



Identities of child, woman killed are released; Sumter sheriff's office details timeline leading up to, during shootings

Man's wife and 11-year-old neighbor killed

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
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On the afternoon of Thursday, April 17, Sumter County Sheriff's Office held a news conference after the fatal shooting of an 11-year-old girl and 76-year-old woman on Wednesday evening.

At around 10:30 p.m. at a Floyd Drive residence, Reuben Arthur Leonard, 80, entered the home, as Chief Deputy Hampton Gardner described, in a "home invasion" manner and opened fire using an assault rifle on approximately 10 residents inside.



LEONARD

An 11-year-old female was said to have been in a front room of the home during the shooting. She was pronounced dead on scene from a gunshot wound, according to the agency.

Sumter County Coroner Robbie Baker later identified her as Ashly McFarland.

Gardner said the agency responded to the residence several times because of complaints from Leonard, who lived behind the woodline behind Floyd Drive, about residents doing target practice in the backyard. On Monday, April 14, Leonard was charged with breach of peace, and Gardner confirmed it was in reference to the ongoing dispute between him and residents at the home on Floyd Drive.

According to Gardner, Sheriff Anthony Dennis spoke with Leonard on Wednesday evening about coming out to speak with everyone to re-



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Chief Deputy Hampton Gardner with Sumter County Sheriff's Office speaks at a news conference on Thursday, April 17, after a double homicide on Wednesday, April 16. An 11-year-old girl was one of the victims, in addition to the suspect's 76-year-old wife.

solve the issue. Dennis told Leonard that if the issue persisted that night to call 911 or Dennis directly.

There were no alleged target practice shootings on Wednesday evening, Gardner said.

On Wednesday night, according to an incident report by the responding deputy, Leonard was captured on a Ring camera outside the Floyd Drive home. A woman lying in bed at the time heard five gunshots and then a male voice say, "I told you sons of b----- I was coming back to kill you" and the suspect running down the hallway. The woman saw her husband

jump on the suspect to subdue him, after which the deputy found them in the bathroom of the residence, according to the report.

McFarland, the granddaughter of the homeowners, was lying on the couch before the shooting, and the responding deputy found her with multiple gunshot wounds on the living room floor being helped by family members.

According to the report, Leonard ignored commands by deputies, and as they tried to gain control over him, "he attempted to reach for a pistol he had holstered on his hip."

SEE **SHOOTINGS**, PAGE A11



The woodline Reuben Leonard reportedly crossed from Saltwood Road where he lives to Floyd Drive, where a child was killed, is seen Thursday morning.

'Road tennis' from Barbados a hit at Lakewood in cultural connection

International teacher from island country brings project to her school in Sumter School District

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Pickleball might be all the craze now in Sumter, but one day soon you might see another variation on the traditional sport of tennis being played on the roadside locally.

"Road tennis" is a national pastime in the island country of Barbados in the Caribbean Sea, and thanks to Lakewood High School math teacher Sandrena Carter, who is a native of the small republic, the sport was recently



BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM

Lakewood High School math teacher Sandrena Carter, who is also the school's teacher of the year for next school year, holds a road tennis racket. She helped bring a cultural project involving the sport to Lakewood recently.

SEE **ROAD TENNIS**, PAGE A11

Community builder, retired JAG officer will be mayor's prayer breakfast speaker

Bullard has background in service and leadership; annual event is May 1

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

"While he is not well known in our community, he is probably the most decorated speaker we have ever had."

Those were the words of Sumter Mayor's Prayer Breakfast Steering Committee Chairman Gifford Shaw in describing Atlanta-based public benefit corporation CEO Rodney Bullard, who is this year's prayer breakfast keynote speaker. The



BULLARD

long-standing service will be held on Thursday, May 1, at Alice Drive Baptist Church.

The breakfast will begin at 6:45 a.m. at Alice Drive Baptist, 1305 Loring Mill Road, with the program starting at 7:30 a.m.

The annual local event is always held on the same day as the National Day of Prayer.

This year's theme for the National Day of Prayer is "Pour out to the God of hope and be filled" and Romans 15:13.

SEE **BREAKFAST**, PAGE A11

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Laura Kirven Onsrud
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John Edward Rhames
Brandy Laketshia Lesesne

Geraldine Dennis Jones
James Rubin Pitts
Jenny Davis Dennis
John Edward Wilson Jr.
Sandres Wright

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SECOND FRONT

E-mail: pressrelease@theitem.com

City's draft budget deficit decreases as work continues

BY DEIRDRE CURRIN
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The City of Sumter had a small agenda at the regularly scheduled city council meeting on Tuesday, April 15, where city finance department staff revealed its budget deficit has gone down by \$78,012.

At its previous meeting, the preliminary draft of the city's fiscal year 2025-26 budget was presented, showing a deficit of \$1,740,033 that will need to be balanced before July 1. Now, the updated deficit is \$1,662,021.

The first budget workshop will take place on May 13, and the public can comment on the budget at the second Sumter City Council meeting in May, which is Tuesday, May 20. The meeting will be on the fourth floor of Sumter Opera House and will begin at 5:30 p.m.

City of Sumter Finance Director Jonathan Flinchum said they will be steadily continuing to work on the budget in the meantime.

The city's preliminary draft budget can be accessed under the budget section at www.sumtersc.gov/finance.

The Midlands Fatherhood Coalition also gave its annual presentation at the meet-



LEFT: Attendees at the Sumter City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 15, were covered in pink in support of those fighting breast cancer and their families and caregivers as Minister Tamekia Hunter Ross spoke about her nonprofit FaithStrong.

RIGHT: Minister Tamekia Hunter Ross speaks about her nonprofit FaithStrong during the April 15 Sumter City Council meeting.

ing. The coalition offers free community-based programs and support groups to fathers.

The coalition has helped 2,506 children since 2018 and saved \$3,188,160 in incarceration costs by helping fathers pay child support.

The coalition gave the same presentation to Sumter County Council in March, and more statistics from the coalition can be read at <https://tinyurl.com/5dmj4x3n>.

Attendees at the meeting were covered in pink in support of those fighting breast cancer and their families and caregivers as Minister Tamekia Hunter Ross spoke about her nonprofit FaithStrong.

Ross spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting and asked the city to have a representative present at its fourth-annual Pink in the City event on the first Saturday of October. Ross re-



PHOTOS BY DEIRDRE CURRIN / THE SUMTER ITEM



The Midlands Fatherhood Coalition gave its annual presentation at Sumter's latest city council meeting. The coalition offers free community-based programs and support groups to fathers.

quested a city council representative give the welcome at the event; 50% of the about 500 to 700 participants come from outside of Sumter.

Ross' second request was for the city to declare the first Saturday in October as "Pink in the City" for Sumter as well as to adorn Main and Liberty streets with breast cancer awareness ribbons throughout the month.

"We would like to see where there are more plat-

forms created throughout the year and not just in October to advocate more about breast cancer because this past year we had about 50 women that was diagnosed [for] the first time with stage 4 breast cancer because they are not being educated; they don't know what to look for," Ross said.

Ross left the podium to clapping, and Mayor David Merchant thanked Ross and her nonprofit for what it does.

BizTalk: 'LensCrafters at Gateway' scheduled to open in September

Sumter manager says retailer will move into former Legacies in popular plaza

BY BRUCE MILLS
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Not all the news on current Sumter Mall store closings is bad, as one retailer will relocate soon into a busy plaza off Broad Street.

After closing in the mall on March 25 because of Liberty STEAM Charter School's current expansion, LensCrafters is slated to open in Gateway

Plaza across the street from Walmart in September, according to the eyewear retailer's manager, who spoke recently to *The Sumter Item*.

Sumter LensCrafters' location manager Tiffani Porter said the new store will go in between Five Below and Yucatan Mexican restaurant in Gateway in the former Legacies Bar & Grill location. Construction renovations will begin in early summer, and the vision-care provider is projected to open in September. The new store will be called "LensCrafters at Gateway," she added.

In the meantime, customers' phone calls to the former

store in Sumter Mall are being routed to the Florence location, Porter said, and LensCrafters also has three locations in Columbia.

Gateway Plaza has been redeveloped and expanded in recent years. Additions have included a Ross, Ulta Beauty, Five Below and Chipotle Mexican Grill, among others. TJ Maxx has been an anchor in the plaza for years.

The nearby intersection of Alice Drive and Broad has become the center of town for commercial development since Walmart moved to that location about 20 years ago.

Porter said she is excited about the move.



BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM

LensCrafters' store in Sumter Mall closed on March 25. The eyewear retailer will open in September in Gateway Plaza.

"It is supposed to be an incredible upgrade," she said, "and we are just thrilled to be out of the mall because traffic has declined so much in recent years. We feel like it will be a good place to be."

LensCrafters' location in

Sumter Mall was next door to the growing charter school, and Porter said the retailer was notified by the mall's owner, Georgia-based Hull Property Group, that it would need to vacate seven months ago, on Sept. 1, 2024.

Sumter coroner: 64-year-old succumbs to injuries sustained in 2-vehicle wreck

BY STAFF REPORT

Lisa Skinner, 64, of Sumter County died at Prisma Health Tuomey from injuries she received in a two-vehicle collision which occurred at 1:40 p.m. Wednesday, April 16, according to Sumter County Coroner Robbie Baker Jr.

The wreck occurred on West Liberty and

Bartlette streets in Sumter.

Next of kin have been notified.

An autopsy will be performed on Saturday, April 19, at the Medical University of Charleston.

The wreck is being investigated by the Sumter County Coroner's Office and the Sumter Police Department.

CORRECTION

A story on the front page of Wednesday's edition about the Real ID deadline did not quote a 20th Fighter Wing spokeswoman with complete accuracy. The quote should have read the following from Staff Sgt. Kelsey Owen:

"Starting May 7, 2025, a Real ID-compliant license will be required for access to federal facilities, including Shaw Air Force Base," said 20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office Staff Sgt. Kelsey Owen. "Visitors will not be granted access without a Real ID, passport or passport card, even with an escort. This update complies with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Real ID program, in accordance with the Real ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005."

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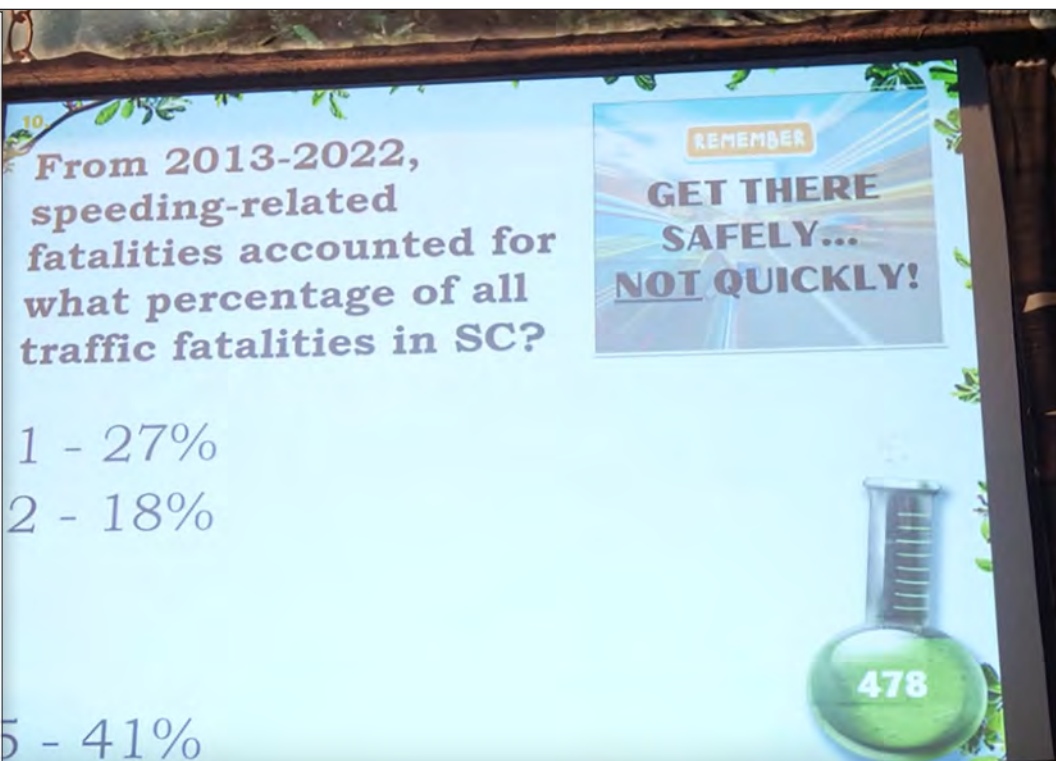


SUMTER TODAY

NOW STREAMING ON YOUTUBE

ThinkFast recently hosted its interactive teen driver safety game show with approximately 200 students at Sumter High. The ThinkFast Interactive program is an innovative and effective method for delivering safety and prevention messaging to teens through a competitive trivia format. The program included prizes and an epic dance battle!

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zR-SQzP2SuM>



From 2013-2022, speeding-related fatalities accounted for what percentage of all traffic fatalities in SC?

1 - 27%

2 - 18%

5 - 41%

REMEMBER GET THERE SAFELY... NOT QUICKLY!

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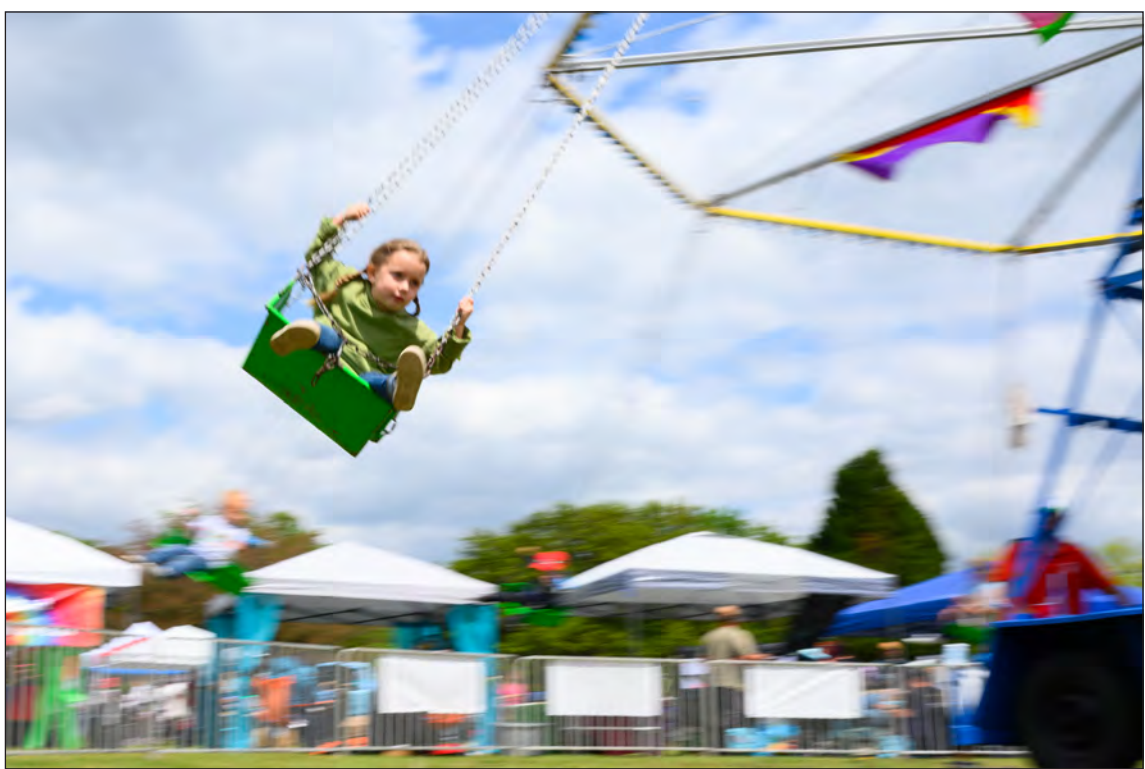
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Puddin' Swamp Festival fun



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM
Bailey Hicks, 14, and Emilee Hancock, 15, run for the finish line of the three-legged race at the annual Puddin' Swamp Festival in Turbeville on Saturday, April 12. The festival, held Friday-Sunday, April 11-13, had something for everyone. From an art show, car show, fair rides, dancing and beauty queens to music, carnival-style games, fun competitions, great food and friends, the event drew a crowd.



Harper Ray, 5, rides on the swings at the annual Puddin' Swamp Festival in Turbeville.



Jonathan Floyd, right, competes in the pie-eating contest at the annual Puddin' Swamp Festival in Turbeville on Saturday, April 12.



LEFT: Dreshawn Cooper, 12, and Jordan Cooper, 11, turn their seats upside down on one of the rides at the festival.

BELOW: Luke Vaughn waits for players at his carnival game.

The Southern Savages of Lynchburg perform at the annual Puddin' Swamp Festival.



Aubree Creel, 3, runs past a dance performance at the annual festival.



PUBLIC NOTICE

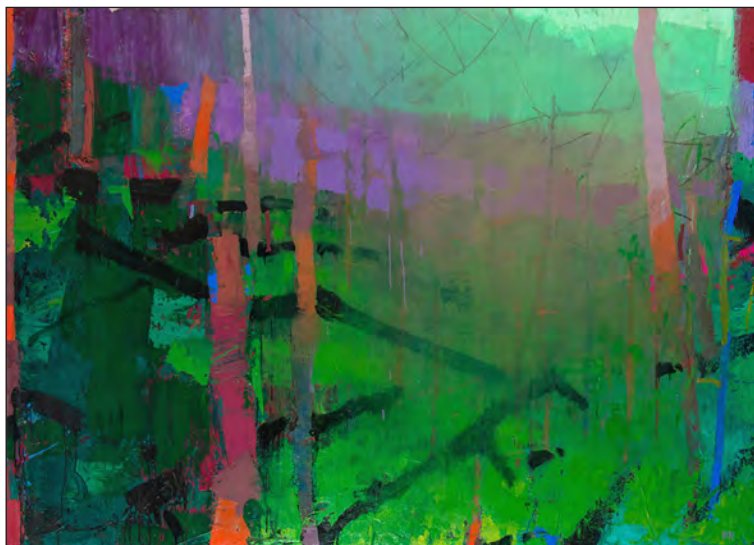
SUMTER COUNTY ANNOUNCES THAT IT'S VECTOR CONTROL DEPARTMENT WILL BEGIN SPRAYING FOR MOSQUITOES THE WEEK OF APRIL 21, 2025. RESIDENTS WHO WISH TO BE ON THE DO NOT SPRAY LIST AS WELL AS BEEKEEPERS ARE ASKED TO CALL VECTOR CONTROL AT 803-774-0045 TO MAKE SURE ALL LISTS ARE UPDATED. REQUESTS FOR SERVICE SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO VECTOR CONTROL AT 803-774-0045. LEAVE A MESSAGE IF NO ANSWER AND YOUR CALL WILL BE RETURNED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Mary Hinson Flower Show on view April 19, Brian Rutenberg art exhibit through June 13 at art gallery

SUBMITTED BY SUMTER COUNTY GALLERY OF ART

Sumter County Gallery of Art, the Deane and Roger Ackerman Family Fund and the Council of Garden Clubs of Sumter present "Horizons" — Sumter's exhibition and flower show, featuring the mysterious and color-saturated Lowcountry scenes of artist Brian Rutenberg. The Mary Hinson Flower Show will be on view to the public on Saturday, April 19, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The exhibition will run through June 13.

Brian Rutenberg, a Myrtle Beach native, is widely considered to be one of the finest American painters of his generation. Rutenberg has spent 40 years honing a distinctive method of compressing the rich color and form of his native coastal South Carolina into complex landscape paintings that imbue material reality with a deep sense of place. Rutenberg says especially inspiring is that point when the land meets the water and for a moment the two become blurred — the horizon. Rutenberg's paintings seethe with the familiar yet foreign components of the Lowcountry — moist, heavy air, nightcrawlers, pluff mud, ancient trees and the ever-changing South



Carolina coast.

Rutenber received his BFA in 1987 from the College of Charleston and his MFA in 1989 from the School of Visual Arts, New York. He is a Fulbright Scholar, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow, an Irish Museum of Modern Art visiting artist program participant and has had more than 100 museum and gallery exhibitions across the U.S. and abroad. Rutenberg's paintings are included in such museum collections as Yale University Art Gallery, The Butler Institute of American Art, Bronx Museum of Art, Peabody Essex Museum of Art, Greenville County Museum of Art, Provincetown Art Museum,

Gibbes Museum, Morris Museum, South Carolina State Museum and many others.

Sumter County Gallery of Art Director Karen Watson notes that the Horizons team searched for just the right artist to provide the "creative canvas" for the floral designers to respond to. She believes that the Sumter audience, with their reverence for the South Carolina coast, will gravitate to Rutenberg's work. For the second year in a row, the Sumter gallery worked closely with Jerald Melberg Gallery in Charlotte, North Carolina — one of the premiere galleries in the Southeast — to bring the art of Rutenberg to Sumter. According to Watson, Jerald and



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Brian Rutenberg's "Blackjack," left, and "Spear the Water," above

Mary Melberg and their team were a dream to work with.

The Levi-Barnett gallery will be the site of the Horticulture Division of the Horizons Flower Show and the exhibition "Family Affair, Dr. David and Linda Brown and Lindsay Brown-Dix." The Brown family are all excellent artists working in different mediums. Linda works in oils, David works in watercolor, and Lindsay, their daughter, works in ceramics. The Browns are very involved in the Sumter arts community and are longtime supporters of the gallery. Linda and David's work is seen regularly in the annual Sumter Artists' Guild Show, and Lindsay's installation "Alchemy" was jur-

ied into the 2024 ArtFields competition.

Rutenber will give an artist talk/presentation and book signing of "Clear Seeing Place" on Thursday, May 8, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

This special exhibition would not be possible without the significant support of the Jerald Melberg Gallery, Charlotte, North Carolina, the Council of Garden Clubs of Sumter and our community sponsors — first and foremost, The Deane and Roger Ackerman Family Fund, Thompson Turner Construction Group, Smith Robinson Law, Carolina Concierge Care, Jones Chevrolet and Patricia & Michael Fernandez.

South Carolina ETV and Public Radio commemorates the 10-year anniversary of Mother Emanuel AME tragedy with special programs

BY SOUTH CAROLINA ETV

COLUMBIA — South Carolina ETV and Public Radio will honor the 10-year anniversary of the 2015 tragedy at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston through a series of special programs and community engagement efforts under the theme Never Forgotten: The Emanuel Nine.

Beginning this month, SCETV will launch a community storytelling initiative, Voices Collected, to preserve the voices and memories connected to the Emanuel Nine as well as to place emphasis on healing, legacy and impact. SCETV invites South Carolinians and others around the country to share reflections and memories online or in person at scheduled events. These collected voices — via audio, video or written submissions — will be curated for use in broadcast, podcast, social media and educational materials. For information on how to schedule your recording session at the ETV studios or an upcoming event, or to submit your story online, visit the SCETV website.

"As we mark 10 years since the tragedy at Mother Emanuel AME Church, SCETV is honored to commemorate the lives lost and amplify the voices of those forever impacted. Telling this story is not just an act of remembrance — it is a responsibility we carry as South Carolinians, as journalists and as human beings. Through thoughtful, community-rooted storytelling, we aim to ensure that the legacy of the Emanuel Nine lives on and

continues to inspire healing and understanding," said SCETV President and CEO Adrienne Fairwell.

In addition to the Voices Collected initiative, SCETV's broadcast and digital platforms will feature dedicated programming throughout June. News reports and features through programs like "This Week in South Carolina" and the "South Carolina Lede" will honor the lives lost, exploring the continued work of justice and reconciliation. A televised broadcast special is also scheduled to premiere on ETV on June 19 at 8 p.m. The special will also be available to stream on the SCETV website, the SCETV App or by using the PBS App.

Additionally, SCETV is collaborating with church and youth organizations to support youth engagement and reflection around the commemoration.

On June 17, 2015, nine worshippers were killed and one was injured during a Bible study at the historic Mother Emanuel AME Church — the oldest Black church in the South. This tragedy sparked conversation and movements across the state and country.

As the state and nation reflect on the legacy of the Emanuel Nine, SCETV is committed to creating space for remembrance, reflection and healing through broadcast and digital content as well as civic community dialogue.

"The content we're creating for this 10-year remembrance is community-informed and collaborative. We are being thoughtful in who we bring to-



AP FILE PHOTO

Memorials are placed in front of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on Thursday, June 16, 2016.

gether — a talented, passionate team of journalists, producers, educators and storytellers — who understand the weight and meaning of this moment. I want to express sincere gratitude to those who are committing their time, energy and hearts to ensure this effort honors the legacy of the Emanuel Nine with passion and compassion," said SCETV Assistant General Manager Dr. Stephanie Cook.

For more information and updates on programming and events, visit scetv.org/emanuelnine.

ABOUT SOUTH CAROLINA ETV AND PUBLIC RADIO

South Carolina ETV and Public

Radio is the state's public educational broadcasting network. SCETV amplifies South Carolina voices, provides educational experiences and strengthens communities while working toward creating a stronger, more connected and informed South Carolina.

In addition to airing local programs, such as "The Know Show," "Making It Grow" and "This Week in South Carolina," SCETV also presents multiple programs to regional and national audiences, including "Books By The River," "After Action," "Reconnecting Roots," "Reel South," "Yoga in Practice," "Downing of a Flag" and Southern Songwriters with Patrick Davis.

Spring is here, and with it are some hungry bears

BY SC DNR

With spring and warmer weather arriving, black bears are emerging from their wintering locations, becoming more active and during this time, bears are looking for easy food. The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) wants to remind South Carolinians to take down their bird feeders, secure their trash and remove other accessible food sources if black bears are in the area. The most common human-bear conflicts involve unsecured food. Many South Carolinians live in close prox-

imity to black bears and anywhere in the state could see a rambling bear on the move.

"The mere presence of a black bear does not necessarily represent a problem," said Tammy Waldrop, an SCDNR black bear biologist stationed in Clemson. "Most bears are just passing through, but if there is an easy meal available, they will take advantage of it. The key to dealing with wandering bears is not giving them a reason to hang around. Removing any food source that would attract bears will significantly reduce any bear issues in residential areas. Bears that have access

to human-provided foods often become dependent upon people, leading to destructive behavior and may lead to the bear's demise."

To help South Carolina residents better coexist with bears, SCDNR reminds you of "Six At-Home BearWise Basics."

-Remove bird feeders when bears are active. Birdseed and grains have lots of calories, so they are attractive to bears. Removing feeders is the best way to avoid creating conflicts with bears.

-Secure food, garbage and recycling. Food and food odors attract bears, so do not reward them with easily avail-

able food, liquids or garbage.

-Never feed or approach bears. Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to find anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach homes and people looking for more.

-Never leave pet food outdoors. Feed pets indoors when possible. If you must feed pets outside, feed in single portions and remove bowls afterwards. Store pet food where bears cannot see or smell it.

-Clean and store grills, smokers. Clean grills after each use and make sure that all grease, fat and food particles are removed. Store clean grills and

smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.

-Alert neighbors to bear activity. See bears in the area or evidence of bear activity? Tell your neighbors and share info on how to avoid bear conflicts.

While people may be excited about seeing a bear, SCDNR wants them to remember that bears are wild animals and should be respected. Black bears are usually shy, evasive and non-aggressive toward people. People and black bears can live in the same area with little conflict by following some basic rules.

For black bear emergencies, call 1-800-922-5431 or 911.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Janine Massnick, a woman of Germany's Slavic-speaking Sorbian ethnic minority, shows a traditional decorated Easter Egg at an Easter Market in Schleife, Germany, on Sunday, April 6.

Sorbian community decorates eggs for thousands of years

SCHLEIFE, Germany (AP) — Anke Hanusch dips her tool into dark blue wax and dots it precisely on a yellow-dyed Easter egg in her hand. Back and forth, wax to egg, egg to wax, as the honeycomb pattern grows.

The intricate motif means the egg will ultimately be a gift from a godparent to their godchild, to bestow diligence and a good work ethic upon the youngster.

The tradition of decorating Easter eggs is part of the culture of the Slavic-speaking Sorbian ethnic minority in Germany. Modern-day Sorbs are descended from Slavic tribes in Central and Eastern Europe who settled in Germany some 1,500 years ago.

About 60,000 Sorbs currently live in Germany, split between the federal states of Saxony and Brandenburg.

EASTER IS THE BIGGEST HOLIDAY OF THE YEAR

Stephanie Bierholdt, an employee at the Sorbian Cultural Center in Schleife, a town just 16 kilometers from the Polish border, said Easter is the biggest holiday of the year for Sorbs and people travel home to celebrate with their loved ones.

"The best thing is that this tradition is still alive in families," she said.

Bierholdt, Hanusch and other members of Schleife's Sorbian community gathered at the cultural center on April 6, two weeks ahead of the holiday, to celebrate their heritage through Easter eggs and traditional folk costumes, songs and dances. Sorbian egg decorating dates back to the Middle Ages.

FROM CHICKEN EGGS TO EMU EGGS

Hanusch wore the red folk costume and bonnet of an unmarried woman; married women wore green. She was among more than 30 artisans selling their Easter eggs at the cultural center. Her prices ranged from the cheapest decorated chicken egg for 7 euros (\$7.72) up to 90 euros (\$99.28) for a painted emu egg.

The decorating can take between 90 minutes and six hours, depending on the techniques used, the motif and size of the egg. The artisans use a needle or the tip of a goose feather quill, cut in different ways, to draw the designs.

The egg artisans said the worldwide bird flu outbreak, and subsequent egg shortage and price hikes, have not yet affected their craft — though they added that it's always best to get eggs directly from a farmer rather than a supermarket.

Hanusch, who is Sorbian on her father's side, is learning to speak the Slavic language. She said she and other Sorbian children start decorating Easter eggs as young as two, from when they can first hold a pencil. Many only do it during the Easter season throughout childhood, but Hanusch continued with the skill and became a teacher to others, including her niece.

"I think it's a valuable cultural asset that needs to be preserved," she said. "It would be a shame if it were to become extinct."

The story of the nails...

Their story begins in the iron ore deposits on the Ramim-Manara Ridge. A miner dug out some ore, packed it on his donkey and made his way to a regular customer, a blacksmith just outside of Jerusalem.

The blacksmith heated the ore, burning off the impurities. He knocked off pieces of the surrounding rock that

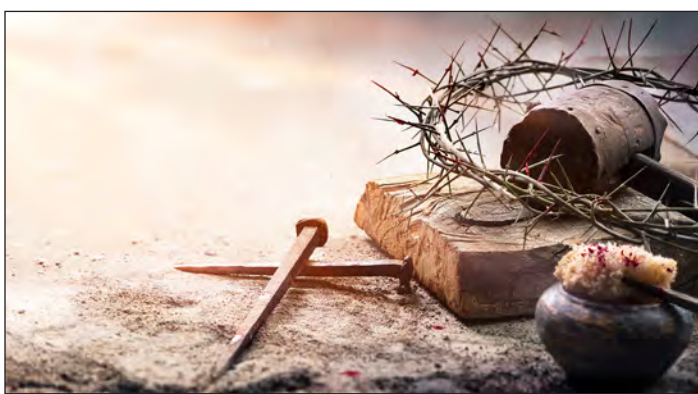


The Rev. Dr. Clay Smith

were not pure enough to process. Then, while the iron was hot, he shaped it with repetitive swings. Some ore was heated again to a liquid state and poured into molds. One of the molds was for nails. Not skinny nails, but ones designed to hold heavy weight. These were for his best customer, the Roman soldiers stationed in Jerusalem.

The Centurion would pick up 20 or so of these nails each month, paying with Roman coins that had real value. The blacksmith was not naïve. He knew what the nails would be used for.

The nails would be used in crucifixions. Often, the soldiers would use ropes to hold those under a death sentence on crosses. Ropes were not as expensive and allowed the ones being crucified to linger longer, sometimes for weeks. But nails were for the hurry-up jobs,



when prisoners needed to be dead in 24 hours. Driven through the hands and feet of the victim and the wood, the nails were often hammered over to prevent them from pulling out as the men writhed in agony.

Once, when the blacksmith was on his way to take care of business in Jerusalem, he saw a crucifixion in progress. He heard the screams of agony as the soldiers drove the nails through the victim's hands and feet. He knew they were probably his nails. His conscience bothered him some, but the Romans were going to buy nails from some blacksmith, so it might as well be him.

After the crucifixion was over, the soldiers would take the victims down. If no family member claimed the body, it would be thrown in the city dump to rot. The cross beams would be reused. The nails would be hammered straight, to be used again.

The iron that made up the nails was brittle. After repeated nailing and straightening, the nail would often break apart. The soldiers

would gather up the pieces and return them to the blacksmith, who would melt the iron down and pour the molten iron back into the molds.

The Centurion arrived one day to pick up a fresh batch of nails. Rumor had it that several men were going to be crucified that week, so Pilate could show the Jews who was really in charge. Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims, who had made their way into the city to celebrate Passover. Pilate wanted them to know that if anyone entertained a thought of rebelling against Rome, they, too, would hang on a cross.

