

the Sumter ITEM

SATURDAY-TUESDAY, DEC. 6-9, 2025 | Serving South Carolina since October 15, 1894

\$2.50

City council approves \$7M in contract bids for water, sewer improvements

BY RHIANNON O'BERRY
rhiannon@theitem.com

"This is always an exciting time of year," City of Sumter Mayor David Merchant said when the Tuesday, Dec. 2, regular meeting kicked off with

Sumter City Council honoring employees who each served for 10 or 15 years and collectively served for 260 years. The employees attending were announced to applause and handshakes from council members and honored with certificates.

You can see their pictures and learn more about their years of service, ranging from emergency response to public works, on the City of Sumter's Facebook page — meanwhile, here are two other highlights from Tuesday's meeting.

CONTRACTS FOR ABOUT \$7M IN WATER LINES, SEWER IMPROVEMENT APPROVED
Water line and sewer improvement projects were funded by state grants. The first approved procurement resolution was for the Down-

town Water Improvements 2025 Project that will replace about 9,300 feet of water lines along downtown streets, including along West Liberty Street from Washington to

SEE **CONTRACTS**, PAGE A8

School board's Facilities Committee chair post is still open

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Sumter school board has a Facilities Committee with a vacancy in the chair position currently.

At the Oct. 20 full board meeting, trustee Matthew "Mac" McLeod formally resigned as the committee's chairman, citing increased work obligations, and recommended fellow trustee Phil Leventis for the post, but board member Tarah Johnson has confirmed that Chairman Shawn Ragin has asked her to take it on.



DISNEY



JOHNSON

Johnson is already chair of the board's Finance Committee and told *The Item* on Friday that she would likely assume the facilities lead post if it is in a "dual role" with her current committee, and that measure serves as a backdrop to Monday night's trustees' meeting.

Ragin may make the assignment at the meeting because he took no action at the board's only meeting in November.

Other items listed on the agenda, which was posted online Friday morning, include a presentation from the consulting firm assisting in the superintendent search on community input it gathered in the consultants visit to Sumter two weeks ago, financial reports and public participation.

MORE ON FACILITIES COMMITTEE

As the Facilities Committee chair since December of last year, McLeod only had one meeting, and that was less than 15 minutes on Feb. 5. That follows a pattern set by

SEE **DISTRICT**, PAGE A8

Meeting addresses 3 concerns about Duke Energy's proposed rate increase



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

A rate increase could impact Duke Energy Progress customers in the tri-county area early next year, with a state Public Service Commission meeting last month focusing on the money Duke could make as a result of its proposed rate increase, Duke's renewable energy exploration and AI data centers. The Sierra Club and others' concerns come as technology giants are investing heavily in data centers in the state: Meta announced an \$800 million Aiken County investment in August 2024, and in October 2025, Google announced a new \$9 billion investment in South Carolina through 2027.

Revenue from rate, renewable energy, AI data center concerns in focus; decision expected Dec. 12

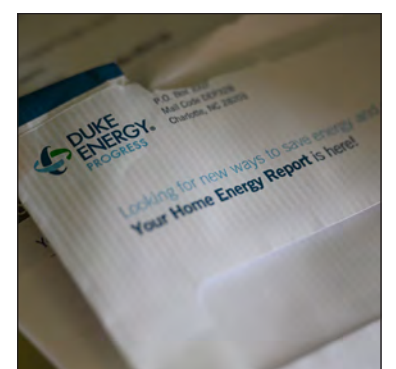
BY RHIANNON O'BERRY
rhiannon@theitem.com

A South Carolina commission approved three stipulation agreements among parties on the dockets for Duke Energy Progress's proposed 15% rate increase, which addressed the revenue Duke could make from an increase, investment in renewable energy and concerns about AI data centers' ener-



gy demand contributing to "rate shock" for other energy customers.

With the revenue requirement stipulation approved by the PSC, typical residential customers would



see a monthly increase of approximately \$11.23, or 7.8% increase. Duke Energy Progress's initial application

SEE **DUKE ENERGY**, PAGE A8

2 suspected homicides under investigation at Lee Correctional

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
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South Carolina Department of Corrections and partnering agencies are investigating the deaths of two inmates at Lee Correctional Institute who were attacked on two

separate days.

Mario Leven Harrison, 37, died at a local hospital on Tuesday, Dec. 2, according to SCDC. He was reportedly assaulted in a common area of his living unit at the prison.

The following day on Wednesday, Dec. 3, Xavier

Martez Delesline, 33, also an inmate at Lee CI, died from injuries sustained in an assault in his common area of the unit, SCDC reported.

Both deaths are being investigated as suspected homicides by the SCDC Inspector General's office, SLED's Divi-

sion Crime Scene unit and Lee County Coroner's Office.

Autopsies have been scheduled.

Lee CI is also where the deadliest prison riot in South Carolina that left seven dead occurred in April 2018.

April 2025 marked seven

years since eight hours of fighting that took place at the maximum-security prison in Bishopville left seven inmates dead, 22 injured and more than 40 allegedly responsible for the entire ordeal, according to *The Sumter Item* archives.

VISIT US ONLINE AT



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DEATHS, B7

Patricia Ann Alvarez
James J. Byrd
David Marshall Holliday
Michael Edward Barrs
Sarah A. Dean
William Jerome Simmons Jr.

Wilhelmina Williams Harrell
John Theodore Matthews
Corine Wade Funcherss
Kenneth Leroy Singleton
Yvonne Belser
Robert Bryan Van Metre

Fannie McNeil
Albert Jenkins
Calvin Timothy Phillips Jr.
Bobby Louis Maple
Barbara Jean Moses

INSIDE

2 SECTIONS, 20 PAGES
VOL. 131, NO. 16

Clarendon Sun A5
A7 Reflections A5
Classifieds B8 A9
Scene in Sumter
Lifestyle A4 Sports B1



SECOND FRONT

E-mail: pressrelease@theitem.com



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

ABOVE: BJ's Wholesale Club is Sumter's first wholesale store, and the Alice Drive area at the intersection with Broad Street continues to be the commercial center for Sumter. RIGHT: The construction on Sumter's BJ's Wholesale Club began in February on the facility, which totals 109,000 square feet.



BJ's sets Sumter opening date for Friday

Construction phase has been 10 months on 109,000-square-foot wholesale club

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Attention area residents: We have an official opening date for Sumter's first wholesale store, BJ's Wholesale Club on Alice Drive near Walmart. On Tuesday, Dec. 2, a public relations specialist for an outside marketing firm that assists BJ's announced

the Sumter location will open on Friday, Dec. 12. Two other wholesale clubs, one in Massachusetts and another in Florida, will open less than one week later on Dec. 17, according to the news release. Construction began 10 months ago in February at 1475 Alice Drive and the wholesale club is about 109,000 square feet. About two weeks ago, on Nov. 19, BJ's Gas station opened at the site and it features 16 pumps. Both require memberships to use. The club's opening on Dec. 12 will mark the third BJ's store in the state. "BJ's continues to grow in communities where unbeatable value resonates," said Bill Werner, BJ's executive vice president of strategy and de-

CLUB HOURS
Monday-Saturday: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sunday: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

velopment. "We'll bring savings of up to 25% off grocery store prices every day." Like Sam's Club or Costco, BJ's is a membership-based warehouse club and offers discounted bulk prices on a variety of products. BJ's offers two membership options with discounted rates through Thursday, Dec. 11. The release says members can save on fresh foods, produce, full-service deli items, fresh bakery

goods, household essentials, home décor, pet supplies, toys, electronics and more. BJ's members can also choose curbside pickup, in-club pickup, same-day delivery and shipping available on BJ's.com, according to the release. Additionally, members shopping in-club can use ExpressPay through the BJ's mobile app to scan products as they shop and skip the checkout line. Shoppers can also try BJ's risk-free with the company's 100% money-back guarantee and combine BJ's coupons with many manufacturers' coupons to maximize savings. Shoppers can learn more about being a BJ's Wholesale Club member at BJs.com/Sumter.

Sumter man charged with attempted murder after brother shot, deputies say

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
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A 21-year-old man is being held at the local detention center after he reportedly shot his brother Friday morning. Staton Cole Montgomery, 21, was arrested and charged with attempted murder, according to Mark Bordeaux, public information officer for Sumter County Sheriff's Office. Deputies responded to a home on Children's Lane at about 9 a.m. on Dec.

5 where they found a gunshot victim who was identified as Montgomery's brother, Bordeaux said. The victim is an adult, Bordeaux told *The Item*. Deputies provided emergency first aid before the brother was transported to Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital. Montgomery was taken into custody and transported to Sumter County Sheriff's Office Detention Center, where he is being held pending a bond hearing. A mugshot was not available.

DPH confirms 2025 season's 1st flu-related death in S.C.

STAFF REPORT

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Department of Public Health announced this week the state has suffered its first influenza-associated death of the season, underscoring the seriousness of the disease as it circulates in our communities. "Regrettably, a person from the Lowcountry region has died from the flu, becoming our first confirmed influenza-associated death

of the season that officially started Sept. 28," said Dr. Linda Bell, state epidemiologist and director of DPH's Health Programs Branch. "Unfortunately, we see many deaths, hospitalizations and other serious complications of flu each year in our state," Dr. Bell said. "Getting vaccinated against this disease is the best way to prevent severe illness and death, and I recommend that all of us who are able get our shot as soon as possible."

Chamber's Annual Legislative Breakfast will be Dec. 12

STAFF REPORT

Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce's Annual Legislative Breakfast will return next week, and community members are invited to attend. According to a news release by the Chamber, the event "brings together community leaders, business professionals and elected officials for an in-depth conversation on key legislative pri-

orities shaping the future of Sumter and South Carolina." "The event will feature members of the Sumter County Legislative Delegation, who will provide updates on recent accomplishments, discuss upcoming initiatives for the next Legislative Session and answer questions submitted by members of the community. The panel will be moderated by Thomas McElveen."

Speakers for the breakfast will include Sen. Jeff Zell, R-Sumter, District 36; Sen. Jeffrey R. Graham, D-Sumter, District 35; Sen. JD Chaplin, R-Sumter, District 29; Speaker of the House G. Murrell Smith Jr., R-Sumter, District 67; Rep. Keishan M. Scott, D-Lee, District 50; Rep. J. David Weeks, D-Sumter, District 51; and Rep. Fawn Pedalino, R-Manning, District 64.

The Chamber invites community members, business owners and local stakeholders to attend to take part in shaping Sumter's legislative dialogue. Tickets are now available at sumterchamber.com for the event on Friday, Dec. 12, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at Christ Community Church. The Chamber's Feed Your Mind Seminar Series is presented by Prisma Health and

is designed to foster awareness, transparency and collaboration throughout the region. Attendees are encouraged to submit their questions in advance for consideration during the moderated discussion. For more information or to register, visit www.sumterchamber.com or contact Ariel Floyd at ariel.floyd@sumterchamber.com or (803) 775-1231.

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NOW STREAMING ON YOUTUBE

Amid sporadic test drives of bikes and comfortable talking and joking, athletes from the University of South Carolina Sumter Fire Ants baseball program assembled dozens of new bikes to go to children this Christmas — one of many volunteer initiatives they're pursuing this year, as in so many years before. They attended three workdays for the Evening Optimist Club of Sumter's Cycles for Christmas program under the supervision of its project chairman, Tom Lawrence — much to his gratitude.

<https://youtu.be/2gz9myA2g98>



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McLeod Health

'Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical' is holly, jolly and witty for adults at Sumter Little Theatre

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

A REVIEW

When you think of Christmas, I'm fairly sure you don't imagine Christmas trees topped with a car flap depicting a glowing racer girl, wreaths made of crushed beer cans and a nativity scene featuring skeletons and witches as stand-ins for the disciples and Mary.

I'd bet my bottom dollar you don't.

That is, until you settle into a plush seat at Sumter Little Theatre.

For its holiday production, the quaint theater does a big undertaking of Betsy Kelson's "Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical." And they do it well.

Under the talented direction of Traci Quinn, "Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical," set in Starke, Florida, tells the story of Armadillo Acres' very own Grinch, Darlene (Shannon Locasha), whose neighbor Rufus (Zackery Nash) is a certified trailer park Christmas aficionado. After Darlene shocks herself on a cable-splitter, she wakes up to suddenly love Christmas and be slowly falling in love with Rufus.

This pair are both adorable and amusing. Darlene grows on you throughout the production. At first, you may quiver in fear or wrestle with wonder of how so much hatred for such a joyous and meaningful holiday can live in a head full of hair like that.

But this production will show that everyone has a backstory, one that comes with its fair share of scraps and deep scars that rear their ugly heads when they lack, or rather were robbed of, the very thing the holiday encourages: warmth. Which is why Rufus opening his heart after Darlene's drastic change in her disposition is a beautiful contrast. It's what we should expect from each other, especially during such a season where togetherness can be the light to cast away someone's darkness. Locasha is a natural on stage, so once she delivered those first few lines, her portrayal of Darlene was going to be an enjoyable one. In collaboration with Nash's gusto as Rufus, who felt like this production's very own selfless, loving, sometimes lewd but often good-natured Frosty the Snowman, the pair were a great match to pull off such a dynamic duo.

