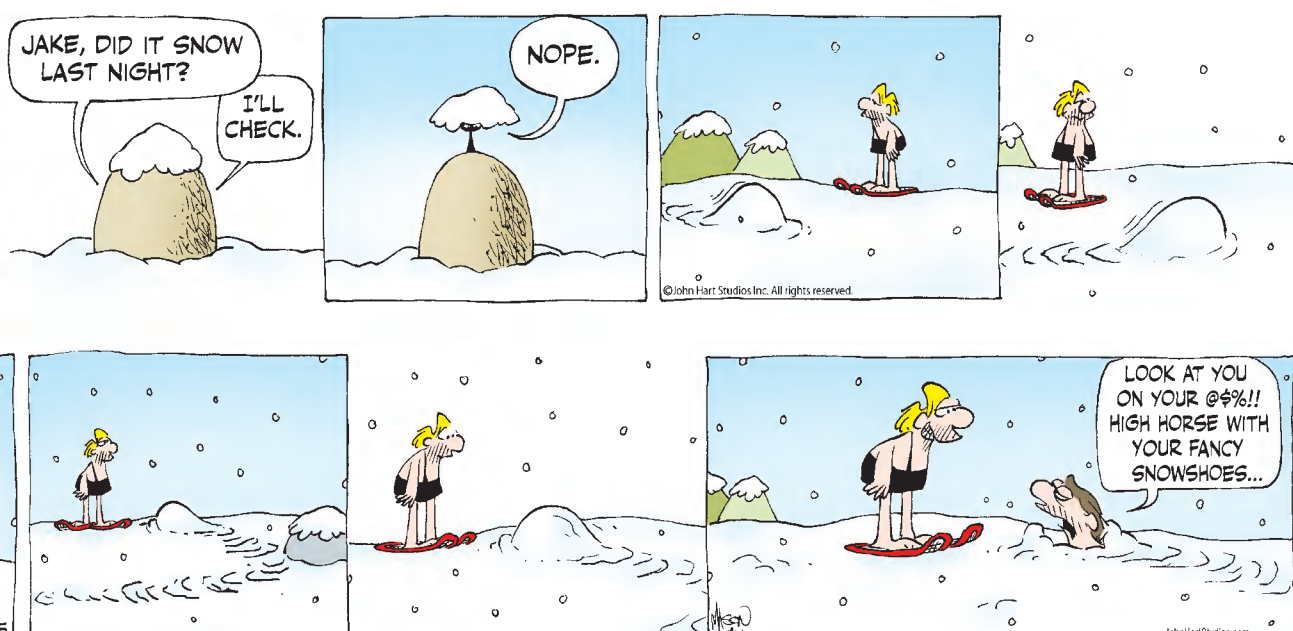


GET FUZZY BY DARBY CONLEY



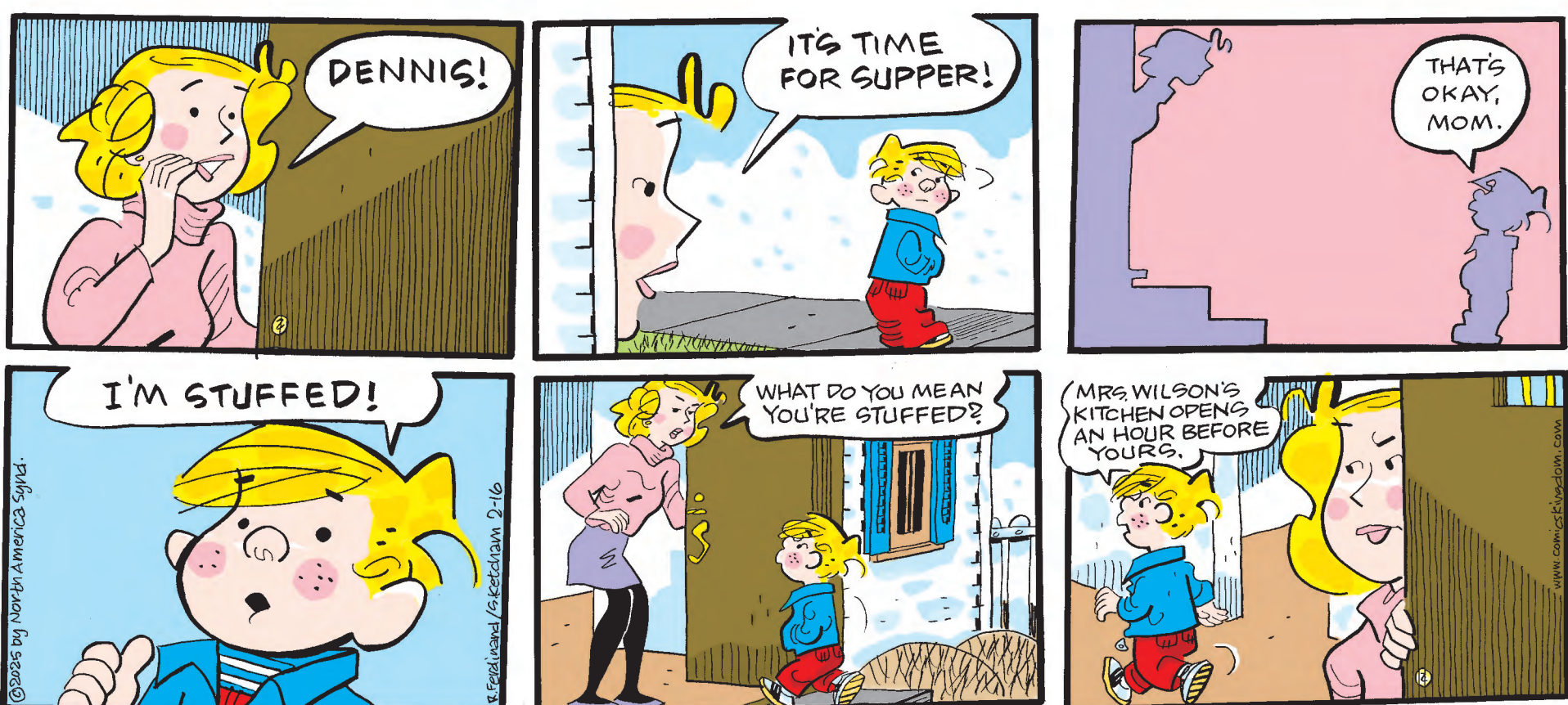
SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY



DENNIS THE MENACE

BY HANK KETCHAM



warm, friendly atmosphere • painless experience • family oriented



Dental Team of Sumter

5635 Broad St. Ext., Sumter, SC 29150 on the corner of 378 & 441 803.494.8466

Dr. R. Capers Lee Dr. Hunter Lee!



DentalTeamofSumter.com



Our Commitment

To connect. To inform. To build a better Sumter. We are the microphone. You tell the story

Essentially local. Authentically Sumter.

the Sumter ITEM

Sign up for The Sumter Item's free email newsletter. www.theitem.com/newsletter