The blacksmith was not there when Jesus was nailed to the cross. He did not hear his screams; he did not see the blood flow from his hands and feet. But he had to go back to Jerusalem that morning to get some supplies. As he rounded the curve, he saw three crosses. As he drew closer, morbid curiosity drew his eyes to the nails. Were they using his nails?

He could see the nails

clearly, noting they were brighter than used nails. These were the nails the Centurion picked up earlier in the week. His normal ability to shrug it off failed him. There was something disturbing about seeing his craftsmanship used for such a cruel purpose. He paused his walk and looked at the man in the middle. He was in obvious pain, but he managed to choke out, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

This struck the blacksmith as odd. What criminal ever forgave those who were crucifying him? But there was something about this man, a peace as he faced death, that he had never seen before. The blacksmith moved on, for clouds were gathering and it looked like rain. As he left "Skull Hill," he thought, "At least my nails are holding."

But the blacksmith was wrong. The man in the middle could have popped those nails right out. As the old song goes, he could have called 10,000 angels. He had that power. But he stayed on that cross. He stayed with the pain of the nails in his hands and feet.

The nails were not holding him. He chose to stay on the cross because he loved the whole world. He loved you. And he loved me. And love, his love, has more holding power than any nail.

The Rev. Dr. Clay Smith is the lead pastor of Alice Drive Baptist Church in Sumter. Email him at claysmith@adbc.org.

GRAND OPENING

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025 / 5PM-8PM

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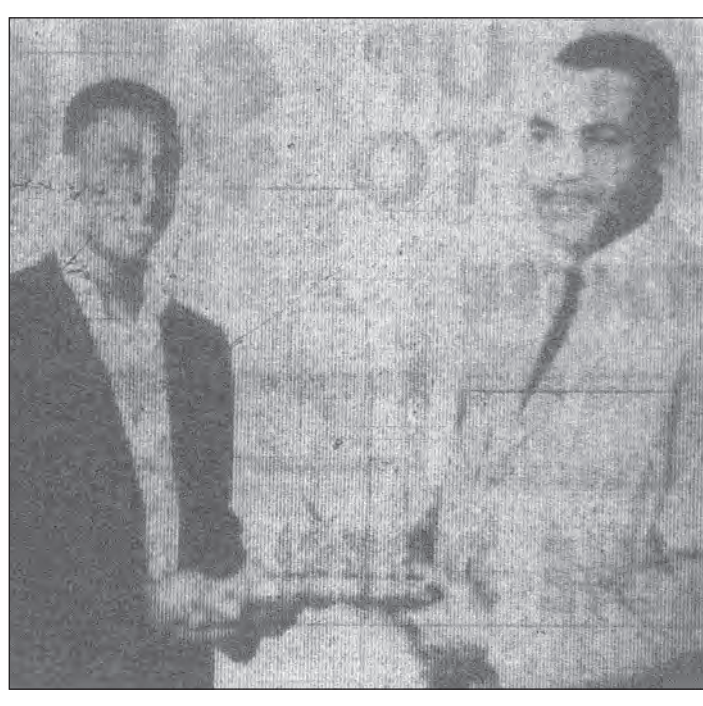
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REFLECTIONS



Richard Singleton, 1954. Singleton made a name for himself playing for Lincoln High and went on to play football for State A and M.



Lincoln High's football team poses for a portrait in August 1968.

LEFT: Robert A. Jenkins, coach of Lincoln High School, is seen with his quarterback, Newt Johnson, admiring a trophy given to Jenkins for his selection as Coach of the Year in this area in February 1965.



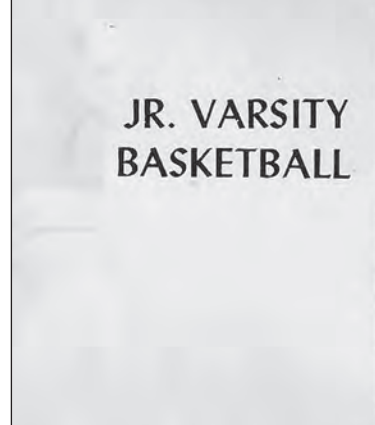
Oliver Wells, 1967



FOOTBALL



BASKETBALL



JR. VARSITY BASKETBALL



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Sumter schools produced many outstanding athletes, Part III

Reflections recalls interscholastic athletics, primarily football at Lincoln High School. Many of Lincoln's outstanding athletes are the focus of this research. The omission of any players or coaches is unintentional. Data and photos were obtained from *The Sumter Item* archives and the writings of Ruth Edens and Dr. Anne King Gregorie.



Sammy Way REFLECTIONS

showed that Lincoln High School had a four-year high school, making the complete course of study 11 years.

Athletic activities have traditionally been popular at Lincoln High. J.H. Kilgo, former principal and coach at Lincoln, initially came to the school to teach in 1930 and organized teams for football and baseball. He became the coach of both of these sports in addition to his teaching duties. In 1935, he also became coach of the newly formed boys' basketball team. In 1953, Lincoln formed a girls' basketball team. During the 1960s, the school's athletic program grew to include a girls' track team. Lincoln also sponsored a girls' and boys' bowling league. During this time, a boys' track team was introduced along with junior varsity teams in all sports.

To keep the spirit high among the student body and support the athletic teams, an energetic corps of cheerleaders became active. The athletic program at Lincoln helped to boost school morale as well as to provide an outlet for student energies.

Following the teaching and coaching initiatives of J. H. Kilgo came the leadership of Robert A. Jenkins, Wilbert M. M. Dorsey and Joe Hoskins.

Lincoln High had a tradition of sending many of its quality athletes to post-secondary institutions, one being Morris College. Rich-

Three of Lincoln High School's teams are seen in 1967. Lincoln opened in 1889.



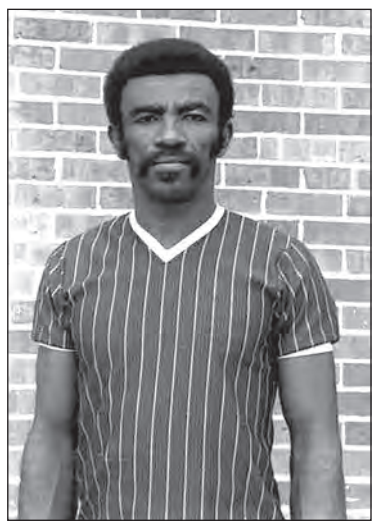
Lincoln High's outstanding football players were honored at a banquet in December 1968 at the school. First row, from left, are Jimmy Rogers (Highest Academic Average), John Haynesworth (Offensive Player of the Year), Mack Scott (Best Defensive Player); back row from left, Sidney Vaught, president of Boosters, Albert Howard (Rookie of the Year), Oliver Wells (Most Valuable) and Coach Joe Hoskins. The Bulldogs finished with a 4-5 mark in a rebuilding season.

ard Singleton, one of Lincoln's standouts, excelled at State A and M. Coley White graduated from Lincoln High in 1959 and enrolled at Voorhees Junior College and later entered Morris College, where he became a featured running back. Following graduation, he became one of Sumter's outstanding coaches. He was inducted into the City's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1997.

Carl Baker, another Lincoln High graduate, excelled in football and later coaching and was recently

inducted in the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame.

Numerous young athletes excelled in basketball and football, including Lindberg Moody and Phenis Brockington. Several young men were selected to all-star teams, including Peter Scarborough and Walter Truman Davis. Other football players included Jimmy Rogers, Mack Scott, Albert Howard, Lewis Ragin, Elder Washington, Leroy Gary, Jacob Jenkins, Joe Ross, James Williams, Frank Davis, Buzzy Scott, David White, G. W. Green, Dan



Coley White



Coach Robert A. Jenkins

Gray, Stanley Richardson, Robert Singleton, Albert Howard, Artis Rucker, John Haynesworth and Oliver Wells. Additional athletes will be featured in several later articles.

Lincoln High and Edmunds High combined in the 1970-71 school term, forming the current Sumter High School.

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THE WATCHMAN AND SOUTHRON

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

H.D. Osteen 1904-1987
THE ITEM

Margaret W. Osteen 1908-1996
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THE SUMTER ITEM



OPINION

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COMMENTARY

Why does union membership keep declining?

It hardly qualifies as news anymore, but according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, union membership declined from 2023 to 2024, going from 10% to 9.9% of wage and salary workers. Some 32% of public employees are union members compared to only 5.9% of private-sector workers, down from 6% in 2023.

This means 49% of all union members work for the government and, even more striking, 32% belong to the two national teachers unions. As National Review's Dominic Pino pointed out, national media is chock full of hopeful stories about union organizing drives and strikes — he cited 214 in 2024 — but the longtime trend line away from private-sector unions has not turned around despite the considerable efforts of Democratic politicians.

This is despite a certain amount of nostalgia in liberal and conservative quarters for the days when union representation of private-sector employees was considered the norm. Union membership as a percentage of employees peaked at 33.5% in 1954, when almost no public employees belonged to unions.

That's more than five times the percentage of private-sector union membership today. It's even more striking because few union members lived in the South, so the union share in the North was up to 40%.

What accounts for this major change in American life? It starts with how unions were formed. Craft and building unions have roots going back more than a century, when many served the function of medieval guilds — maintaining quality standards and stamping out the competition. They often had a discernible ethnic character, with membership open to sons, brothers, nephews and

cousins of current members.

The big jump — a tripling — in union membership came suddenly from 1937 to 1947 after the passage of the New Deal's Wagner Act. Industrial workers weren't the worst-off employees in the 1930s Depression. They feared that "time and motion study" managers would speed up the assembly lines, and, with 20% unemployment, they knew they could be easily replaced if they walked out.

In early 1937, auto and steel union organizers staged illegal sit-ins in the giant factories that fueled American economic growth from the 1890s to the 1920s. After Democratic governors refused to enforce court orders to clear out, auto and steel executives caved in and accepted the industrial unions as bargaining agents.

When the big factories switched to wartime production, industrial labor leaders, such as the young Walter Reuther, cooperated to prevent strikes as workers churned out astonishing numbers of planes in Henry Ford's Willow Run plant in Michigan and boats in Henry J. Kaiser's Richmond shipyards in California.

In the postwar years, Reuther negotiated with General Motors' Charles E. Wilson on the 1950 Treaty of Detroit — a five-year no-strike contract with cost-of-living increases, health care benefits and defined-benefit pensions.

In what has been referred to as "America's midcentury moment," it became widely known that the only enlightened way to manage enormous

centralized factory operations, vulnerable always to violence, was to cooperate with union leaders. Their increasingly choreographed negotiations dominated national news (I still remember the names of the United Steelworkers and the chief steel management negotiator in the 1959 steel strike sessions) and set the pattern for wage and benefit packages in smaller companies.

Alas, as so often happens in human affairs, success bred failure. U.S. auto and steel companies failed to respond effectively to unexpected foreign competition, and 1970s contracts promising early retirement and open-ended pre-Medicare retiree health care insurance pushed Detroit's Big Three and Big Steel toward bankruptcy.

Foreign-based auto companies building new plants avoided Michigan and Ohio counties with elected judges who would not enjoin wildcat strikes and chose sites in states with right-to-work laws banning compulsory union membership. New manufacturing techniques promoting cooperation and worker autonomy produced better-quality products than the Wagner Act unionism's adversarial foreman-versus-shop-steward bargaining and thousands of pages of work rules.

As inventive employers moved from labor-intensive to increasingly automated manufacturing and as a growing economy moved from manufacturing to services, rapid-growth firms such as Walmart and Amazon depended on thousands of geographically dispersed locations rather than a few enormous factories, while high-tech assembly work migrated to China.

Unions were also victims of their own good intentions. Federal and state minimum wage, work safety and pen-

sion legislation made union protections seem unnecessary. Human resource departments, created in response to government regulations and court decisions, handled matters unions used to.

There has also been a decline in the quality of union leadership. Reuther and his immediate successors were men of broad outlook and high integrity. In contrast, two recent United Auto Workers presidents were convicted of embezzlement, and the current UAW leader, Shawn Fain, endorsed President Donald Trump's April 2 tariffs and then expressed embarrassment after automaker Stellantis laid off workers because of them.

Similarly, the Washington Examiner's Salena Zito said National Steelworkers leaders who supported Cleveland-Cliffs' acquisition of U.S. Steel are finding themselves out of step with local union leaders who favored its acquisition by Nippon Steel, which promised to keep its Monongahela Valley plant open. It's unclear whether today's union leaders understand their members' short-term interests.

Democrats inevitably insert provisions encouraging private-sector unionization in their big legislation, including Obamacare and the Biden stimulus. Provisions that "Abundance" authors Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson pointed out include increased costs and delayed completion of public works. But these haven't pushed the union numbers up. It seems that however well suited labor unions were during the "mid-century moment," they're not well suited to our current service-dominated decentralized economy.

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Michael Barone

HONORING THOSE WHO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON IN SUMTER COUNTY

While we don't need an official date to say thank you, April 18 marks National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

Lineworkers support the growth of industries and businesses by helping expand power infrastructure. They install new power lines, transformers and other equipment to reliably accommodate growth. And they often work in challenging conditions, including extreme weather and heights, to restore power and keep our communities running.

Their commitment was evident when our state faced Hurricane Helene last fall, one of the most impactful storms in recent history. Nearly every Duke Energy customer was impacted by the storm. Restoration work in South Carolina included replacing 5,800 utility poles, thousands of transformers and over

3 million feet of wire on the distribution system.

And more than 9,000 skilled utility workers came from Sumter and across the U.S. to join in safely restoring power to communities in the dark in South Carolina. Although power restoration is complete, our local crews have helped do work in areas impacted by the storm to restrengthen and rebuild portions of the electric grid. They stand ready as hurricane season approaches yet again to prepare for and respond to whatever Mother Nature sends our way.

Duke Energy line teams are making the grid smarter, stronger and more reliable to better serve customers. The next time you flip on the lights, please join me in thanking a lineworker.

QUINETTA BUTERBAUGH
Duke Energy government and community relations manager



COMMENTARY

Earth Action Day: unleashing our power for our planet

BY SUSAN BASS

April 22 will mark the 55th anniversary of Earth Day. The power of those 20 million voices that came out on the streets that first Earth Day led the U.S. to create the EPA and the first generation of environmental laws addressing clean air, clean water and toxics.

Fast forward to today. Under the banner of "Our Power. Our Planet", earthday.org, the global organizer of Earth Day, is calling on people from all walks of life to join in "Earth Action Day" — an effort to once again mobilize people power to tackle the current generation of environmental crises.

2024 was a disaster for the planet and its people. According to NASA, it was the warmest year since temperatures began being recorded in 1880. In the U.S. alone, there were 27 climate and weather events resulting in at least a billion dollars of damage — second only to 2023 with 28 such events.

While a number of factors have contributed to the increase in these catastrophic events, research demonstrates

that "human-caused climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of certain types of extreme weather that lead to billion-dollar disasters — most notably the rise in vulnerability to drought, lengthening wildfire seasons in the Western states and the potential for extremely heavy rainfall becoming more common in the eastern states."

The news about plastic pollution is similarly dark. Earth Action reported that on last Sept. 5 — Plastic Overshoot Day — the amount of plastic waste exceeded the capacity of waste systems to manage it. 220 million tons of plastic waste were expected to be produced in 2024 with 66 percent of the population living in places where the amount exceeds local capacity. While negotiation of a strong global treaty on plastics in Korea and INC 5 held forth the promise of handling some of these issues, negotiators failed to reach agreement, and the talks drone on.

All of this is taking place in the face of increasing scientific news about the harmful im-

pacts of plastics on humans and their health. World Wildlife Federation reported that humans could be ingesting up to 5 grams of plastic each week, and a recent report found that high levels of plastics have been found in human brains. Additional research has shown that plastics are associated with everything from cancer to endocrine disruption, which can impair reproduction, growth and cognitive abilities. Wildlife, too, is suffering, with plastic ingestion and entanglement contributing to starvation and strangulation, among other issues.

For years, we have been told by the plastics industry we can clean up and recycle our way out of this problem — continued use of plastics, however, means continued use of fossil fuels, and recycling has been demonstrated to be in large part myth due to factors including quality degradation, contamination and non-recyclable content.

What is the common thread of all these challenges facing our planet and the survival of its people — the cause of all

of these threats can be traced to one source — humanity.

The encouraging and hopefully inspiring news is that the solutions to these problems also rest in the hands of the people. We have the collective power not only to protect our planet, but also to improve lives and livelihoods.

The link between greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is now scientifically indisputable. According to the United Nations, fossil fuels make up 75% of greenhouse gas emissions and 90% of carbon dioxide emissions. The good news from the International Renewable Energy Agency is that 90% of global electricity can and should come from renewable sources by 2050.

Slowing the climate crisis is only one of many reasons to switch to renewables. Renewable energy prices are falling, and in most places of the world today, it is the least-expensive option. Other benefits range from preventing unhealthy air associated with the burning of fossil fuels to creating up to 30 million jobs supporting energy security.

Whether you choose to power your home or vehicle with renewable energy, support community solar or call on government leaders for more research and investment, the options for taking action to accelerate the transition to renewables are many. Similarly, as consumers we can choose plastic-free products, demand a reduction and transition in the use of plastics from business while at the same time pressuring government leaders to reduce production globally, end the use of toxic ingredients and improve waste management systems.

So this Earth Action Day, exercise your power! We need to demonstrate to our leaders in government and business that we are still here, we are a witness to their actions, and we will hold them accountable to do right by our planet and its people.

Susan Bass is senior vice president of earthday.org, the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement with thousands of partners in 192 countries.

Tick-borne diseases rise; learn to protect yourself

BY SAGE SCOTT

Recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, studies estimate about 476,000 Americans may be diagnosed with Lyme disease each year. But there's another fast-growing tick-borne condition you've probably never heard of—and it could change your life forever.

Tick-borne diseases are on the rise, and not just in the places you might expect. Alpha-gal syndrome, or AGS, is one tick-triggered allergy that can change what you eat, the medications you tolerate and how you live the rest of your life.

THE RISE OF TICK-BORNE DISEASES

According to an article by the National Institutes of Health, "bites from infected ticks are responsible for about half a million new illnesses each year in the U.S. And those numbers are rising." While Tick-Borne Conditions United notes that Lyme disease remains the most commonly reported tick-borne disease, AGS is quickly emerging as a serious — yet widely overlooked — threat.

A recent analysis of lab data suggests that AGS may already be the second most-common tick-borne illness in the U.S., even though it's not officially tracked in most states, and the CDC determined that many health care providers are unfamiliar with the condition. As a result, most Americans are unaware that a single tick bite could make them allergic to mammalian meat, dairy, medications and even health and beauty products.

COMMUNITIES AT RISK

The risk of encountering disease-carrying ticks extends far beyond remote wilderness trails. People with certain occupations and recreational lifestyles face predominantly high exposure.

Farmers, landscapers, park rangers and military members often work in wooded or grassy environments where ticks thrive. With extended hours outdoors and frequent contact with vegetation and animals, these workers are at the front lines of tick-borne illness risk.

Outdoor enthusiasts, including hikers, campers, hunters and birdwatchers — even people walking their dog — regularly immerse themselves in tick habitats, often during peak season, which is April through June. Children involved in youth organizations such as the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and 4-H also spend time in similar environments, increasing their vulnerability to tick bites and potential infections.

UNEXPECTED SOURCES OF TICK BITES

Many people assume tick bites only happen in the deep woods or on backcountry hikes. In reality, some of the most overlooked risk factors are much closer to home.

Household pets that spend time outside, particularly dogs, can unknowingly bring ticks indoors. Even if a pet is treated with a tick preventive, it may still carry ticks on its fur, creating a potential exposure risk for everyone in the home.

Ticks are also increasingly found in urban and suburban areas. Landscaped golf courses, well-tended city parks and even community gardens can harbor these parasites. In some regions, tick presence has even been documented near beaches.

Since their initial sighting on Martha's Vineyard more than a decade ago, the *Vineyard Gazette* recently reported that lone star ticks have been sighted along nearly all of the island's coastline. On the West Coast, NPR reported that the coastal shrubs and grasses in Northern California are a surprising new habitat for ticks.

COMMON TICK SPECIES AND THE DISEASES THEY CARRY

While Lyme disease remains



the most recognized tick-borne illness, alpha-gal syndrome is rapidly gaining ground. Once thought to be caused only by the lone star tick, CDC studies now confirm that other tick species — including the black-legged and western black-legged ticks — may also trigger AGS in the United States.

"There's so much more to the puzzle of tick-borne diseases that we don't understand," says public health expert Jennifer Platt, DrPH, co-founder of Tick-Borne Conditions United. "With thousands of Lyme patients telling us they can't tolerate red meat, we've long suspected other ticks are involved."

This shifting science adds urgency. Blacklegged ticks, known for spreading Lyme, are common in the Eastern U.S. and Midwest. Western blacklegged ticks thrive along the Pacific Coast. And lone star ticks, once considered a Southern problem, have now expanded into the Northeast, Midwest and Southwest. That means millions of Americans may be at risk for AGS and not even know it.

Unlike Lyme, AGS has no cure, no universal treatment and no consistent tracking system. Additionally, many doctors aren't familiar with it, testing is limited, and patients can spend years searching for answers.

PREVENTING TICK BITES

Avoiding tick bites is essential to reduce the risk of tick-borne diseases. Ticks are active every season except deep winter, so take preventive measures year-round. Dr. Thomas Mather, director of the University of Rhode Island's Center for Vector-Borne Disease and its TickEncounter Resource Center and one of the country's foremost tick experts, promotes the three T's for personal tick protection: tucking, treated clothing and tight-fitting compression clothing.

Before heading outdoors, Mather also recommends applying an Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent containing at least 20% DEET, picaridin or lemon eucalyptus oil to exposed skin and clothing. You can also follow product instructions to treat clothing and gear with 0.5% permethrin or buy pretreated items designed to repel ticks.

Dress to prevent contact by wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, but be sure to tuck your shirt in at the waist and your pant cuffs into your socks. Tight-fitting, compression-style clothing like leggings and insect-repelling shirts from Rynoskin help keep ticks from crawling up inside of clothing. Stick to well-trodden trails and avoid brushing against tall grasses and shrubs.

After returning indoors, place worn clothing in a dryer on high heat for at least 15 minutes before washing to kill any hidden ticks. Perform a thorough tick check, especially underarms, behind ears, in the belly button, behind knees, around the waist, between legs and on the scalp, especially at the hairline. Showering within two hours may help wash off unattached ticks and is a good time to check your body.

Inspect pets that spend time outside, as they can carry ticks indoors. Ask your vet about effective prevention options and check pets daily.

IDENTIFY AND REPORT TICKS

If you discover a tick at-

tached to your body, remove it immediately. The CDC recommends using fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Twisting or jerking can cause parts of the tick to break off and remain embedded. After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.

Whenever possible, save the tick in a sealed container or plastic bag, noting the date and location of the bite. This can be useful if you develop symptoms later and need to identify the species involved. TickSpotters is a free, quick-turnaround tick identification program at The University of Rhode Island. Submit a photo of the top side of the tick to classify it and receive tips to reduce your risk of future tick bites.

KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR BEST REPELLENT

As tick populations continue to grow and spread, so do the risks of the diseases they carry. Awareness is no longer an option with tick habitats spreading beyond their original range. Prevention is powerful — and it starts with you. Staying informed, practicing safe outdoor habits and reporting tick encounters are powerful tools to protect not just yourself, but also your broader community.

Sage Scott was diagnosed with alpha-gal syndrome in March 2021. She is the creator of Sage Alpha Gal, a trusted resource for the growing alpha-gal community that offers alpha-gal-friendly recipes, helpful tips and a supportive space to navigate life with AGS.

Grandmother thinks toddler should be more responsible

DEAR ABBY: I have a 16-month-old who has recently learned to walk. My mom was watching him one day a week while I worked part-time, but she ultimately decided it was too much stress on her back and said she could no longer lift him. Lately, she has been telling me I need to "train" him to do certain things in order for her to watch him without lifting him (e.g., climb into his own car seat). Abby, he's too young to consistently do anything like that.

It's no longer possible for her to put him in his car seat, lift him to put him in his crib, high chair, etc. She's being very pushy about me finding alternative ways to do things that ultimately will make more work for me. I think it would be safer and easier to pay an able-bodied caregiver.

Talking to her about this has become stressful because she calls me "crazy" for thinking this is a safety concern. If we are at the park and he does something unsafe, I pick him up and remove him because he is not yet a reliable listener. How do I discuss this with her in a kind but firm way, and is my concern valid?

LIFTING HIM UP IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR LIFTING: You are not crazy! Of course your concerns are valid. Your son is years away from being able to do what your mother is suggesting. End those discussions. She needs to be told kindly, but firmly, that you know she loves her grandson, but he needs more hands-on care than she is able to give him, which is why you ARE hiring someone to do it.

DEAR ABBY: I am one of your male readers. My best friend, "Will," and his family have been close friends of mine for nine years. I regard them as extended fam-

ily, and we do almost everything together.

Two years ago, they bought a house and converted the garage into a room for Will's brother-in-law. A year ago, the brother-in-law met a woman I'll call "Anika," who stays with them several days each week. She has made her place in the family, doing everything with Will's wife and their kid. Will and his wife have now started including her on trips and things they would have normally invited me to do with

them — but without me. I recently discovered that Anika was disgusted to hear that I was going on a recent trip with them, but she gave in to Will to let me go.

I feel like I'm being pushed out of the family I know and love by this new girlfriend. How do I handle this?

PUSHED ASIDE IN THE EAST

DEAR PUSHED: Tell Will that over the nine years you have been close friends with him and his family, you have grown to regard them as your extended family. Then tell him it has come to your attention that Anika did not want you included on that last outing and ask if he knows why. Had you offended her in some way? She may be jealous of the relationship you have had for so long with Will and his brother-in-law and be unwilling to share her boyfriend — or his family.

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.

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF SUMTER

A Special Election for STATE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 50 will be held on Tuesday, June 03, 2025. Any person wishing to vote in this special election must be registered no later than Sunday, May 4, 2025. Mail-in voter registration forms will be accepted if postmarked by Monday, May 5, 2025.

At 10:00 a.m. on the day of the special election, the County Board of Voter Registration and Elections will begin its examination of the absentee ballot return envelopes at Sumter County Voters Registration and Elections, 129 E. Liberty Street, Sumter, SC 29150.

On Friday, June 6, 2025, at 10:00, the County Board of Canvassers will hold a hearing to determine the validity of all provisional ballots cast in the special election. These hearings will be held at Sumter County Voters Registration and Elections, 129 E. Liberty Street Sumter, South Carolina.

The following precincts and polling places will be open during the special election from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.:

Polling Location	Address	City
Rembert	Rembert Fire Station	Rembert
Hillcrest	Hillcrest Middle School	Dalzell
Oakland Plantation 1	Oakland Primary School	Sumter
Dalzell 1	Hillcrest Middle School	Dalzell
Oswego	Crestwood High School	Sumter
Mayesville	Mayesville Fire Station	Mayesville
Salem	Rule Fire Station	Gable
St. John	Shiloh Community Center	Lynchburg
Thomas Sumter	Hillcrest Middle School	Dalzell

Coach Bill to be honored at 'Bill Brewer Night'

Yankee great Bobby Richardson to speak at May 22 event; tickets on sale now

BY SHARRON HALEY
Clarendon contributor

MANNING — Thousands of American Legion baseball players across Clarendon County, this region, and South Carolina know the man who has called the American Legion baseball diamond home for more than a half century as “Coach Bill,” and those in the stands knew him as “Bill” or “Mr. Bill.”

William “Bill” Jackson Brewer has spent his entire life raising his family and building a prosperous business, Superior Manufacturing, a wooden pallet company, in a small farming community about six miles east of Manning, Bloomville. At the young age of 14, Brewer lost his father. His mother’s brothers, his Bagnal uncles, took the teen under their wings, sharing their skills and knowledge of baseball to help fill the void that was left when his father passed away.

Brewer played football, basketball and baseball at Manning High School. Following high school, Brewer attended North Carolina’s Presbyterian Junior College, where he spent just one year playing baseball before his love for his family and his family’s need for him on the farm lured him away.

In 1963, Brewer married his high school sweetheart, Irene Richburg, and the couple raised four children: Penny, Mickey, Kelley and Jackie.

Brewer wasn’t a man to sit still for too long.

While Brewer was raising a family and building his business from the ground up, he started coaching baseball at various schools, including Christian Academy and Laurence Manning Academy, and then Manning-Santee American Legion baseball.

His family, friends, fellow coaches and the athletes he coached knew that if there was a ballgame within driving distance, “Coach Bill” made it a point to attend the game.

“Coach Bill” was a lot more than a coach to the baseball players under his tutelage. If a player needed a ride to practice, they called Coach Bill. If they needed a ride home, all they had to do was ask Coach Bill. Brewer was their mentor, their advisor, their best friend, and at times, he was their father figure. After games, Coach Bill would frequently pick up the bill so that all the players ate after the game. He also purchased equipment.

“Bill Brewer was an instrumental key to keeping the American Legion program going in Clarendon County,” said one of Brewer’s former co-coaches, G.G. Cutter. “He was a coach, a volunteer and a tremendous supporter of American Legion baseball.”

Cutter said Brewer and he coached the Manning-Santee American Legion team to its first state championship in 2002.

In November 2023, Brewer was in-



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Local baseball icons Bobby Richardson of Sumter, center left, and Manning’s Bill Brewer, center right, are seen here with Dr. Wallie Jones and Dr. Phil Brandt prior to the start of the 2016 Legends Dinner and Fire Ant Bash at USC Sumter. Richardson and Brewer were both inducted into the inaugural class of the South Carolina American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame on Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023. Brewer will be honored at Bill Brewer Night on May 22.

BILL BREWER NIGHT

WHERE: Manning Junior High School Cafeteria, 1101 W.L. Hamilton Road, Manning

WHEN: 6 p.m. Thursday, May 22

TICKETS: \$25 per person. Cash or checks made out to Manning Santee Baseball are accepted. Tickets can be purchased from G.G. Cutter at (803) 225-2929, Donald Hardy at (803) 473-6652, Jerry Coker at (803) 473-6764, Maxie Knowlton at (843) 373-7474, Guignard Diner, 439 N. Guignard Drive, Sumter, or Weldon Auditorium, 7 Maple St., in Manning.

ducted into the Inaugural 2023 South Carolina American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame along with seven other remarkable athletes and coaches.

The program included this quote from the 2023 Hall of Fame committee and SCALB: “Their bios will give you an insight to their tremendous efforts on and off the field to the love of the game that all in this state have been allowed to enjoy. From farm and textile villages, they have come and made an opportuni-

ty for many to learn life lessons about the great game of baseball and to offer their support to the youth of our great state of South Carolina.”

As the baseball season began heating up this spring, several of Brewer’s friends and fellow coaches decided it was time to recognize the man who kept American Legion baseball alive and well in Clarendon County. G.G. Cutter, Donald Hardy, Jerry Coker, Maxie Knowlton, and others began

preparations for “Bill Brewer Night,” and what better person to be the key speaker for the night than another local baseball legend, New York Yankees second baseman Bobby Richardson.

The event will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 22, at Manning Junior High School Cafeteria, 1101 W.L. Hamilton Road. Tickets are \$25 per person. Cash or checks made out to Manning Santee Baseball are accepted. Tickets can be purchased from G.G. Cutter at (803) 225-2929, Donald Hardy at (803) 473-6652, Jerry Coker at (803) 473-6764, Maxie Knowlton at (843) 373-7474, Guignard Diner, 439 N. Guignard Drive, Sumter, or Weldon Auditorium, 7 Maple St. in Manning.

Thanks, “Coach Bill,” for keeping the American Legion baseball program alive and well and for giving young men an outlet where they can grow academically, athletically and into leaders of the community.

Pets of the week

RIGHT: Hello, I'm Simba, a young, playful male domestic shorthair with a heart full of love. At first, I might seem a bit shy, but give me a little time, and I'll be your best friend. I'm a gentle feline who loves to play and interact with my fellow cats. I'm an orange tabby, but don't let my common color fool you; I'm unique in my own way. I love chasing toys and exploring new corners. I'm looking for a loving home where I can grow and play. Adopting me would mean a forever friend who'll fill your life with joy and love. I'm neutered and up to date on vaccinations.

If you are interested in adopting either Simba or Trapper, or any of the other wonderful pets at the shelter, you can get preapproved by completing our online application at www.ASecondChanceAnimalShelter.com. Adoption fees: dogs, \$125; cats, \$100.



LEFT: Hey there, I'm Trapper! I'm a young Carolina Dog mix with a zest for life. I'm as friendly as they come, always ready to play and full of energy. I've got a sweet nature. Sure, I've got heartworms, but don't let that deter you. With a little care and medication, I'll be as good as new. I get along great with other dogs, too, so I'd make a perfect addition to a family with other furry friends. I'm neutered and current on all of my vaccinations. Why should you adopt me? Well, I promise to bring joy, love and endless play into your life. I can't wait to meet my forever family.

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Clarendon County Sheriff's Office investigating deaths of 2 men, 1 with 'what appeared to be a gunshot wound to back of his head'

BY SHARRON HALEY
Clarendon contributor

CLARENDON COUNTY — The deaths of two men whose bodies were found in Clarendon County during the weekend are being investigated by Clarendon County Sheriff's Office with assistance from South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, Clarendon County Coroner's Office and Orangeburg Sheriff's Office.