Back to the plot. Everything is going smoothly — as smooth as it can be with a post-electrocuted Christmas fanatic like Darlene and chaotically charming casanova like Rufus. That is until the town "breastaurant" owner, Jackson "Jackie" Boudreaux

(Lee Warren), enters the scene. Boudreaux dresses like a Southern tycoon who believes sex sells best when paired with a side of cheesy looks and cheeky phrases. Warren's portrayal of Jackie is much like Locasha's portrayal of Darlene: You'll question what good can come from such a grumpy character. But, again, by the end of his redemption arc, he'll grow on you as you see his heart — and his wallet — grow three sizes bigger.

From Jackie's entrance, the plot thickens and things start to lose their luster. Darlene shocks herself again, Jackie buys the trailer park and threatens to kick everyone off the property mere HOURS before Christmas, Rufus sports a black eye and a bad hangover after chugging too much 99-cent gin, someone needs an exorcism, there's singing, sadness and some heartfelt confessions. But everything gets tied up with a big, red, red-neck bow for a very satisfying ending for everyone.

The plot is simple and somewhat predictable, but what makes this musical so appealing is the terrific trio that is Betty, Lin and Pickles (played by Crystal Vance, Haley Franks and Emma Ketchum, respectively). This trio glues the production together and breaks the fourth wall, letting you know we're all going through these shenanigans together.

While each actor and character deserves his or her flowers and an abundance of applause, this trio was the highlight of the show. Betty doubles as the trailer park matriarch but also the production's fairy godmother. In her garb, she floats through the scene, nurturing and guiding characters

through difficult moments and tough realizations with that Southern warmth that is poetic but real and raw when you read between the lines. If you know, then you know. What was enjoyable about Vance was her humor in the line delivery that softened some of those tough messages, giving a pop to punchlines while skillfully emphasizing key points.

Linoleum, or "Lin," can only be described as spiked keg nog. It's not the kind of drink that works for everyone, but it works for someone, and that someone can really appreciate the taste, texture and tenacity it takes to be so unique. And that's exactly how Franks portrayed Lin. She had a way of keeping the production lively and unexpected; truly, there are some lines she delivers in this show



PHOTOS BY ALAYSHA MAPLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

From left, Crystal Vance as Betty, Emma Ketchum as Pickles and Haley Franks as Lin perform in Sumter Little Theatre's "Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical."



Lee Warren as Jackie Boudreaux speaks in Sumter Little Theatre's "Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical."

for which the only accurate response was a laugh because words weren't enough. Franks gave a spark to this production through her delivery, her reactions and her overall enthusiasm. It was much appreciated.

Then, there is Pickles. Though this production has strong language and discusses some not-so-family-friendly topics, Pickles was that tenderness that we all crave during the Christmas holidays, to unravel yourself from the hustle and bustle, the highs and lows, the trials and tribulations that adult life brings us and just enjoy the merriment and the magic. Ketchum as Pickles couldn't have been better cast. Be it the sparkle in her eyes or the wonderment in her delivery, she brought light and life to this character and held on to it throughout the show, no matter how many times they told her Santa wasn't real.

Alongside their acting skills, we're also getting the full musical effect with David Nehls' music and lyrics in "F*** It, It's Christmas," "Christmas Leather Love," "Christmas Is for Dummies" and more. Great kudos goes to the live band, including new SLT music director Lyneea Aillery, Jessie Freyermuth on guitar, Barry Simpson on drums and Ben McIver on bass, behind the scenes — literally just beyond the terrifically tacky sets — who aided



juggle their normal 9-5 jobs and hefty classwork, all to spend their evenings making you laugh during the winter months, hoping to warm you up from the inside out. Who can't use a laugh every now and then?

This production is a "sequel" to the original "Great American Trailer Park," one this reporter has not seen before. So, with this being the introduction to this unique universe of characters and chaos, this cast deserves an audience that will hoot, holler and have eager hands to clap them into their final curtain call.



Zackery Nash portrays Rufus in Sumter Little Theatre's "Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical."

Pamela Anderson's vegetable bourguignon is a hearty dish

BY PAMELA ANDERSON
Voracious

Cooking with wine always feels elegant and elevated. This Vegetable Bourguignon, from my cookbook "I Love You: Recipes from the Heart" is hearty and satisfying for family dinners or for curling up by a fire on dark, moody days. And it's always good for leftovers.

Serve it with a mashed vegetable — potatoes, parsnips or celery root (also known as celeriac). In this recipe, I call for celeriac because I enjoy sneaking in new things for my family to try. My dad had no idea he was eating mashed celery root instead of his regular potatoes at a Sunday meal ... and almost fainted when I told him. Gotcha!

VEGETABLE BOURGUIGNON WITH MASH

Servings: 6
Ingredients

BOURGUIGNON

1/3 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
2 1/2 cups boiling water
2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 yellow onion, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 large carrots, cut into chunks
2 celery stalks, cut into chunks
Fine sea salt
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 cup red wine
1 pound 10 ounces fresh mushrooms (any kind), thinly sliced
6 sprigs thyme
1 sprig rosemary
2 bay leaves
1/2 small bunch lacinato kale, center ribs removed, leaves chopped
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper



DITTE ISAGER / VORACIOUS VIA AP

Vegetable Bourguignon with Mash is from the cookbook "I Love You: Recipes from the Heart" by Pamela Anderson.

Chopped flat-leaf parsley, for garnishing

MASH

3 1/2 pounds celeriac (about 2)
6 garlic cloves, sliced
1/4 cup plant butter
3 tablespoons plant sour cream
Fine sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Make the bourguignon:

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Place the dried porcini mushrooms in a small, heat-proof bowl and pour the boiling water over them. Set aside to soak while you cook the vegetables.

Warm the olive oil in a Dutch oven or other heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add the carrot, celery, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender.

Stir in the tomato paste and flour and cook for another minute. Pour in the wine, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pot to loosen any golden bits. Add the soaking liquid from the porcini mushrooms (give the porcini a quick chop and add

them as well) along with the sliced fresh mushrooms. Tie the thyme, rosemary and bay leaves into a little bundle with a piece of twine and add to the pot. Cover the pot and put in the oven to cook until the vegetables are very tender and the stew has thickened slightly, 20 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the mash:

Peel the celeriac and cut into large chunks. Place them in a medium saucepan with the garlic and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and cook, uncovered, until tender when poked with a fork, about 15 minutes. Drain. Return the drained celeriac and garlic to the pot, add the plant butter and plant sour cream, and mash until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the bourguignon from the oven. Mix in the kale, cover the pot, and return it to the oven to cook for a final 10 minutes or so, until the kale is tender. Stir in the vinegar and season with pepper and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Taste and add another little pinch of salt if you like.

Serve the bourguignon garnished with chopped parsley alongside the celeriac mash.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PHOTO BY THOMAS PAUL

The North American Aerospace Defense Command is busy tracking Santa on Dec. 24, 2024, for the program's 69th year in the NORAD Tracks Santa Operations Center on Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado. On Dec. 24, NORAD has the special mission of tracking Santa, using the same satellites, radar and fighter jets it uses 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to track anything that flies in or around the North American continent.

NORAD is ready to track Santa's flight for 70th anniversary year

Christmas fun available on website

BY JOHN INGLE

PETERSON SPACE FORCE BASE, Colo. — The North American Aerospace Defense Command is ready to track Santa on Dec. 24 and is celebrating the program's 70th anniversary. NORAD monitors and defends North American airspace 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. On Dec. 24, NORAD has one additional mission: tracking Santa Claus as he makes his way across the globe, delivering presents to children.

The NORAD Tracks Santa website (www.norad-santa.org) launched on Dec. 1. It features Santa's North Pole Village, which includes a holiday countdown, games, movie theater, holiday music, web store and more. The website is available in nine languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese and Korean.

The official NORAD Tracks Santa app is also in the Apple App and Google Play stores, to count down the days until Santa's journey on mobile devices. NORAD Tracks Santa will also be available on digital media platforms including

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X, and on contributor platforms, Amazon Alexa, SiriusXM and OnStar. More information about our contributors is available on our website.

On Dec. 24, trackers worldwide can call 1-877-HI-NORAD (1-877-446-6723) to ask our live operators about Santa's location from 4 a.m. to midnight MST. Additionally, we are introducing a web-based calling option so children without the means to reach NORAD via our phone number can call the NORAD Tracks Santa Operations Center directly from our NORADSanta.org website. Virtual translation services will also be able to support more than 200 languages via our call center. While live operators will be unavailable after midnight MST, trackers can continue to follow Santa's flight until 3 a.m. on Dec. 25 by calling and listening to our Interactive Voice Response system or visiting our website.

NORAD Tracks Santa is a global experience, and the U.S. and Canadian personnel of NORAD are proud to continue the tradition of delighting families everywhere.

Senior couple are on different paths in relationship

DEAR ABBY: I'm a man in my 70s. My girlfriend is eight years younger. We were first introduced 42 years ago by relatives



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL
VAN BUREN

who believed we would be a good match. I was an only child; she was from a broken home. We dated and liked each other, but there were communication problems.

I was independent as a younger man and dated. She was devoted to her mother and cared for her until her passing. We reconnected and started dating seven years ago. We live an hour apart, and I would drive to spend a weekend with her every two weeks. We talk every day.

Things were good, and I asked if she would be interested in marriage someday. She said she would "consider it." A few years later, I offered to buy a ring to show that she belonged to me, and she became upset. I backed off. A year ago, she suddenly said I shouldn't come any longer. When I asked why, she told me I have said

things in the past that upset her. She said I poke fun at things she likes to do and made comments that were intimate in nature. I asked why she hadn't brought these issues to my attention sooner. She said she should have but just didn't do it. I kid around a bit, even poke fun at myself, but I never intended to hurt anyone's feelings. I apologized and suggested relationship therapy. She believed we could just work through it. She said she had to build up the trust again. We took a vacation, but nothing changed. Simple things like holding hands don't seem to interest her anymore. I don't have years to waste. Do I have the wrong girl here?

FRUSTRATED IN OHIO

DEAR FRUSTRATED: Yup, you sure do. The lady isn't physically attracted to you, and she can't bring herself to communicate when there are problems that could be fixed. You can do better than this, and the time to start widening your dating circle is now.

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

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CLUB DIGEST

SUMTER ART ASSOCIATION

President Karen Ingram welcomed 52 members to the December meeting of The Sumter Art Association, which was held in the Parish Hall of the Church of the Holy Comforter on Tuesday, Dec. 2. Members introducing their guests were Andrena Ray, whose guest was Bill Scobee, and Margaret Moses, whose guest was Sandie Cone.

Shirley Osborne gave a lovely devotion on the true meaning of the Christmas season. She encouraged members to reflect upon what they are doing with their light and offered a prayer.

Debbie Thomas reported on a number of cultural events

currently available in the Sumter area.

Rosemary Drakeford introduced the guest musicians, Annette Matthews and Hamilton Stoddard. The members were entertained with several lovely pieces on the piano ushering in the Christmas season.

Following adjournment, members enjoyed refreshments provided by the hostess committee. The chairperson was Randa Edmunds; Debbie Shelley served as co-hostess. They were assisted by Ann Booth, Em Boykin, Liza Cooper, Bonnie Disney, Mary Glenn Givens, Becky Pritchard, Emily Stroman, Nancy Thompson and Sue Towery.

REFLECTIONS



This front page of the *Item* was published the afternoon of Dec. 8, 1941.

SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Sumter responds to the attack upon Pearl Harbor

BY SAMMY WAY

Sumter Item archivist and historian

This issue of Reflections remembers Dec. 7, 1941, “A Date Which Will Live in Infamy.” Words spoken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt recall how this Japanese attack changed the nation and profoundly affected every American community regardless of its location or size. The surprise attack brought the Sumter community together, instilled patriotism and helped forge national unity. Incorporating a number of articles from *The Item* archives, this issue of Reflections notes life’s changes and the city’s response to the events wrought by this act of war.

On Dec. 8, 1941, an Associated Press article described the location and description of the Pearl Harbor naval station. It noted that the Hawaiian Islands were at the crossroads of the Pacific Ocean, approximately one-third of the way across the vast expanse of water. “The strategic location of Hawaii and the great defense works centered there made the territory a major key to the conflict in the Far East. Thousands of soldiers, their numbers increasing steadily, were housed at the Schofield Barracks in the center of Oahu. There was also a big army air field, the destination of a secret mass flight of 21 bombers from California early in 1941.”

The Sumter Daily Item on Dec. 8, 1941, alerted the public to the changes effected by the surprise attack. “Public utilities, public buildings, railroads and highways in Sumter were being guarded today by soldiers from Shaw Field and detachments from Fort Jackson. Shaw Field was also under strict guard this morning, and no person was being admitted without an official pass. All city officials were put on alert. Two soldiers were stationed at the overhead bridge at the end of South Main Street, two at city waterworks and one at the courthouse. The railroads were also being closely guarded. Out of the city at the junction of U.S. Highways 76 and 521, two guards were stationed on each highway and two at the Clayton Lowder Store. Sgt. Safferman of Company K, 128th Field Artillery, which was stationed at Fort Jackson, told a member of the *Item* staff that 200 men from his unit were on guard duty in the district of which Sumter is a part. Safferman was stationed at the courthouse; his unit, he said, arrived about 9 a.m. He could give no information as to where they would be quartered or for how long they would remain.

Orders from the mayor’s office put members of the city police force and the fire department on alert for any trouble that might arise. Industrial leaders were also warned to be on the lookout for disorder in what the mayor described as “simply a precautionary measure.” At county police headquarters, a telegram was received from Gov. Harley advising officers to be ready for further orders. *The Sumter Daily Item* began notifying its readers of the location and the condition of local servicemen and women from Dec. 12, 1941, and would continue that practice long after the cessation of hostilities.

One such serviceman was Joseph D. Sweetman. Young Sweetman, like thousands of men, entered the military after completing school. Sweetman joined the Army in 1939, enlisting at Fort Dix in New Jersey, his native state. He was assigned to a coastal artillery unit and was shipped to the South Pacific. He would remain in this theater until 1945



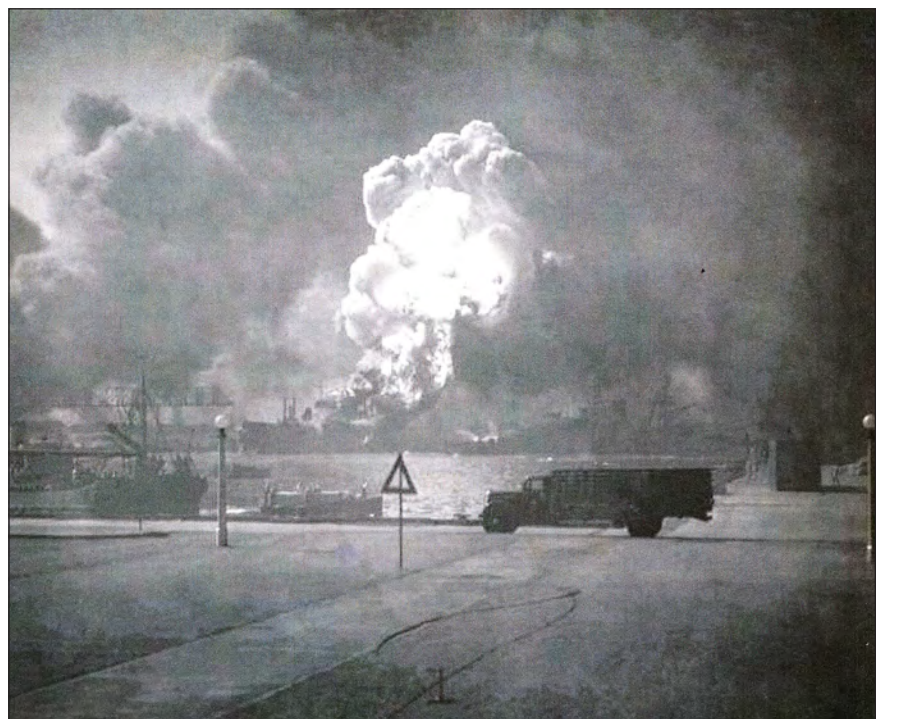
Joseph Sweetman took these photographs on Dec. 8, 1941, of the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor.



Joseph Sweetman served in the U.S. Army during World War II and photographed the destruction at Pearl Harbor after Japan’s attack on Dec. 7, 1941.



This poster was published in June 1942.



when hostilities between the U.S. and Japan ceased. He holds the distinction of having participated in every beach landing undertaken by the Army in the South Pacific. He would receive numerous commendations including the Bronze Star awarded for bravery and service beyond the call of duty.

Sweetman, an avid and gifted photographer, was assigned to a troop carrier which arrived at Pearl Harbor the day

after Japan’s attack. Sweetman took numerous photographs that helped chronicle the carnage at the massive naval facility. His photographs reflect his ability to capture the emotions and devastation of this historic event. During the next four years, his camera would continue to capture thousands of images from the South Pacific. At the conclusion of the war in 1945, he left the Army only to return in 1947

and remain in the service of his country until 1965. Sweetman died in Charlotte and is buried in the Veterans Cemetery in Florence, S.C.

Examples of his photography, awards and medals are proudly displayed at Sumter Military Museum in the Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center on Harvin Street in Suite Two. The exhibits can be viewed each Sunday from 1 until 4 p.m.

Dance into the holiday cheer with Jingle with the Arts on Dec. 12-13



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Sumter Civic Dance Company and Sumter High School Show Choir will host the 30th-annual "Jingle with the Arts" on Friday-Saturday, Dec. 12-13. The hometown production was co-produced by Andrea Freed-Levenson, right, after being inspired by Radio City's Christmas Show in 1994. Freed-Levenson and Sonja Sepulveda hosted the inaugural "Jingle with the Arts" in 1995. Thirty years later, their proteges, Andrea Govier, left, and Herbert Johnson, have continued the tradition.

recorded that year's Radio City Christmas Show and founded Freed School of Performing Arts.

Knowing that teamwork makes the dream work, Freed-Levenson shared her idea with Sepulveda, who was then-director of Sumter High School Show Choir. After a simple yet unforgettable conversation, the duo would debut the hometown production, "Jingle with the Arts," in 1995. With no budget, they relied on ticket sales alone to

cover costs. Between community support and the abundance of talent throughout Sumter County, the show was — and has always been — a success.

For 30 years, "Jingle with the Arts" has thrived because of the talent and dedication of the dancers and singers and the unwavering support of the community. Having performed in the inaugural production, proteges Andrea Govier, artistic director of Sumter Civic

Dance Company, and Herbert Johnson, director of Sumter High School Show Choir, assured the production "will continue to be a treasured gift to Sumter, a timeless cornerstone of our community."

Alongside Sumter Civic Dance Company and Sumter High School Show Choir, there will also be performances by Lemira Elementary School's Percussion Drumline, Sumter High's Concert Choir and its alumni and many more.

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysa@theitem.com

WANT TO GO?

WHERE: Patriot Hall, 135 Haynsworth St.
WHEN: 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12, and at 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13.
TICKETS: \$15 and can be purchased at Freed School of Performing Arts, 527 N. Guignard Drive, over the phone by calling (803) 773-2847 or at the door the day of the show.

A turn here, a kick ball change there and a whole lot of holiday cheer to go around.

Sumter Civic Dance Company and Sumter High School Show Choir's 30th-annual Jingle with the Arts will bring the holiday tunes and magical moves to the Patriot Hall stage Friday-Saturday, Dec. 12-13.

As an annual highlight for the creative for Sumter, this anniversary will be a special one.

Founded by founding artistic director Andrea Freed-Levenson and founding musical director Sonja Sepulveda, the pair teamed up in 1994 when Freed-Levenson, who founded the Sumter Civic Dance Company, returned from New York inspired by Radio City's Christmas Show and wanted

to do a performance of similar grandeur, only with a Southern flair, in Sumter.

Freed-Levenson would be the second of the women in her family to return from New York inspired to create a place where dance could not only live, but also flourish and be appreciated in Sumter. The first was her mother, Betty Freed, who returned from New York in 1955, where she

Downtown Sumter library opens Winter Wonderland



Enjoy all the winter magic, and maybe a story book or two, as Sumter County Library's Christmas Winter Wonderland is now open. The display of lights, music and scenery that includes twinkling trees, a jolly snow family and trinkets and toys of various sizes welcomes children and community members in need of a dose of holiday magic. The display is free and will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 111 N. Harvin St.

PHOTOS PROVIDED



Get your gift wrapped, support a local civic group at the Sumter Mall

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysa@theitem.com

The holiday season is here, and that means many hours of wrapping gifts for your loved ones.

To ease your stress and give back, Phenomenal Southern Legends is looking to help.

Phenomenal Southern Legends was founded in 2024 and seeks to "honor women who have made significant contributions to their families, communities, jobs and/or church; recognize women who offer unconditional help and support to their immediate and outstanding friends, family and community members without expecting anything in return; and celebrates the successes of others and improve self-confidence while increasing the desire to love and demonstrate a genuine willingness to support others simply because it is the right thing to do."

Wrapping Christmas gifts is a new fundraiser for the civic group. Prices for wrapping depends on the size of the gift.

Small gifts, such as jewelry, candles, small toys and bath and body hygiene items, cost \$3 to \$5. Medium gifts, includ-



PHOTO PROVIDED

Phenomenal Southern Legends will fundraise by wrapping gifts at Sumter Mall throughout December.

ing shirts, pants, sweaters, board games and small electronics, are \$6 to \$8. Large gifts, such as boots, suits, small appliances and large toys, are \$9 to \$12. Extra large or bulky gifts, like luggage, guitars and odd-shaped packages, cost \$13 to \$18.

Gifts can be wrapped from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10, Friday-Saturday, Dec. 12-13, and Monday-Saturday, Dec. 15-20, with a break from 2 to 4 p.m., and from 1 to 6 p.m. on Dec. 14 and Dec. 21 at Sumter Mall, 1057 Broad St.

803Fresh, Elijah Bradford to make audiences move at 'A Soulful Holiday' Dec. 13

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysa@theitem.com

During this season of merriment, Sumterite Elijah Bradford and rising soul/R&B singer 803Fresh want to wish you "A Soulful Holiday," happening on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Coffee House Productions and Snake Eyez Music Group have partnered to host an "unforgettable evening of Southern soul music and classic R&B," with the Georgia-born, Wage-ner-bred breakout artist 803Fresh headlining the occasion. Widely known for his hit song "Boots On The Ground," his "Carolina Soul" musical style has taken parties, field shows and festive gatherings by storm.

Joining him on stage will be Sumter's own Elijah Bradford & The Valentinos, local legends who are well-loved and well-known for their electric stage presence, dynamic vocals and timeless musicianship.

Attendees will also enjoy soulful tributes to musical

icons, including The Temptations, The O'Jays, The Four Tops, Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan and more.

On top of a grand performance, concertgoers will also be helping to provide financial relief to a student in need. A portion of concert proceeds will support Crestwood High School student Peyton Bradshaw, whose mother, Kim, recently died.

In addition, Bradford, an alumnus of Morris College, will award a scholarship to a Morris College student as a means to continue his commitment to supporting youth and giving back to the institution that shaped him.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased at Imports LTD, 9 N. Main St., or online at <https://tinyurl.com/2s3b7skp>.

The concert will be Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Morris College Neal Jones Auditorium, 100 W. College St. Doors for VIP open at 5:30 p.m. and at 6 p.m. for general seating. The concert will begin at 7 p.m.

Briefs



MANNING POLICE TOY DRIVE

MANNING — Manning Police Department has kicked off its annual toy drive and is asking the public to drop off new unwrapped toys to help ensure children in the community have a happy holiday. Please donate new unopened toys, stuffed animals, board games, dolls, toy cars, puzzles, sports balls, books and any other item a child would be happy to have. Drop off from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday at the Manning Police Department lobby, 42 W. Boyce St.

Cash donations are also being accepted. Donations can be dropped off at MPD or donated through the Cash App account: \$ManningPoliceDonate.

For additional information on donating or receiving items, contact MPD via Messenger on Facebook or call (803) 435-8859 during business hours. If you are a parent in need of gifts for your children, contact Officer Thompson at cthompson@manningpolice.com or Officer Chere at wchere@manningpolice.com.

SUMMERTON POLICE TOY DRIVE

SUMMERTON — Help Summerton Police Department make sure every child has a Merry Christmas by participating in the Summerton PD Annual Christmas Toy Drive. Please drop off toys between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at either Summerton PD, 2 Cantey St., or Summerton Town Hall, 10 Main St.

DONATE TO CARE CLOSETS AT MJHS, WALKER-GAMBLE

MANNING — Manning Junior High School, 1101 W.L. Hamilton Road, has begun a Clothing and Care Closet for its middle-school scholars. Some of the items needed include gently used pants, shirts, socks, new undergarments, feminine hygiene products, shoes, coats, deodorant, body sprays, hair ties, belts,

school supplies, clothing racks, storage containers and more. If you have items to donate, contact Holly McCabe at (803) 435-8195 or email holly.mccabe@clarendoncsd.org.

A Comfort Closet has begun at Walker-Gamble Elementary School. Products are free to children who express a need. The following items are needed: feminine hygiene products, laundry items, boys and girls toiletries. Please donate and make a difference for students facing challenges. For information, call (803) 309-1087.

BLANKET DRIVE

GABLE — Let's Read Clarendon is hosting the annual Blanket Drive to support Clarendon's aging population and those experiencing homelessness. We're asking everyone to partner with us to help collect blankets this holiday season. Donations of gently used blankets are welcome, or you may purchase new blankets and drop them off at Abundant Life Resource Center, 13386 US-301, Gable, on Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. For additional information, call (843) 598-8210.



PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING

SUMMERTON — A free prostate screening for men age 40 and over, through a partnership with Clarendon County Healthy Counties Advisory Council, will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, at Historic Liberty Hill AME Church, 2310 Liberty Hill Road. To register, call or text (803) 708-4732.

LAKE MARION ARTISAN GALLERY OPEN HOUSE

SUMMERTON — Lake Mari-

on Artisan Gallery, 108 Main St., will hold an open house from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, at the gallery. Share in an afternoon of light appetizers and punch.

MANNING HIGH CHRISTMAS CONCERT

MANNING — Manning High School will present a Christmas Concert at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, in the CSD District Office Multi-Purpose Room. Performing will be the Junior High Band, MHS Concert Band and the MHS Jazz Band.

STEPPIN' INTO THE HOLIDAYS WILL BE ON DEC. 20

SUMMERTON — K & H Resource Center is asking everyone to save the date for its Third-Annual Fundraiser "Steppin' into the Holidays" Adult Sneaker Ball on Saturday, Dec. 20, at the Clarendon Community Resource Center gymnasium, 1154 Fourth St. Ticket donations are \$25 each.

For more information, contact Kathleen L. Gibson at (803) 225-0832.

SUMMERTON'S JINGLE AND JOY CHRISTMAS PARADE

SUMMERTON — The Town of Summerton will hold the Jingle and Joy Christmas Parade at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, in downtown Summerton. Included will be a tree-lighting ceremony, wreath contest, food vendor, live carols and music. Santa Claus will make an appearance. Free hot chocolate while it lasts.

'GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING'

MANNING — The Chancel Choir of Manning United Meth-

odist Church, 17 E. Rigby St., will present "Glory to the Newborn King" at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 14. All are invited to join the celebration of Christ's birth in music.

NEW START TURKEY SHOOT

MANNING — New Start Community Church of the Nazarene is hosting a Turkey Shoot from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 13, at 4686 J.W. Rhames Road.

The shoot costs \$5 per shot, and prizes include cash, hams and turkeys.

For more information, call Eric Stubbs at (803) 565-6598.



SOUPS, STEWS & SWEETS

MANNING — Get your ticket now for Soups, Stews and Sweets from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026. Stroll historic Brooks Street and enjoy favorites from local restaurants and businesses while viewing festive lights and chatting with friends. Check-in and parking will be held at Weldon Auditorium, 7 Maple St. Tickets are \$35, which includes bite-sized dishes, beer and wine and music. Purchase tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/4mjazd8n>. Select "Other" at checkout to skip fees to Zeffy, the ticketing service.

WINTER COAT DRIVE

MANNING — Help those in need of a warm winter coat during the Winter Coat Drive. Drop-off locations are 107 Main St. in Summerton and 19 N. Brooks St. in Manning.

First 2026 Guardian ad Litem training begins Jan. 6, 2026

SUBMITTED BY GAL

As the New Year brings fresh starts and renewed commitments, the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program, a division of the South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy, invites community members to make a meaningful resolution — become a volunteer Guardian ad Litem (GAL) in Sumter and Clarendon counties. The first free online training of 2026 begins Jan. 6, making now the perfect time to act and begin the year with purpose.

This training provides volunteers with the tools, knowledge and skills needed to advocate for a child's best interests in Family Court. Just as many people set intentions for growth, service and positive change in the New Year, becoming a GAL offers a powerful and achievable way to turn those intentions into real impact.

Volunteer Guardians ad Litem ensure that children involved in Family Court legal proceedings through the Department of Social Services have a voice. GALs speak for children in court during times of instability, helping them find safety, stability and hope for a brighter future.

"The New Year is a natural time to reflect on what matters most," said Christy Vinson, recruitment and training director of the SC GAL Program. "If your resolutions include giving back, finding purpose or making a difference, becoming a GAL is a meaningful way to transform those resolutions into life-changing action for a child in need."

DETAILS OF THE VOLUNTEER GAL TRAINING

- Begins Jan. 6, 2026 — Morning and evening sessions offered
- Virtual training

- Application deadline is Dec. 20, 2025
 - Requirements: Volunteers must be at least 21 years old, have a clean criminal record, no previous DSS case history and be able to contribute four to five hours a month advocating for a child.
- Visit gal.sc.gov for more in-

formation and to download an application. Follow @Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program on Facebook for updates and local events in your area or contact communications@childadvocate.sc.gov to be added to the newsletter for updates and local events in your area.

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LEGAL NOTICES

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: Louise Moreland Lowder #2025ES1400330
 Personal Representative: **Russell D. Lowder**
 8120 Summerton Hwy
 Pinewood, SC 29125

Estate: Miriam Morris Blackmon #2025ES1400327
 Personal Representative: **Terry Alan Blackmon**
 15250 Hwy 301
 New Zion, SC 29111

Estate: Anne Gibson Lavender #2025ES1400241
 Personal Representative: **William Thomas Lavender, Jr.**
 80 Leaning Tree Road
 Columbia, SC 29223

For Clarendon Sun Advertising:

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

the Sumter ITEM

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Estate: Louise Moreland Lowder #2025ES1400330
 Personal Representative: **Russell D. Lowder**
 8120 Summerton Hwy
 Pinewood, SC 29125



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DUKE ENERGY

FROM PAGE A1

originally proposed a \$21.66, or 15% increase.

These stipulations approved at the Public Service Commission's Nov. 20 Commission Business Meeting were the revenue requirement stipulation, the large load stipulation and an energy efficiency/demand side management stipulation.

While the first stipulation addresses the electricity rate itself, the other two stipulations emerged from lengthy negotiation between varied parties like Duke Energy Corporation, Sierra Fund, South Carolina Business Chamber of Commerce and more. These agreements touch on prominent energy issues in the United States such as data centers' impact on existing customers and solar energy commitments.

The revenue requirement stipulation the PSC approved at the meeting included a \$51.2 million, or 8.3%, increase in annual base revenue for Duke Energy Progress, a subsidiary of Duke Energy Corporation, from electricity rates. That was about 30% less than the \$73.7 million, or 11.6%, increase the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff said Duke requested in its initial application.

As part of the process for involved parties — private and public, from Duke representatives to consumer advocates — two other agreements also emerged.

The energy efficiency/demand side management stipulation, described as “the result of extensive negotiation and compromise among the parties,” states Duke will commit to exploration of increased investment in renewable energy like solar energy as well as increased efforts to weatherize homes and optimize their energy efficiency. This is in line with some of the company's broader stated goals on transitioning to cleaner energy, as well as the goals of other intervenors.

In Duke Energy's Dec. 4 news release praising pub-

Duke Energy Progress gets 70% of proposed annual revenue increase in settling agreement



lic-private partnerships with the U.S. Department of Energy on nuclear energy, the company stated, “Duke Energy is executing an ambitious energy transition, keeping customer reliability and value at the forefront as it builds a smarter energy future. The company is investing in major electric grid upgrades and cleaner generation, including natural gas, nuclear, renewables and energy storage.”

Duke Energy also has its Shared Solar program, in which customers pay a monthly subscription fee to support solar facility operations in the Pee Dee. The customers then get a monthly credit proportionate to the amount of solar energy their investment produces.

“Duke Energy is committed to providing sustainable energy solutions for our South Carolina customers,” its website on S.C. solar energy programs states.

Fellow parties who signed the agreement include South Carolina Business Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Upstate 21 Forever

and Vote Solar.

The large load stipulation addressed a tension prominent across the nation right now — how electric companies can support new developments for AI data centers and other large customers without excessively burdening existing customers. This stipulation acknowledged the contentiousness of this topic amid the involved parties, reading:

“The Parties expressly acknowledged that this settlement arises out of a heavily contested matter, with significant disagreements remaining on various issues ... While the Parties have agreed to certain adjustments and methodologies as part of the negotiated compromise and settlement among the Parties, no Party consents to any characterization of this Large Load Stipulation as reflecting its views on the resolution of the underlying issues. No Party waives any right to assert any position on these issues in any future proceeding or docket before the Commission or in any court.”

The Sierra Club, an environmental organization that describes itself as grassroots and has dozens of chapters across

the United States, signed the large load stipulation but not the other two agreements, while it did not oppose them either. In its Oct. 30 news release, it stated: “The docket will enable parties to file or present comments on strategies like large load tariffs that state regulators could adopt to protect families and businesses from the rate shock associated with building power plants and other infrastructure to serve new data center customers. When properly designed, large load tariffs can require new large customers to pay their fair share of new power plant costs through minimum bills and multiyear contracts.”

Paul Black, Sierra Club's senior campaign organizer in South Carolina, said, “The undeniable truth around the country is that new power-hungry customers like data centers are increasing demand for electricity, and unless utility regulators enact consumer protections, average customers like families and small businesses will see our monthly bills go up even more to pay for new power plants. States like Kansas are protecting existing customers from rate

shock due to data center demand for electricity, and we need South Carolina's utility regulators to do the same.”

Roger Hall, advocacy director and deputy consumer advocate for South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, the state agency chosen to represent the interests of consumers in these cases, said to *The Item*, “It was an issue that was raised by other parties in the docket, but after talking to them, we recognized that it's an important issue in South Carolina — so, we were happy to join that settlement in order to keep that conversation going.”

The PSC will issue its final and official order on Dec. 12, with any approved rate increase going into effect on Feb. 1 — the conclusion of a long process that gathered intervenors private and public from across the state and touched on some of the most pressing current energy questions along the way.

A Duke spokesperson said the increase will go toward improved infrastructure, resilience and services, in part thanks to upgraded poles, power lines and power plants.

CONTRACTS

FROM PAGE A1

Purdy Street. The about \$2.5 million bid from B & B Construction Company Inc. in Sumter was more than \$400,000 less than the next lowest bid and carried unanimously.

The second approved contract bid of about \$4.4 million was from McClam & Associates for the Sibley Village Pump Station and Force Main Project. “The project scope includes a new duplex submersible sewer pump station,” council documents describe, “with new wetwell, generator, electrical equipment, access drive and all associated appurtenances. The work also includes approximately 560 linear feet of gravity sewer and 13,600 linear feet of sewer force main.”

This will become the largest pump station in Sumter and is intended to support future development and maximize efficiency. Merchant expressed thanks to the team that coordinates improvements and emphasized their importance, saying, “It's under the ground. We don't see it, we take it for granted — but it's not a problem until it is.”

NEW SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION BROADCAST STUDIO REZONING APPROVED

About 1.28 acres at 100 E. Liberty St., 108 E. Liberty St. and 11 S. Harvin St. was unanimously approved to be rezoned from General Commercial to Central Business District. The property is currently owned by SCETV, and the rezoning will facilitate an almost 50,000-square-foot facility with the dual purpose of media production and educational opportunities.

SCETV Sumter is at 18 N. Harvin St. in Sumter, near Sumter Opera House. Its website shows a three-person staff, and it is home to “Making It Grow,” a weekly, live gardening program with Clemson University Extension Service. That facility is rentable, so this new development could be as well, as “community engagement” is named as something it's designed for in documents attached for the council meeting.

So, why the new location, and why the CBD rezoning? It is “to allow for the development of a new broadcast studio with a development pattern and setbacks similar to other buildings in the CBD.” University of South Carolina Sumter is a partner on the development. This approval comes after University of South Carolina's Nov. 20 announcement of a broader collaboration with SCETV in the form of a capstone class in which juniors and seniors will be able to develop, pitch and ultimately publish multimedia stories with SCETV.

DISTRICT

FROM PAGE A1

Ragin when he chaired the committee and it met five times in the three-year period of 2022-24.

However, in that timeframe, the district has had major facility issues to include the Crestwood High School football stadium/athletic complex, which never had a project scope attached to it and was initially estimated to cost \$3 million but now is projected at \$10.5 million. That project is also part of a current state Office of Inspector General investigation, along with how the district disposed of old furniture from schools last year after new furniture was purchased.

Earlier this year, *The Sumter Item* asked McLeod and Ragin on the lack of committee oversight of the Crestwood project, and the two offered their perspectives.

McLeod admitted the project's challenges and said he assumed the district's operations department, led by Samuel Myers, was handling the work appropriately.

“We thought as a board, the project was getting handled, but we should have been looking at it a little closer,” he said. “We thought that Crestwood would be done and handled just like the Lakewood football stadium was done when it was completed in the mid-2000s by the former Sumter School District 2.”

Ragin said, “The number of Facilities Committee meetings does not

directly determine the progress of the Crestwood stadium project.”

“As the former Facilities Committee chair, I understand why that perception exists,” he said, “but the reality is that the committee's role is to advise, ask the right questions and make recommendations to the full board. It does not control project execution or timelines. That is the work of the administration.

“The Crestwood project has not progressed as quickly as I or others would like, but that reflects broader challenges with funding, prioritization and long-term planning, not a lack of Facilities Committee meetings.”

Other board committees' issues have been prevalent in Ragin's first year as board chair.

After becoming the board leader at the end of 2024, he disbanded fellow trustee Bonnie Disney's curriculum committee, telling *The Item* it led to “too much oversight” by the board. In the last two years, the district has had one elementary school that scored “Excellent” or “Good” on SC READY, which is the state's assessment for grades 3 through 8. That school is Alice Drive Elementary.

Also after becoming chairman, he stopped the board's Transportation Ad-Hoc Committee and said it was his understanding that busing issues had been resolved.

District Transportation Director Marlon Dantzler has told the board and the media this year that the district is still plagued by a

lack of drivers.

On the topic of assuming the Facilities Committee, Johnson said she could probably handle the role if facilities was combined with her Finance Committee because the two topics are generally associated with each other. She added that she needs to clarify with Ragin his expectations when she can.

“If it's one combined committee, and I am the chair of both committees, then I can facilitate both discussions at one time,” Johnson said. “If it's two separate committees, I don't know that it makes sense for me to be leading two separate committees.”

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND MORE ON MONDAY NIGHT

Monday's meeting will begin at 6 p.m. at the district office, 1345 Wilson Hall Road.

Regarding public participation, any member of the public wanting to make a comment to the board on any topic must arrive before the 6 p.m. start time — as early as 5:30 p.m. — and complete a form to speak. For those not physically attending, the district continues to broadcast meetings live on YouTube.

Anyone wanting to attend the meeting virtually can do so via YouTube Sumter School District Board Meeting and the district's Facebook page, @SumterSCSchools.

Given the upcoming Christmas/winter break, the full board only meets once in December.

Aldersgate United Methodist opens ‘Peace Parlor’

SUBMITTED

In recognition of the second week of Advent and its focus on welcoming the Prince of Peace, Aldersgate United Methodist Church is opening its newly transformed Peace Parlor to the public from Sunday, Dec. 7, through Friday, Dec. 12, daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Peace Parlor is designed as a free, quiet and welcoming space where anyone in the community can pause, rest and reflect during the busy and often demanding holiday season. The room has been intentionally curated to offer a calm, warm atmosphere for:

- Parents and caregivers on the go
- Local professionals needing a break
- Students and teenagers seeking stillness
- Community members desiring a peaceful pause

Light refreshments will be available to nurture the body, mind and spirit. Visitors may stay for a few minutes or linger longer. The hope is that all who enter will experience what Scripture promises in Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God.”