Information on whether the two deaths are connected has not been released.

At 7:42 a.m. Sunday, April 13, Clarendon County deputies responded to West Summerton in reference to a male found unresponsive lying in a ditch near Washington and Louis streets. On arrival, deputies reported that the male had "what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the back of



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CCSO

Clarendon County Sheriff's Office is searching for Tyrese Najae Lawson's black 2010 Nissan Altima, bearing SC tag number WPP-671. Anyone who knows where this vehicle is located or has seen this vehicle recently is asked to call the CCSO at (803) 435-4414 or the CCSO's Tip Line at (803) 433-8477. Callers may remain anonymous.

his head." The male was identified as 32-year-old John Edward Rhames III of Summerton. Clarendon County Sheriff

Tim Baxley said that Rhames' death is being investigated as a homicide. Shortly after 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 14, CCSO deputies

responded to a dirt road in the Home Branch Community between Manning and Paxville after a person walking along the road reported seeing "what they thought to be a body in the woods off the roadway."

Investigators with CCSO and SLED's Crime Scene responded to the area. During the investigation, officers identified the body as 25-year-old Tyrese Najae Lawson of the Summerton area.

Investigators contacted Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office because that office was working on a missing person case involving Lawson, who was reported missing and last seen in the Santee area of Orangeburg County on April 10.

Clarendon County Coroner's Office responded to the scene and later met with Lawson's family. Clarendon Coun-

ty Coroner Jacqueline Blackwell said an autopsy had been scheduled at the Medical University of South Carolina to determine Lawson's cause of death.

Investigations into both deaths are ongoing. Anyone with information on either or both deaths is asked to call Clarendon County Sheriff's Office at (803) 435-4414 or CCSO's Tip Line at (803) 433-8477. Callers may remain anonymous.

Clarendon County Sheriff's Office is also searching for Lawson's black 2010 Nissan Altima, bearing S.C. tag number WPP-671. Anyone who knows where this vehicle is located or anyone who has seen this vehicle recently is asked to call the CCSO at (803) 435-4414 or the CCSO's Tip Line at (803) 433-8477. Callers may remain anonymous.

Briefs

Master Gardeners' Plant Sale May 2 and 3

MANNING — The Annual Clarendon County Master Gardeners' Plant Sale will be held from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 2, and from 9 a.m. until noon on Saturday, May 3, at the Land, Parker & Welch Courtyard near the corner of West Keitt and South Mill streets.

You can't miss this sale. Stan the "Citrus Man" will be on hand answering questions and suggesting the best varieties for the planting area.

Annuals, perennials and "pass-along" plants will be on sale.

Hundreds of plants will be on sale, but don't wait. The best varieties sell out fast.

3-day revival at Summerton United Methodist Church

SUMMERTON — The Jordan Charge and Summerton United Methodist Church are hosting a three-day revival Monday-Wednesday, May 5-7, at Summerton United Methodist Church, 2

Briggs St. Worship will begin at 6 p.m. Guest speakers will be the Rev. Kathrine Crimm on May 5; the Rev. Dr. Mary Rhodes on May 6; and the Rev. Dr. Carolyn Roy on May 7.

Walk/Run Wearing Pink Sneakers is May 17

MANNING — The 14th-Annual Think Pink Banquet sponsors of the Walk/Run Wearing Pink Sneakers event will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 17, in the Manning High School gymnasium, 2155 Paxville Highway.

Money from the event will benefit the Clarendon County Cancer OverComers.

T-shirts will be \$15 each. Meal tickets are \$30 each and include a T-shirt. T-shirt sponsorships are \$230 each and include one meal and T-shirt. Souvenir book ads are on sale.

For more information, contact Annett Smith at (803) 460-6679 or email her at annett.smith1@gmail.com or contact Eleise Fulton at (803) 968-5445 or email her at clarendoncountycancerover@gmail.com.

'Boat Church' set to begin on May 25

LAKE MARION — The board of directors of "Boat Church" is preparing for the first service of Christian worship at Boyles' Point on Lake Marion this summer. Worship will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 25. We look forward to greeting our old friends and meeting new ones.

Bookmobile May schedule

Harvin Clarendon County Library announces its May bookmobile schedule:

- May 2 and 16: 3:30 p.m., Paxville Community
 - May 6 and 20: 10 a.m., TC's Soul Food
 - May 7 and 21: 9:30 a.m., Pocotaligo River Health Rehab
 - May 7 and 21: 10:30 a.m., Turbeville IGA
 - May 7 and 21: 2 p.m., Barriereau Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4 p.m., Lodabar AME Church
 - May 12: 10 a.m., Abundant Life Center
- For more information on the HCCL Book Mobile, call (803) 435-8633.

Celebrity Cornhole Tournament fundraiser

MANNING — Be Propelled Foundation is sponsoring a Celebrity Cornhole Tournament from noon until 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 7, at Manning Elementary School, 311

W. Boyce St. The cost is \$50 per team for the cash prize/winner-takes-all tournament. Food vendors and more will be on site.

To register online, visit www.zeffy.com/ticketing/celebrity-cornhole-tournament.com.

PUBLIC HEARING FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET FOR CLARENDON COUNTY

Pursuant to §6-1-80 of the SC Code of Laws, public notice is hereby given that Clarendon County Council will hold a Public Hearing at 6:00 PM on Monday, May 12, 2025 at the Clarendon County Administration Building, Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, S.C. 29102, to consider Ordinance #2025-07 to Adopt the County Budget for FY 2025/2026.

General Fund FY2024/25 (current) Revenues:	\$29,622,705
General Fund FY2024/25 (current) Expenses:	\$29,622,705
General Fund FY2025/26 (budget) Revenue:	\$31,833,570
General Fund FY2025/26 (budget) Expenses:	\$31,688,055
Change in Operating Budget:	\$1,865,350
FY2024/25 (current) millage for General Fund:	160.2
Millage (in dollars) for FY2025/26 Budget:	\$22,423,460

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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

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11:00 a.m. Friday
for the Saturday edition

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LEGAL NOTICES

Summons & Notice

SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF CLARENDON A NO.: 2025-CP-14-00188 SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF FILING OF COMPLAINT

Mary Weathers, Plaintiff,

vs. Malvenia Cox, John Doe, a fictitious person, representing as a class, all unknown persons who claim or night claim to be an heir at law of Warren Green, Ellison Green, Sr., Katie Leola Bazemore, David I. Green, Rosa Odell Hampton, Julia McConico, Powell Hampton, Jr., Charlie Lee Hampton, James Franklin Hampton, Ellison Green, Jr., and/or Neomia James, or who claim or might claim any right, title, interest in or lien upon the real property described herein, and Richard Roe, a fictitious person representing as a class, all persons suffering under legal disability who claim or might claim to be an heir at law of Warren Green, Ellison Green, Sr., Katie Leola Bazemore, David I. Green, Rosa Odell Hampton, Julia McConico, Powell Hampton, Jr., Charlie Lee Hampton, James Franklin Hampton, Ellison Green, Jr., and/or Neomia James, or who claim to have any right, title, claim, interest in or lien upon the real property described herein.

FO: THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE NAMED: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint in this Action, and to serve a copy of your Answer to the said Complaint on the subscribers, Johnson DuRant, LLC, at their office, 411 N. Brooks St., Manning, SC, 29102; P.O. Box 137, Manning, SC, 29102, within thirty (30) days after service hereof, and in lieu of the lay of said service; or, if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, the Plaintiff herein will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint. ORDER OF APPOINTMENT OF

Summons & Notice

GUARDIAN AD LITEM NISI This matter comes before me upon a motion of Christopher R. DuRant, Attorney for the Plaintiff. It appears that it is necessary that a Guardian ad Litem Nisi be appointed on behalf of John Doe, a fictitious person, representing as a class, all unknown persons who claim or might claim to be heirs of Warren Green, Ellison Green, Sr., Katie Leola Bazemore, David I. Green, Rosa Odell Hampton, Julia McConico, Powell Hampton, Jr., Charlie Lee Hampton, James Franklin Hampton, Ellison Green, Jr., and/or Neomia James, and also all other persons unknown, claiming any right, title, estate, interest in or lien upon the real estate described in the complaint herein, and Richard Roe, a fictitious person representing as a class, all persons suffering under legal disability and claiming or who might claim to be an heir at law of Warren Green, Ellison Green, Sr., Katie Leola Bazemore, David I. Green, Rosa Odell Hampton, Julia McConico, Powell Hampton, Jr., Charlie Lee Hampton, James Franklin Hampton, Ellison Green, Jr., and/or Neomia James. ELECTRONICALLY FILED - 2025 Apr 08 2:35 PM - CLARENDON - COMMON PLEAS - CASE#2025CP1400188 The Court finds that Ricci L. Welch, Esquire of the Clarendon County Bar is a proper person to be appointed as Guardian ad Litem Nisi on behalf of the unknown defendants described herein. It is hereby ORDERED that Ricci L. Welch, Esquire, of the Clarendon County Bar is hereby appointed as Guardian ad Litem Nisi for the purposes set forth herein. AND IT IS SO ORDERED, Shanita Brangman, Clerk of Court NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the original Complaint, together with the Lis Pendens in the above-entitled action was filed in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Clarendon County on April 4, 2025. NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN that Ricci Land Welch, Esq., of the law firm of Land, Parker, Welch, LLC, 29 South Mill Street, Manning, SC, 29102, has been appointed as Guardian ad Litem Nisi for the unknown Defendants. JOHNSON | DURANT, LLC

Summons & Notice

BY:s/Christopher R. DuRant S.C. Bar No. 78080 PO Box 137 411 N. Brooks St. Manning, South Carolina 29102 Telephone: (803) 435-0909 Facsimile: (803) 435-2858 chris@jdnlawfirm.com Attorney for the Plaintiff April 4, 2025 STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CLARENDON IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CASE NUMBER: 2024-CP-14-00620 SUMMONS ASHLIEGH EVANS, PLAINTIFF. VS. MENDY MCKENZIE, NINA WARREN, AND SARA WHITE, DEFENDANTS. TO THE DEFENDANT, MENDY MCKENZIE, NAMED ABOVE: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED, and required to answer the Complaint in this action, a copy of which is available from the Clerk of Court for Clarendon County, South Carolina, herewith served upon you, which was filed on December 27, 2024 at 4:07 P.M., and to serve a copy of your answer to the said Complaint on the Plaintiff, or her attorneys, Anastopoulos Law Firm, LLC, at their office located at 32 Ann Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403, within thirty (30) days after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the amount of time aforesaid, the Plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for judgment by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint. NOTICE TAKE NOTICE, that the Summons in the above-mentioned action of which the foregoing is a copy, together with the Complaint therein was filed in the office of the Clerk of Court, Clarendon County Court of Common Pleas, 102 South Mill Street, Manning, SC 29102, on the 27th day of December 2024 at 4:07 P.M. POULIN | WILLEY | ANASTOPOULOU, LLC s/ Mackenzie P. Watson

Summons & Notice

Mackenzie P. Watson S.C. Bar No.: 105877 32 Ann Street Charleston, SC 29403 (803) 222-2222 E: teamwatson@poulinwilley.com ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF Charleston, South Carolina Dated this 3rd day of April 2025 Estate Notice Clarendon County NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF ESTATES All persons having claims against the following estates MUST file their claims on FORM #371ES with the Probate Court of Clarendon County, the address of which is 411 Sunset Dr. Manning, SC 29102, within eight (8) months after the date of the first publication of this Notice to Creditors or within one (1) year from date of death, whichever is earlier (SCPC 62-3-801, et seq.), or such persons shall be forever barred as to their claims. All claims are required to be presented in written statements on the prescribed form (FORM #371ES) indicating the name and address of the claimant, the basis of the claim, the amount claimed, the date when the claim will become due, the nature of any uncertainty as to the claim, and a description of any security as to the claim. Estate: Gene Pullen Jeffers #2025ES1400095 Personal Representative: Pamela K. Jeffers 701 Virginia St. Kingstree, SC 29556 Estate: Julia Mattie Hagerman Agers #2025ES140087-2 Personal Representative: Elsie D. Cowan 1017 Krissy St. Summerton, SC 29148 Estate: Joseph Ralph Springs #2025ES1400090 Personal Representative: Joel R. Springs 4062 Venus Lane Lancaster, SC 29720 Estate: Patricia June Cottingham Briggs #2025ES1400093 Personal Representative: Robert E. Briggs, Jr. PO Box 335 Manning, SC 29102 Estate: Ricci Land Welch, Esq. Attorney at Law PO Box 138 Manning, SC 29102 Estate: Joyce Evelyn Mabry Privitera #2025ES1400099 Personal Representative: Tammy P. Jordan 1574 Princes Trace Cir. Summerton, SC 29148

Estate Notice Clarendon County NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF ESTATES

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ROAD TENNIS

FROM PAGE A1

brought to the school as a cultural enrichment activity.

A requirement as part of Carter's assignment in Sumter School District through an international teacher exchange program called Foreign Academic and Cultural Exchange Services, better known as FACES, was to bring a cultural activity from her homeland to Sumter students, she said.

Carter wrote her proposal before she even arrived here in 2021 and met then with a couple of top officials from the republic who referred her to another official, Donna Greene-Rusnighi, in the government's Division of Culture.

Contact was made between the two in October 2021 during Carter's initial months in the local district, but given the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, the project had to be put on the back burner, she added.

Fast forward to 2024, and Carter met Greene-Rusnighi at an international teaching fair in Columbia, and the endeavor took flight again.

Through Zoom meetings, which included Greene-Rusnighi and Lakewood administrators, arrangements were finalized to bring the culture of Barbados to South Carolina and then take the state's culture — via Lakewood students — back to the island nation in the Caribbean.

The sport of road tennis is one of the highest-profile sports in Barbados and was invented there in the 1930s by primarily local working-class natives who could not afford to play lawn tennis at a club facility. The sport is played in the road, and official competitions have now moved indoors to increase interest and spectators, Carter said. She also played road tennis in her youth in her neighborhood.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Lakewood High School students play road tennis in the school's gymnasium recently as coaches from Barbados referee a match. The sport is a variation of the traditional game of tennis that was invented in Barbados during the 1930s.



Barbadian certified road tennis coaches Aaron Barker, left, and Mark Griffith flank Sandrena Carter for a picture in her classroom at Lakewood recently.

After separating from the British monarchy in recent years, Barbados is trying to establish its own identity and build the sport's interest abroad. Bringing road tennis to Lakewood was a natural choice, Carter said.

Two certified road tennis coaches from Barbados, Mark Griffith and Aaron Barker, have been all over the world

to demonstrate and teach the sport and were chosen to make the trip here, and the republic's government covered all the expenses. Griffith is a road tennis national champion in the island country.

The two coaches were in Sumter at Lakewood from March 31 through April 11, teaching the game, its rules

and how to referee the sport to the high school's students in the school's gymnasium. Griffith and Barker also taught all of Lakewood's athletic coaches how to teach the game to other students, Carter said.

On April 7, a special ceremony was held at the school that included the consul general and deputy consul general of Barbados. A total of 110 students, about 10% of Lakewood's enrollment, received certificates of participation at the event, she added.

The plan is to get the two Barbadian coaches back at Lakewood next school year and also in other district schools if funding is approved by the island government.

Next school year, a contingent of Lakewood students to include athletes, band students, culinary arts program students and dance program students will make a trip to

Barbados as well in the bilateral relationship. They will learn various aspects of the native culture with planned tours and a mini competition in road tennis.

Carter said the response to the Barbadian project from Lakewood students and staff was tremendous.

"This was for the students here, and they were extremely happy," she said.

"The school's special education students also came out every day and participated in the game and enjoyed it. The response from the school's coaches was also great, and they embraced the

sport. "This was the beginning of a bilateral relationship between the government of Barbados and the local district. Government officials said they want to have some interaction or relation with the school district every year through some cultural aspect."

DID YOU KNOW?

About 10% of teachers in Sumter School District are international teachers.

Source: Sumter School District

BREAKFAST

FROM PAGE A1

The event includes multiple prayers offered for different groups in the local community, including law enforcement, first responders, families, schools, the military and business/industry, among others, Shaw said.

A frequent speaker with an extensive background in service and leadership, Bullard founded The Same House in 2023. The corporation is dedicated to enhancing economic mobility by bridging social division and addressing social and economic challenges in the world today.

Bullard previously served as a judge advocate general (JAG) officer in the U.S. Air Force, a legislative counsel at the Pentagon and an assistant U.S. attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice. He was also selected as a White House fellow, working directly for the NASA administrator. Additionally, Bullard served as vice president of community affairs at Chick-fil-A Inc., and executive director of the Chick-fil-A Foundation.

An alumnus of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Duke Law School, University of Georgia's Terry School of Business and Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program,

Bullard is also the author of a best-selling book, *Heroes Wanted: Why the world needs you to live your heart out.*

Shaw said Bullard is a great fit for the mayor's prayer breakfast.

"While he is not well-known in our

★ ★ ★ Sumter ★ ★ ★

MAYOR'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

2025

WHEN: Thursday, May 1. Program is at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast begins at 6:45 a.m.

WHERE: Alice Drive Baptist Church, 1305 Loring Mill Road, Sumter, SC 29150

TICKETS: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door before program. Tickets available at The Olive Tree Christian Bookstore, Sumter YMCA and Swan Lake Visitors Center.

community, he is probably the most decorated speaker we have ever had and he is well-known across the country," Shaw said.

"He's been in the White House, the Pentagon, he was the director of the Chick-Fil-A Foundation. So he's been involved in philanthropy and involved in social needs of our communities — much like our community — with The Same House. We need to have that same message, that same understanding in Sumter. It was a great opportunity to get a great speaker."

A Sumter City councilman, Shaw learned of Bullard from Dexter Davis, who previously served as a member of the founding board of directors of Liberty STEAM Charter School. Now, Davis is a board member with South



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Attendees are seen from the upper floor at the Sumter Mayor Prayer Breakfast in 2019.

Carolina Public Charter School District, based in Columbia. Davis' wife, LaShea, was appointed to replace him on the Liberty STEAM board.

Shaw said he has been working for three years to get Bullard for the prayer breakfast, given his busy schedule, and credited the Davises for their efforts in helping the process.

"As a friend to Dexter and LaShea, he is a friend to many," Shaw added.

Given Bullard's background in the Air Force, he hopes many from Shaw Air Force Base will come to hear him speak.

Sumter Mayor David Merchant and

his wife, Laurie, will open the program and provide a welcome, he added.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door on the morning of the event.

Tickets are available at The Olive Tree Christian Bookstore and Doolalies, The Sumter YMCA and Swan Lake Visitors Center. Several area churches also have tickets for sale, and people can check with various churches' offices, he said.

"As always, we hope that we are represented by the whole of our community at the prayer breakfast, and we hope it will continue to draw us all together as one in Christ," Shaw said.

SHOOTINGS

FROM PAGE A1

The handgun was recovered on Leonard in the bathroom, Gardner said. Deputies also observed injuries to Leonard, and he was taken to a local hospital. Gardner did not confirm if those injuries were self-inflicted.

Leonard told deputies he had also shot his 76-year-old wife, Felicia Leonard. According to the report, while he was being taken to an ambulance, he said, "Check on my wife. I shot her, too." She was found in the garage of their Saltwood Drive home and pronounced dead, Gardner said. Sumter Police Department is investigating that shooting.

There is a 100-yard difference between Floyd Drive and Leonard's residence along Saltwood Drive; he walked through the

woodline to get to the Floyd Drive home, according to the sheriff's office.

Leonard was released from the hospital Thursday afternoon, according to the sheriff's office. He was charged with two counts of murder, seven counts of attempted murder, two counts of possession of a weapon during a violent crime and one count of first-degree burglary, according to public records.

Gardner described the shooting as "unprovoked" and that the sheriff's office plans to "prosecute to the fullest."

An investigation is ongoing by the sheriff's office and police department. More information will be released as it becomes available.



Floyd Drive's sign is seen on Thursday, April 17.

ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

PUBLIC AGENDA

- SUMTER COUNTY DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD
CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS INC.
INDEPENDENT LIVING INC.
ABILITIES UNLIMITED INC.
ADAPTIVE LIFESTYLES INC.
MAGNOLIA MANOR INC.
FIRST FLIGHT INC.
Tuesday, April 22, 8 a.m., 750 Electric Drive. Call (803) 778-1669, extension 2537.
MCLEOD HEALTH CLARENDON BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Tuesday, April 22, at 6 p.m., hospital board room, 10 E. Hospital St., Manning
SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL
Tuesday, April 22, at 6 p.m., Sumter County Council Chambers
SUMTER CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 23, at 3 p.m., fourth floor, Sumter Opera House, Council Chambers
SCEA-R ORGANIZATION
Wednesday, April 23, at 11 a.m. the North HOPE Center, 904 N. Main St. Contact Ernestine Mickens (803) 840-2156 for further info.
SUMTER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Thursday, April 24, at 7:45 a.m., 10 E. Liberty St.
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, April 24, 6:30 p.m., District Administration Complex Quadplex, 310 Roland St., Bishopville.
SANTÉE WATEREE RTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Monday, April 28, at 6 p.m., 129 S. Harvin St. For special accommodations, call (803) 934-0396, extension 103.
CITY OF MANNING BOARD OF APPEALS
Monday, April 28, 6 p.m., 29 W. Boyce St., City Hall Chambers, Manning

AROUND TOWN

The City of Sumter is taking applications for its Summer Youth Employment Programs. For ages 14-15, the program includes work within city government roles. For ages 16 through high school, students can participate in the Co-Op Program with local businesses. To apply, students should contact their school guidance counselors for applications and income guideline information. Applicants must reside within city limits and meet HUD's income requirements. Application period is now to May 2. Applications can also be downloaded from the city's website www.sumtersc.gov or picked up at the Liberty Center, Community Development/Housing, 12 W. Liberty St., Suite 4, during office hours, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday to Friday. For additional information, contact Carolet Thomas at (803) 774-1652 or Clarence Gaines at (803) 774-1649.

SOLUTION TO THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD



WEATHER

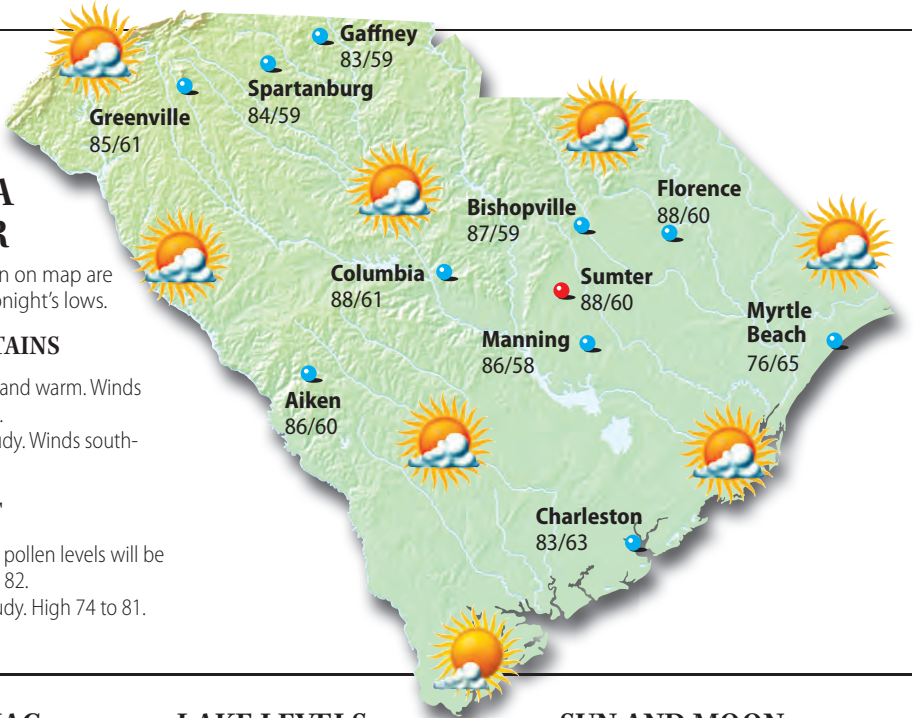
Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2025

AccuWeather® five-day forecast for Sumter

Table with 6 columns: TODAY, TONIGHT, SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY. Includes weather icons, temperature forecasts (e.g., 88°, 60°, 86°/60°), and chance of rain percentages.

TODAY'S SOUTH CAROLINA WEATHER

Temperatures shown on map are today's highs and tonight's lows.
IN THE MOUNTAINS
Today: Partly sunny and warm. Winds southwest 7-14 mph.
Sunday: Rather cloudy. Winds southwest 4-8 mph.
ON THE COAST
Today: Partly sunny; pollen levels will be very high. High 76 to 82.
Sunday: Mostly cloudy. High 74 to 81.



LOCAL ALMANAC

Table with 2 columns: Category and Value. Includes Temperature (High 79°, Low 44°), Precipitation (Thursday 0.00"), and River Stages (Black River, Congaree River, etc.).

LAKE LEVELS

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

SUN AND MOON

Table with 2 columns: Sun/Moon event and Time. Includes Sunrise (6:46 a.m.), Moonrise (1:33 a.m.), Sunset (7:56 p.m.), and Moonset (11:04 a.m.).

TIDES

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

NATIONAL CITIES

Table with 3 columns: City, Today Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, etc.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with 3 columns: City, Today Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists regional cities like Asheville, Athens, Augusta, Beaufort, Cape Hatteras, etc.

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

Advertisement for local newspaper advertising. Text: 'Look no further than your local newspaper for The right advertising opportunity! Call (803) 774-1200 and get started today.' Includes image of a person on a laptop.

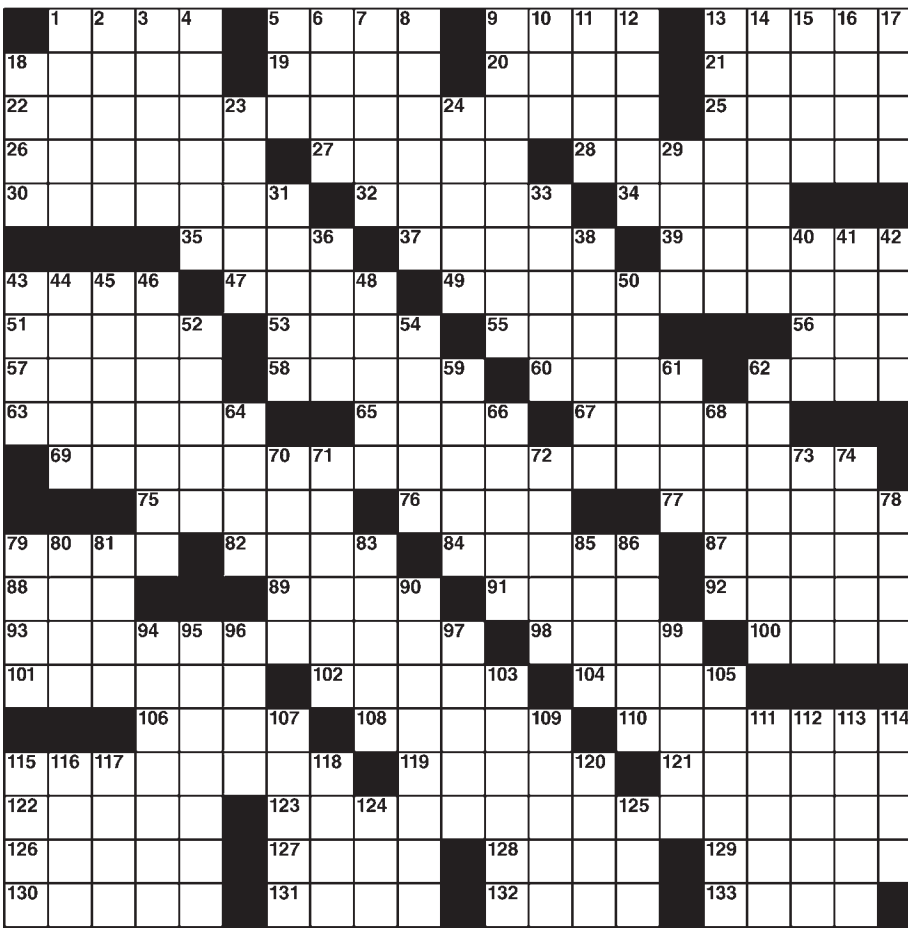
THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

VOWELS TO VISIT: In clustered fashion by S.N.

- ACROSS
1 Have the lead role
5 French friar
9 Most essential part
13 Handbag handle
18 Chopin piano piece
19 Address like "my dear lady"
20 Vicinity
21 Standing up straight
22 Oxford University research facility
25 Small jeweled crown
26 Grills in an oven
27 Any literary category
28 Kilograms and miles
30 Person from Belgrade
32 Harness parts
34 Phony deal
35 Negative votes
37 Taxicab device
39 Hint given
43 Mixer with scotch
47 Drain defect
49 Historic Boston meeting place
51 Mistaken
53 Decline to include
55 Fireplace fuel
56 Color nuance
57 Sharp of vision
58 "When donkeys fly!"
60 Spanish waterways
62 Felt regret for
63 Washbowls
65 Reason for cramming
67 Helpful to have
69 Tall tree attraction
75 Seize control of
76 Misdeeds
77 Large Alaskan Island
79 Arthur of tennis
82 Good friends
84 Giraffe cousin
87 Kingdom near Fiji
88 Resort with hot tubs

- 89 Message from a boom box
91 Nonfat milk
92 B. Anthony
93 Hawaiian surfing center
98 Rearranged mtg.
100 Circus enclosure
101 Attach with a click
102 Favre of football
104 Does tailoring
106 Does tailoring
108 Snake-shaped letters
110 Legal authority metaphor
115 One of a Monopoly quartet
119 Sounds from a sty
121 Illinois city
122 "Good heavens!"
123 West-central African capital
126 Needing tightening
127 OR imperative
128 Collaborative group
129 Full of flavor
130 Harp ancestors
131 Solemn vow
132 Bart's bus driver
133 Observes intently
DOWN
1 Mall tenant
2 Henry VIII's house
3 Off-script remark
4 Catch, as a fish
5 Doctors' bloc
6 Explosive sound
7 Hay-bundling machine
8 Oscar-winning rapper
9 Of moms and dads
10 Keogh alternative
11 Contract length
12 President after Grant
13 Leave port
14 Great success
15 Bring up, as children
16 Square mile fraction
17 School support orgs.
18 Recedes
23 Son of Abraham
24 Not wordy

- 29 Overture follower
31 Carpet fabric
33 Mexican mister
36 A handful of
38 Corn Belt, e.g.
40 Honolulu locale
41 Chimney channel
42 Hastened away
43 Sailor's mop
44 Predatory dolphins
45 Throw water on
46 Vintage collectible
48 Donated
50 "Good old" land
52 Group of species
54 Panhandle state
59 Numerical comparison
61 Be mopey
62 Digital display
64 Salad alternative
66 Otter cousins
68 Circles on dominoes
70 Person from Teheran
71 Great poise
72 Port of Japan
73 Washer cycle
74 Justice Elena
78 German philosopher
79 Makes a request
80 Extend across
81 Oral LOL
83 False alarm
85 Circles on dominoes
86 Urge onward



- 90 Straight down, on maps
94 Very near
95 French pilgrimage site
96 Golden Rule preposition
97 "The mail's here"
99 Afternoon hr.
103 Take care of
105 Cold symptom
107 Final authority
109 Clay target sport
111 Macabre illustrator Edward
112 Ascended
113 Barrels of laughs
114 Numerous
115 Winning streak
116 Seagoing greeting
117 Composer Stravinsky
118 Spreadsheet contents
120 "Cereal!"
124 Cream morsel
125 I love: Lat.



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Thomas Sumter track and field team celebrates after winning the Region I-3A meet on Wednesday.

Thomas Sumter track sweeps region meet

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Thomas Sumter track and field team went to Orangeburg Prep on Wednesday with a mission. They expect OP to be their top competition at state in a few weeks, so the first step toward winning a state title was proving they could earn a victory over their rivals at their region meet. Mission accomplished.

The Generals took home team wins for both the boys and girls with a slew of electric performances. The guys cruised with 97 team points, beating 55 from OP. The girls, meanwhile, needed every one of their 91 points, outlasting OP, who finished with 85.5.

"It was a really good night. I'm really proud of these kids," head coach Rob Coursey said. "We've done it before, and that was the thing I was trying to tell the kids. We've gone in there

and thumped OP at the region meet, and they turn around, and they get charged. They don't want to lose to us. They're going to be ready (at state), and so are we."

On a night of incredible performances, Coursey was most impressed with the way his team was malleable enough to score points where they were needed, even if they could've been the region's top point-earners by focusing on their top events.

"What I really like about this team is that we had so many winners that weren't focused on winning high point," Coursey said. "It was a team effort tonight, and that's the big thing."

The stars for the Lady Generals shined, though Coursey shifted his lineup around to find some new opportunities for his runners and throwers.

SEE GENERALS, PAGE B4

Former Wilson Hall star Sears getting settled in A's new home in Sacramento

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Former Wilson Hall standout JP Sears came into his fourth season with the Athletics with high expectations.