“We created the Peace Parlor as a gift to our neighbors,” said Rev. Dr.

Regina H. Moore, pastor of Aldersgate United Methodist Church. “Advent is a season of holy anticipation, and it often becomes a season of hurry. This space is our way of offering an invitation to breathe deeply, slow down and encounter peace.”

Aldersgate United Methodist Church affirms that all are welcome. Safe Sanctuary and security protocols will be in place throughout the week to ensure a safe environment for every guest.

The Peace Parlor is at 211 Alice Drive in Sumter. For more information, contact the church office at (803) 775-1602 or info@aldersgatesumter.org.

Scene in Sumter and Clarendon

Look who was spotted across Sumter and Clarendon in the past few weeks, celebrating Adoption Day in Sumter just before the holidays, enjoying the lights at Swan Lake Gardens and more.



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

A family takes a look at St. Nick during the opening ceremony for Fantasy of Lights at Swan Lake Iris Gardens on Monday, Dec. 1.



RHIANNON O'BERRY / THE SUMTER ITEM

Circuit Court Judge George McFaddin, center, said there are many benefits he's seen since instituting Adoption Day and that it is the happiest court day of the year in Sumter.



Liberty STEAM Charter School Executive Director Trevor Ivey, left, and members of the school's board of directors share a light moment on Monday, Dec. 1, with families in attendance who were accepted in the enrollment lottery.

BRUCE MILLS / THE ITEM



RHIANNON O'BERRY / THE SUMTER ITEM

From left, Cecil Williams, Lorin Peri Palmer, Elsie Goines, Vikki Laurence Palmer, Felicia L. Goins and James L. Felder attend the unveiling of the new South Carolina historical marker for Palmer Funeral Home in Sumter on Tuesday, Nov. 25.



BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM

Lisa's Ark Pet Care owner Lisa Gaedtke, left, and office manager Christy Essigman show off the recently released All About Sumter 2025 edition with some furry friends recently. The pet care business is profiled in the magazine, and in it, Gaedtke explains the various services she provides, how long she has had the operation and just exactly how it got its name. Lisa's Ark is at 2900 Jerco Road off U.S. 521 North and is an easy drive from the middle of town. The business offers daycare, boarding services and also home visits for dogs and other pets. Lisa's Ark is unique because it provides "kennel-free" services. To read the pet care business' story and many others, visit <https://tinyurl.com/vzrevp7h>. Want a hard copy? Stop by *The Item's* office Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Item magazines turned into trees bring cheer to Covenant Place residents



PHOTOS PROVIDED

The Sisterhood of Temple Sinai and some of their friends made Christmas trees out of old magazines donated by *The Sumter Item* for the residents of Covenant Place. When Diana Roof and Barb Kucharczyk delivered the finished trees, the residents were so thrilled that a second batch of trees was requested.



Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians leaders Chief Francis Benenhaley, right, and Vice Chief Tammy Stevens, left, stand with S.C. Rep. Jermaine Johnson Sr., D-District 52, on Nov. 15 at the tribe's 12th Annual Pow Wow. "I'm just honored to be here," Johnson said. He is a candidate for governor of South Carolina. Initiatives he mentioned included ensuring Indigenous Peoples' Day is celebrated, lifting restrictions for traditional burial practices and ongoing inclusion of Native leaders in legislative discussions and processes.

RHIANNON O'BERRY / THE SUMTER ITEM



TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

East Clarendon cheerleaders perform during the Wolverines' matchup with Scott's Branch on Monday, Dec. 1.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Please email your meeting dates for 2026 to pressrelease@theitem.com with PUBLIC AGENDA in subject line.

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m., 1345 Wilson Hall Road

CLARENDON COUNTY COUNCIL

Monday, Dec. 8, at 6 p.m., Administration Building, Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning

CITY OF MANNING PLANNING COMMISSION

Monday, Dec. 8, at 6:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 29 W. Boyce St., Manning

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 9:30 a.m., council chambers (as needed)

LYNCHBURG TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m., Teen Center on Magnolia Street, Lynchburg

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m., Sumter County Council Chambers

SUMMERTON TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m., Summerton Town Hall, 10 Main St., Summerton

MANNING CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m., Manning City Hall, Council Chambers on second floor, 29 W. Boyce St. at 6 pm. If you are planning on attending please use the Mill Street entrance.

PINEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6:30 p.m., town hall, Pinewood

TURBEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6:30 p.m., Council Chamber of Town Hall, 1400 Main St., Turbeville.

MAYESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6:30 p.m., 35 N. Main St. East, Mayesville

PAXVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m., Paxville Town Hall, 10277 Lewis Road, Paxville

GREATER SUMTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, Dec. 10, at noon, chamber office

SUMTER COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION / ELECTION COMMISSION

Thursday, Dec. 11, at 5:30 p.m., registration / election office, 129 E. Liberty St.

AROUND TOWN

To correct any information or to make a submission to Around Town, email pressrelease@theitem.com with Around Town in subject line.

Annual screenings for stroke and heart disease risk will be held at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, 805 S. Harvin St., Sumter, on Saturday, Dec. 13, and Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. Screenings are easy, painless and noninvasive. All appointments include carotid artery, abdominal aortic aneurysm, atrial fibrillation and peripheral arterial disease screenings. According to the Life Line Screening website, the screenings are affordable without the need for insurance. Call (844) 558-0973. Visit hearthealth.lifelinescreening.com to choose the time you'd like to have your screening.

SOLUTION TO THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid with filled-in letters. The grid is 18x18. Filled letters include: Row 1: S, H, S, T, L, E, S, T, I, D, E, S, H, E, D; Row 2: A, R, C, A, N, E, R, S, I, D, E, S, H, E, D; Row 3: P, E, R, I, O, D, P, R, O, I, C, A, R, E, C, O, O, T; Row 4: W, O, R, L, D, S, E, R, I, E, S, C, H, A, M, P, I, O, N, S; Row 5: F, A, I, R, E, T, C, I, F, S, O, M, A, F, A; Row 6: S, E, A, K, E, Y, O, N, C, E, L, Y, S, O, L; Row 7: D, E, F, E, N, S, I, V, E, L, I, N, E, C, O, A, C, H; Row 8: A, S, A, H, I, P, E, T, S, I, M, P, L, Y, S, T, I, X; Row 9: F, I, R, S, T, B, U, Y, S, T, A, L, R, I, S, E; Row 10: A, M, Y, C, R, E, E, O, H, O, A, M, O, R; Row 11: S, U, P, P, L, Y, C, H, A, I, N, M, A, N, A, G, E, M, E, N, T; Row 12: T, H, O, U, N, A, P, W, E, A, K, M, I, D; Row 13: L, A, R, D, O, M, A, N, F, L, U, E, D, G, E, R; Row 14: B, O, D, E, P, H, R, A, S, E, O, D, D, U, N, I, T, E; Row 15: P, E, R, G, R, O, U, P, R, E, S, S, U, R, E, S; Row 16: P, E, R, S, E, G, I, G, A, U, N, E, B, T, U; Row 17: U, S, A, R, I, G, A, I, O, N, I, R, O, N; Row 18: O, U, T, S, I, D, I, N, G, S, E, T, D, E, S, I, G, N; Row 19: C, O, R, K, L, I, N, U, S, R, E, P, H, E, R, I, N; Row 20: E, R, A, S, A, R, I, A, S, A, W, E, P, R, A, N, K, S; Row 21: R, A, T, A, D, O, L, M, A, B, T, W, S, A, M, B, A, S.

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, descriptions (e.g., 'Cool with periods of rain'), temperatures (e.g., 51°, 37°), and wind speeds (e.g., WSW 4-8 mph).

TODAY'S SOUTH CAROLINA WEATHER

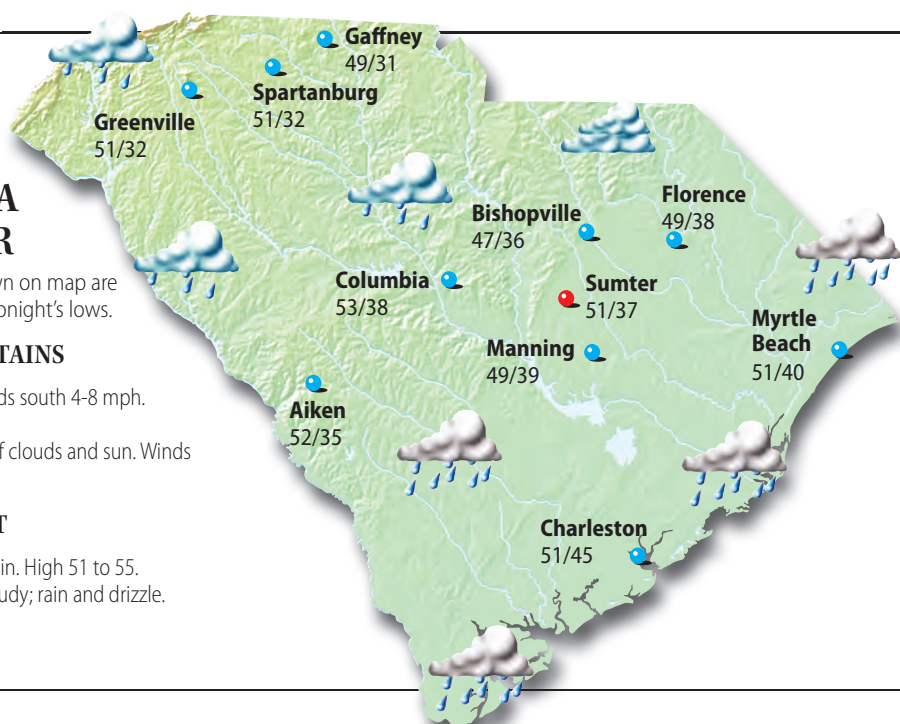
Temperatures shown on map are today's highs and tonight's lows.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Today: Cloudy. Winds south 4-8 mph. Mainly cloudy. Sunday: Intervals of clouds and sun. Winds southwest 4-8 mph.

ON THE COAST

Today: Periods of rain. High 51 to 55. Sunday: Mostly cloudy; rain and drizzle. High 55 to 61.



LOCAL ALMANAC

Table for SUMTER THURSDAY: Temperature (High 53°, Low 32°, Normal high 60°, Normal low 37°, Record high 80° in 1978, Record low 18° in 1960), Precipitation (Thursday 0.00", Month to date 1.61", Normal month to date 0.42", Year to date 32.27", Last year to date 34.45", Normal year to date 45.42").

LAKE LEVELS

Table with columns: Lake, Full pool, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Includes data for Murray, Marion, Moultrie, Wateree lakes.

SUN AND MOON

Table for Sunrise (7:13 a.m.), Sunset (5:13 p.m.), Moonrise (6:59 p.m.), Moonset (9:16 a.m.), and phases: Last (Dec 11), New (Dec 19), First (Dec 27), Full (Jan 3).

RIVER STAGES

Table with columns: River, Flood stage, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Includes data for Black River, Congaree River, Lynches River, Saluda River, Up. Santee River, Wateree River.

TIDES

Table for AT MYRTLE BEACH: High, Ht., Low, Ht. for Today (9:48 a.m., 3.8, 3:59 a.m., -0.7) and Sun. (10:44 a.m., 3.6, 4:53 a.m., -0.5).

NATIONAL CITIES

Table with columns: City, Today Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Includes cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Francisco, Wash., DC.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with columns: City, Today Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Includes cities like Asheville, Athens, Augusta, Beaufort, Cape Hatteras, Charleston, Charlotte, Clemson, Columbia, Darlington, Elizabeth City, Elizabethtown, Fayetteville, Florence, Gainesville, Gastonia, Goldsboro, Goose Creek, Greensboro, Greenville, Hickory, Hilton Head, Jacksonville, FL, La Grange, Macon, Marietta, Marion, Mt. Pleasant, Myrtle Beach, Orangeburg, Port Royal, Raleigh, Rock Hill, Rockingham, Savannah, Spartanburg, Summerville, Wilmington, Winston-Salem.

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

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THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

DIVERSE COLLECTIONS: Centrally located by Mark McClain ACROSS

- 1 See 115-Across
5 Greek stuffed grape leaf
10 Texter's "incidentally"
13 Brazilian dances
19 Historical stretches
20 Operatic deliveries
21 Leave amazed
22 Practical jokes
23 Irish county
24 Double Nobelist Pauling
25 Agent, briefly
26 Bit of legalese
27 Annual theater award
31 Disneyland's Main Street,
32 Latvian capital
33 Atom with a charge
34 Laundry appliance
35 Inherently
37 "Billion" prefix
39 French article
40 A/C measure
43 Challenges for adolescents
50 Foreshadow
53 Sentence excerpt
54 Unconventional
55 Bring together
56 Frying medium
57 Arabian nation
58 Winter bug
59 Trimming tool
60 One grand, for short
61 Brief snooze
62 Watered-down
64 Prefix for point
66 Manufacturing coordination
74 Novelist Tan
75 Native Canadians
76 Taunting exclamation
77 Spanish love
78 Initially
82 Investment newsletter rating
83 MD's ASAP
84 Move higher

- 85 Beer from Japan
86 Puppy or parrot
87 Nothing more than
89 Mythical river
90 Football strategist
94 Mermaid's home
95 All-important
96 Years ago
97 Mr. Clean rival
101 So-so
103 List shortener
104 "Should that happen..."
107 Curator's deg.
108 Baseball's fall celebrators
114 Sentence ender
115 With 1-Across, fairly divided
116 Empathetic comment
117 Wetlands bird
118 Esoteric
119 Very long time span
120 Live it up
121 Diminutive ending
122 Closed in on
123 Ambulance destinations: Abbr.
124 Words of clarification
125 Get rid of

DOWN

- 1 Get back, as losses
2 Stir up
3 ___ sauce (shrimp topping)
4 Calls (for)
5 The ___ Lama
6 Faucet gasket
7 Stella McCartney's mom
8 Hawaiian island
9 Affinity grp.
10 Cake beside a sink
11 Pre-adolescent
12 Was in tears
13 Areas of knowledge
14 Childish comeback
15 County on San Francisco Bay
16 Rare blood type, for short
17 Similar (to)
18 Tax form no.