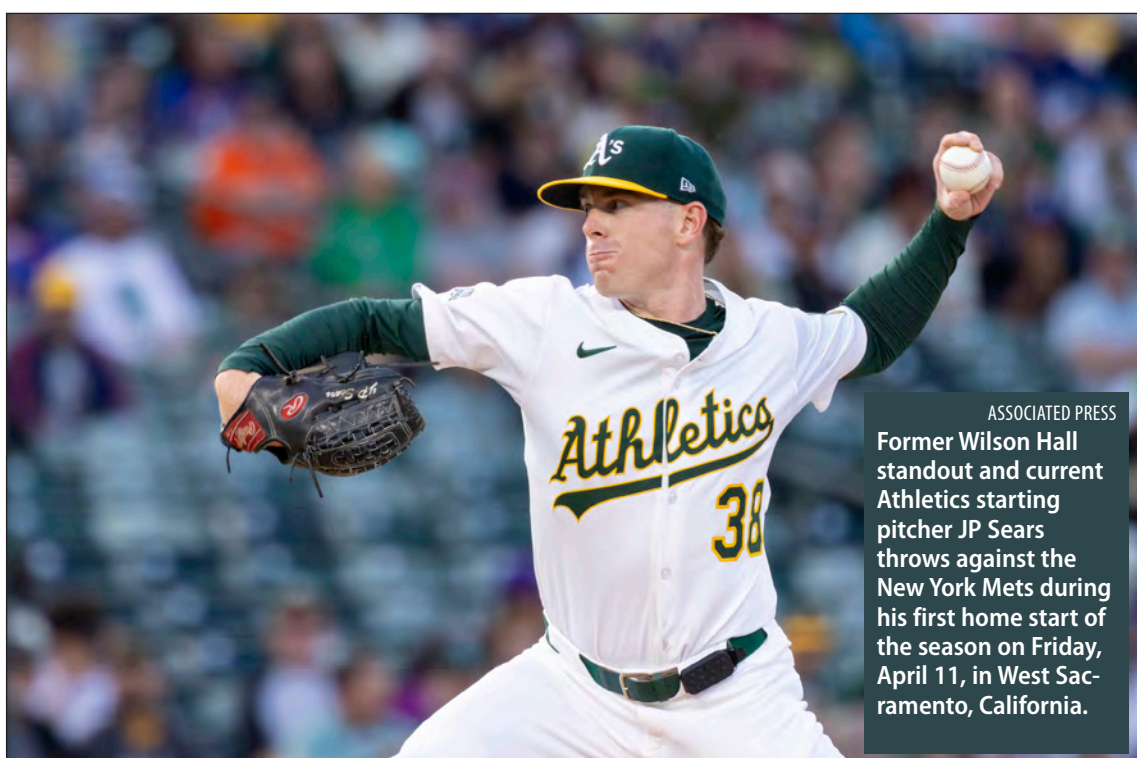
The A's are in the midst of a move from their longtime home in Oakland and taking a pit stop in Sacramento before eventually heading to Las Vegas. Sears put in plenty of work this offseason to find the next level of his game on the mound, but he was going to deal with a very different pitching environment moving out of the spacious Oakland Coliseum to Sutter Park, the minor league stadium the A's are calling home this summer.

Early returns have been all over the map for both Sears and the A's. He made an excellent start in his first trip to

the bump but suffered a 2-1 loss after making one mistake to Julio Rodriguez on March 30. He then got out to a rough start in Colorado, giving up three runs through the first three innings before settling in and earning a 7-4 win. Sears got touched up in his first home start last week, falling to the Mets 7-6 on April 11, but bounced back with six shutout innings against the White Sox on Thursday, improving his second to 2-2.

Sears' start matches that of his team, as the young A's went into Friday's trip to Milwaukee with a 9-10 record. While the season has been far from perfect, the former Baron can see this group finding itself as they settle into their new home in

SEE SEARS, PAGE B4



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Former Wilson Hall standout and current Athletics starting pitcher JP Sears throws against the New York Mets during his first home start of the season on Friday, April 11, in West Sacramento, California.

Sumter High's Morgan Love hit a three-run homer and added two saves on the mound against No. 1 Blythewood to earn Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week honors.

TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM
FILE PHOTO



Sumter High's Love shoves against No. 1 Blythewood on way to Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Sumter High baseball team knew there was plenty at stake when they faced the state's top-ranked team, Blythewood, in region action last week.

Sure, they wanted a pair of region wins heading into spring break, but they also wanted to prove that they can compete with the best in the state.

Thanks in part to Morgan Love, they

succeeded with flying colors.

Love earned saves in each of the Gamecock victories and sparked their offense with a massive three-run blast in the second game of their series during a 2-0 week. The SHS third baseman and reliever earned Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week honors in the process.

"It feels amazing," Love said of the

SEE AOTW, PAGE B4

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SUMTER'S BEDDING HEADQUARTERS

Lady Wolverines head into spring break with a bang, baseball fumbles against ACA

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The East Clarendon softball and baseball teams entered this week's series with Atlantic Collegiate with plenty at stake.

For both teams, ACA was among the top threats to compete with the Wolverines for a region crown. Both of East Clarendon's teams came away from their two-game set with some pros and cons.

The softball team stumbled in their first matchup, falling 7-3 on Monday, only to rebound a day later with a resounding 18-3 win in four innings. The baseball team had the opposite fortune. After grinding out a 4-3 win on Monday, one ugly inning snowballed into a 10-1 loss. With spring break around the corner, both teams are looking to set the tone for an eventual playoff run with a strong finish to the regular season, which is rapidly approaching.

LADY WOLVERINES GO OFF

Tuesday night's win was exactly what the doctor ordered for East Clarendon head coach Jason Newsome and the Lady Wolverines. After riding a hot-and-cold wave during the past few weeks on the diamond, they needed to get back in the right mindset with just four games left on their regular season slate.

"Tonight was a big game for us. We've been a little up and down over the last two or three weeks, and they know that. They've been a little frustrated with it, they know I've been a little frustrated with it, so tonight was kinda one of those nights where it all came out into a big number for us," Newsome said. "It's something good for us to build on going into spring break."

The win on Tuesday didn't lock up the region for EC, as they still have one series left against Marion after spring break. They'll need to sweep that series to claim the region crown because of Monday's loss to ACA. That makes a productive spring break even more important.

"They're all playoff games from here on out," Newsome said of the team's mindset. "We've played 22 ballgames to this point; our girls are tired. That's part of the reason things have been up and down for us the last couple of weeks. We're a little nipped up in some places, too, some kids battling some nagging stuff. It's a good opportunity for us to get healthy, to clear our heads and to kinda refocus on what we need to do to win ballgames and get into playoff mode."

Newsome and the Lady Wolverines felt Monday's loss was avoidable. They committed four errors, which led to four unearned runs. His message to the team afterward was simple.

"We kinda beat ourselves," he said. "It was a little bit of a lack of focus at the plate. A lot of things go into that, but that's the bottom line. We couldn't get out of that funk, and we booted the ball around a little bit. Tonight, we were able to clean that up."

East Clarendon did more than clean up some mistakes on Tuesday; they mashed. They piled on four runs in the first inning and never slowed down. Peyton Hanniford provided the biggest highlight with a two-run shot to left field on her way to three hits and three RBIs on the night. Bayleigh Hicks had a triple and two doubles, driving in three runs in the process. Laiklyn Gaskins, EC's starting pitcher, added two hits, two RBIs and three runs scored. Braelyn Locklear drove in a pair of runs, while Catherine Fleming, Zoey Culick and Chloe Goff each drove in a run. They finished with 15 hits and walked six times in just four innings.

"Throughout the year, different players have been hot at different times. They've all been hot at some point. To-



The East Clarendon softball team gathers at home plate to celebrate a home run by Payton Hanniford on Tuesday against Atlantic Collegiate.



East Clarendon's Bayleigh Hicks throws to first on Tuesday.



East Clarendon's Whit Nesbitt swings on Tuesday.

night was one of the nights, and there's been few and far between this year, where everybody was seeing the ball well," Newsome said. "It seemed like tonight everything fell into place. We're going to need that going forward, so hopefully that continues."

While the bats were rolling, Gaskins was dealing. The EC ace scattered five hits and three walks and struck out five. While Newsome has tried to take some off the senior's plate this year with a few other arms, the Lady Wolverines will ride their ace as they begin their push through the playoffs.

"She's the leader of our staff. We've got a good staff, and we've had a staff approach, but there's no doubt that's the leader of it," Newsome said. "It's important for us that she pitches well, and tonight she did."

After a week off from games next week, East Clarendon will cram four games into their last week of the season. Outside of the two region games, they'll face off against SCISA powerhouse Clarendon Hall twice as they look to prep for the postseason.

"We feel like we've got a chance to make a deep run. We feel like we've got a good team," Newsome said. "It's all about our mindset. We're going to take a few days off and get to practice over spring break. We just want to have a good mindset; we feel like that's a difference-maker for us. The difference between losing against good teams and winning against good teams is having the right mindset."

BASEBALL STUMBLES

The Wolverines saw an 11-game winning streak come to an end with Tuesday's loss to

ACA. With the loss, East Clarendon lost control of their destiny in the region. They're tied with Atlantic Collegiate atop the region but lose the tiebreaker based on run differential against each other. Barring a loss from ACA down the stretch, the Wolverines will head into the post-season as the second seed in the region. Head coach Curtis Johnson took the blame for a game that lacked execution in major moments.

"I've just got to do a better job of having our guys prepared. That was on me," Johnson said. "I felt like they put us in some situations that we've covered, but we weren't prepared enough to execute in those situations. Our kids played hard, they competed; it just didn't really work out for us. Their pitcher kept us off balance, and we just couldn't string together some hits."

The wheels didn't fall off until the third inning, but the miscues started in the second. Foster Matthews reached on an error with one out in the frame and made it to third on a sacrifice bunt. With two strikes against Gavin White, Matthews tried to steal home but was tagged out well before he reached the base. An inning later, the mistakes piled up. After a leadoff double, EC expected a bunt. Instead of getting an out at third, the ball went to first base and wasn't corralled, which plated the first run. While there was only one official error in the five-run inning, mental errors piled up.

"We know they're going to bunt, it's 0-0, and we run our wheel play to get him out at third. We call one, they throw it to first, and it pops out of Gavin's glove at first," Johnson said. "That happened and just a couple of little things



East Clarendon's Blease Hardy delivers on Tuesday.

execution-wise. I've got to do a better job of making sure our kids are ready to play. We got exposed a bit in some situations that I didn't think we would, and that falls on me."

Stuck in a five-run deficit, the Wolverines couldn't find their bats. Evan Lee eventually had an RBI in the fifth, but it was too little, too late. EC managed just five hits, two of which came from White.

Blease Hardy had a solid start on the mound, even though his ERA took a bit of a hit because of some mental errors in the field. He allowed six earned runs across six innings. He surrendered seven hits and walked three while striking out eight. Cooper Goff pitched the seventh, allowing three runs on three hits, but only one was earned.

One loss won't put a damper on what has been an incredible spring for the Wolverines. East Clarendon hadn't lost since making the jump up to play some larger teams — Socastee, Carolina Forest, Hartsville and West Florence — to open the season. They added another 12-0 loss to West Florence on Wednesday night.

"I think it goes to show them that we have to play well to win. We have to play well in all three aspects, and we have to execute," Johnson said. "Hopefully they understand we have to do things in order to have a chance to win. We've just got to go back to it. We believe in what we're doing, we trust in what we're doing, and we're going to keep trying to do what we do. We've just got to execute better, and we've got to be more prepared."

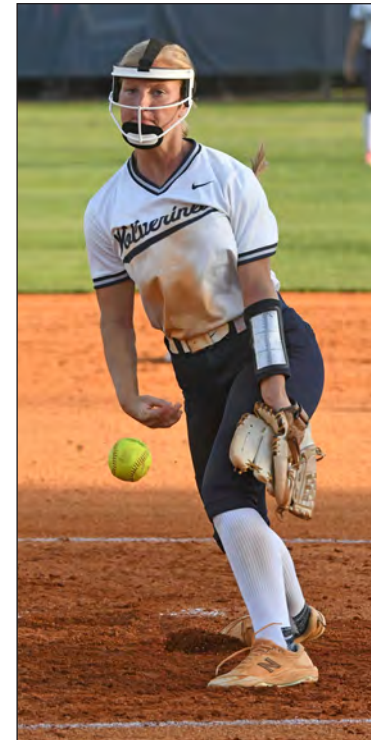
East Clarendon had one key missing this week, as Hunter Mixon suffered an injury at work during the weekend. Johnson hopes to have his senior third baseman back before the playoffs, as Mixon's leadership and bat have been critical this spring.

"He's the vocal leader for us. When he goes, we go," Johnson said. "Hopefully we'll get him back, and we can keep going."

While Mixon has been a key leader, Matthews has been the other rock for the Wolverines. He's been the ace of the pitching staff while providing a consistent bat in the lineup.

"Foster's been the same guy; he's going to go out there, and he's going to compete and give you a chance to win," Johnson said. "Foster is going

BELOW: East Clarendon's Laiklyn Gaskins pitches against Atlantic Collegiate.



to throw strikes and just get after it. I think he's 7-1 with a .98 ERA. He's almost four-to-one on strikeouts to walks. He's been really, really good for us. He anchors us at the top, and Blease has been really good for us on the mound."

When East Clarendon has been at full strength, they've hit in bunches. They've surpassed 10 runs in 11 games this spring. Johnson expects that his group will be able to settle back into the success they've found at the plate throughout the season.

"The first three games, we played Hartsville, West Florence and Carolina Forest. We hit .200 and struck out 34 times in three games. We kinda went back to the drawing board and said if we're going to be successful, we have to be able to beat some arms that are as good as these guys threw," Johnson said. "We kinda changed our approach offensively. Preston Shuey is our hitting guy, and he's done a really good job. We just went back and said we're going to try to hit the ball to right-center, take away the outside part of the plate, and if they throw it in, we feel like we're good enough to hit it. We've done a really good job hitting velocity."

"We hit .200 the first three games, and since then, we're hitting like .350 as a team, so it's been better for us. I feel like we're a really strong offensive team when we have all of our pieces. It certainly hurts not having Hunter there."

The Wolverines won't take spring break off. They'll take part in the South Atlantic Bank Invitational next week, facing a group of out-of-state teams, along with Lewisville. After that, they'll face Marion twice to close out the region and match up with Socastee.

"It's spring break, so you have to take it as spring break. You want to play well, but it's also an opportunity to work on some pieces and try to get ready for the playoffs," Johnson said. "I'm going to run a bunch of different arms out there. My top two guys are Foster and Blease, and they're going to get their work in with their starts, but we have to find some depth on the mound. We will use next week to find some depth on the mound and plug in some gaps defensively and try to find the pieces that we need to be successful in the playoffs."

PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Scott's Branch hires Days to take over boys basketball program

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@thetitem.com

The Scott's Branch boys basketball team is under new leadership. The Eagles have hired Damien Days to take over the program from Kevin Miller, who helped guide Scott's Branch to four consecutive state championships — one as an assistant before three as the head coach.



DAYS

"I know it's a basketball area. I used to play them back in middle school. I know the crowd and the atmosphere as far back as the late '80s and '90s when they won their back-to-back state championships," said Days, a Hartsville native who leaves McBee to join the Eagles. "Being able to get into a basketball environment is really key to me because I'm all basketball."

Scott's Branch Athletic Director Marion Lewis was

thrilled to add Days to the fold this season. "He came in with a structured plan with a goal of getting our basketball team to win trophies," Lewis said. "We're going to win the games we're supposed to win, but we want to win trophies and keep it going."

Days has been extremely successful during his coaching tenure and has some roots in the local basketball scene. He served as an assistant under current Crestwood head coach Aric Samuel at their alma mater, Hartsville, winning a pair of state championships. He also coached under Samuel at Coker College before heading over to McBee, where he helped turn around the Panthers' program. He went from seven wins in his first season in 2022 to 22 wins and a trip to the state semifinals this season.

"That's my guy," Days said of Samuel. "We kinda play the same game because that's the game that we were raised with in Hartsville, and you just add

your flavor to it. We're big on fundamental skills over the summer and the open periods. That's what makes my teams great."

Days picks up the torch from Miller, who leaves Scott's Branch with a record of 82-41. He's excited to bring his own spin to the program after the Eagles fell short of the postseason this winter. He's going to bring the brand of basketball he learned in Hartsville to the Eagles and work to soar to new heights.

"We're going to get back to the fundamentals of the game, teaching the fundamentals of the game, playing defense, passing and shooting. Making sure they understand different levels of the game, not just playing freelance ball," Days said. "We're going to play fast; we're going to run. Hopefully we can shoot the three well, but we're going to play fast and play a lot of defense."

"In order to be successful, we have to play defense and have to play fast."

play in Cheraw's spring break tournament with a 12-2 win over North Central on Tuesday.

Justin Pendergrass drove in four runs on two hits, while Morgan Love doubled and drove in three runs. Cory Bailey was 2-3 with a walk and two RBIs.

Bailey earned the win on the bump, allowing one earned run on four hits and three walks, striking out five.

LMA BLANKS CALHOUN

The Laurence Manning baseball team hosted Calhoun Academy on Wednesday, winning 6-0.

Four Swampcats combined to throw a shut-out. Cole Hawthorne allowed three hits and a walk across three innings, striking out three. Seth Witherspoon pitched two innings, allowing four hits. Josh Niswonger allowed just one hit in an inning of work, while Grayson Thornton gave up two hits in his lone inning on the mound.

Brentston Rembert drove in two runs on two hits in the win. BJ Balls and Ray Weston each had two hits and scored twice. Balls added three steals. Grainger Powell and Payton Brown each had a hit and an RBI.

MANNING SWEEPS MARION

The Manning baseball team faced Marion in a region series on Tuesday and Thursday, taking home a pair of wins.

The Monarchs won 15-0 on Tuesday. Johnathan White pitched six shutout innings, allowing just one hit and two walks while striking out 12. Joshua White struck out the side in his lone inning in relief.

JaRae Mitchell reached base five times in the win, going 3-3 with two walks. CJ Joye added two hits and two RBIs, while Johnathan White drove in three runs and Joshua White drove in two.

Manning then held off a late comeback for a 14-10 win on Thursday. Joye drove in three runs on two hits, while Lucas Peters added two knocks and two RBIs. Johnathan White and Laylon Davis each had a hit and drove in two runs.

Peters pitched 4 1/3 innings, allowing two earned runs on six hits, a walk and two hit batters. He struck out six. Joye pitched 2 2/3 innings, allowing three earned runs on four hits and three walks, striking out six.

TRACK

EC RUNS AT LAMAR

The East Clarendon track team ran in a meet at Lamar on Thursday.

The girls were led by Courtney McFadden who won both the 400m dash and 800m run with times of 1:06.22 and 2:50.97. Nakea Perkins and Kennedy Harrison also finished sixth and seventh in the 400m dash, while Justice Davis took fifth in the 800m run. Destiny Franklin and Taylor Robinson finished sixth and seventh in the 200m dash, while Franklin finished 12th in the 100m dash.

The Lady Wolverines' 4x400 team won with a time of 4:51.93, while their 4x100 team took third with a time of 57.83.

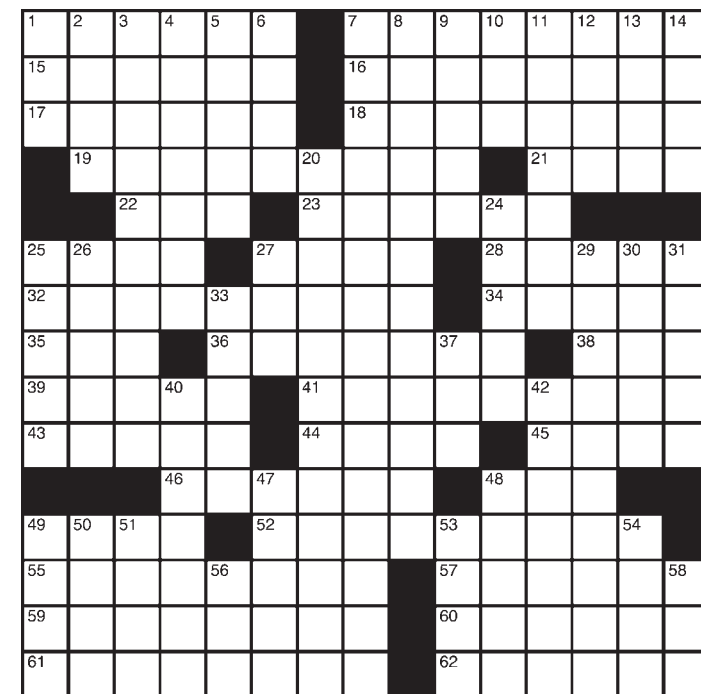
In the field events, Cherish Cochran took second in the long jump, clearing 4.19m. Kierston Woods finished second in the shot put with a throw of 8.41m and fourth in the discus with a toss of 19.7m.

The boys were led by a trio of second-place finishes in the sprints. Takoda Cornelius took second in both the 100 and 200m dashes with times of 11.75 and 22.03. Clayton Myers finished sixth and fifth in those sprints. Braylon Brown finished second in the 400m dash with a time of 55.83, while teammates Edvion McKenzie and Jahvick Brown finished third and fourth. Michael McFadden added a fifth-place finish in the 800m run with a time of 2:29.92, while Jalen Witherspoon finished sixth in the 1,600m run with a time of 5:57.86. Jeff Robinson took fourth in the 3,200m run with a time of 13:23.21, while Misael Molina finished fifth.

East Clarendon took second in both the 4x100 and 4x400 with times of 45.11 and 3:59.28.

Avery Lowery finished second in discus with a throw of 33.31, while finishing eighth in the shot put with a throw of 9.47m. Walker Kirby finished eighth in the discus and Collin Brown added a ninth-place finish in the shot put.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Conventional leader?
- 7 Option for table service
- 15 Pops in
- 16 Went up in smoke
- 17 Light show?
- 18 Not shy
- 19 Line of ownership?
- 21 Art patron Henry
- 22 Some concert merch
- 23 Supplements
- 25 Besides
- 27 Foundation of many cultures
- 28 Altercation
- 32 Big name
- 34 Eat down by the river?
- 35 Plumeria arrangement
- 36 Takes back
- 38 Hem, for instance
- 39 African capital served by Kotoka International Airport
- 41 Leg exercise that mimics a ballet step
- 43 "Moneyball" squad
- 44 "Flights" novelist Tokarczuk
- 45 Some links
- 46 Use leaves for eaves, say
- 48 Big name in sealant
- 49 Event in which the best competitors are untouchable?
- 52 Underground feminist punk movement
- 55 Selena y ___: American Tejano band
- 57 Beach bottle
- 59 Critical moment at Wimbledon
- 60 Layette piece
- 61 "Off the top of my head ..."
- 62 Least

Down

- 1 Zedonk parent
- 2 Chum, e.g.
- 3 Divisive way to sell pizza?
- 4 Breakout performer?
- 5 Vaccinations
- 6 Members of a virtual community
- 7 Stay the heck away from
- 8 Time to throw in the towel, perhaps
- 9 Poker offerings
- 10 Gulf structure
- 11 Private performances?
- 12 Second-largest branch of the second-largest religion
- 13 In transit
- 14 Hem, for instance
- 20 Elixirs
- 24 Something left on the cutting room floor?
- 25 Showiness
- 26 Freeloader
- 27 "The Land Is Inhospitable and So ___ We": 2023 Mitski album
- 29 Expected
- 30 Just perfect
- 31 Terrarium pets
- 33 Irreverent
- 37 Assam export
- 40 Fairly tame, per the MPA
- 42 One of four in the WNBA
- 47 Golfer Palmer, to fans
- 48 Bee that doesn't sting
- 49 Animated ice queen
- 50 Ada Limón, for one
- 51 "___ bien!"
- 53 Latch (onto)
- 54 Lane in Metropolis
- 56 Debtor's note
- 58 Lets hit it

AREA ROUNDUP

Wilson Hall goes 3-1 in Ripken Experience

STAFF REPORT

The Wilson Hall softball team had an excellent spring break in the Ripken Experience, going 3-1 on the week.

The Lady Barons opened the week with a split on Monday, beating Solvay 16-0 as Lilly Grace Przybyla threw a no-hitter and struck out three before falling to Fremont Ross 9-8. They bounced back on Tuesday with two blowout wins. Wilson Hall started with a 14-3 win over Alexander Central out of New York. Przybyla struck out two while allowing just four hits in five innings, while Marsha Kate Skey allowed just one hit across two innings of work. Skey got the start in the nightcap as Wilson Hall rolled to a 13-1 win.

The offense was explosive all week. Addie Griffin had an on base percentage of .800, while driving in eight runs with two doubles and three triples. She scored seven runs. Przybyla hit .500, driving in nine runs across four games, while Skey hit .462 with a home run. She scored eight runs and drove in five. Caroline Moorman and Emmie Williamson each hit .419 on the week, as Moorman scored seven runs and drove in six. Mary Paisley Geddings got on base in half of her plate appearances, scoring five times while driving in four runs. Caroline Andrews homered, drive in five runs and scored six times.

LADY SAINTS TOP TSA

The Clarendon Hall softball team defeated Thomas Sumter 16-2 on Tuesday.

The Lady Saints finished with 13 hits and five walks in the win. Mandy Wells homered twice, driving in five runs, while Brynli Brewer drove in three runs with two long balls. Calli Yount and Maggie Harrington each added home runs. AC Martins drove in three runs on two hits, including a double, while Aubree Richardson and Skylar Dymond each tripled.

Brewer earned the win, allowing one earned run in four innings. She scattered four hits and no walks while striking out six. Sunshine Brown pitched a hitless frame in relief.

Paisley Hill and Natalie Saphore split time in the circle for Thomas Sumter in the loss. Kason Harter hit a solo home run for TSA, while Anna Luzzi, Lila Kate Stines and Hannah Geddings each added hits.

LMA OUTLASTS OP

The Laurence Manning softball team hosted Orangeburg Prep on Wednesday, winning a shootout 21-16.

Marlee Black had four hits and drove in four runs out of the leadoff spot, while Ashley Rae Hodge was 2-3 with two walks, three RBIs and two runs scored. Lyza Prickelmyer had four hits and a walk. She tripled and scored four times, while driving in two runs. Laini Kosinski and Carol Ann Briggs each added two hits and two RBIs. LMA piled up 18 hits and nine walks in the win.

Kosinski pitched 4 2/3, allowing eight earned runs on 14 hits and a walk, striking out four. Kayleigh Parmenter-Avins pitched 2 1/3 innings, allowing five earned runs on five hits and three walks.

LAKEWOOD TOPS PALISADES

The Lakewood softball team closed out their spring break tournament with a 13-2 win over Palisades on Thursday.

Anna Grace Fowler homered twice, driving in three runs, while Sadie Johnson added a home run and two RBIs. Callie Ard had four hits and scored three times while driving in a run. Ainsley Pittman added an RBI, while Gracyn Guilford had two hits and scored twice.

Pittman pitched all six innings, allowing two unearned runs on six hits while striking out six.

BASEBALL

SUMTER HIGH BEATS NORTH CENTRAL

The Sumter High baseball team wrapped up

JUMBLE

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

RFYTO

CCIYN

FEIDDE

STRHHA

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Did I say, "At ease"? Is your back broken? It better be for you to not be at attention right now.

Yes, Sergeant! Sorry, Sergeant.

4 19

AFTER THE SERGEANT TOLD HIM TO STOP SLOUCHING, THE PRIVATE WAS GOING TO ---

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

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

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

Jumbles: FORTY
Answer: After the sergeant told him to stop slouching, the private was going to — STAND CORRECTED

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

GENERALS FROM PAGE B1

Malaysia English was electric, winning the 100m dash with a 13.13 to lead a brigade of Lady Generals. Hannah Burnside took second with a 13.38, while Ronia Sanders finished third in 13.67. Bayleigh Donhauser finished fifth before placing second in the 200m dash in 27.87. Sanders finished fifth in the 200m. English then claimed second in the 400m dash with a school-record time of 59.56, while Sanders took fourth.

The distance events were dominated by the TSA ladies. Abbie Fisher won both the 800m and 3,200m runs with times of 2:41.66 and 12:59.61. Skylar Spilker took first in the 1,600m run with a time of 6:10.64, just a fraction of a second ahead of Fisher (6:10.75). Kelsey Martin finished third, while Kiera Anderson finished fifth. Spilker added a second-place finish in the 3,200m run with a time of 13:11.77, while Martin finished third and Anderson placed fourth.

Burnside remained atop the hur-

dles, taking home victories in both races. She won the 100m race with a time of 16.69 before crossing the finish line in the 400m hurdles with a time of 1:07.93.

TSA finished as runners-up in all three relays with a time of 54.41 in the 4x100, 4:51.93 in the 4x400 and 11:42.91 in the 4x800.

Donhauser and Paisley Claypool were the top two high jumpers, clearing 1.47m and 1.32m, respectively. They also finished sixth and seventh in the triple jump in the same order. Sanders finished third in the long jump by clearing 4.5m.

Thomas Sumter also swept the throws. Anna Luzzi won both the javelin and the shot put with throws of 32.39m and 8.22m. Sylvia Burrows won the discus with a toss of 22.44m, while Luzzi settled for runner-up with a throw of 20.62m.

The boys were equally efficient. Nate Livingston won both the 3,200m and 1,600m races with times of 11:22.45 and 5:01.08. Ty Fisher took second in each of those races with times of 11:46.45 and 5:19.56. Ashton Pierce added a third-place finish in

the 1,600m run, while Henry Sturkey, Wyatt Swinehart and Connor Van Osterom rounded out the top five in the 3,200m run. Thomas Sumter also took the top three spots in the 800m run. Trent Spilker won with a time of 2:14.66, followed closely by Sturkey (2:16.92) and Pierce (2:23.91).

Isaac Walsh swept the hurdles for TSA in an incredible performance. He won the 110H with a time of 20.48 while winning the 400H with a time of 1:07.96, narrowly beating teammate Christian Williams, who crossed with a time of 1:08.08. Bradley Dukette also finished fourth.

"Isaac Walsh is a first-year kid, and I remember his dad walked up to me in practice, and I told him his boy is going to be something," Coursey said. "And he's worked. He's had some injuries that he's had to work through, but he won the 110 hurdles and 400 hurdles. That's huge."

TSA claimed four of the top five spots in each of the sprints, but OP's Connor Funchess took home the win in all three events. Sam Petruschke finished second in both the 100m and 200m dashes with times of 11.94 and

24.18, missing out on first place by .13 and .12 seconds in each race. Christian Williams finished both races in third. Joseph Andrade took second in the 400m dash with a time of 57.13, just ahead of teammate Hadrian Hughey (57.29).

The Generals swept the relays. TSA won the 4x100 with a time of 47.73, the 4x400 with a time of 4:14.40 and the 4x800 with a time of 9:42.39.

TSA continued their excellence in the field events. Petruschke won the triple jump by clearing 11.53m, while Zion Williams finished second by jumping 11.1m. Petruschke finished second in the long jump by clearing 6.12m, while Christian Williams took second with a leap of 6.03m.

Reed Dollard won the javelin with a toss of 40.08m, while Weston Shaffer finished second and Dukette placed fourth. Shaffer added a third-place finish in the discus with a throw of 32.49m, while Dollard took fifth and Jake Lessard finished sixth. Dollard also placed third in the shot put with a throw of 11.02m, while Lessard finished sixth and Dukette finished eighth.

AOTW FROM PAGE B1

recognition. "I had a lot of support from my teammates and coaches and especially my parents."

Love and his teammates were locked in from the word "go" last week as they fought to prove their ability to play with the best of the best.

"I feel like we had a really good week of practice going into it. We had that Sunday practice, and I could tell the guys had a different mindset," Love said. "We just had the mindset that we didn't have anything to lose because the odds were against us with the rankings. At the end of the day, we strongly feel that the ranking is just a number. We just had the mindset that we had nothing to lose, and that was on our side."

Sumter High head coach Will McMillan was thrilled to see Love put all the pieces together against Blythewood. Love's role has changed over the years from splitting time at catcher to moving into the infield. He wasn't asked to pitch much prior to this spring, but Love has embraced his role as a reliever, which turned into two saves against the top team in South Carolina.

"He's worked really hard," McMillan said of his third baseman and reliever. "He and Coach (Andrew) Twitty have tinkered with some things, arm slot and different stuff in the bullpen, and it's really paying off for him."

"He just has confidence. He never gets rattled; he's always even-keeled."

Love's success on the mound this season came after a shift in mentality. He's taken the opportunity and run with it all spring.

"Coach McMillan told me I was going to pitch a little bit more this season, and that made me take my bullpens a lot more seriously," Love said. "I've always wanted the ball, and it felt good getting up there and competing. We have an amazing pitching coach, Coach Twitty. His pitch-calling and everything he does, he does to the best of his abilities, and that's helped out a lot."

In the first game of the series, Love entered with a 4-1 lead. He scored two of those runs to help the offense and took the ball in the seventh looking to finish the job. Marion Davis gave the Gamecocks a great start, holding Blythewood to one run on just two hits, before Joseph Chapman tossed a shutout inning. After watching his teammates allow a combined three hits in the first six innings, Love was confident he could put the game to bed.

"Those two guys really stepped up," Love said. "We looked forward to getting a good start from Marion, and having Chap come in there and give us a strong outing, the confidence was going through the roof out there."

Before Love came in to close their second win of the week, he provided some much-needed offense. He stepped up to the plate trailing 1-0 with two runners on and two outs and launched the first pitch he saw over the fence in left.

"I had a lot of confidence," Love said. "I knew I didn't

have much to lose, and that was a reflection of hard work paying off. I stuck to my approach and the ball leaked in, and I just put a good swing on it."

Confidence has been key for Love during a great spring at the plate. He finished the week with four hits and a walk in eight plate appearances, all of which proved crucial in an intense week on the diamond.

"Just walking up there, I tell myself I'm 10 feet tall and bulletproof," he said. "It reminds me that there's no reason to be scared. I feel like I worked really hard this offseason, and I just stick to my approach of hitting middle-back side, and if it leaks in, make them pay. Luckily on Thursday, the odds were in my favor, and it happened."

With a batter like Love in the middle of the lineup, McMillan can be confident his Gamecocks will be able to scratch enough runs across to come away with wins.

"We've got a couple guys at there at the top of our lineup that have been consistent all year, and he's one of them," McMillan said. "They've bought into the approach and what we've been trying to work on. Numbers don't lie. He's really continued to work. He's a hard worker, and he's competitive and wants to help the team in any way he can. He's been a team guy. He gets the three-run home run, but he's also been the guy that lays down a safety squeeze this year. He's going to do whatever he needs to do to help the team win."

Sumter High added three more runs an inning later in the fourth, which proved to be critical. Love came in for the save with a 6-3 lead and ran into a little trouble. After getting two quick outs, an infield single put runners on the corners. Love intentionally walked Amare Counts to load the bases. A single by Sergio Melendez brought the Bengals within a run, but Love induced a ground ball to get out of Blythewood with a win.

"It definitely got a little rocky there in the last inning," Love admitted. "I had a little mental mistake not getting over to first on the ground ball to Chap at first, but I took responsibility for that and stepped on the mound wanting to compete. Luckily it worked out in our favor."

Love and the Gamecocks only have four games left on their regular season slate. Sumter High had a rocky spring break in a tournament at Cheraw, dropping two games on Monday before a 12-2 win over North Central on Tuesday. They'll face Westwood for a two-game set this week before finishing the regular season with four games in five days the following week. They plan on heading into the playoffs on the right foot.

"This week was filled with highs and lows, but I felt like on Tuesday, we did a good job of bouncing back from Monday," Love said. "It takes a good team to bounce back, but we're going to work hard, and I feel like the confidence will be there going into next week."

SEARS

FROM PAGE B1

Sacramento.

"We've discussed it as a team and a pitching staff; anytime you go somewhere new, there's an adjustment time. We're kinda getting used to the flow of things. Even the ballpark staff and everyone like that, still getting used to things," Sears said. "Everything is new there, and all the facilities are very nice. Everything that they've done so far has been great. We're getting used to the ball flying a little bit more there at that stadium, especially during the night games."

"But team-wise, we've been OK so far. The last couple of years, we haven't had great years, and we've been off to worse starts than this. We kinda feel like we're in a good spot, even though our record doesn't really show it."

Sears quickly noticed that their stay in Sacramento would be very different from his time in Oakland. He joined the A's during a challenging time, especially after the move out of Oakland was announced. They've been welcomed with open arms in their new home, especially because Sutter Park brings fans a little closer to the action compared to a stadium in Oakland that was built to double as an NFL arena.

"Sacramento has a homey feel; they support their teams really big there," Sears said. "It's obviously a lot more intimate. The fans are a lot closer to you. You feel like you can hear everything more there. Oakland was just such a vast, wide-open stadium, so this has a more intimate feeling to it."

PITCHING IN EVERY ENVIRONMENT

In four starts this season, Sears has pitched in the most extreme environments in the sport.

Seattle is known as the most pitcher-friendly park in MLB thanks to a batter's eye in center that makes it difficult for hitters to see the ball and wind flow through the stadium that adds movement to pitches. His second start came in the high elevation in Colorado, where home runs tend to fly out of the ballpark in the lighter air. Sacramento has been pretty hitter-friendly so far, too. Rate Field in Chicago is one of the more neutral parks in baseball, serving as an early season reprieve from extreme settings.

"The more and more you pitch in different atmospheres, you get used to the variety of it all. You really have to, at times, not think about it at all because they still have to hit the ball, you still have to command the zone really well," Sears said of his early tour of some of baseball's most intense pitching environments. "The atmosphere has been a lot different in those first three games and, as a player, you just have to drown out those things you can't control and try to focus on the team that you're playing



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Wilson Hall star and current Athletics starting pitcher JP Sears (38) throws against the Chicago White Sox on Thursday, April 17, 2025, in Chicago.

and the atmosphere that night."

EARLY RETURNS ON OFFSEASON WORK

Coming into the season, Sears prioritized working on ways to get deeper into games. So far, that work has largely paid off. He's gone at least six innings in three of his four starts, the lone exception being his one start at home. Sears had to grind in a 7-6 loss to the Mets, throwing more than 100 pitches in just four innings of work.

"The Mets game, obviously I got ran out there a little early. They were just a good team fouling off a lot of pitches. They kinda got me into a lot of deep counts, which made me throw a lot of pitches each inning," Sears said. "But that's my goal. The way I've tried to go about getting deeper into games is to be more efficient with my reasoning behind each pitch I'm throwing. Every pitch has a purpose throughout the whole game, and there's multiple reasons I throw each pitch."

"I think just trying to figure out the chess part of the game where there's more times to be aggressive with this team and less times to be aggressive with this team, where I have to be a little more patient."

Another focus for Sears has been mixing his pitches a little bit more, specifically with his slider.

"I'm trying to introduce my slider a little bit more, just trying to throw two different breaking balls now to get guys off my sweeper," Sears said. "I've been able to throw my sweeper in the zone a lot and get outs through it. Now I'm trying to add a little more of that slider to get guys off the sweeper and get more swing and miss with the slider."

"I'm always trying to figure out ways to get better, and the best way to do it is to try to be overprepared for the game and really just do whatever you can to combat the offense, using my stuff and my strengths to give me the best chance to win that day."

YOUNG, FUN OFFENSE

Sears and the rest of the A's pitching staff have been the beneficiaries of some of the most exciting young hitters in baseball this spring. The southpaw from Sumter got plenty of run support in Thursday's win over the A's as first baseman Tyler Soderstrom launched his

league-leading ninth home run. Lawrence Butler, Brent Rooker and JJ Bleday all added long balls as Sears scattered three hits and two walks across six innings of work in a comfortable win.

Soderstrom and rookie shortstop Jacob Wilson, the son of longtime MLB shortstop Jack Wilson, have been two of the most pleasant offensive surprises this season. Wilson leads the team with a .338 batting average, while Soderstrom is hitting .315 and has already driven in 18 runs, which is tied for fifth in all of baseball. He's fourth in all of baseball in wins above replacement behind only Fernando Tatis Jr., Aaron Judge and Corbin Carroll.

"Baseball is a game of confidence. When you have a good offense behind you swinging the bat really well, it brings another aspect to being a starting pitcher," Sears said. "There are times when I get kicked in the teeth early on in a game, I give up some runs in the first or the second and I feel like I've gotten our team behind. In years past, I feel like I've given the game away. Now, when you've got an offense that you feel like can strike with big numbers any inning, any game, it gives me more confidence as a pitcher to go out there and keep doing what you're doing and stay patient throughout a game."

Perhaps most importantly, Sears doesn't feel like he has to throw a perfect game any time he steps on the mound if he wants to leave with a win. That free feeling makes it much easier to step on the rubber and go to work.

"I talked with Sevy (fellow A's pitcher Luis Severino) about it a couple of days ago. In that start in Colorado, we went down 3-0 pretty early in that game, and I was frustrated because the team is losing, and you feel like it's your fault," Sears said. "He just told me the more you're on teams where you feel like the offense can do a little more to help you out, that gives you the confidence to go back out there and be more patient. I feel like we're starting to get that now with our team and this offense. Just learning how to be patient and not let your emotions get to you too early, just learning from these guys around me is going to help me try and continue to get better and propel my career a little bit longer."

College football players chasing dollars with portal open, House settlement approval delayed

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

The opening of the college football transfer portal has created a dash for cash. The delay in approving the House vs. NCAA antitrust settlement means the rules around compensation are not yet in place, blowing up the market for the amount of money players can receive from their schools' name, image and likeness collectives or from third-party endorsement deals.

More than 400 players have entered the portal since it opened Wednesday, according to tracking by 247Sports. Athletes have until April 25 to enter, and they clearly have leverage until the settlement is approved by U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken in California.

"It's basically a free pass to pay guys as much as you want to pay them right now," said Mit Winter, a Missouri sports law attorney who advises agents, collectives and schools. His advice to athletes: "Get your deal signed now before the House settlement gets approved and make sure the payments are made from a collective before July 1."

Once the House settlement is approved, any NIL deals with a collective or third party over \$600 must be reported to a clearinghouse, where it will be vetted to determine if the pay is commensurate with the service provided by the athlete and that it is in line with the athlete's fair market value. July 1 is the expected date for the settlement to take effect.

Jacob Piasecki and Stefan Aguilera, co-founders of the Austin, Texas-based A&P Sports Agency, have been busy since winter negotiating "frontloaded" NIL contracts that will pay all or most of the money to their clients before July 1.

"It's like an 11th hour now,"



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Tennessee quarterback Nico Iamaleava is in the transfer portal after trying to negotiate for more NIL money from the Volunteers.

Piasecki said. "We're getting to the point where collectives are going to be highly scrutinized and everything is going to be under a microscope."

Michael LeRoy, a University of Illinois labor and sports law professor, said it would have been advantageous for the schools if Wilken had given final approval to the settlement in the days between the April 7 settlement hearing and the opening of the portal this week.

"The lack of closure," LeRoy said, "adds one more element of chaos."

UNCERTAINTY REIGNS

The scramble for pay has disrupted college sports the past few seasons, particularly with athletes now free to transfer without having to sit out the following season. This past year alone, quarterback Nico Iamaleava left Tennessee when he was set to reportedly earn \$2.2 million next season

and QB Matthew Sluka left UNLV, saying the school didn't come through with \$100,000.

In addition to NIL, athletes also will be able to get paid through revenue sharing beginning July 1. Schools are now sending players term sheets or memorandums of understanding regarding pay. Each school will be allowed to distribute \$20.5 million to their athletes this year, with football and men's basketball players likely to receive the lion's share.

Considering some schools had unofficial NIL payrolls at or near \$20 million just for football last year and that there soon will be greater policing of collective and third-party NIL deals, some of the highest-paid players will take pay cuts this year unless their current deals are renegotiated before House approval.

Piasecki and Aguilera predicted a random Power Four quarterback who earned \$2

million in 2024 might make only half that in 2025 because of the rev-share and NIL caps.

Winter agreed some players could make less, "but they still will be able to negotiate within whatever budget a school has. There's still going to be collectives at a lot of schools that will come in to fill gaps or go over that cap as well."

How would a collective fill a pay gap if any deal over \$600 must go through the clearinghouse?

"The way it's envisioned now, the athletes are responsible for reporting deals with collectives and boosters to the new enforcement entity," Winter said. "Probably like now, there'll be lots of deals that don't get reported."

COURT FIGHTS LOOM

Experts say lawsuits are a certainty, noting limits have been placed on rev-share and NIL pay without collective bargaining involving the ath-

letes and their representatives. Because college athletes are not considered employees, collective bargaining is not required. Conferences and schools have lobbied Congress to codify the House settlement and bake in some level of antitrust protection.

As the settlement is written, if the clearinghouse disallows an NIL deal, the athlete is ineligible if they go forward with it. Otherwise, they can renegotiate the deal or go to arbitration and try to show why the deal is within fair market value.

Winter said the formula for determining fair market value is nebulous. He said it's his understanding the athlete's performance, social media followers and the market in which their school is located will be factors.

"Who's to say what's fair market value if someone wants to pay someone X?" Winter said. "How can you say their fair market value is not X?"

As for enforcement, the power conferences are establishing an enforcement arm to oversee adherence to the salary cap and clearinghouse and levy penalties on violators.

"One element that's in the background that's going to keep inserting itself into the foreground is these schools want to create a rules structure for everybody else except themselves," LeRoy said. "That's always been the history of NCAA competition. We'll have a rules committee, we'll have enforcement. The underlying behavior is we find ways to shortcut the rules, spin the rules, even cheat on the rules."

"I look at this new regime as, 'We're setting up rules, everybody knows what the rules are.' And then everybody is thinking about how can you game it, how can you circumvent it?"

Kid's Corner

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After upgrading defense in free agency, Panthers left with more options entering NFL draft

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — The Carolina Panthers entered the offseason in dire need of upgrading the NFL's worst defense.

General manager Dan Morgan aggressively attacked those shortcomings in the first few days of free agency, spending nearly a quarter-billion dollars of owner David Tepper's money by signing defensive tackles Tershawn Wharton and Bobby Brown III, linebackers Pat Jones II and Christian Rozeboom, and safety Tre'Von Moehrig and re-signing cornerbacks Jaycee Horn and Mike Jackson.

The moves give the Panthers more flexibility entering the NFL draft, where they have the No. 8 overall pick.

So if Morgan wants to pivot from the team's obvious needs on the defense to take a wide receiver such as Arizona's Tetairoa McMillan or Texas' Matthew Golden, or fill a long-time team need at tight end with the likes of Michigan's Colston Loveland, he can.

That doesn't necessarily mean that will happen, even though the Panthers have spent their top two draft picks on offense the past two years.

Morgan, who will be overseeing his second draft in Carolina, knows the Panthers need as much depth as possible on defense after allowing a league-worst 31.4 points and 179.8 yards rushing per game in 2024.

That, and a slow start to the season for second-year quarterback Bryce Young, resulted in the Panthers finishing 5-12 and failing to make the postseason for the seventh straight season.

If the Panthers go defense, edge rusher Jalon Walker from Georgia could give their pass rush a needed boost.

Carolina had just 32 sacks last season, tied for third fewest in the league.

There could also be potential help available at linebacker with Alabama's Jhaad Campbell or cornerback with Texas' Jahdae Barron.

STOCKPILE OF PICKS

Don't be surprised if Morgan does a little wheeling and dealing on Day 2 of the draft.

The Panthers have one pick in both the second and third rounds on Friday night, but they also have two selections in the fourth round and three in the fifth, which could enable Morgan to package some picks and move back up into the second or third rounds.

BULKING UP THE LINES

Morgan made it clear at the NFL combine that the Pan-



Carolina Panthers general manager Dan Morgan speaks during a press conference at the NFL combine in Indianapolis on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

thers need to improve up front on both sides of the ball — not unlike the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.

Carolina invested more big money in guards Robert Hunt and Damien Lewis in 2024 and re-signed center Austin Corbett earlier this offseason to shore up the offensive line. The defensive line, even with the free agent additions, is an area the Panthers may look to improve in the draft.

"You have to win the line of scrimmage," Morgan said. "You have to be bigger, you have to be tougher, you have to be more physical — and that's what we're looking to do around here. We're looking to build that defensive line like we built the offensive line last season. Give the fans a good product on the field, give us a good product on the field."

NEED

Edge rusher, cornerback and linebacker are all areas of need on defense, while wide receiver and tight end could be targets on offense.

DON'T NEED

The Panthers seem content with the maturation and growth of Young and they resigned veteran Andy Dalton, so quarterback is off the table. Running back is also not an area of need either after signing free agent Rico Dowdle from the Dallas Cowboys to back up Chuba Hubbard. Also last year's second-round pick Jonathan Brooks is expected back mid-season after a knee injury. The starting offensive line appears set, although the team could look for an eventual replacement for left tackle.

PICK 'EM

The Panthers seem enamored with Walker, a 6-foot-1, 243-pound edge rusher who would bring versatility to the team's 3-4 defensive scheme.

gan Fox, who played the past three seasons with the Los Angeles Chargers. Coach Raheem Morris said the Falcons can't put too much emphasis on boosting the pass rush.

"I think you can't have enough edge," Morris told reporters at the annual league meeting this month. "You know, I think that's got to be something that you're always constantly doing. ... You play a bunch of different people. You got to get a chance to roll those guys around. You can make the movement you have to make necessarily go out there and try to win matchups. And I think you want to continue to add those guys as much as you can."

Georgia's Mykel Williams and Marshall's Mike Green could be available at No. 15.

TRADE TALK

The Falcons could have interest in trading down in the



An elevated overall general view is seen of Lambeau Field during a game between the Green Bay Packers and the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday, Nov. 24, 2024, in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

NFL's smallest market prepares to host league's top offseason spectacle as draft comes to Green Bay

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Corey Behnke was a 7-year-old attending a Green Bay Packers preseason game with his grandfather when he pointed to the homes across the street from Lambeau Field and vowed to live there eventually.

Now he has one of the best spots to watch as the NFL's greatest offseason spectacle takes shape.

The NFL draft's annual pilgrimage to cities across the league is arriving in Green Bay next week with all the pageantry that comes from operating in the home of the NFL's only publicly owned franchise.

"I think it's going to be iconic in a way that other drafts aren't," said Behnke, now president of the neighborhood association of the area adjacent to Lambeau Field.

As soon as the NFL started taking its draft around the country nearly a decade ago, Packers officials wondered what it would take to bring the event to Green Bay. They realized they'd never get a Super Bowl because of Green Bay's small population and frigid February weather.

Hosting a draft would be the next best thing.

The possibility that Packers president/CEO Mark Murphy envisioned so long ago now becomes reality just as he prepares for his retirement this summer. As draft-related construction continues in the area around Lambeau, one of several Packers-themed signs in the yards of homes across the street from the stadium includes this message: "Draft Dreams on Murphy's Turf."

"For us, we'd been seeing how the draft has grown and what it's become and knew the kind of impact it would have, not just on the local Green Bay community, but the entire state," Murphy said. "Since we're a community-owned team, that's really one of our top priorities, is to give back to the community. It'll be the largest event ever held in Green Bay."

Therein lies the challenge. The Green Bay metro area includes about 320,000 people, according to Discover Green Bay spokesman Nick Meisner. The city itself has a population of under 110,000. Bringing the draft to a town of this size creates obstacles that league officials didn't have to worry about when this event took

place in Chicago, Philadelphia or other major metro areas.

Green Bay has about 5,000 hotel rooms, a figure that gets up to 10,000 when nearby Appleton is included. That means plenty of fans watching the draft may have to stay a couple of hours away in Milwaukee or Madison, though many of them already are accustomed to doing that for Packers home games.

"When people say, can the city handle it, well, what does that mean?" Behnke asked. "Do we have enough hotels? No, but we knew that. Does Wisconsin have enough hotels? Yeah, I think so. I think a lot of people (understand) the fact that it's going to be a driving event. People are going to drive here. But I also think that's how games are. ... I think people are kind of used to driving an hour and a half or two hours to get to Green Bay."

The smaller population likely means a smaller number of people at this draft. Murphy said a total attendance of about 250,000 is expected, less than one-third of the record crowd of over 775,000 that attended last year's draft in Detroit. Crowd figures are measured by adding the attendance numbers for each of the draft's three days, so one person who attends all three days would be counted three times.

"The beauty of the draft is you can adapt it to any environment you're in," said Jon Barker, the NFL's senior vice president for global event operations. "With each draft, there's always going to be challenges that you need to overcome, but there's also great opportunity."

Those opportunities involve focusing on the tradition and history of a place Behnke calls "the best football town in America."

For instance, one of the NFL's greatest training-camp rituals occurs at Green Bay each summer, as players borrow children's bicycles to ride from the locker room to the practice field. Packers officials referenced this tradition in their draft bid by sending a Packers-themed bike to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell's office.

"We had our draft pitch in video form in the basket in the Packer bike," said Gabrielle Dow, the Packers' vice president of marketing and fan engagement.

Without giving too much away, Barker said part of Thursday's draft opening will incorporate that bike tradition. A bike parade for children is planned for Saturday.

Falcons expected to take advantage of NFL draft's deep pool of edge rushers

BY CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga — The Atlanta Falcons are expected to take advantage of the NFL draft's deep pool of edge rushers even after addressing the need in free agency.

The only question may be if the Falcons will look for pass rush help with the No. 15 overall pick or wait until later in the draft.

The Falcons have only five picks in the draft, including the No. 46 pick in the second round.

Atlanta signed Leonard Floyd to a one-year, \$10 million deal to add experience and punch to a pass rush after finishing next to last in the league with 31 sacks in 2024. Floyd, 32, had 8 1/2 sacks for San Francisco last season.

The Falcons also signed free-agent defensive end Mor-



Atlanta Falcons head coach Raheem Morris arrives for interviews at the NFL's annual meetings on Tuesday, April 1, in Palm Beach, Florida.

first round to add depth to their draft. They currently have picks in the second and fourth rounds before closing their draft with two selections

in the seventh round. Because edge rushers are a strength of the draft, the Falcons could move down in the first round, perhaps for a third-round pick, and still find pass-rush help.

NEED

Cornerback also ranks high on the Falcons' list of needs. A.J. Terrell is set at one cornerback spot, but Atlanta could look for help with one of its first selections.

Atlanta released two-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Grady Jarrett, who signed with Chicago. The move opens a spot for 2024 second-round pick Ruke Orhoro to join David Onyemata at tackle, but Morris noted the Falcons scouted defensive tackles in preparation for the draft.

Safety and tight end also could be positions Morris and general manager Terry Fontenot look to address in

the draft.

NEUZIL SET FOR FULL-TIME ROLE

Morris said the Falcons are comfortable with Ryan Neuzil, who started eight games last season, moving up at center to replace Drew Dalman, who also signed with Chicago.

QUARTERBACK PLAN

Despite Morris saying the Falcons "feel very strongly" about keeping Kirk Cousins as the backup to starting quarterback Michael Penix Jr., the coach didn't rule out trading the veteran. If trading Cousins is the real plan, then drafting a backup for Penix would make sense.

DON'T NEED

Bijan Robinson and Tyler Allgeier make running back a position of strength. Wide receiver and guard also do not rate as pressing draft needs.

NBA teams begin sprint towards title tonight

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

EDITOR'S NOTE: Friday's play-in games, which featured former Crestwood star Ja Morant and the Grizzlies facing the Dallas Mavericks and the Atlanta Hawks meeting the Miami Heat, were not completed at press time.

There was Toronto in 2019, the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020, Milwaukee in 2021, Golden State in 2022, Denver in 2023 and Boston in 2024.

Six different seasons, six different champions. A run of parity like none other in NBA history.

And now the Celtics get their turn at bucking that trend. Boston will try to win back-to-back NBA titles, something no franchise has managed since Golden State did it in 2017 and 2018. The NBA playoffs start Saturday with four Game 1s, continue Sunday with four more Game 1s and just like that a 16-team, two-month journey will be off and running.

"It's the best time of the year," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said.

Favored to win the title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook, are the 68-win Oklahoma City Thunder, the top overall seed and No. 1 seed in the Western Conference — a team that set an NBA record this season by outscoring teams by 12.9 points per game. Their fellow No. 1 seed out of the Eastern Conference: the 64-win Cleveland Cavaliers, a group that put together the second-best regular season in franchise history.

The Thunder haven't been to the NBA Finals since 2012. The Cavaliers haven't been there since the end of LeBron James' second era in Cleveland in 2018. Over the last six seasons, nine different franchises have made at least one finals appearance — further speaking to the parity league-wide right now, and the Thunder and Cavs both have eyes on adding to that list.

"This is what you compete for, is to be able to compete on the biggest stages," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fans react as Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) celebrates after making a 3-pointer during a NBA play-in tournament game against the Memphis Grizzlies in San Francisco on Tuesday, April 15.

said. "We're now entering that. We've earned the opportunity to be there just like everybody else. We're certainly excited."

The Cavs aren't even favored to win the East; oddsmakers list Boston as the pick to represent that side of the league in the NBA Finals. Cleveland — a team that led the NBA in scoring this season and finished second in field-goal percentage — may be turning that into fuel.

"I think I've been saying we're humble and hungry," Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson said. "I don't know if that rings, but it's kind of who we are. ... Within the humility, there's a hunger in that locker room. They want to prove people wrong."

Among the others in the playoff field: James and the Lakers, Stephen Curry and the Warriors, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Milwaukee, Nikola Jokic and Denver. All past MVPs, all past champions, and all of them looking to do what Boston did last year.

"We're not defending a championship. We won last year. Can't nobody take it from us," Celtics forward Jayson Tatum said. "But last year was last season. That's out the window. We're not worried about anything besides the Magic right now."

Most of the matchups are set. It's Boston vs. Orlando, New York vs. Detroit and Indiana vs. Milwaukee in the East, with Cleveland set to meet either Atlanta or Miami. In the West, it's Houston vs. Golden State, the Lakers vs. Minnesota and Denver vs. the Los Angeles Clippers, with Oklahoma City awaiting the winner of Memphis and Dallas.

James and Curry have four titles apiece. Nobody has gotten to five as a player since Tim Duncan in 2014, when San Antonio won its most recent title. And both have to believe they have a realistic chance of getting through a loaded Western Conference — James and the Lakers bolstered by the addition of Luka Doncic, Curry and the Warriors

bolstered by the addition of Jimmy Butler.

"Means a lot to match up against him," Minnesota star Anthony Edwards said of facing James, his Olympic teammate last summer, in Round 1. "Probably goes down as the greatest player to ever play basketball. So, trying to get putting him out of the playoffs under my belt is going to be a tough one — but it's going to be a fun road."

There's one Round 1 rematch from last season: Milwaukee vs. Indiana. The Pacers took advantage of a hobbled Bucks team last year and won in six games, and this year they'll be facing a Bucks team that doesn't have Damian Lillard for at least Game 1. Lillard has been sidelined by a blood clot, though was cleared to resume basketball activity this week.

"We're always going to get their best shot. They're always going to get our best shot," Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton said. "Plain and simple, we don't like each other."

There are tons of other storylines.

Denver is seeking its second title in three years, only this time with interim coach David Adelman — who replaced Michael Malone with three games left — at the helm, and the Nuggets open against Kawhi Leonard, James Harden and the airtight defense that the Clippers bring. Detroit is back in the playoffs, now with eyes on ending a 14-game postseason losing streak that goes back to 2008. Houston is back in the field, ending a five-year drought and climbing all the way to the No. 2 seed out West.

The Thunder are the favorite. The Cavs and Celtics both won 60-plus games. The Lakers, Warriors and Nuggets certainly have reasons for confidence. The Timberwolves were the surprise team that made a deep run last year. The Pacers might be that team this year.

Parity may reign again.

"We have something to look forward to now," Curry said. "And I'm excited about the challenge."

OBITUARIES

ISAAC SHAHEEM NELSON SR.

Isaac Shaheem Nelson Sr., 27, son of Isaac H. Nelson and LaDonna D. Alston, was born on April 24, 1997, in Sumter. He departed this life on Sunday, April 13, 2025, in Sumter. Public viewing was held on Friday, April 18, 2025, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 20, 2025, at The R.O. Johnson Memorial Convention Center, 8031 Black River Road, Rembert, 29128, with Bishop Gregory Jackson officiating.

Interment will follow in Union Baptist Church Cemetery, Rembert. Family will receive friends at the home, 4040 Queen Chapel Road, Sumter, daily from 3 to 8 p.m.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com, or visit us on the web at www.jobsmortuary.net.

LAURA KIRVEN ONSRUD

Laura Kirven Onsrud, 93, widow of David Onsrud, died Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at home. Born in Sumter, she was the daughter of the late Thomas Jackson Kirven and Eva Chandler Kirven.

Mrs. Onsrud was a graduate of East Carolina University, majoring in education. She taught in Burlington and Fayetteville, North Carolina, and in Sumter, subsequently moving to Smithtown, New York, where she taught for 31 years at the Mt. Pleasant Elementary School before retiring in 1991 and moving with her husband to Simpsonville. She was an active member of Simpsonville United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women, Altar Guild and chairperson for the Faith Circle for a number of years. She was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church.

She is survived by her sister, Julie Kirven Griffin (Lynwood) of Sumter, and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a sister, Ophelia Kirven, and

brothers, Joe C. Kirven, Russell Kirven, Danny Kirven, Larry Kirven and Tom Kirven.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 19, 2025, in the Chapel at Trinity United Methodist Church with the Rev. Joseph James officiating.

The family will receive friends from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, April 19, 2025, in the church parlor.

Burial will follow in Sumter Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Trinity United Methodist Church Day School, 226 W. Liberty St., Sumter, SC 29150.

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

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



BENJAMIN CLARK SR.

Benjamin "BJ" Clark Sr., 101, widower of Julia Davis Clark and son of the late Marion Clark and Frances Bowen Clark, was born on Jan. 2, 1924, in Sumter. He departed this life on Friday, April 11, 2025, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Sumter. Public viewing will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2025, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 20, 2025, at Sumter Berea Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 675 Lafayette Drive, Sumter.

Interment will follow in Beulah AME Church Cemetery, Sumter.

Family will receive friends at the home, 10 Dobson St., Sumter, daily from 2 to 8 p.m.

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

Online memorials may be sent to the family at jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com, or visit us on the web at www.jobsmortuary.net.

DAVID PLOWDEN

With deepest sorrow, we at Henryhand Funeral Home regret to announce the passing of David Plowden, 85, of Miami, Florida, formerly of Manning, husband of Dorothy Plowden. He passed away on Friday, April 4, 2025.

Funeral services will be held

on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Goodwill Baptist Church, 1329 Goodwill Church Road, Manning.

Loved ones left to cherish his memories are: his wife, Dorothy Plowden of Miami, Florida; two daughters, Vicki Plowden and Emma Thompson Plowden, both of Miami, Florida; one son, Warren Plowden of Manning; and a host of other relatives and friends.

JOHN EDWARD RHAMES

John Edward Rhames, 32, passed away on Sunday, April 13, 2025, in Summerton.

Services have been entrusted to Clarendon Funeral Home LLC of Summerton.

BRANDY LAKETSHIA LESENE

Brandy Laketshia Lesene, 49, daughter of Delorise Singleton Lesene Brunson, was born on Dec. 23, 1975, in Sumter County. She departed this life on Monday, April 14, 2025, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Sumter.

Public viewing was held on Friday, April 18, 2025, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Congruity Presbyterian Church, 3750 Congruity Road, Gable.

Interment will follow in Congruity Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Gable.

Family will receive friends at the home, 1030 Plowden Mill Road, Sumter, daily from 4 to 8 p.m.

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

Online memorials may be sent to the family at jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com, or visit us on the web at www.jobsmortuary.net.

GERALDINE DENNIS JONES

Geraldine Dennis Jones, 75, widow of Clarence Jones and daughter of the late Wesley Dennis and Alma Johnson Dennis, was born on Sept. 4, 1949, in Sumter. She departed this life on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at her residence.

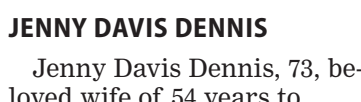
Family will receive friends at the home, 534 Kingsbury Drive, Sumter, daily from 2 to 6 p.m.

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

JAMES RUBIN PITTS

James Rubin Pitts was born on Jan. 29, 1938, to Clayborn Pitts and Fannie Milligan Pitts, who both preceded him in death.

He peacefully departed his earthly life on Monday, April 14, 2025, at his home. Please visit www.Palmermemorialchapel.com.



JENNY DAVIS DENNIS

Jenny Davis Dennis, 73, beloved wife of 54 years to Danny Dennis, passed away peacefully into the waiting arms of her Savior on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. A true force of nature for good,

Jenny's life was defined by compassion, strength and unwavering faith. Jenny dedicated over 16 years of her life to hospice and caregiving — a calling she embraced with her whole heart. She cared deeply for the elderly, the less fortunate or anyone she saw in need. Her devotion to her church, The Church of the Holy Comforter in Sumter, was constant, and she loved to invite others to attend. Above all, Jenny found her greatest joy in her grandchildren, who were the center of her world. A tough, hardworking Southern woman, she was fiercely loyal. If Jenny was in your corner, you had a champion. Her family takes immense pride in the legacy of love and strength she leaves behind.

Surviving in addition to her husband are her children, Denny Dennis of Sumter, Davis Dennis and his

wife, Vanessa, of James Island, and Jenny-Lee Maxwell and her husband, Matthew, of Greenville. She was the proud grandmother of Travers and Loyall Dennis and Drayton, Davis and Oliver Maxwell. Jenny is also survived by her brother, Julius Davis, of Columbia, and her sister, Patty Smith of Atlanta, Georgia. She also leaves behind her beloved Jack Russells Franklin and Harry, who were her faithful companions.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Julius and Helen Davis of Dalzell.

A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 2 p.m. at The Church of the Holy Comforter. Burial will be private.

The family will receive friends on Monday, April 21, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Bullock Funeral Home.

You may go to www.bullockfuneralhome.com to sign the family's guestbook.

The family has chosen Bullock Funeral Home for the arrangements.



JOHN EDWARD WILSON JR.

John Edward Wilson Jr., 63, son of Wille Mae Hodge Wilson Harry and the late John Edward Wilson Sr., was born on Oct. 19, 1961, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He departed this life on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at Prisma Health Baptist Hospital, Columbia.