- 28 Ash or almond
29 Bach-era dance
30 Ate well
36 Accelerated
37 Mom's mom
38 Apple hardware platform
39 Pakistani language
40 Naval lockup
41 Parisian pate
42 ___-friendly software
44 Word derived from a name
45 Department store founder
46 Pictorial chart
47 Oktoberfest music
48 Glove material
49 German conjunction
50 Crunchy sandwiches
51 Hawaiian island
52 Globule
58 Wide renown
62 Slender and strong
63 Compass reading
64 Hawaiian thanks
65 "Understood!"
67 Language of old Rome
68 Sharp, as objection
69 Potentially objectionable
70 Like swamps
71 Send forth, as light
72 Overly interested
73 Fearsome dino
78 Short-lived trends
79 Words of understanding
80 Nadal nickname
81 "Steady as ___ goes"

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbered starting points for clues.

- 82 Large collection
83 Hook's aide
86 Port facilities
87 Starting on
88 Co. designation
91 Lost traction
92 Skin soothers
93 Hoof sound
98 Trouble-free
99 Deserving attention
100 Wore well
101 Monastery resident

- 102 Unaided
103 Wrong move
104 "___ my reasons"
105 Riding charges
106 Silver fish
108 Once existed
109 Whale cousin
110 Fencing blade
111 Amazon Alexa alternative
112 Included in an email
113 Tops, as a torte
114 Skillet



NICH PITTS / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Former Sumter High, Clemson and Philadelphia Eagles standout Derrick Witherspoon, left, will be inducted into the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday, Dec. 13.



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Former Sumter High, Citadel and St. Louis Cardinals infielder Timmy Jones will be inducted into the Gamecocks' athletic hall of fame next weekend.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Former Sumter High basketball and track standout Danielle McFadden will be inducted to the Gamecocks' athletic hall of fame next week.



TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Former Sumter High basketball coach Byron Kinney will be inducted into the school's athletic hall of fame on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Sumter High to induct five to athletic hall of fame next Saturday

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame is about to get a little bit bigger.

The Gamecocks will induct five new members to their athletic hall on Saturday, Dec. 13, in a ceremony that begins at 6 p.m. in the cafeteria. Keith West, who serves on the hall of fame committee, is thrilled to welcome in another class.

"We voted on this back in the summertime, and we feel very good about this class, so we're very excited," West said. "All five are very, very deserving of this award."

The Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame was stagnant for more than a decade before a new class was enshrined in 2023. That first group back included eight members before five more athletes and coaches joined the hall last December. This year brings another incredible group of both athletes and coaches into the fold. The lone coach in this year's class is Byron Kinney, who led the Gamecock boys basketball team to the 1985 state championship with an undefeated record of 29-0. The athletes include Stephon Blanding, who played for Kinney on that championship squad before a stellar career at Wofford; former St. Louis Cardinals infielder Timmy Jones; Derrick Witherspoon, who followed up a spectacu-

lar high school career with a strong run at Clemson before playing for the Philadelphia Eagles; and Danielle McFadden, who was a state champion in track before playing college basketball at both the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith and Vorhees.

Kinney coached for 13 seasons at Sumter High and started on a perfect note. The perfect run to the '85 state title kicked off a coaching career that finished with a record of 274-92 and three region titles before stepping down in 1997.

Blanding was along for the ride on that championship run, as the team's center as a junior. In his final two seasons at Sumter High, Blanding averaged 10.1 points and 8.2 rebounds, which earned him a scholarship at Wofford. He took his game to another level with the Terriers. He ended his career as the school's 10th all-time leading scorer with 1,454 points and fifth-leading rebounder with 1,149. He was the fifth player to finish his Wofford career with 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds.

Jones played for Sumter High and the P-15's in high school but saw his career skyrocket at The Citadel. He finished his career with the Bulldogs with a .351 batting average while setting or tying four program records. He left as the program leader for at bats (526), hits (185) and total bases (253). He was tied for the career stolen-bases record

SEE HALL OF FAME, PAGE B3



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Former Sumter High star Stephon Blanding will be inducted into the school's athletic hall of fame next week.

AREA ROUNDUP

LMA boys outlast Hammond, Ben Lippen in early SCISA 4A tests

STAFF REPORT

Laurence Manning got their first crack at SCISA 4A opponents this week, making the trip to Hammond on Tuesday before hosting Ben Lippen on Wednesday. The LMA boys passed both tests, taking down Hammond 43-41 in the final moments before a late bucket helped them win 60-59 over Ben Lippen. The Lady Swampcats, however, suffered a pair of losses in the process.

LMA got out to a slow

start against Hammond, scoring just three points in the opening quarter. They were able to grind for the final three quarters to pull out the win. Wes Lyles led the way with 15 points, while Charlie Duvall knocked down a trio of threes to finish with 11. Scoop Dennis added nine in the victory.

The Lady Swampcats struggled to find their offense early in a 56-44 loss to Hammond. They trailed

SEE ROUNDUP, PAGE B2

Gamecocks sweep Lakewood in 1st Sumter County matchup

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Sumter High made the trip over to Lakewood for the first Sumter County rivalry games of the basketball season on Tuesday. The Gamecocks left the Swamp with a pair of victories, as the girls broke away for a 57-30 victory before the No. 6 team in SCHSL 5A DI cruised to a 77-37 win.

LADY G'S TO 3-0

The Sumter High girls claimed their third consecutive win to open their season in dominant fashion. After a relatively even first quarter,



TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Sumter High's BJ Brown drives to the basket against Lakewood on Tuesday.

SEE GAMECOCKS, PAGE B4

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SUMTER'S BEDDING HEADQUARTERS



Laurence Manning's Charlie Duvall scored 22 points in their win over Ben Lippen on Wednesday.

TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO



ROUNDUP FROM PAGE B1

28-18 at the half and couldn't dig their way out of the hole. Lyza Prickelmyer turned it on in the second half, scoring 16 of her 17 points after the break, but it wasn't enough to close the gap. Ashley Rae Hodge added 12, and Gracie Lyles chipped in with seven.

The boys had another barnburner on Wednesday, scoring with 5.8 seconds left to take home a victory over a Ben Lippen squad who started the season 6-0.

Duvall had another huge night from behind the arc, knocking down five threes in a 22-point performance. Lyles added 19, seven of which came in the final quarter, while S. Dennis finished with 16, scoring 10 in the fourth quarter to help LMA take home a thrilling win.

The Lady 'Cats, meanwhile, couldn't jumpstart their offense in a 58-19 loss. Prickelmyer led the way with seven points for LMA.

The Swampcats return to action on Tuesday against Cardinal Newman before taking part in the Baron Classic next weekend.

CRESTWOOD, MANNING SPLIT

Manning hosted Crestwood on Wednesday for some cross-county rivalry action. The former region

foes split the night's games, as the Lady Monarchs dominated the girls game 52-29, while the Knights took the nightcap 63-55.

Manning ran away with the girls game with a solid defensive effort and a balanced offense. Ameerah Coyners led the team with 15 points, while Taniya Johnson added 14. Eight Lady Monarchs scored in the win. Crestwood, meanwhile, struggled to find any offense. Teyana Harris led the team with eight points, while Zaire Ransom added five.

The Knights used a big second quarter to take a 28-19 lead into the half against Manning and never looked back. The Monarchs kept pace after the break but couldn't close the gap, as Sheldon Davis and Anton Bennett helped deliver a strong finish for the Knights. Davis scored 14 of his 21 points in the second half, while Bennett scored all six of his points in the third quarter. J.D. Shaw finished with 16 points for the night, driving Crestwood's offense before the half.

Lovell Stevenson did what he could to carry Manning to victory, scoring 22 points after being shut out in the first quarter. Daniel Robin-

son added 13 for the Monarchs.

BARONS SWEEP PDA

The Wilson Hall basketball teams made the trip to Pee Dee Academy on Wednesday and came home with a pair of victories.

The Lady Barons kicked things off with a 43-26 win. Lilly Grace Przybyla had a huge night with 21 points, eight rebounds and five steals. Caroline Moorman added 10 points. Emmie Williamson had six steals, two rebounds, two assists and two points. Grace McArthur chipped in with six rebounds, two steals and two points.

The boys ran away with a comfortable 76-39 win. Ford Wilder poured in 21 points, while Caulder Williamson added 17 and Ryan Griffin chipped in an additional 13. Nine Barons scored in the blowout win.

EAGLES SPLIT WITH LAKE CITY

Scott's Branch faced off with Lake City on Tuesday, splitting the matchups.

The No. 10 Lady Eagles couldn't find anything on offense, falling 53-14 in a game that quickly got out of hand.

The boys followed with a 61-52 victory. They took an early lead, outscoring the Panthers 15-4 in the first quarter before holding off a

comeback attempt in the second half to seal the win. Frajon Bennett led the team with 15, while Quintin Jackson added 13, Christian Makel chipped in with 11 and Nyren Bowman scored 10.

LCHS FALLS TO MCBEE

The Lee Central basketball teams traveled to McBee on Tuesday, falling in both games.

The No. 2 Lady Stallions fell 43-40 in overtime. Serenity Williams did what she could to put the team on her back, scoring 29 points, but it wasn't enough for Lee Central.

The boys followed with a 45-40 loss. They led 31-27 entering the fourth quarter, but McBee got hot and outscored LCHS 18-9 in the final frame to steal the win. Sinatra Rembert led the team with 14 points, five rebounds, two blocks, two assists and a steal. Wyatt Halley added nine points, eight rebounds, two blocks and a steal, while Aaron Montgomery chipped in with nine points, two rebounds, an assist and a steal.

RAGIN PREP DOMINATES

The Ragin Prep boys basketball team faced off with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic on Tuesday, running away with a 54-10 victory.

Robert Kelly Jr. led the pack with 24 points, while Nasir Frank added 11.

TSA SPLITS WITH COLLETON PREP

The Thomas Sumter basketball teams faced off with Colleton Prep to open their season on Wednesday, splitting the matchups.

The Lady Generals kicked off the night with a 52-34 victory. Malayia English led the pack with 16 points, while Natalie Saphore chipped in with 11, Annabelle Connell scored eight and both Kendal Lucas and Anna Bell added six.

The boys followed with a 65-44 loss, as they couldn't contain Mateo Castillo, who scored 34 points for Colleton Prep. Christian Williams and Kasen Ross each scored 13 for TSA, while Shawn Wrigley added eight.

LEE OPENS SEASON

The Lee Academy basketball teams opened their season against Williamsburg Academy on Tuesday before traveling to Dorchester on Wednesday.

The Lady Cavaliers went 1-1 on the week. They started with a 43-38 win over Williamsburg. Mazie Tomlinson was one point shy of a double-double with 14 rebounds and nine points, adding five assists and two steals. Karagan Melton led the team with 15 points, adding six rebounds and three steals. Zana Brazell had six points and nine rebounds.

The Lee girls then fell to Dorchester 61-26. Beth Whiteside led the team with 10 points, six rebounds and two blocks, while Tomlinson added five points, four rebounds, six steals, two blocks and three assists.

The boys went 0-2 on the week, falling to Williamsburg 52-25 before a 56-29 loss to Dorchester. Cain June led the Cavs with nine in their loss to DA.

ADMS GIRLS BEAT L-E

The Alice Drive Middle School girls ran away with a 53-14 win over Lugoff-Elgin on Wednesday.

Maziah Tindal led all scorers with 16, while Cityrah Jackson added 12. Zy'Aire Randolph, LaVayah Dingle and Navaiah Harris each added six.

BATES SWEEPS CHESTNUT OAKS

The Bates Middle School basketball teams faced Chestnut Oaks on Thursday, winning by identical scores of 50-11.

The girls reached the mark on the back of a 19-point performance from Ly'Naisha Bradley, while London Helton added 10 and Jordan Rogers chipped in with eight. Saniah Nelson and Ka'Mora Dennis each had six.

The Bantam boys followed with a balanced victory, as Jamarion Witherspoon and Du'Rhan Lundy each scored 10, while Kendall Myers added eight and Jonathan Wilson chipped in five.



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BASKETBALL

SUMTER HIGH @ LAKEWOOD
BOYS 77-37 **GIRLS 57-30**

LMA SWAMPCATS @ HAMMOND
BOYS 43-41 **GIRLS 44-56**

SCOTT'S BRANCH @ LAKE CITY
BOYS 61-52 **GIRLS 14-53**

LEE CENTRAL @ MCBEE
BOYS 40-45 **GIRLS 43-40**

RAGIN PREP @ SEASC
BOYS 54-10

LEE ACADEMY @ WILLIAMSBURG
BOYS 25-52 **GIRLS 43-38**

BEN LIPPEN @ LMA SWAMPCATS
BOYS 59-60 **GIRLS 58-19**

WILSON HALL @ PEE DEE ACADEMY
BOYS 76-39 **GIRLS 43-26**

CRESTWOOD @ MANNING
BOYS 63-55 **GIRLS 29-52**

COLLETON PREP @ THOMAS SUMTER
BOYS 65-44 **GIRLS 34-52**



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Philon scores 29 points and propels No. 12 Alabama past Clemson 90-84 in ACC/SEC

BY KENNINGTON SMITH III
Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Labaron Philon tied his career high with 29 points, Amari Allen added 20 points and 11 rebounds and No. 12 Alabama beat Clemson 90-84 on Wednesday night in the ACC/SEC Challenge.

The Crimson Tide (6-2) led by 19 and then had to rally down the stretch after Clemson (7-2) took a two-point lead with 2:41 to play.

RJ Godfrey led the Tigers with 19 points. Dillon Hunter chipped in 13 points, and Zac Foster added 12.

Alabama played without second-leading scorer Aden Holloway, who was a late scratch after aggravating a wrist injury. In his place, Allen had his third double-double of the season. Two other starters, Keitenn Bristow and Latrell Wrightsell Jr., were sidelined again.

Alabama delivered one of its most impressive first

halves of the season, shooting 50% from the field and 44% from 3-point range while building the big lead.

Clemson closed the gap midway through the second half. With Philon on the bench with three fouls, the Tigers used a 14-3 run to take its first lead, 62-61, since the opening minute of the game.

With the Tigers up 83-81, Philon answered and put Alabama up for good. The Crimson Tide closed out the game on a 9-1 run.

Okot's double-double lifts No. 3 South Carolina over No. 22 Louisville 79-77

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Madina Okot had 23 points and 13 rebounds and No. 3 South Carolina outlasted No. 22 Louisville 79-77 on Thursday night in the ACC/SEC Challenge.

After blowing a second-half lead a week ago against Texas in the Players Era Championship, the Gamecocks (8-1) found themselves in a fight against the Cardinals (7-3).

Okot, a 6-foot-6 senior, had 13 points and 10 rebounds in the second half. Her layup with 1:33 left put the Gamecocks up for good, 76-75.

Okot hit the first of two free throws with eight seconds left to put the Gamecocks up two. Louisville had a chance, but Tajianna Roberts missed a 3-pointer off the inbounds pass.

Okot grabbed that board as well and was fouled. She missed both free throws with two second remaining. Louisville's Anaya Hardy could not grab the ball cleanly enough to get off a chance for a winning shot.

Tessa Johnson added 20 points for South



South Carolina center Madina Okot (11) shoots over Louisville forward Anaya Hardy (9) on Thursday in Louisville, Kentucky.

Carolina, and Raven Johnson had 11 points and eight assists.

Roberts led Louisville with 20 points.

UP NEXT

South Carolina: Hosts North Carolina Central on Saturday.

Former NBA champion and Clemson player Campbell dies at 57 on Monday

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

Elden Campbell, a center who played 15 seasons in the NBA — including nine with the Los Angeles Lakers — and later won a championship with the Detroit Pistons, has died. He was 57.

Campbell's family informed the Pistons of the death, telling the team that he died on Monday. No cause was given.

The 6-foot-11 Campbell was born in Los Angeles and excelled at Morningside High before heading to Clemson. He was a first-team ACC selection in the 1989-90 season and finished as the school's all-time leading scorer with 1,880 points.

Campbell helped the Tigers win the 1989-90 ACC regular-season title and reach the Sweet 16 before being selected in the first round of the 1990 NBA draft by his hometown Lakers.

He played nine seasons in Los Angeles, but didn't win a championship ring until



Former Los Angeles Laker and Clemson Tiger Elden Campbell (41) passed away on Monday.

later in his career with the Pistons — beating the Lakers in five games in 2004. Campbell played in 1,044 NBA games and amassed more than 10,000 points and 1,600 blocks while averaging 10.3 points and 5.9 rebounds per game.

Campbell averaged 14.9 points per game with the Lakers playing alongside

Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant in 1996-97, but his best statistical season came in 1999-2000 with the Charlotte Hornets when he averaged 15.3 points and 9.4 rebounds.

Campbell also spent time with the New Orleans Hornets, Seattle SuperSonics and New Jersey Nets before retiring in 2005.

HALL OF FAME FROM PAGE B1

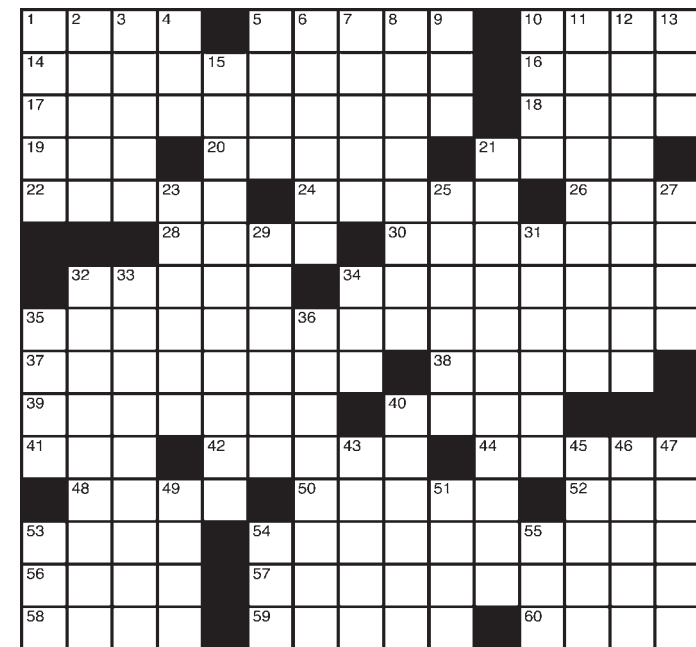
with 86. Those numbers and a slick glove helped Jones be selected by the St. Louis Cardinals in the second round of the 1985 draft. He served as a backup to Cooperstown inductee Ozzie Smith while spending parts of six seasons with the Birds on the Bat. He finished his MLB career with 113 hits, 28 RBIs, 45 walks and 15 steals. He was a super utility player, taking the field at every position but first base and right field during his professional career.

Witherspoon started his Sumter High career with a bang, scoring the game-winning touchdown of the 1987 state championship victory over Spartanburg, clinching a 24-21 win in the final seconds. He continued an illustrious career at SHS. He was *The Item's* Area Player of the Year as a senior in 1989 after accumulating 2,063 all-purpose yards and 13 total touchdowns. He was the career leader in rushing when he graduated, finishing with 3,167 yards and 33 touchdowns. Witherspoon played in the North-South All-Star Game before beginning a career at Clemson where he rushed for 939 yards and had seven total

touchdowns. After going undrafted, he made a name for himself as a returner for the Philadelphia Eagles for three seasons. He finished his career with 1,901 return yards and three return touchdowns, two of which came in 1996 when he led the league. He was also third in the league in return yards that season. Witherspoon now serves as the co-founder and vice president of the South Carolina Chapter of NFL Alumni alongside fellow Sumter High Athletic Hall of Famer Dexter Davis, the chapter president.

Danielle McFadden rounds out the incredible group of inductees. She won the 2010 state title in the long jump by clearing 19'4" as a sophomore. She also had an excellent basketball career, averaging 20.5 points, three rebounds, four assists and four steals per game as a senior, earning All-State honors. She then played two seasons at University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, averaging 7.3 points per game before completing her career at Vorhees. She is the daughter of Sumter High Athletic Hall of Famer Karen McFadden.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 ___ curtains
- 5 ___ operandi
- 10 Depop's parent company
- 14 Libation made with skin-contact grapes
- 16 Geodesic structure
- 17 Main, often
- 18 Subj. of some food labeling laws
- 19 Currency exchanged for GBP, perhaps
- 20 Singer ___ Marie
- 21 Bird feeder?
- 22 Angry
- 24 Spreadsheet specification
- 26 Quirk
- 28 Record holders
- 30 Half-baked, say
- 32 A-one
- 34 Educated
- 35 American, for one
- 37 Home of the Glastonbury Festival
- 38 Grazing groups
- 39 "Whew, that was close!"
- 40 Unadorned
- 41 Trig ratio
- 42 "___ me!"
- 44 Digression
- 48 Editorial override
- 50 "Mangia!"
- 52 Small inlet
- 53 Common pendant on a graduate's tassel
- 54 Talisman
- 56 "I ___ sorry"
- 57 Enigmatic rock group
- 58 Jangling set
- 59 Laconic
- 60 Brick oven output

Down

- 1 Trig ratio
- 2 Fischer who invented the plastic drywall anchor
- 3 Grain bowl ingredient with a nutty flavor
- 4 GPS heading
- 5 Dole (out)
- 6 Possessive types
- 7 Kristen's "Spencer" role
- 8 Part of UAV
- 9 "What'd I tell you?"
- 10 Browser with a blue-and-green wave logo
- 11 Natural shade produced by lycopene
- 12 Mezcal quality
- 13 Celebratory cry
- 15 "You should take a break"
- 21 Put all of one's eggs in one basket
- 23 Like some packaged produce
- 25 "Copy"
- 27 Give up
- 29 Buzz
- 31 Some riding mowers
- 32 "Pinky swear!"
- 33 Genre for novelists Sarah J. Maas and Rebecca Yarros
- 34 Court call
- 35 Trident-shaped letters
- 36 Make plans to tie the knot
- 40 Sets off
- 43 Fastidiousness
- 45 From Tehran
- 46 Requiem
- 47 Big name in midcentury modern design
- 49 Archer in Greek mythology
- 51 Brand that once had a licensing deal with 7-Eleven
- 53 ___ butter
- 54 DEN airport zone
- 55 Like a cool cat

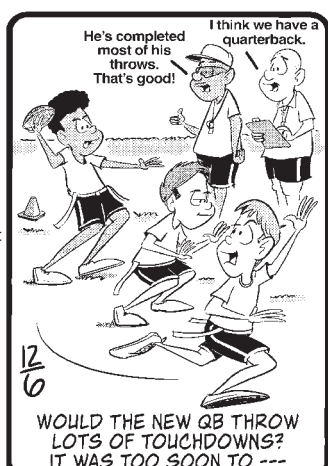
JUMBLE

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

YSEZT
 AMHNU
 DESPEY
 LNJEIG

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



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

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

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

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

Jumbles: ZESTY HUMAN SPEEDY JINGLE
 Answer: Would the new QB throw lots of touchdowns? It was too soon to — PASS JUDGMENT



Sumter High's Nick White shoots on Tuesday.



Lakewood's Jordan Butler (2) handles the ball while being defended by Sumter High's Eli Britt.



Lakewood's Damion Wilson shoots against Sumter High.

GAMECOCKS FROM PAGE B1

the SHS defense swallowed up Lakewood in the second to grab a commanding lead they would not relinquish. The win was an important step for a young Sumter High squad, which was playing without its most veteran player, Kennedy Dantzler, who was sidelined with an injury.

"These are big rivalry games and the emotions run high, the fans get into it early, so I told them before the game started that they have to come out, settle down early and play within ourselves. Do what we've been coached to do, do what we've been working on in practice every day, and don't worry about the outside noise because you can't control that anyway," head coach Jeff Schaffer said. "I really thought when we made that little run in the first half, it really started on the defensive end. We were getting in front of people and stealing some balls and getting down the floor. That's what we've got to do; we don't have much size, so we have to be able to get up and down the floor."

It was a tough season opener for Lakewood, who struggled to combat Sumter High's defensive pressure for too many stretches in the loss. Still, first-year head coach Indya Zimmerman found plenty of positives to take away from the loss.

"Overall, we have a lot of work to do," Zimmerman said. "Our girls are really young. We have two seniors that transferred in, we have one senior that's injured right now and they're just learning to rely on each other, trust each other and have some faith in the game plan. Moving forward, we'll be all right."

Sumter High started to grab control early in the second quarter when Aleiyah Credle knocked down a three to get the ball rolling. The SHS defense then took control. Lakewood's only point in the first five minutes of the quarter was a free throw by Camorri Glenn. Meanwhile, Sumter High was rolling in transition, stretching their lead out to 22-7 before Lauryn Nesmith was able to get a basket in transition to finally stop their skid. At that point, the deficit was too much to overcome. Lakewood went into the half trailing 25-13 and didn't get much closer for the rest of the night.

The recipe for Sumter High's success was riding excellent performances from Jayla Thomas and Anari Tindal, who both finished with 18 points in the win. Thomas was in complete control of the offense from the point, while Tindal controlled the post. Tindal's performance was especially important because SHS was playing without Dantzler, their senior leader.

"Kennedy brings a calming presence to things because she was on that state championship team; she really knows what's going on out there. And she directs traffic; even though she's not a guard, she directs a lot of traffic. It was big to have Anari Tindal step up and play huge minutes inside, and Lay, our guard, she might've been our leading rebounder. She was grabbing balls all over the place tonight."

Schaffer credited his team's communication for their success in the second quarter, which launched them to the runaway win.

"I thought they did a little bit of a better job talking to each other tonight and getting into the right spots for

each other," he said. "We have a tendency to not rotate the way that we're trying to work on right now. I thought in that run that we did a little bit of a better job of that. Just the fact that they were comfortable with each other, I'm happy with where we're at right now."