Family will receive friends at the home, 608 S. Harvin St., Sumter.

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

SANDRES WRIGHT

Sandres Wright, 69, died Thursday, April 17, 2025, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Sumter. Born Sept. 12, 1955, in Sumter, she was the daughter of the late Sammie Lee Wright and Margaret Dinkins.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 8075 Ruggs Lake Road, Rembert.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by the management of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter.

Notice of Sale

BY VIRTUE of a judgment heretofore granted in the case of Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance Inc. vs. Ronnie Washington a/k/a Ronnie Eugene Washington; and the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles I, Michael M. Jordan, Master in Equity, for Sumter County, will sell on May 5, 2025 at 12:00 pm, at the Sumter County Courthouse, 215 N. Harvin Street, Sumter, SC 29150, to the highest bidder: All that certain piece, parcel or lot of land together with the buildings and improvements thereon, situate, lying and being in Sumter Township, Sumter County, South Carolina, known and designated as LOT 27, containing 0.34 of an acre, more or less, and being more particularly shown and delineated on a plat of MANNING HEIGHTS prepared for Mark Brody by Edmunds Land Surveyors, Inc., dated May 19, 1999, revised June 30, 1999, April 24, 2000 and May 30, 2000 and recorded June 26, 2000 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Plat Book PB2000 at Page 438; said lot having such metes and bounds as reference to said plat will show, all measurements being a little more or less. This being the identical property conveyed to Ronnie Washington by deed of LAAS, LLC dated August 31, 2020 and herewith simultaneously recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County, South Carolina.

TMS #: 251-09-05-071 1130 Gilbert Street, Sumter, SC 29150 Mobile Home: 2021 CMHM VIN CLH044792TNAB

SUBJECT TO SUMTER COUNTY TAXES

TERMS OF SALE: The successful bidder, other than the Plaintiff, will deposit with the Master in Equity at conclusion of the bidding, five (5%) of his bid, in cash or equivalent, as evidence of good faith, the same to be applied to purchase price in case of compliance, but to be forfeited and applied first to costs and then to Plaintiff's debt in the case of non-compliance. Should the last and highest bidder fail or refuse to make the required deposit at the time of the bid or comply with the other terms of the bid within thirty (30) days, then the Master in Equity may resell the property on the same terms and conditions on some subsequent Sales Day (at the risk of the former highest bidder). Should the Plaintiff, or one of its representatives, fail to be present at the time of sale, the property is automatically withdrawn from said sale and sold at the next available sales day upon the terms and conditions as set forth in the Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale or any Supplemental Order.

That a personal or deficiency judgment being waived, the bidding will not remain open after the date of sale, but compliance with the bid may be made immediately. NOTICE: The foreclosure deed is not a warranty deed. Interested bidders should satisfy themselves as to the quality of title to be conveyed by obtaining an independent title search well before the foreclosure sale date.

The successful bidder will be required to pay interest on the amount of the bid from the date of sale to date of compliance with the bid at the rate of 9.310% per annum.

- B. Lindsay Crawford, III (SC Bar# 6510) Theodore von Keller (SC Bar# 5718) B. Lindsay Crawford, IV (SC Bar# 101707) Jason Hunter (SC Bar# 101501) Eric H. Nelson (SC Bar# 104712) Katharyn L. Sophia (SC Bar# 105541) Crawford & von Keller, LLC P.O. Box 4216 1640 St. Julian Place (29204) Columbia, SC 29240 Phone: 803-790-2626 Email: court@crawfordvk.com Attorneys for Plaintiff

MASTER IN EQUITY NOTICE OF SALE 2025-CP-43-00001

BY VIRTUE of a decree heretofore granted in the case of: US Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity, but solely as owner trustee for GS MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES TRUST 2022-RPL3 vs. Deloris China a/k/a Deloris A. China; and Lawrence China, I, the undersigned Michael M. Jordan, Master in Equity for Sumter County, will sell on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 12:00 PM, at the County Courthouse, 141 N. Main St., Sumter, SC 29150.

The property to be sold to the highest bidder: All that piece, parcel or lot of land situate, lying and being just outside of the western limits of the City of Sumter, in the County of Sumter, State of South Carolina, and being bounded: On the North by Carver Street (formerly Charles Street), and measuring thereon 50 feet; On the East by land formerly of Haynsworth, and now or formerly of

Notice of Sale

Lula Wilson, and measuring thereon 125 feet; On the South by the right of way of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad and measuring thereon 50 feet; and On the West by land formerly of Haynsworth, and now or formerly of Mack and Eula T. Galloway and measuring thereon 125 feet, be all of said dimensions a little more or less.

This being the same property conveyed to Lawrence China by deed of Thomas H. Bultman, Executive Director and Dr. Edna L. Davis, Treasurer of Walker Cemetery Association, W.F. Bultman, Sr., Trustee, dated February 13, 1998 and recorded February 13, 1998 in Book 697 at Page 398 in the Office of the Clerk of Court/Register of Deeds for Sumter County.

Thereafter, the same property was conveyed to Lawrence China and Deloris China by deed of Lawrence China dated June 9, 1998 and recorded June 17, 1998 in Book 708 at Page 1652 in the Office of the Clerk of Court/Register of Deeds for Sumter County.

TMS No. 4000025531 (Mobile Home) and 2270701012 (Land) Property address: 146 Carver Street, Sumter, SC 29150

The Court in its Decree has further made its finding that this mortgage was intended to and specifically secures and collateralizes that certain Mobile Home permanently affixed to the above-described real estate in the mortgage being foreclosed and is further provided under the laws of the State of South Carolina, the same being more particularly described as follows:

1998 BELLCREST Manufactured Home, Serial No. GBHML30855, with any fixtures.

TERMS OF SALE: The successful bidder, other than the Plaintiff, will deposit with the Master in Equity, at conclusion of the bidding, five percent (5%) of said bid is due and payable immediately upon closing of the bidding, in certified funds or equivalent, as evidence of good faith, same to be applied to purchase price in case of compliance, but to be forfeited and applied first to costs and then to Plaintiff's debt in the case of non-compliance. In the event of a third party bidder and that any third party bidder fails to deliver the required deposit in certified (immediately collectible) funds with the Office of the Master in Equity, said deposit being due and payable immediately upon closing of the bidding on the day of sale, the Master in Equity will re-sell the subject property at the most convenient time thereafter (including the day of sale) upon notification to counsel for Plaintiff. Should the last and highest bidder fail or refuse to comply with the balance due of the bid within 20 days, then the Master in Equity may re-sell the property on the same terms and conditions on some subsequent Sales Day (at the risk of the said highest bidder).

No personal or deficiency judgment being demanded, the bidding will not remain open after the date of sale, but compliance with the bid may be made immediately.

Purchaser to pay for documentary stamps on Master in Equity's Deed. The successful bidder will be required to pay interest on the balance of the bid from the date of sale to date of compliance with the bid at the rate of 4.750% per annum. The Plaintiff may waive any of its rights, including its right to a deficiency judgment, prior to sale. The sale shall be subject to taxes and assessments, existing easements and restrictions of record. This sale is subject to all title matters of record and any interested party should consider performing an independent title examination of the subject property as no warranty is given.

Neither the Plaintiff nor its counsel make representations as to the integrity of the title or the fair market value of the property offered for sale. Prior to bidding you may wish to review the current state law or seek the advice of any attorney licensed in South Carolina.

Michael M. Jordan Master in Equity for Sumter County Scott and Corley, P.A. Attorney for Plaintiff

Notice of Sale

MASTER IN EQUITY'S SALE CASE NO. 2024-CP-43-01566

BY VIRTUE of a decree heretofore granted in the case of Trustmark National Bank against Tierra L. Montgomery, et al., I, the Master in Equity for Sumter County, will sell on Monday, May 5, 2025, at 12:00 noon, at the Sumter County Courthouse, Sumter, South Carolina, to the highest bidder:

All that certain piece, parcel or lot of land with the improvements thereon, if any, situate, lying and being in the City and County of Sumter, State of South Carolina, and being more particularly shown and delineated as Lot No. 49 on that certain plat by Palmer & Malone, C.E.s, dated April 12, 1950, and recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Plat Book Z-9 at Page 46. This said lot has such metes, boundaries, courses and distances as are shown on said plat, which are incorporated herein in accordance with the provisions of Section 30-5-250 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. This being the same property known as 714 W. Hampton Avenue, Sumter, South Carolina. Represented by Sumter County Tax Parcel No. 228-10-02-034.

This being the same property conveyed to Channing R. Goodman and Tierra L. Montgomery, as joint tenants, with the right of survivorship, and not as tenants in common by deed of Jason Gleaton and Angela E. Gleaton dated May 18, 2018 and recorded May 22, 2018 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County, South Carolina in Book 1244 at Page 3635. Subsequently, full title was vested in Tierra L. Montgomery upon the death of joint tenant Channing R. Goodman on December 31, 2022 as evidenced by that South Carolina Probate Court Case No. 2023-ES-43-00034.

TMS#: 228-10-02-034 Property Address: 714 W Hampton Avenue Sumter, South Carolina 29150

TERMS OF SALE: The successful bidder, other than the plaintiff, will deposit with the Master in Equity for Sumter County at conclusion of the bidding, five percent (5%) of the bid, in cash or equivalent, as evidence of good faith, same to be applied to the purchase price in case of compliance, but to be forfeited and applied first to costs and then to plaintiff's debt in the case of non-compliance. If the Plaintiff's representative is not in attendance at the scheduled time of the sale, the sale shall be canceled and the property sold on some subsequent sales day after due advertisement. Should the last and highest bidder fail or refuse to make the required deposit at time of bid or comply with the other terms of the bid within thirty (30) days, the deposit shall be forfeited and the Master in Equity for Sumter County may re-sell the property on the same terms and conditions on some subsequent Sales Day (at the risk of the said highest bidder). As a deficiency judgment is being Waived, the bidding will not remain open thirty days after the date of sale. Purchaser shall pay for preparation of deed, documentary stamps on the deed, and recording of the deed. The successful bidder will be required to pay interest on the amount of the bid from date of sale to date of compliance with the bid at the rate of 4.50% per annum. The sale shall be subject to assessments, IRS's 365-day right of redemption, Sumter County taxes, easements, easements and restrictions of record, and other senior encumbrances.

s/Ryan J. Patane S.C. Bar No. 103116 Benjamin E. Grimsley S.C. Bar No. 70335 D'Alberto, Graham & Grimsley, LLC Attorneys for the Plaintiff P.O. Box 11682 Columbia, S.C. 29211 (803) 233-4999 rpatane@dgglegal.com bgrimsley@dgglegal.com

Notice of Sale C/A No: 2022-CP-43-01827

BY VIRTUE OF A DECREE of the Court of Common Pleas for Sumter County, South Carolina, heretofore issued in the case of Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC vs. Mose Ester Edwards; Robert W. Johnson; Gregory Johnson I the undersigned as Master-in-Equity for Sumter County, will sell on May 5, 2025 at 12:00 PM at Sumter County Judicial Center at 215 N. Harvin St., Sumter, South Carolina to the highest bidder: Legal Description and Property Address:

ALL THAT PARCEL OF LAND IN CITY OF SUMTER, SUMTER COUNTY, STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AS MORE FULLY DESCRIBED IN DEED BOOK 1039, PAGE 1616, ID# 248-08-03-034, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOT 48, OAKDALE, FILED IN PLAT BOOK Z42, PAGE 391, RECORDED 03/16/1979.

THIS BEING the same property conveyed unto Moses Johnson by virtue of a Warranty Deed from Julia D. Hyatt dated July 31, 2006 and recorded AUGUST 7, 2006 in Bok 1039

Notice of Sale

at Page 1616 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County, South Carolina.

THEREAFTER, Moses Johnson's interest in the subject property was conveyed unto Mose Ester Edwards, Robert W. Johnson and Gregory Johnson, by Robert W. Johnson as Personal Representative of the Estate of Moses Johnson, (Estate # 2016-ES-43-00238), pursuant to the probate of said Estate, and by virtue of a Deed of Distribution dated July 13, 2017 and recorded July 13, 2017 in Book 1234 at Page 5874 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County, South Carolina.

474 Allen Drive Sumter, SC 29150 TMS# 2480803034

TERMS OF SALE: For cash. Interest at the current rate of 5.5% to be paid on balance of bid from date of sale to date of compliance. The purchaser to pay for papers and stamps, and that the successful bidder or bidders, other than the Plaintiff therein, will, upon the acceptance of his or her bid, deposit with the Master-in-Equity for Sumter County a certified check or cash in the amount equal to five percent (5%) of the amount of bid on said premises at the sale as evidence of good faith in bidding, and subject to any resale of said premises under Order of this Court; and in the event the said purchaser or purchasers fail to comply with the terms of sale within Twenty (20) days, the Master-in-Equity for Sumter County shall forthwith resell the said property, after the due notice and advertisement, and shall continue to sell the same each subsequent sales day until a purchaser, who shall comply with the terms of sale, shall be obtained, such sales to be made at the risk of the former purchaser. Since a personal or deficiency judgment is waived, the bidding will not remain open but compliance with the bid may be made immediately. If the Plaintiff or the Plaintiff's representative does not appear at the above-described sale, then the sale of the property will be null, void, and of no force and effect. In such event, the sale will be rescheduled for the next available sales day. Plaintiff may waive any of its rights prior to sale. Sold subject to taxes and assessments, existing easements and restrictions of record. Neither the Court, nor Plaintiff, nor Plaintiff's counsel makes any warranty of title or representations with regard to the condition or existence of any improvements on the subject property. Prospective bidders may wish to assess these matters to their satisfaction prior to sale.

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In Memory of our Mother Josie Richburg August 9, 1934 April 17, 1995 Gone but not forgotten. R.I.P Love always, Your loving children, grands & foster daughter Celissa.



In Memory

In Loving Memory of Loretta Williams White Oct. 6, 1957 - Apr. 21, 2024



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Love, Your husband Elijah, sons Antwan & Kevin and grandchildren

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Garage, Yard & Estate Sales

2-day yard sale mission fundraiser, Korean-American Presby. Church, 5410 Oakland Dr. (near Shaw AFB), Thur. Apr. 24 & Fri. Apr. 25, 7:30am-4:30pm. Furniture, beauty supplies, dishes, shoes, clothes (incl. large selection of new t-shirts in various sizes), babies' & kids' items, and more!

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Home for rent, 4 bed/2 bath home between Sumter & Manning. \$1100/mo plus \$1100 security. 803-473-7577

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2 & 3-BR mobile homes for rent in Cherryvale area, \$325/mo & up. Water incl. (803) 651-9926.



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6 'The Thomas Crown Affair' still works the second time around



7 Back to 'You': Final season of Badgley-led thriller gets late-April premiere



7 Surreal scenarios: Nathan Fielder ups the weird factor in Season 2 of 'The Rehearsal'

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The Summer Scene

April 19 - April 25, 2025



A happy birthday wish: TCM celebrates Shirley MacLaine

BY DANA SIMPSON

Many film lovers are about to send Shirley MacLaine birthday greetings, and those at Turner Classic Movies are among them.

The winner of numerous honors including an Oscar, a Prime-time Emmy and six Golden Globes turns 91 on Thursday, April 24, when TCM will dedicate its daytime lineup to six of the attractions she's made since launching her screen career in 1955 with the Alfred Hitchcock-directed "The Trouble With Harry."

Ranging from comedy to drama and musicals in her work, MacLaine (the sister of actor-filmmaker Warren Beatty) has scored six Academy Award nominations, winning that accolade for "Terms of Endearment" (1983) ... with her famous acceptance-speech proclamation, "I deserve this!"

A MacLaine "must," the 1960 comedy-drama "The Apartment," is absent from the birthday tribute, but it's one of TCM's most frequently shown titles. The day's lineup begins with "The Yellow Rolls-Royce," a 1964 film made up of several stories all related to the title car.

MacLaine appears in the second of the three tales as a

gangster's (George C. Scott) fiancée who becomes involved with a photographer (Alain Delon) after her spouse-to-be leaves her in Italy to return to America on business. Rex Harrison, Jeanne Moreau, Ingrid Bergman and Omar Sharif are also in the starry cast.

A bounty of stars is also present in the next feature, "Around the World in 80 Days," the Oscar-winning best picture of 1956. Producer Michael Todd's extravaganza features MacLaine — in only her third movie — as a princess who ends up joining Phileas Fogg (David Niven) and his valet Passepartout (Cantinflas) as they try to win a 19th-century bet that they can circle the entire globe in just under three months. Based on Jules Verne's novel, the picture boasts numerous cameos by celebrities from Frank Sinatra to Red Skelton.

Next is the 1958 Western comedy "The Sheepman," with MacLaine as a resident of a town where a gambler (Glenn Ford) brings the many sheep he has won. Also from 1958, the drama "Some Came Running" follows, with the adaptation of a novel by James Jones ("From Here to Eternity") casting

MacLaine as the companion of a military veteran (the aforementioned Sinatra) who returns to his hometown and becomes friends with a gambler (Dean Martin).

Director Hal Ashby's acclaimed 1979 comedy-drama "Being There" is next, with MacLaine as a tycoon's (Oscar winner Melvyn Douglas) wife who takes an interest in a supposedly brilliant, TV-educated gardener (Peter Sellers). Finally, the 1961 drama "Two Loves" offers MacLaine as an American school-teacher in New Zealand, where her new involvement with another educator (Laurence Harvey) unsettles her.

A stage star as well, MacLaine has done the occasional television role (as on PBS's "Downton Abbey" and Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building"), and she also has been a prolific author of memoirs detailing her views on mysticism and spirituality. Still, her overriding identity arguably has come from her movie work, and that will be the TCM-appropriate focus as the channel sends its regards by giving her a birthday showcase.

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Horoscopes

The luckiest signs this week:
LIBRA, SCORPIO AND SAGITTARIUS

ARIES

Embrace professional change without hesitation! Taking on new responsibilities will drive your progress and likely lead to a salary increase, even if time becomes an increasingly precious resource.

TAURUS

You may consider embarking on a journey or adventure that requires considerable preparation. Enrolling in a training course or diving into a new field of study could change how you see your future.

GEMINI

To reduce tensions, set aside some time for your loved ones. This time you spend together will help you open up to each other and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges each of you may be facing.

CANCER

You'll finally have time to spend with your partner. You must make minor adjustments to your relationship and free up time to do things with your better half. This will help you resolve many of the issues that have been bothering you.

LEO

You'll hear about a job opening that aligns with your professional goals. You'll need to invest time and work hard to adapt to your new responsibilities.

VIRGO

You'll be surprised to find yourself in the spotlight this week. Your presence will captivate those around you, and you'll receive applause for an impressive feat. You'll perform a heroic act that will boost your self-esteem.

LIBRA

Your family counts on your presence, so you may need to spend part of the week at home. Although your move is still a few months away, start preparing right away to stay ahead of the game.

SCORPIO

You'll know just what to say this week, and your words will resonate far and wide, especially on social media. Prepare for a series of enriching trips.

SAGITTARIUS

Indulge and spoil yourself this week. Take the opportunity to wander through stores and boutiques. You'll find useful items, and also a few goodies to brighten up your daily routine.

CAPRICORN

Prepare for a busy week ahead. Your enthusiasm and perseverance will set you apart. You're also likely to see a significant increase in your income, which will give rise to some wonderful celebrations.

AQUARIUS

Exhaustion is catching up with you, and a sleepless night could jeopardize your progress on certain projects. Embrace a new routine. A balanced diet and regular physical activity could work wonders for your energy levels.

PISCES

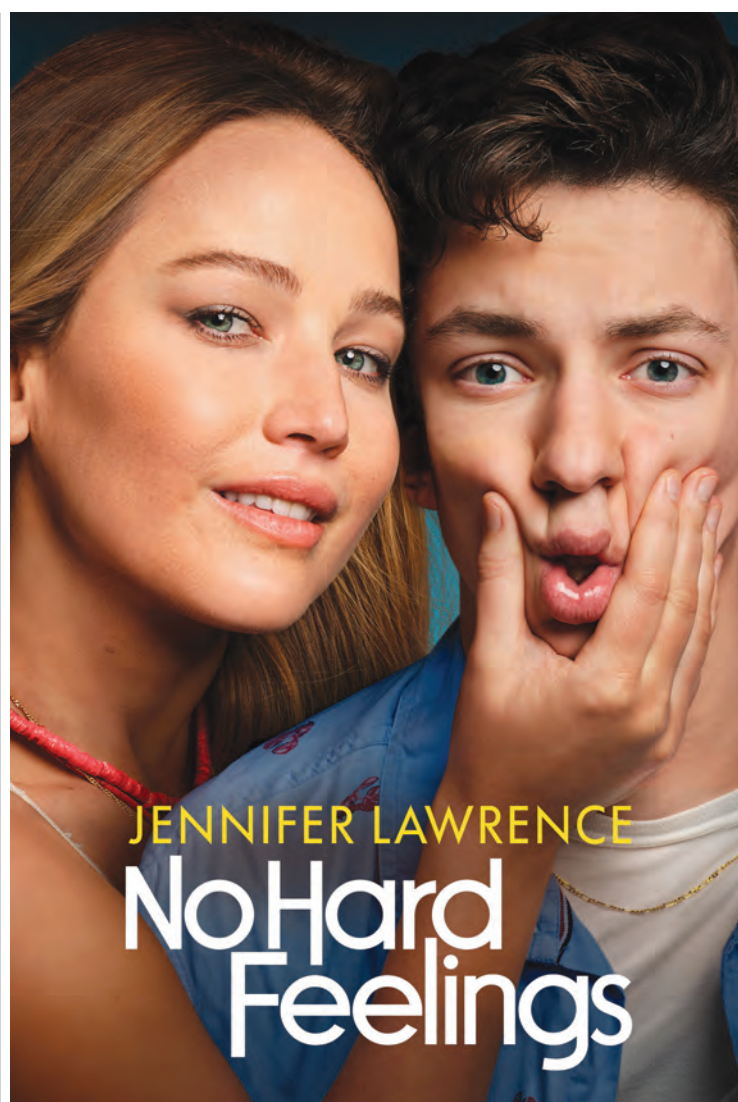
You'll be tasked with organizing a large-scale meeting at work. Your social life will be buzzing with activity. You'll show empathy and innovation this week. Divine inspiration may guide you.

New Streaming Movies & Shows



"Gladiator II" (April 22)

After his home is conquered by the tyrannical emperors who now lead Rome, Lucius (Paul Mescal) is forced to enter the Colosseum and must look to his past to find strength to return the glory of Rome to its people. Pedro Pascal, Denzel Washington, Joseph Quinn and Connie Nielsen also star.



"No Hard Feelings" (April 21)

Jennifer Lawrence produces and stars in this comedy. Maddie (Lawrence) thinks she's found the answer to her financial troubles when she discovers an intriguing job listing: wealthy helicopter parents looking for someone to "date" their introverted 19-year-old son, Percy (Andrew Barth Feldman), and bring him out of his shell before he leaves for college. But awkward Percy proves to be more of a challenge than she expected, and time is running out before she loses it all.

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A S A Y S E A S R M P U A O C
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M F P S G O O G E T E I R K E
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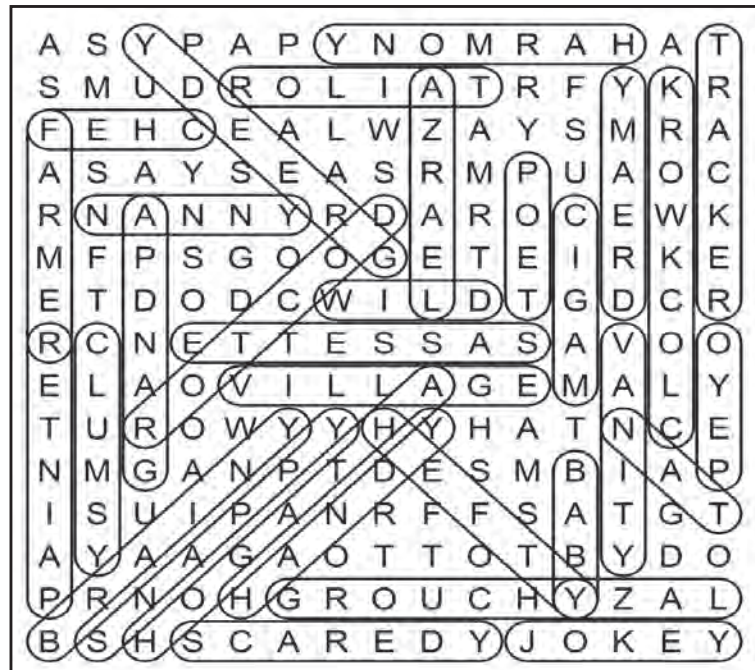
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"Pangolin: Kulu's Journey" (April 21)

From Pippa Ehrlich, the director of "My Octopus Teacher" (2020), this documentary follows a man who finds new purpose when he helps rescue a baby pangolin, one of the most trafficked animals in the world, in a sting operation in South Africa. He leaves the city and embarks on a heartfelt mission to rehabilitate and prepare the vulnerable animal for a life of freedom in the wild.

"Secrets of the Penguins" (April 21)

On the 20th anniversary of National Geographic's Academy Award-winning "March of the Penguins," this new docuseries changes everything we ever believed to be true. From the emperor penguins' revelatory bonds of friendship to the gritty resolve of gentoos and rockhoppers and the astonishing ingenuity of the migrant penguins that reached deserts and far beyond, their incredible traditions and societies echo ours in ways we never dreamt possible — until now.



Q&A: Ving Rhames

BY JAY BOBBIN

Q: What is Ving Rhames doing lately? I feel like I haven't seen him for a while.

A: Ving Rhames ("Mission: Impossible," 1996) has settled into a pretty amazing career groove. Essentially, he appears in one the biggest movies of the year every few years and then fills the time between with interesting indie projects. Those big movies are generally sequels to 1996's "Mission: Impossible." He plays computer hacker Luther Stickell in the series, and is in fact the only actor to appear in all eight films besides their main star, Tom Cruise ("Top Gun," 1986). All of them have been blockbusters. In between, he does more scrappy, street-level projects, and his most recent role falls into this category. He's part of the ensemble cast of "Dope Thief," a gritty new Apple TV+ drama series about two low-level criminals — played by Brian Tyree Henry ("Atlanta") and Wagner Moura ("Narcos") — who stumble into a major narcotics operation. It's just now finishing up its first season, with no word so far on a second.

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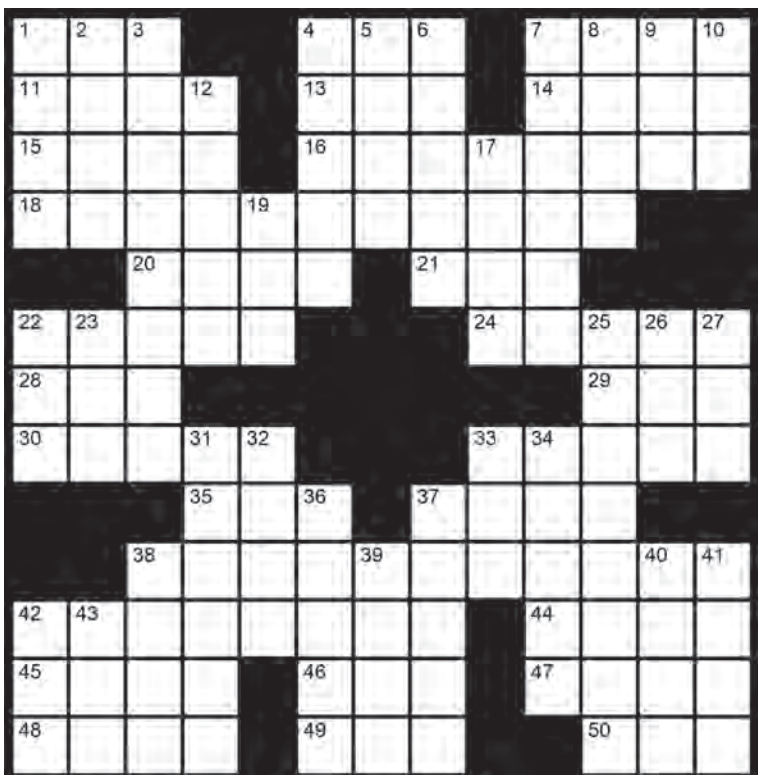
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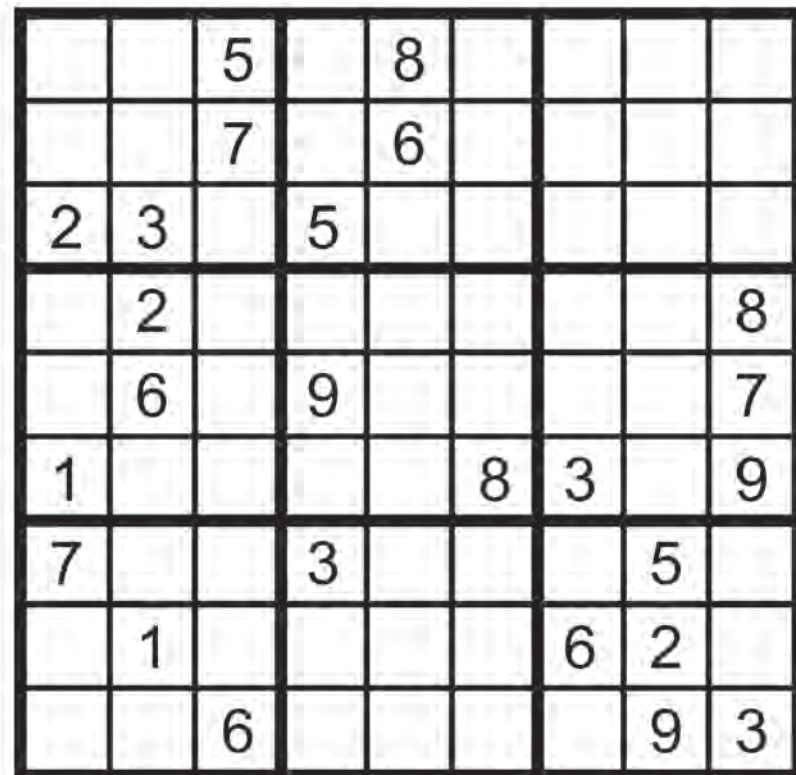
Crosswords



- Across**
- Make it
 - "Loki" or Thor, e.g.
 - Wendie Malick's "Just Shoot Me!" role
 - 1960s civil rights leader _____
Brown
 - Sierra Nevada, e.g.
 - Pitching stats
 - Top of the heap
 - Gilda Radner character on "S.N.L."
 - Rosamund Pike series, with "The"
 - Cinematographer Nykvist
 - RR stop
 - Marveled aloud
 - Hoity-toity sorts
 - "Doctor _____"
 - Point
 - Like acidic detergents
 - The _____ Blues
 - "Certainment!"
 - European capital
 - "Everybody's Live" host
 - Lovey's hubby on "Gilligan's Island"
 - First name in jeans
 - 1973 Supreme Court decision name
 - Fled
 - Tiny amount
 - Repute
 - "_____ luck?"
 - Guitarist Paul
- Down**
- Unfreeze
 - Shoe part
 - "Jeopardy!" or "Pyramid"
 - Libreville's land
 - "Frozen" (2013) snowman
 - Markers
 - "Seinfeld" role
 - Dies _____
 - Slangy turndown
 - Palindromic guy
 - Pet _____
 - Isles
 - Ran
 - Mouse catcher
 - "So that's your game!"
 - Lawrence who hosts "The Last Word" on MSNBC
 - Physique, slangily
 - Pork place?
 - Not as good
 - Confused sounds
 - Country singer McDaniel
 - Big name in toothbrushes
 - Prefix with venous
 - Bugs _____
 - Kind of chop
 - Complain
 - "A Letter for _____" (1945)
 - Puppy sounds
 - "_____ and a Half Men"
 - Hornswoggled



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

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



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Table with columns: SUNDAY EVENING, SP=Spectrum, FTC=Farm, DTV=DirectTV, MOVIES, SPORTS, KIDS, APRIL 20, 2025. Rows include channels like WIS, WKTC, WOLO, WACH, NWSN, WLTX, WRJA, WZRB, NICK, TOON, DISNEY, etc.

Table with columns: MONDAY EVENING, SP=Spectrum, FTC=Farm, DTV=DirectTV, MOVIES, SPORTS, KIDS, APRIL 21, 2025. Rows include channels like WIS, WKTC, WOLO, WACH, NWSN, WLTX, WRJA, WZRB, NICK, TOON, DISNEY, etc.

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'The Thomas Crown Affair' still works the second time around

BY JAY BOBBIN

As movie remakes go, "The Thomas Crown Affair" is a solid caper that does nothing to diminish the reputation of the original version.

That's no small thing, since the 1999 revisiting of the merger of larceny and romance — which MGM+ shows Thursday, April 24 — stands on its own quite nicely, with Pierce Brosnan (who also produced the picture) confidently appropriating Steve McQueen's 1968 title role as a wealthy businessman who commits thefts for kicks. In the original film, a Boston bank heist was the crime of choice, here; the setting shifts to New York, and an art robbery is the felony engineered by Crown.

A cynical police detective (Denis Leary, succeeding the original's Paul Burke) gets the case, but a stylish insurance investigator (Rene Russo, in the part Faye Dunaway originated) also joins the probe. She's intrigued by Crown once she starts to link him to the missing painting, which has been swiped during an elaborate attack on the museum that housed it. Her interest in him eventually becomes more personal than professional, though she does her best to keep that hidden.

Dunaway appears in this "Thomas Crown Affair" as well, playing Crown's psychiatrist in a few scenes. However, with the way those were filmed, it's possible Brosnan and Dunaway weren't in the same place at the same time during production. Nevertheless, her presence makes for a nice connection to the original.

One missing element is the comic relief that co-star

Jack Weston provided in the first film as the getaway driver who becomes a focus of the investigation. Working under Brosnan's Crown, the crooks generally are devoid of individual personalities, though they're certainly handy as functionaries in a concluding setup to throw the police off Crown's track.

Under the direction of John McTiernan ("Die Hard"), Brosnan made "The Thomas Crown Affair" while still in the throes of his tenure as James Bond. It was good timing, since moving his suave and sophisticated image to the other side of the law wasn't an enormous leap for the actor to make. He partners quite well with Russo, with her playing the type of role that was her main suit at the time — strong yet vulnerable, with a well-played emphasis on the latter trait in the story's home stretch.

Those familiar with the first "Thomas Crown Affair" will recognize the theme song "The Windmills of Your Mind," which composer Bill Conti integrates into the score in clever ways before Sting performs it full-out over the closing credits. (Noel Harrison sang it originally, helping it to earn an Oscar then.) However, Conti also captures a jaunty spirit in other sections of the soundtrack that's entirely in keeping with the overall approach.

One of the biggest questions about any remake is whether it's necessary. "The Thomas Crown Affair" might not have been, but it's quite enjoyable in tackling the premise in its own way.

Best JUDY GARLAND MOVIES

BY JAY BOBBIN

"The Wizard of Oz" (1939): In one of her most famous screen performances, Garland (in a job first intended for Shirley Temple) plays Dorothy, the youngster whisked away from Kansas to a magical land — with dog Toto, of course — where she makes friends with a scarecrow, a tin man and a cowardly lion (Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, Bert Lahr).

"Babes on Broadway" (1941): Garland made numerous musicals with her good friend Mickey Rooney, and this tale of a homegrown performance for charity is one of the best examples.

"For Me and My Gal" (1942): Garland and Gene Kelly make an expectedly excellent duo as teamed performers, whose relationship may go beyond just a professional one.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944): A family gets ready to move from New York to the title city in this enduringly popular musical, which has a particular highlight in Garland and Margaret O'Brien's rendering of "Under the Bamboo Tree." The picture was directed by Vincente Minnelli, Garland's then-future husband.

"The Harvey Girls" (1946): The site of a new restaurant is the destination of train travellers including Garland's character in this classic musical, which notably includes Angela Lansbury and Cyd Charisse in its cast as well.

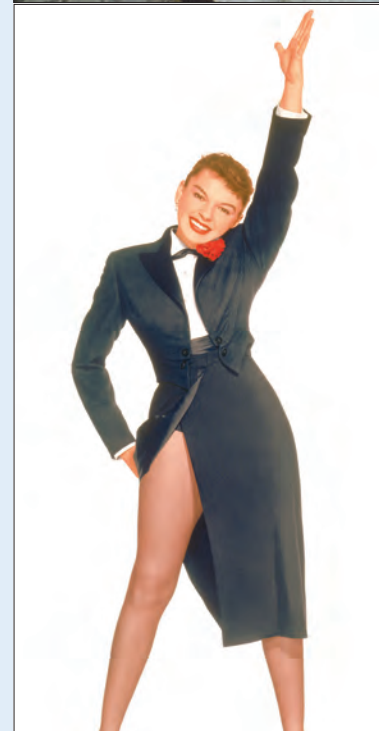
"Easter Parade" (1948): Appropriately being shown by Turner Classic Movies on Easter Sunday, April 20, this tuneful treat offers bountiful music by Irving Berlin. Fred Astaire, Ann Miller and Peter Lawford also are on board.

"In the Good Old Summertime" (1949): The familiar plot about combative co-workers who unknowingly admire each other as pen pals services Garland and Van Johnson nicely. It's a "must" to stay until the final scene, which features Garland's daughter Liza Minnelli.

"Summer Stock" (1950): A theatrical troupe sets up its home base at a farm in another delightful teaming of Garland and Gene Kelly.

"A Star Is Born" (1954): Dramatically as well as musically, Garland is a stunner in this third screen take on the tale of a performer whose star rises in direct reverse trajectory to her true love's career downfall. James Mason has the latter role in the George Cukor-directed film that includes Garland's legendary crooning of "The Man That Got Away."

"Judgment at Nuremberg" (1961): No music is involved for Garland here, but she earned an Oscar nomination for her memorable work in the all-star cast of director Stanley Kramer's drama, about the trial of several accused war criminals. The film was expanded from a story that screenwriter Abby Mann conceived for the anthology series "Playhouse 90."



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Back to 'You': Final season of Badgley-led thriller gets late-April premiere

BY DANA SIMPSON

What makes a murderer? And how can you tell them apart from everyone else? These sinister questions form the basis of "You," the Netflix thriller series that shot to popularity following its Season 1 debut in September 2018. Now, nearly seven years later, the series' fifth and final season brings murderous leading man Joe Goldberg, played by Penn Badgley ("Gossip Girl"), back to the New York City bookshop where it all began. "You" Season 5 premieres Thursday, April 24, on Netflix.

Both true crime and human psychology have been hugely popular topics of public interest for centuries, but the rise of film, television and podcast culture has had a lasting impact on the way society views some of our most frightening peers — whether real or fictional. Author Caroline Kepnes capitalized on this morbid interest when she wrote her first novel, "You," in 2014, despite then being completely unaware that it would later be translated into 19 languages while spawning three sequels and a five-season Netflix series starring Badgley, one of TV's biggest small-screen darlings.

The novel — and subsequently the TV series'



first season — follows bookstore employee Joe Goldberg, a charming and well-read young New Yorker with a troubling outlook on love who grows obsessed with budding author Guinevere Beck (played in Season 1 by "Ordinary Joe" actress Elizabeth Lail). Driven by his untamed "love" for her, Joe tracks her every move through the city, arranging "chance" encounters and ultimately forcing a relationship by any means possible. Determined to have the supposed love of his life by his side forever, Joe's passion sees him go to extreme lengths to secure Beck's loyalty to him.

Now four seasons and three big "loves" later, Joe is married and moving back to New York from London, where Season 4 took place.

"Every season they manage to find new space to make it interesting and relevant," Badgley told Netflix's Tudum while filming the series' fifth and final season. "I think somehow coming back to where it started allowed for it to just become grounded in the way that it needs to also have this kind of spectacular finish."

Based on press details released by Netflix, the "epic" fifth season was always expected to be "You's" last. Because of this, expectations will be high for the finale, and fans of the show are likely to be split in their desire to see Joe brought to justice for his numerous grisly crimes.

As for the plot of the series' final 10 episodes, Netflix has set the scene three years after Joe and his wife, Kate (Charlotte Ritchie, "Call the Midwife"), left the U.K. for New York. We learn that Joe has purchased Mooney's bookstore — the site of his meet-cute and final showdown with Beck — with some of the ample funds he has accrued by virtue of his marriage into the affluent Lockwood family. With Kate now in the role of CEO of Lockwood Corporation, "Joe is her loyal husband who has been dubbed Prince Charming by the adoring public, and they're both following through on their pact to help each other do good" (per Netflix).

Season 5 of "You" co-stars Griffin Matthews ("The Flight Attendant"), Anna Camp ("Pitch Perfect," 2012), Natasha Behnam ("The Girls on the Bus"), Pete Ploszek ("Captain Marvel," 2019), Nava Mau ("Baby Reindeer"), stage actor Tom Francis (Hope Mill Theatre's "Rent," 2020) and the mononymous b ("Station 19").

Surreal scenarios: Nathan Fielder ups the weird factor in Season 2 of 'The Rehearsal'



BY CAROLINE COLLCUTT

Question reality and prepare for the future alongside writer, director, star and producer Nathan Fielder ("The Curse") during Season 2 of the oddly twisted and widely acclaimed series "The Rehearsal," premiering Sunday, April 20, on HBO.

Blurring the lines between what's real and what's fake, "The Rehearsal" first made its debut in 2022 with a stellar first season. Following Fielder, who plays himself, the series aims to help real-life people prepare for some of life's biggest moments, doing so through the use of freakishly-accurate, borderline surreal simulations. Using his wide array of resources, including a construction crew, actors and more, Fielder helps these everyday people "rehearse" for these upcoming moments. Whether they are big events, conversations or parenthood itself, Fielder offers the opportunity to experience the future in a controlled setting, where they can practice each and every potential outcome.

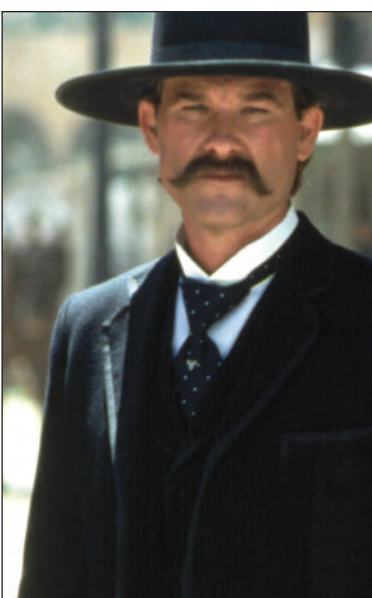
Featuring six episodes, this second season aims to build on the surrealism of Season 1, seeing "the urgency of Fielder's project grow as he decides to put his resources toward an issue that affects us all" (per HBO). Adding to the cryptic

intonation of HBO's press release was a 20-second preview for the upcoming season, in which Fielder oversees the dressing of five identical room-like sets, all built within a massive and foreboding warehouse.

Speaking at the FYC House + HBO Max panel in 2023, Fielder once explained his hopes for "The Rehearsal," sharing: "The goal is always for things that are better than your plan to happen. But I would try to map out like every scenario of what would happen ... I would go into a situation, like, 'OK, if they do this, I'll do this. And if they do this, I'll do that,'" he said. "And then all the time, these moments would happen that I didn't see coming at all. And they're often like the best moments in the show. But instead of thinking, 'Oh, that's like, cool that this thing happened,' I would always be sort of mad at myself and go, 'Man, why didn't I see that coming?' And so I thought that frustration was funny, because, obviously, you can't predict reality."

While you can't predict reality, you can certainly practice for it. "The Rehearsal's" second season takes center stage Sunday, April 20, on HBO.

View from the Couch



"TOMBSTONE"

The legendary gunfight at the O.K. Corral has had a number of screen retellings, but one of the most popular is this 1993 version that comes to 4K Ultra HD for the first time. Kurt Russell plays Wyatt Earp, the former lawman joined by his brothers Virgil and Morgan (Sam Elliott, Bill Paxton) and Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) in seeking to uphold justice against The Cowboys, a lawless group that only escalates a campaign of violence when they face opposition and significant losses. Directed by George P. Cosmatos ("Rambo: First Blood Part II") and written by Kevin Jarre ("Glory"), the picture is notable for its vast and impressive cast that also includes Powers Boothe, Michael Biehn, Charlton Heston, Jason

BY JAY BOBBIN

Priestley, Stephen Lang, Thomas Haden Church, Dana Delany, Michael Rooker, Billy Bob Thornton, Billy Zane and John Corbett. Robert Mitchum narrates the saga. The special features include three "making-of" documentaries. *** (R: AS, N, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"FOUL PLAY"

Goldie Hawn and — in his first acting role after becoming a star as one of "Saturday Night Live's" original cast members — Chevy Chase are a winning team in this 1978 comedy-mystery, now making its debut in the 4K Ultra HD format. Hawn plays a recently divorced librarian whose encounter with a stranger makes her a perplexed party to murder, prompting a wise-cracking police detective (Chase) to try to protect her as villains continue to pursue her through San Francisco. Meant to echo works by Alfred Hitchcock, writer-director Colin Higgins's script gave Dudley Moore the means to graduate to comedy stardom, and veteran actor Burgess Meredith also has a great role as Hawn's surprisingly agile landlord. Brian Dennehy (who would work with Moore in the following year's "10") and Rachel Roberts also appear; Barry Manilow performs the hit theme song "Ready to Take a Chance Again," which became a staple of his musical repertoire. *** (PG: AS, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"SNEAKERS"

A terrific cast populates this comedic 1992 caper from director

and co-writer Phil Alden Robinson ("Field of Dreams"), now on 4K Ultra HD for the first time. A security expert with a checkered past, played by Robert Redford, is enlisted to help retrieve a mysterious black box that supposedly has involved foreign funding. Not all is what it initially seems, though, and the security man eventually has to deal again with a questionable associate from his earlier years (Ben Kingsley) while utilizing his current team to make sure the situation comes out right. Sidney Poitier, David Strathairn, Dan Aykroyd, River Phoenix, Mary McDonnell, David Strathairn, Timothy Busfield and James Earl Jones also are featured in the tale that maintains a light touch through some rather intricate plotting. *** (PG-13: AS, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"CHEYENNE: THE COMPLETE SERIES"

Initially slated for a January home-video release last January but ultimately delayed, this 1955-63 ABC show (which has had a revival on the Starz Encore Westerns channel lately) was significant as one of the Warner Bros. studio's earliest entries into weekly television. Clint Walker, known in later years for such projects as "The Dirty Dozen," became a major home-screen star in the title role of a Westerner continually on the move, making good use of the special understanding he had from and of Cheyenne Indians — having been raised by some of them. Ty Hardin's series "Bronco" was spun off from this, when that

character was developed to fill the place of Cheyenne Bodie while Walker (who basically was the lone cast regular) and the Warner Bros. hierarchy were enmeshed in a contract dispute. It's notable that James Garner, who soon would have his own TV success in the genre with "Maverick," appeared in several first-season episodes here ... playing a different character in each one. *** (Not rated: AS, V)

"THE HUNT"

The title literally describes the theme of this 2020 thriller, which was one of the last major-studio movies released before the coronavirus pandemic had a profound effect on the operation of theaters. (The picture was made available for digital purchase very shortly afterward.) Newly available on 4K Ultra HD, the drama — which had Damon Lindelof ("Lost") as one of its writers and producers — makes a group of kidnapped targets of an elite group of hunters at a manor, with many of the abductees meeting grisly ends while several of them find the means to strike back against their pursuers. Hilary Swank plays the hunt's leader in a cast that also includes Betty Gilpin, Wayne Duvall, Ethan Suplee, Ike Barinholtz, Justin Hartley ("Tracker"), country music's Sturgill Simpson, Amy Madigan and Glenn Howerton ("It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"). *** (R: P, GV)

"THE CRUEL SEA"

Now on Blu-ray, this classic 1953 drama gives clearly visible

conformation of its title by sending a military vessel into winter waters on a mission to rescue survivors of U-boat attacks during World War II ... and more specifically, during the Battle of the Atlantic. Jack Hawkins heads the cast as a commander assigned to whip a crew of novice officers into effective service quickly. With a screenplay by novelist Eric Ambler, the film also features Donald Sinden and John Stratton as the leader's principal deputies; Denholm Elliott, Stanley Baker, Virginia McKenna (the later "Born Free") actress, who married co-star Elliott after meeting him on this project), Moira Lister and Alec McCowen are in the cast as well. *** (Not rated: V) (Also on DVD)

Coming Home Soon

"ANORA" (CRITERION COLLECTION) (APRIL 29)

"DIRTY HARRY" (4K ULTRA HD) (APRIL 29)

"LAST BREATH" (APRIL 29)

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"STAR TREK: SECTION 31" (APRIL 29)

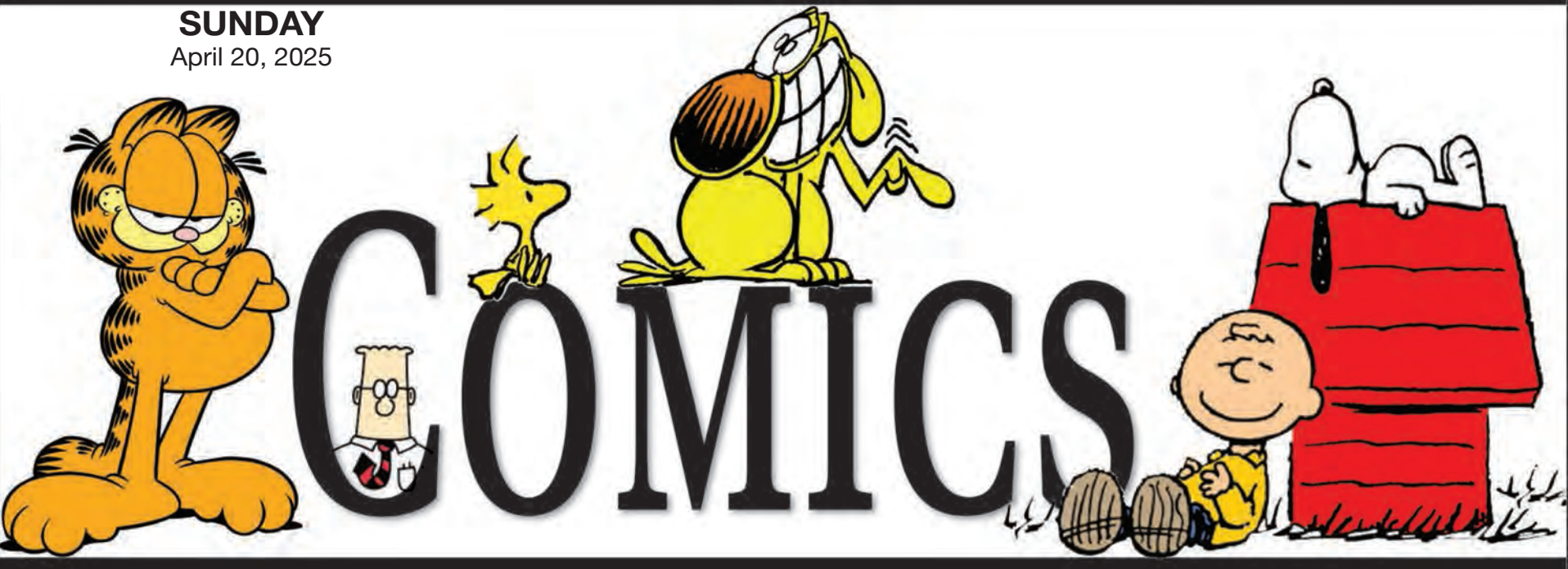
AS Adult situations
P Profanity

Family Viewing Ratings

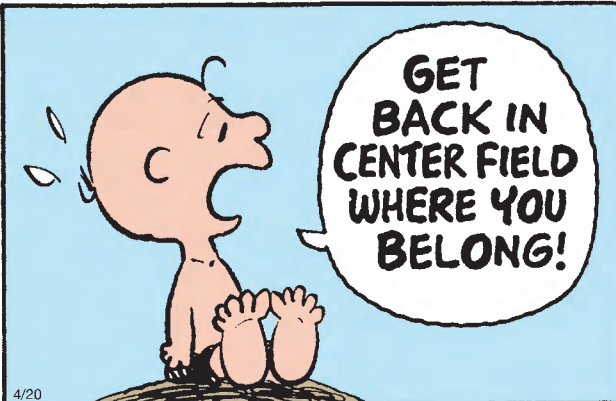
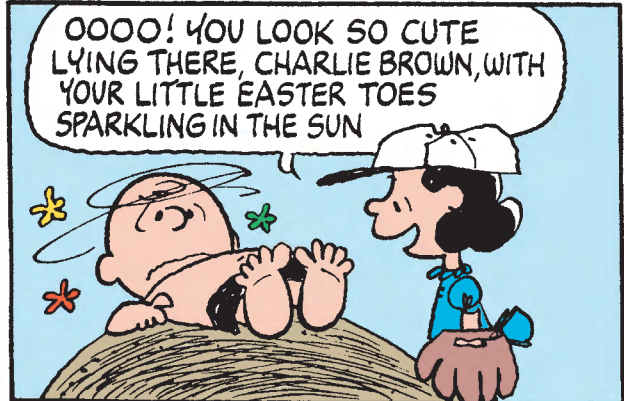
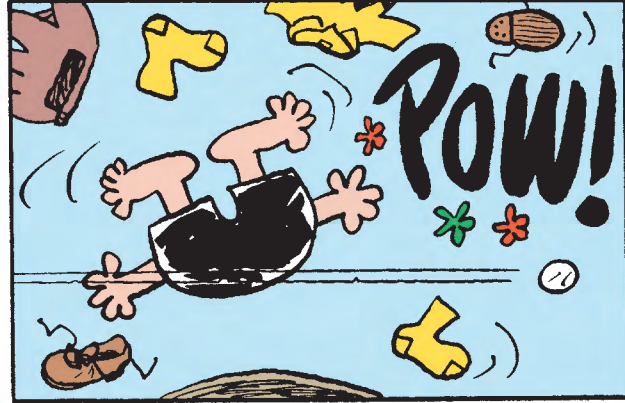
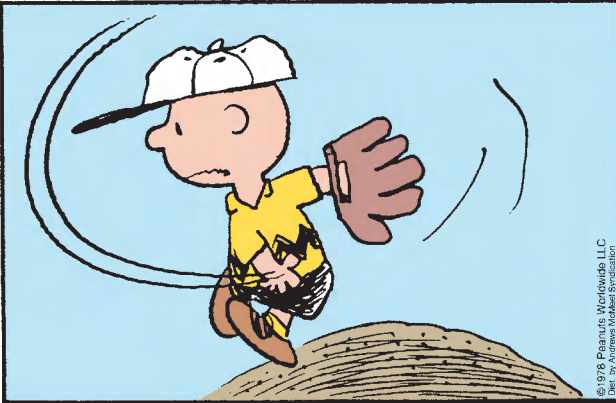
V Violence
N Nudity

GV Graphic Violence

SUNDAY
April 20, 2025

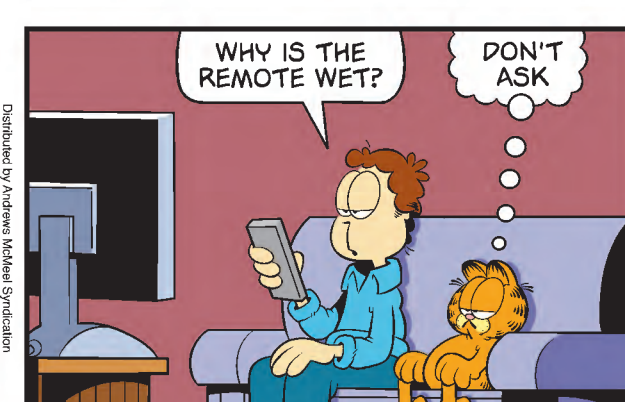
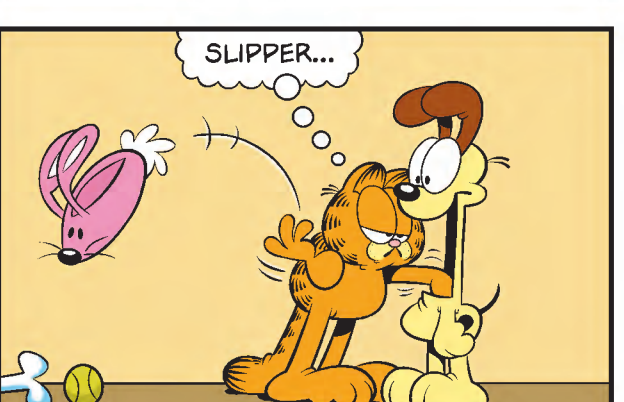
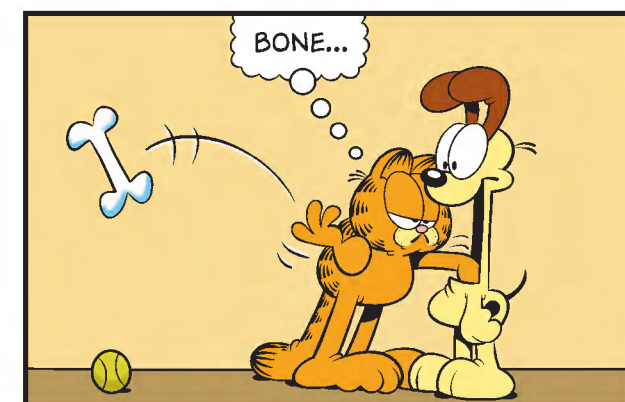
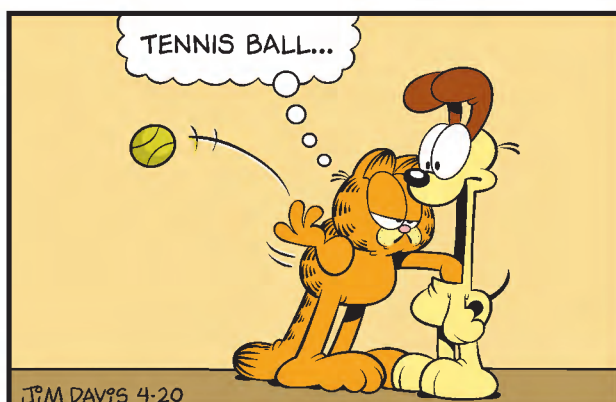
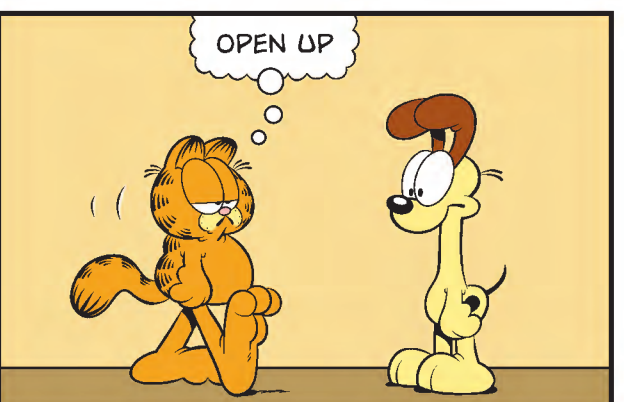


PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



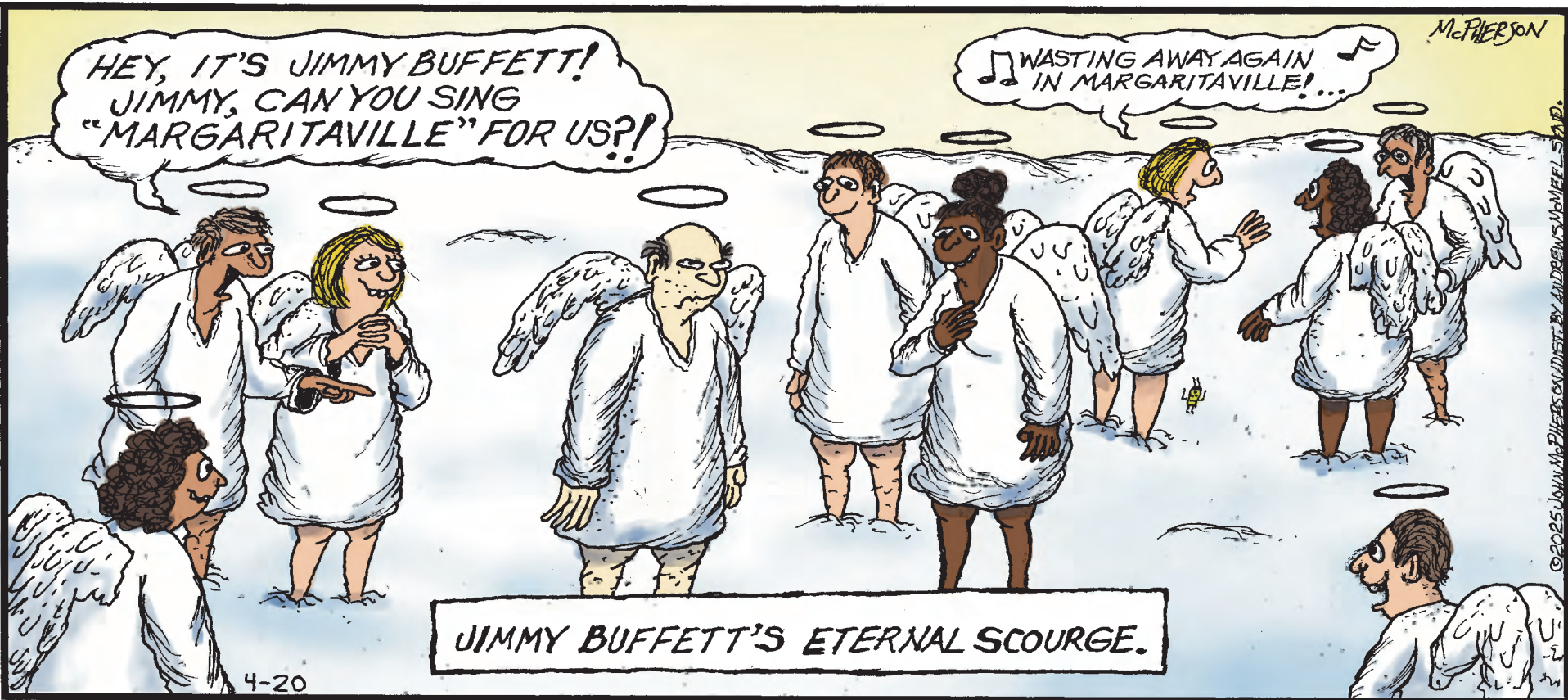
TAKE IT FROM THE TINKERSONS

BY BILL BETTWY

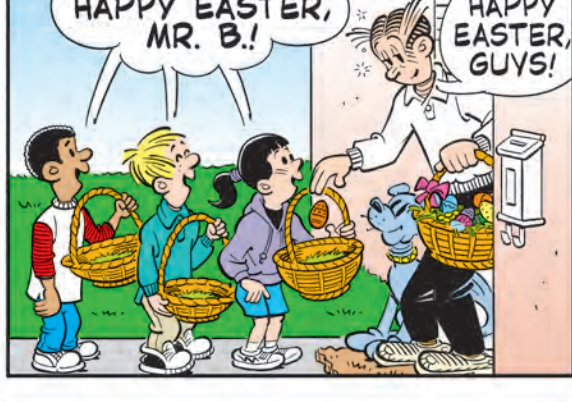
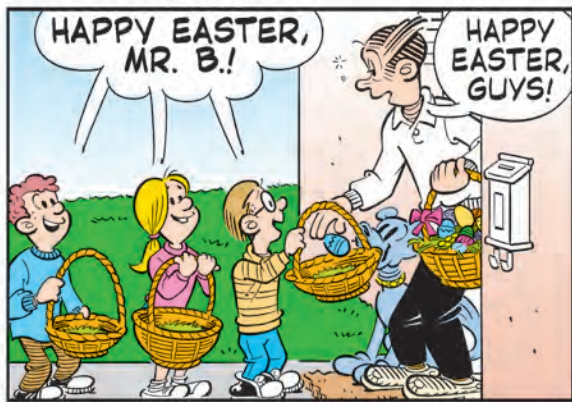
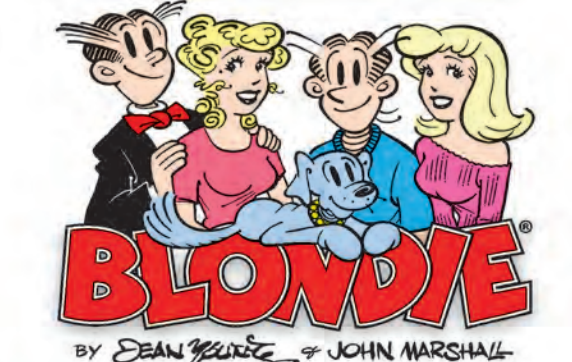


CLOSE TO HOME

BY JOHN McPHERSON

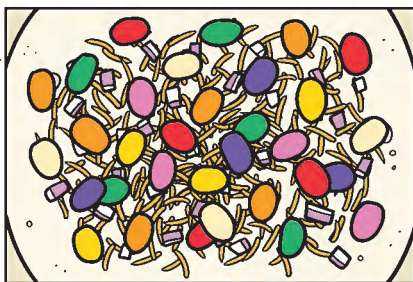
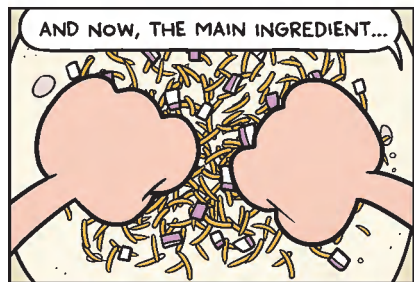
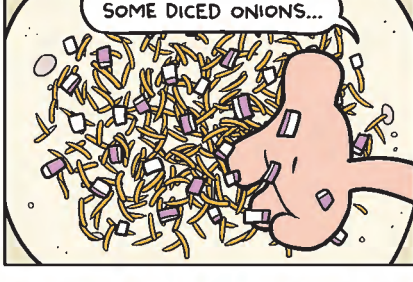
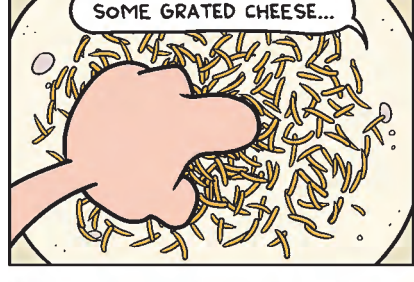


JIMMY BUFFETT'S ETERNAL SCOURGE.



FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



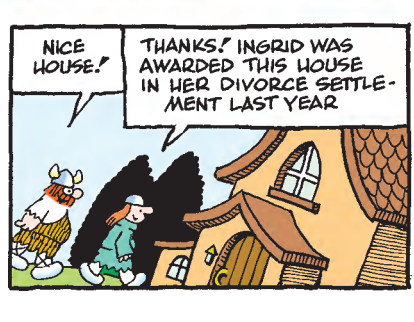
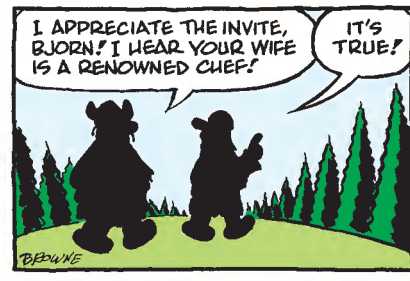
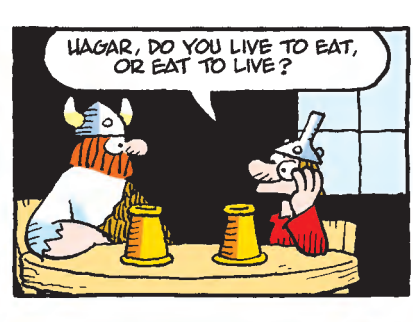
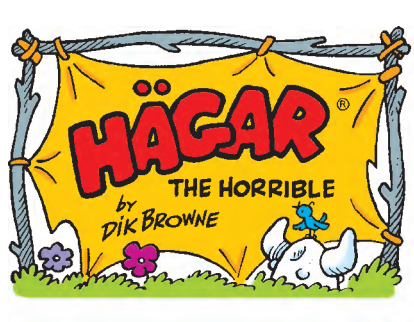
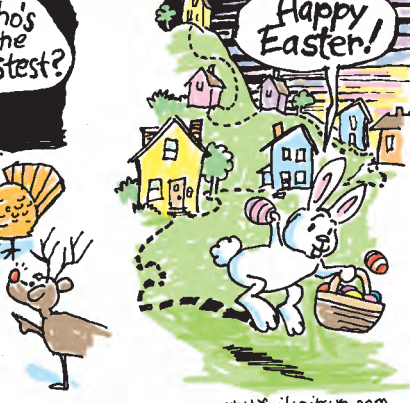
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bill Keane

For an additional supply of jelly beans, seven-year-old Billy has agreed to provide this Easter cartoon.

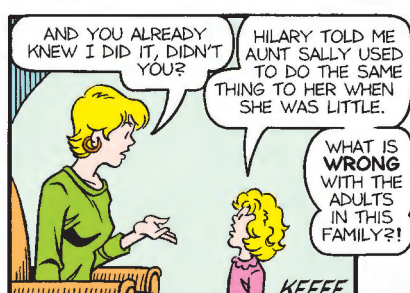
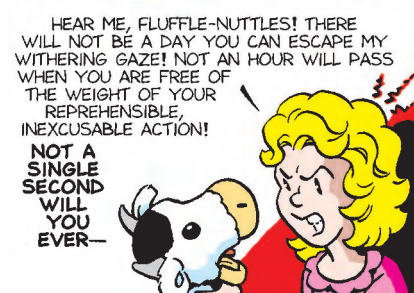
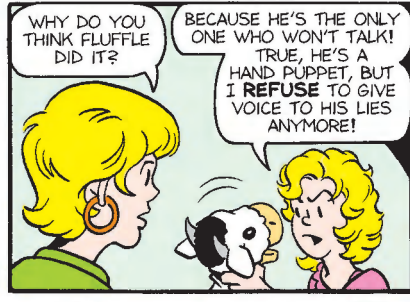
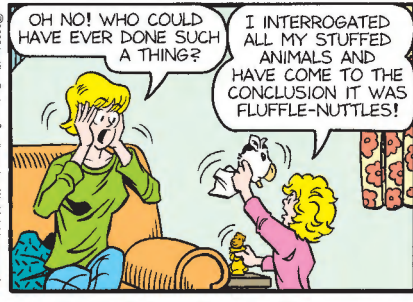
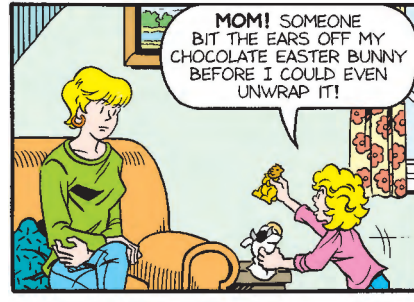
How a Bunny Got the Job Many Years Ago

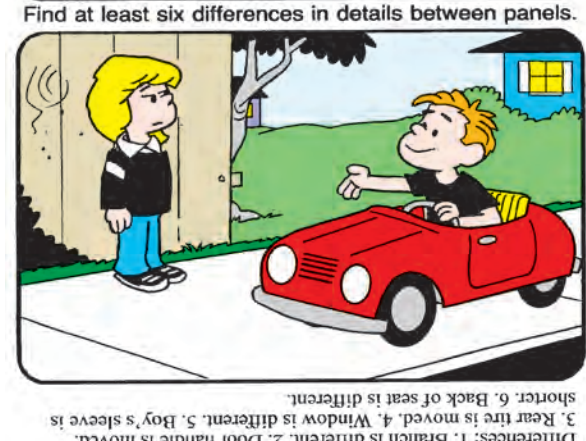
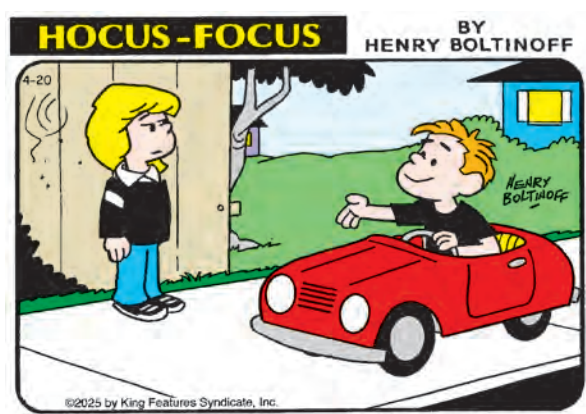
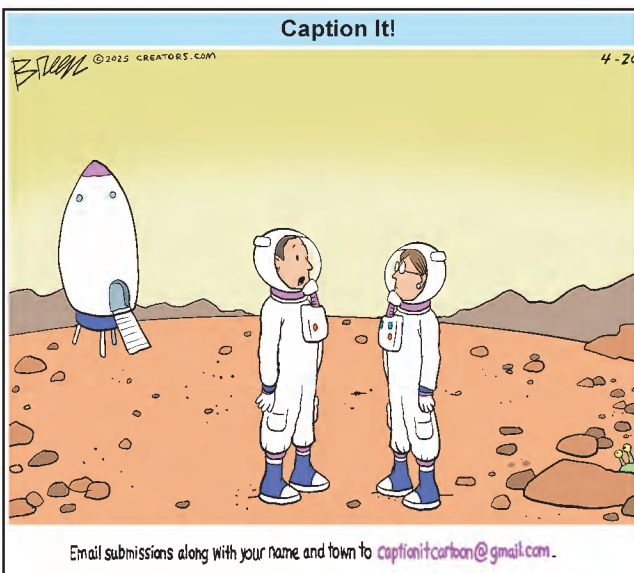
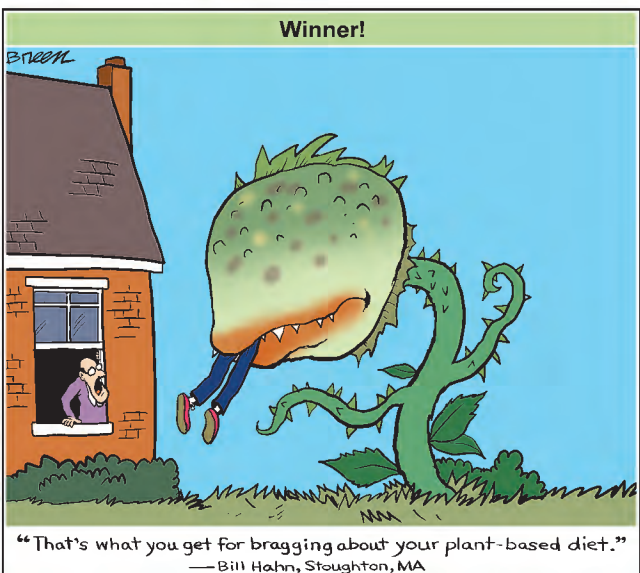
by Billy



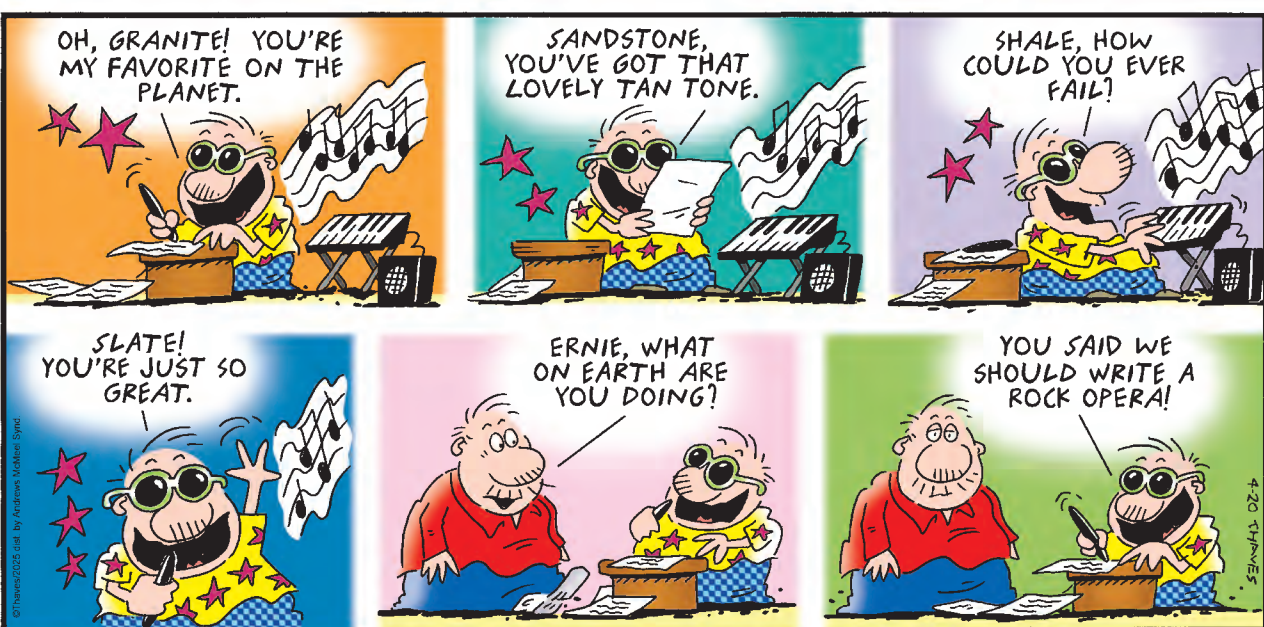
SALLY FORTH

BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE

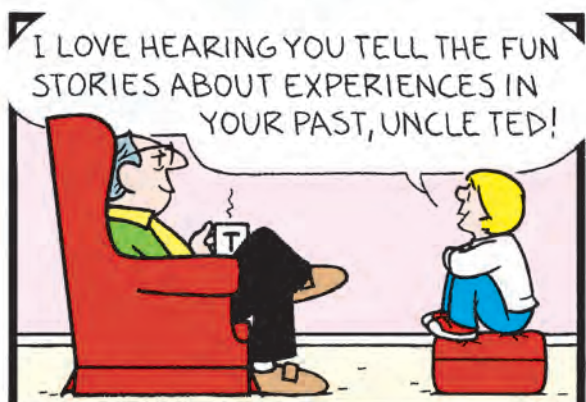




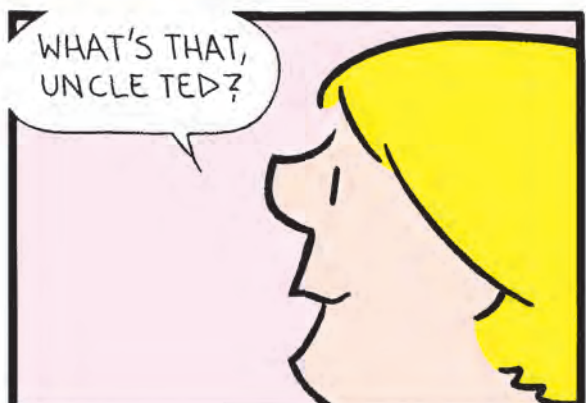
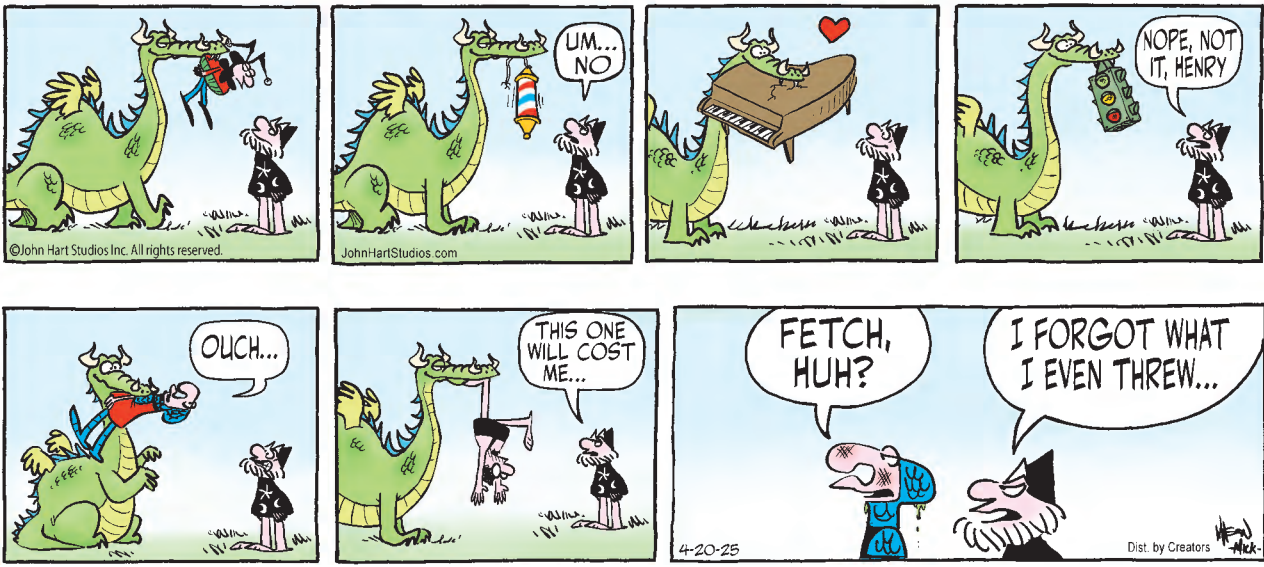
FRANK AND ERNEST



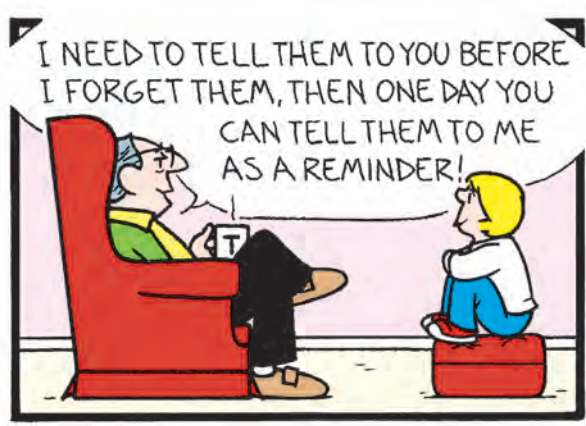
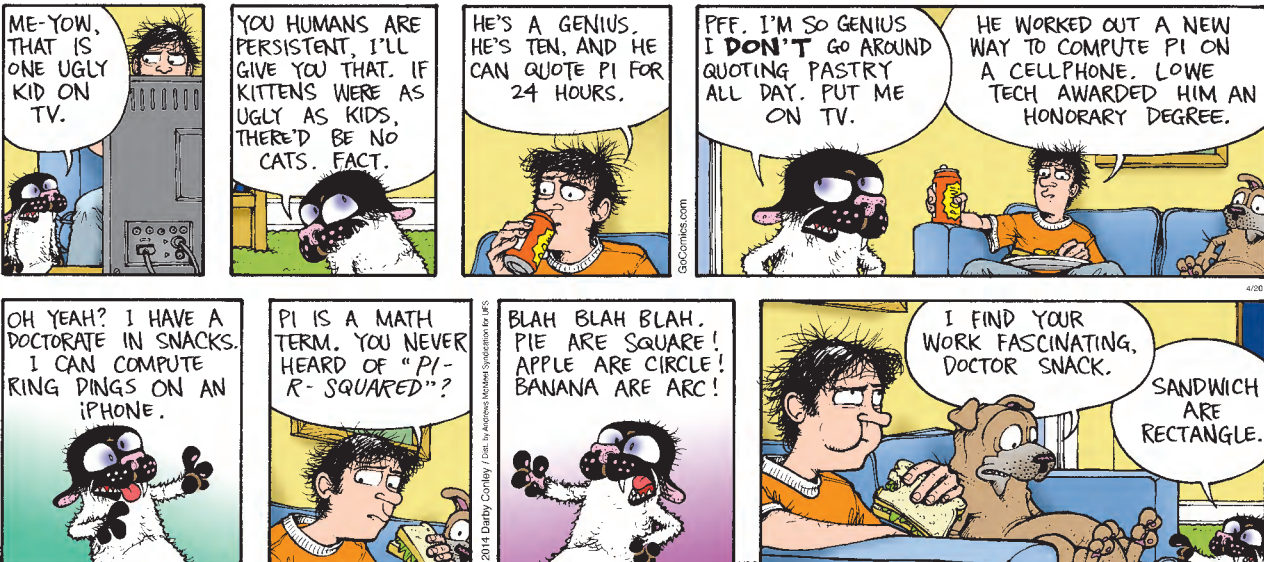
THE BORN LOSER



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS

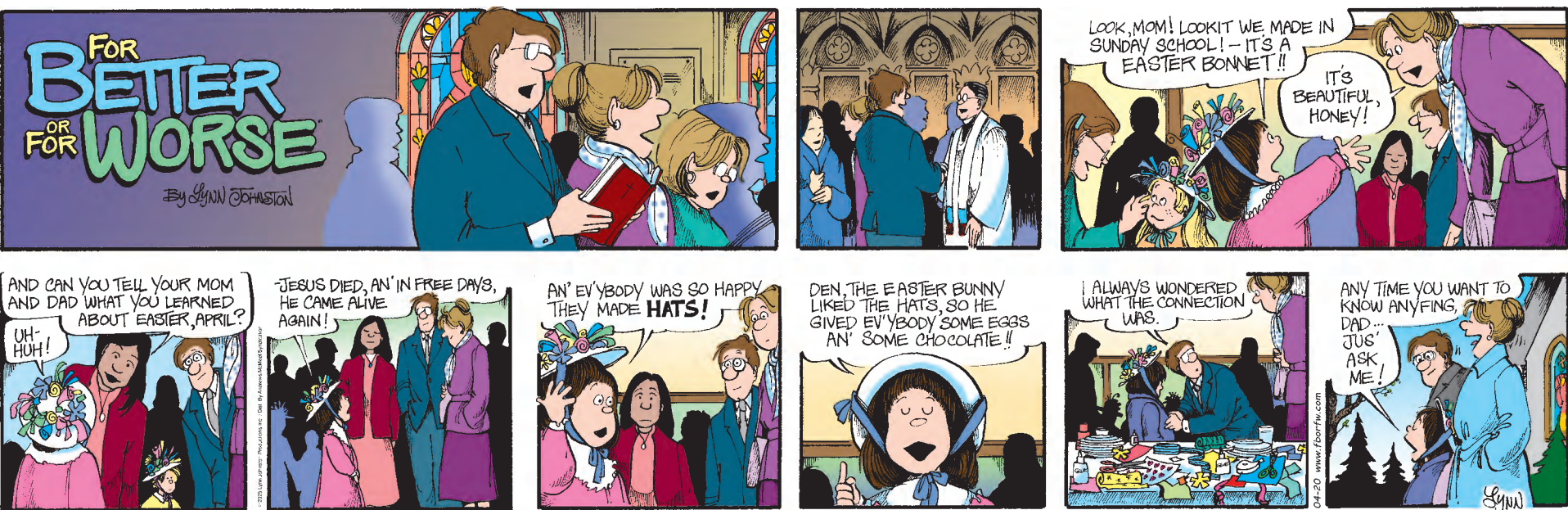
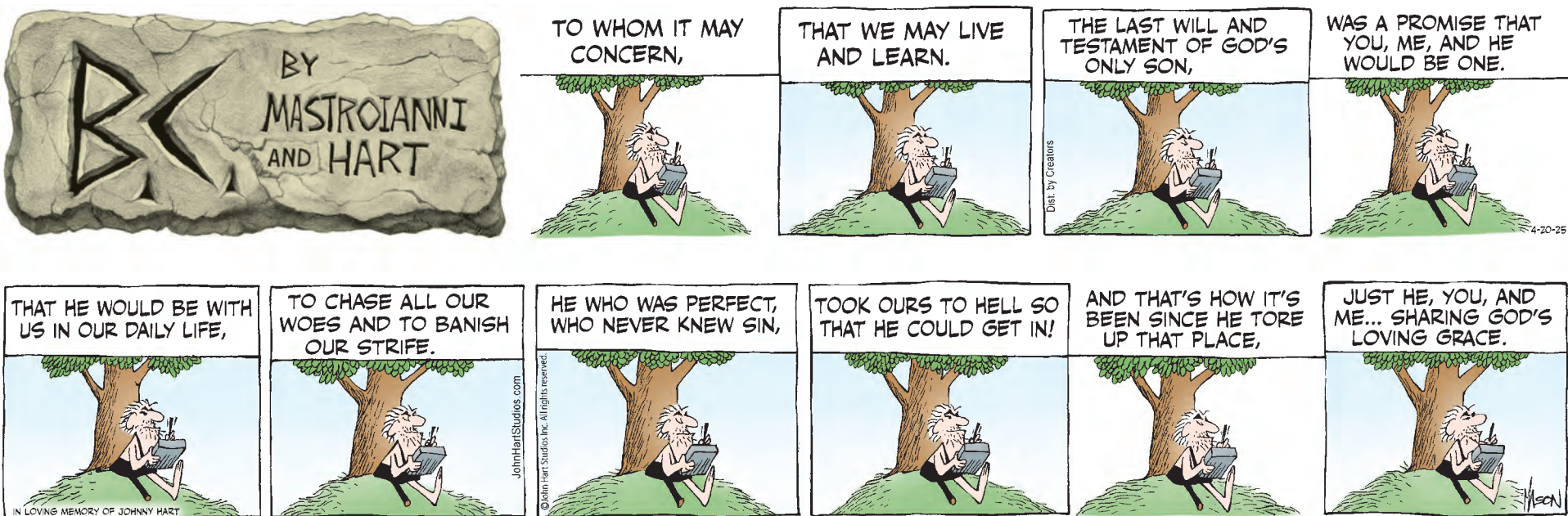
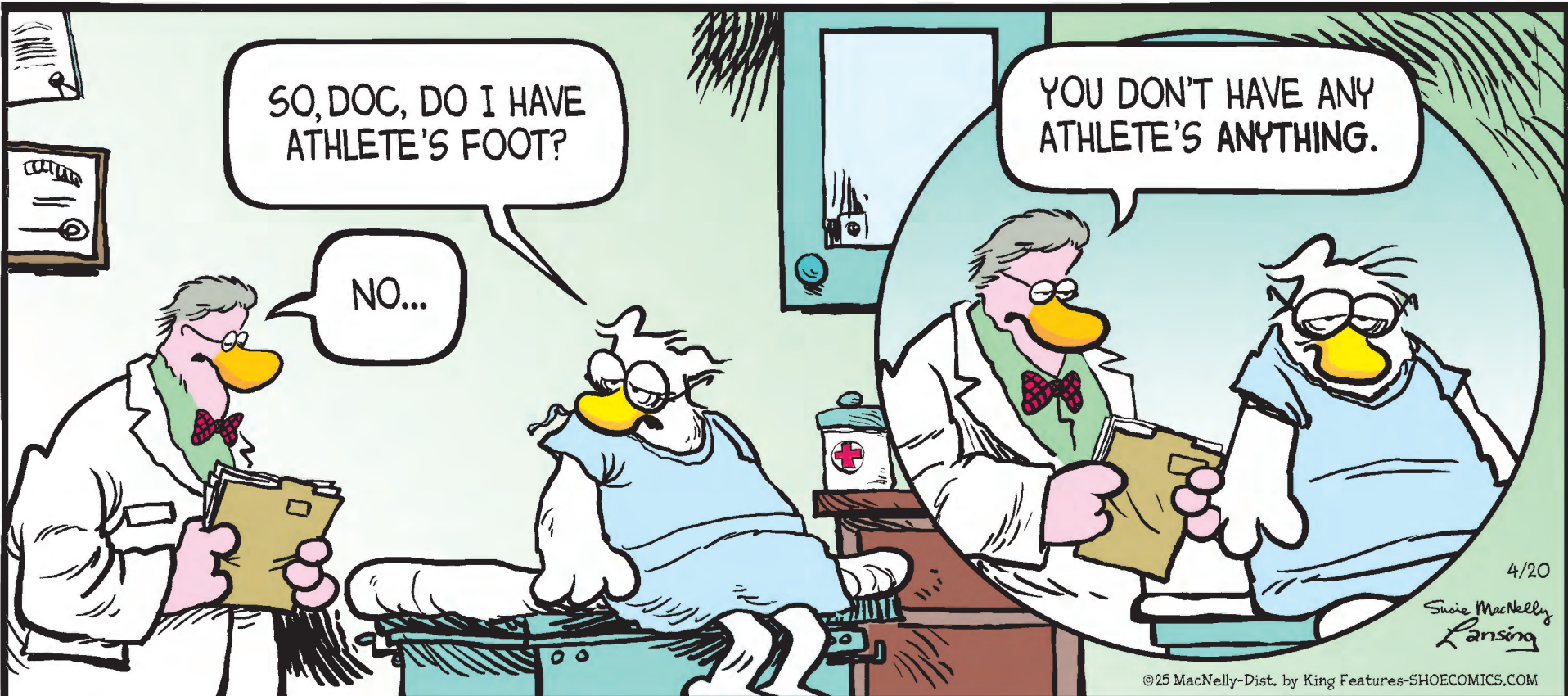


GET FUZZY BY DARBY CONLEY



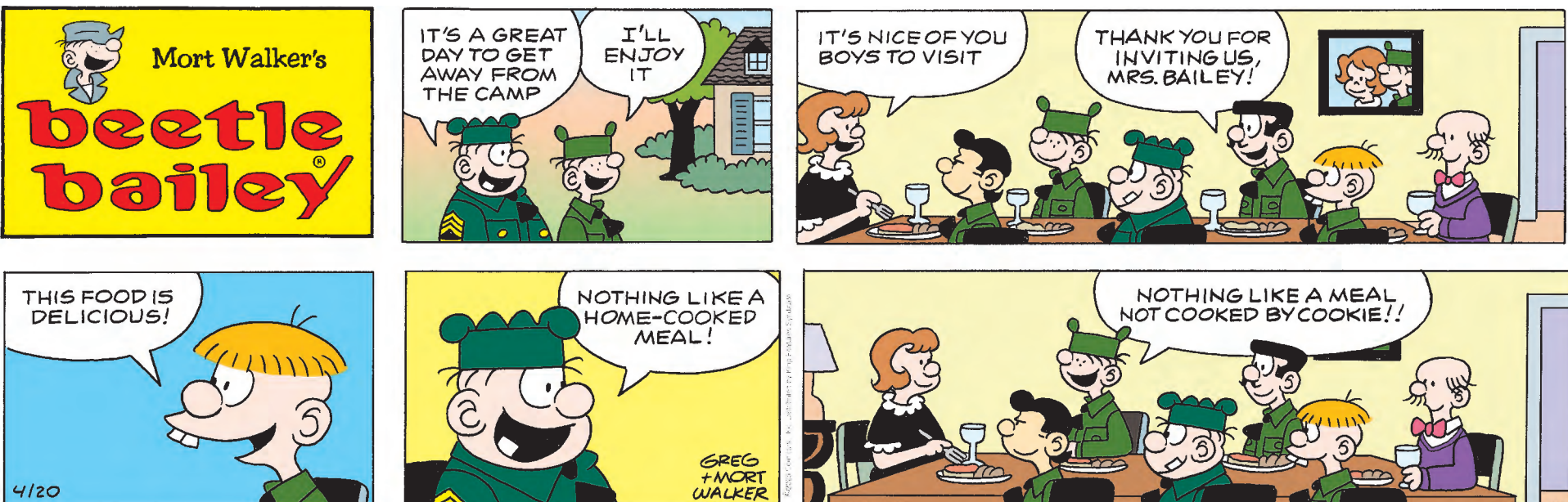
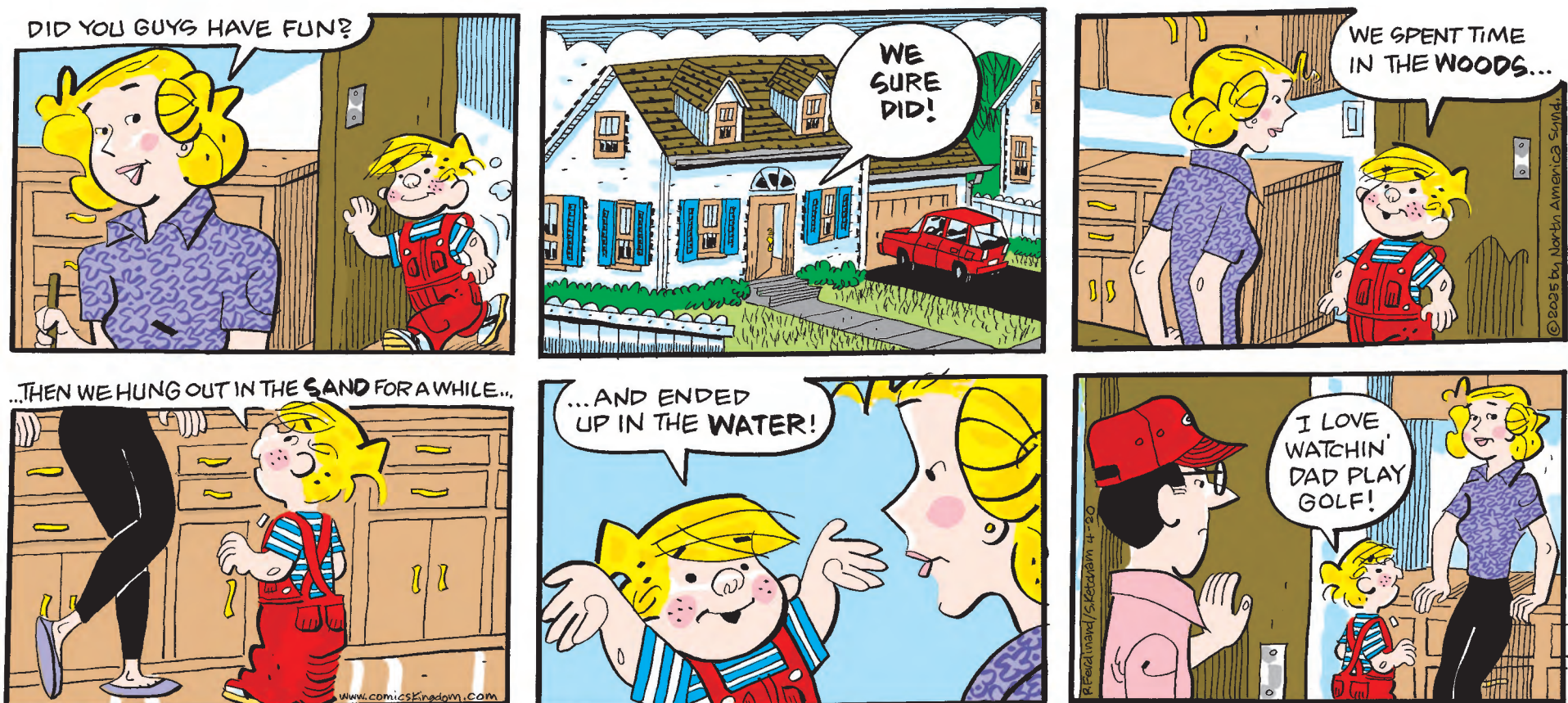
SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY



DENNIS THE MENACE

BY HANK KETCHAM



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