Schaffer loved what he saw from Thomas all night long. She buried a trio of threes, was aggressive on the glass and ran the offense well. Last season, SHS put most of their offensive weight on A'rainna Ross, who has since transferred to Wilson, so Schaffer needs to find players who are willing to step up on the offensive end.

"She's gaining confidence," Schaffer said. "She was one of the ones that kinda watched last year and wasn't as active as I'd like her to be because she's probably the quickest one we've got on the team. When she finally started clicking a little bit and started getting confidence in what she's doing, she was controlling things on offense for us. She's going to have to continue to do that as we get into our region where it gets really tough. We're going to have to handle the ball because they're going to come at us with pressure."

Nesmith carried the offensive burden for Lakewood. She was battling through some bumps and bruises alongside Mikayla Cisse, who had a nasty collision but was able to return to the game. Nesmith still managed to score 12, while Cisse finished with seven and Glenn chipped in with eight, but with a thin bench, it was a long night for the Lakewood core.

"They're learning that they're leaders. Even in this game, as tough as the loss was, they're learning that whatever they do, their teammates are going to follow behind them," Zimmerman said. "As they mature in the game and just mature in general, I'm excited to see how they grow and push through those different trials and tribulations."

Lakewood played excellent defense for stretches, particularly in the first quarter. Zimmerman wants to see her team build on those moments so they can play a complete four quarters of basketball.

"Conditioning," Zimmerman said about what her team needs to focus on. "We only have nine girls, so getting in shape is going to be imperative to our success as we go forward into the season. We've got a lot of running to do."

Both coaches are focused on building their team's confidence after the first county matchup. For Sumter High, a 3-0 start is a massive boon for a young team trying to find out who is ready to step into leadership roles.

"It's huge to see that confidence, that growth without A'rainna being with us. Everybody kinda did their job, stepped up and did what they needed to do. The exciting thing about it is they're starting to figure things out, and I'm starting to see them understanding the game of basketball," Schaffer said. "A lot of that is the youth and not having that basketball IQ where it needs to be right now. Not saying they're not smart, but just understanding the game of basketball. They're starting to figure out how they need to play together to make the whole thing work. Once we start to get those puzzle pieces where



Lakewood's Camorri Glenn (23) shoots against Sumter High.



Sumter High's Jayla Thomas drives on Tuesday.



Sumter High's Anari Tindal, left, shoots against Lakewood on Tuesday.

they need to be, we'll improve as the season goes on."

While Lakewood would've loved a 1-0 start, Zimmerman is glad her team has some concrete evidence of what they need to work on throughout December as they prep for region play.

"One good thing about this game is that it's a good assessment to see where we are," Zimmerman said. "When we get into region play, we're going to play much better teams, much better ball-handlers, much more aggressive defense. As we move forward, this was a learning experience and a stepping stone for us. We're going to look at the film, work on things in practice, communicate and see if we, as coaches, need to go back to the drawing board. Even in a loss, I like the diagnostic result that we got here."

GAMECOCKS ROLL

The boys game got out of hand pretty quickly as a veteran Sumter High squad handled their business against a young Lakewood team. The Gamecocks poured in 28 points in the first quarter and ran away with things, which opened the door for some of their younger players to get some extended run on the court. It wasn't a perfect night in the eyes of head coach Bryan Brown, as the Gamecocks got into some foul trouble in the first half, but he didn't have many complaints as the No. 6 team in SCHSL 5A DI cruised to the win.

"I thought our defense was good early. We fouled a lot, but I'm proud of my team's mindset and the competitive nature that we came into the game with," Brown said as his team improved to 3-0. "I

think we got a little ahead of ourselves, had a lot of fouls. I think we had 16 in the first half. That's not good defense, so that's something we've got to work on, but all in all, our intensity was good, and we approached the game with a competitive mindset so we could get out early."

Lakewood head coach Cam Lee was left frustrated after the game. Youth definitely played a factor, as most of the Gators are playing together at the varsity level for the first time this season, but that doesn't make it easier to watch a running clock in the fourth quarter of a rivalry game.

"It's growing pains," Lee said. "We've got to be better. It's part of the process; sometimes it happens like that. We just can't get discouraged. We've got to keep fighting and find guys who are willing to play hard and do what it takes to win, learn how to win. Until we figure that out, it's going to be hard not to get these results. Hopefully this is the best learning tool to help them change things that we've been preaching since June. We've got to keep pushing forward; we can't stop the work. It (stinks) to lose a home game like this, but hats off to them. They were better than us tonight, and we've got to keep working."

Sumter High thrived on balance, as everyone got involved. BJ Brown and Eli Britt led the charge with 14 points apiece as a total of 12 Gamecocks scored in the win. Kenon Ward added 11 for Sumter High. SHS lost just one player from last year's team, so most of the roster has played a ton of varsity basketball together, but they still have a few newcomers from JV alongside freshmen Jacori Wright and Kam



Lakewood's Lauryn Nesmith directs the Lady Gator offense on Tuesday.



Sumter High's Amaria Anderson, center, celebrates a play against Lakewood on Tuesday.

Choice. Coach Brown was happy to unload the bench and get his young players some important minutes.

"In the last couple of years, we haven't had many games like this where multiple guys have an opportunity to score early. So we got comfortable early, and we got scoring from pretty much everybody," the SHS head coach said. "We don't always have an opportunity to explore our bench and give them an opportunity, so it's nice for them to get that opportunity. We're trying to solidify our guys who are going to play when we get to region play, so this is a good opportunity for everyone to get their feet wet."

Damion Wilson and Kaden Brown led Lakewood with eight points apiece in the loss. While it was a tough night for the Gators, Lee hopes his team was able to learn something against one of the top teams in 5A because it won't get any easier when Lakewood enters region play against some of the top teams in 4A.

"Nobody is going to feel sorry for us. If a team can come in and beat you by 40, they're going to do it. If it was the other way around, we would want to dish it out as well. We have to figure it out; this is the game, this is basketball. It's a competitive sport. We play in a good region, and that's a good team. That's a playoff-caliber team in 5A. Hopefully we can take this lesson and it's something we can look back on in a month or two and say it changed our season and helped us grow," Lee said. "I thought in the second half we had some flashes where they played hard, we put a couple of plays together, but we have to figure it out. We're in a tough spot. We just have to stay hungry and not quit."

Sumter High continues region play on Friday with Crestwood before hosting the Stars and Stripes Showcase with Upward Stars on Saturday. In the showcase, SHS will face 3A powerhouse Keenan, so Coach Brown is looking forward to a challenging stretch to close the week.

"Crestwood is going to be a tough team. I'm really excited to play them in the cross-town rivalry," Coach Brown said. "This year, we have higher expectations than we've had, so we're excited about it."

MLB players union gathers this week to prepare for potentially contentious labor negotiations in 2026

BY DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Roughly a month after the Los Angeles Dodgers finished a scintillating seven-game World Series triumph over the Toronto Blue Jays, the Major League Baseball Players' Association gathered in Arizona this week to discuss the future of the game and look ahead to a possible lockout next December.

Japanese stars headed by Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto have sparked record international interest, in-game attendance was up in 2025 for the third straight season, and a set of rule changes that began in 2023 has produced a faster-paced game that's been widely lauded.

But the big-spending nature of the \$500 million Dodgers — who were led by high-priced stars like Ohtani, Yamamoto, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman — highlighted baseball's payroll disparity as the MLBPA prepares for a potentially contentious round of labor negotiations leading to the expiration of the collective bargaining agreement next Dec. 1.



Major League Baseball Players Association Executive Director Tony Clark answers a question during a news conference in New York on March 11, 2022.

AP FILE PHOTO

Union head Tony Clark said formal bargaining will likely begin in the spring, consistent with previous negotiations.

“As an organization, you start preparing for the next round of bargaining as soon as the ink is dry on the previous one,” Clark said Thursday. “You're constantly assessing the system, you're assessing how it is that teams and players are responding to the system.”

“A year away, you're really drilling down on what that looks like.”

The eight-person executive subcommittee consists of 2025 Cy Young Award winners Paul Skenes and Tarik Skubal, along with veterans Chris Bassitt, Jake Cronenworth, Pete Fairbanks, Cedric Mullins,

Marcus Semien and Brent Suter.

There are also 30 player reps — one for each team.

“We have an outstanding group of player leaders,” Clark said. “We are better and stronger as an organization when players engage one another and are educated on the issues. We have that. It's something we're grateful for and something historically our organization has always had.”

Clark said the MLBPA's main focus continues to be centered on a few large issues heading into bargaining. One is finding more ways to encourage all 30 teams to spend on the free-agent market to make teams as competitive as possible.

While the Dodgers have spent roughly \$890 million over

the past two years building back-to-back World Series champions, the Athletics have committed more than \$150 million over the same period. MLB is the only major U.S.-based professional sports league without a salary cap.

The players' association is bracing to resist a renewed push for a cap. Demand for a cap from owners is what led to a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 and the first cancellation of the World Series in 90 years.

Thirty years later, scars from that experience still remain. Clark made his MLB debut with the Detroit Tigers in 1995.

“Knowing that there are teams who have the wherewithal to compete, that choose not to and how that affects the industry,” Clark said. “In an industry where not all 30 teams are committed to that, what does that mean? Are there things that we can do to address those concerns? There are.”

The other major issue is that the MLBPA would like to see more ways for younger players to be paid in a way that's more consistent with their on-field value. Most players are eligible for salary arbitration after

three years of MLB service time and can be free agents after six years.

The union made some gains in compensating younger players in the last round of bargaining. The minimum salary jumped to \$700,000 in 2022 and will be \$780,000 next year. And a \$50 million annual pool was established for pre-arbitration-eligible players.

CLARK HAS NO UPDATE ON ONETEAM PARTNERS PROBE

Clark said he did not have any new information to offer about an ongoing federal investigation into OneTeam Partners, a licensing company the union founded with the NFL Players Association.

The company has grown in recent years, working with other unions that represent players in the WNBA, men's and women's soccer, and college sports.

“We continue to cooperate fully,” Clark said. “We don't know when it may wrap. But as they ask questions and are interested in information, we answer the questions and provide them information. That's not going to change.”

Former Angels, Rangers manager Ron Washington joining Giants as infield coach

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Former Angels and Rangers manager Ron Washington is returning to the Bay Area to become infield coach for the San Francisco Giants on new manager Tony Vitello's staff.

Washington worked for nearly two decades in the same role for the Oakland Athletics, developing many stars with his detailed work hours before the first pitch.

“We are working out the logistics. I have agreed to join the Giants,” Washington told The Associated Press in a text message Thursday. “I get a chance to continue to make a difference.”

The 73-year-old Washington took a leave of absence from the Angels last season with his team at 36-38 to undergo quadruple-bypass heart surgery, and Los Angeles then moved forward at the end of the year by hiring Kurt Suzuki as its manager.

Washington had expressed his desire to be back on the field for 2026 once healthy. He was the oldest manager in the majors during his two seasons guiding the Angels, who hired him in November 2023. In 2024, Los Angeles went 63-99 for the worst finish in franchise history after the free-agency departure of two-way superstar Shohei Ohtani to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The Angels have missed the playoffs the past 11 seasons, with 10 straight los-

ing seasons — both the longest active streaks in the majors.

Washington managed Texas from 2007-2014. He brings decades of knowledge and expertise to the staff of Vitello, the former University of Tennessee coach who has no professional playing or coaching experience.

Before managing the Rangers, Washington was a longtime infield coach for the Oakland Athletics, credited with helping develop players like six-time Gold Glove third baseman Eric Chavez.

Washington was known to arrive early and toss short-hop grounders from his knees to help groom some of the game's great infielders before they were stars.

From Jason Giambi, Miguel Tejada,

Chavez and Mark Ellis to Marcus Semien, Washington helped shape them all on and off the diamond — “Mark McGwire, I turned him into a great leader,” Washington once said.

Chavez even gave Washington one of his six straight Gold Glove awards earned from 2001-06.

“I watched many young kids come through here and grow, I watched many baseball players that the industry thought were through come through here and blossom and get deeper contracts for their careers,” Washington said in July 2024 during the final A's season in the Oakland Coliseum. “The tradition here in Oakland, I just saw it kept passing down and kept passing down. I've had a great 17 years here.”

Kid's Corner

Private eye

Wich two are exactly alike?

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Panthers' McMillan top candidate for AP NFL Offensive Rookie of Year but is not satisfied with season

BY STEVE REED

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — Carolina Panthers wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan calls himself his biggest fan — and biggest critic.

He's a tough one at that. "C-plus," McMillan said when asked to grade his own performance on the field this season.

Nevermind that McMillan leads all NFL rookies with 826 yards receiving and has 57 receptions, second only to Indianapolis tight end Tyler Warren's 58.

And forget that the No. 8 overall pick from Arizona is averaging 14.5 yards per catch, has six touchdown catches and is a slight favorite over New York Giants quarterback Jaxson Dart and Tampa Bay wide receiver Emeka Egbuka to win AP NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year, per BetMGM.

In his mind, he can be better. "It doesn't matter that I'm the leading receiver or not," McMillan said. "I have had a lot of missed opportunities out there. That's the bottom line. I feel like I'm a much better player than what I've shown."

McMillan has made some impressive acrobatic catches this season, but his own frustration centers on seven drops — some of which have been on routine passes.

"I just have to look (the ball) all the way in and stop trying to do too much," McMillan said. "I'm as surprised as you are with dropping some of these balls. Like you said, it's routine catches. I have to clean that up, for sure."



Carolina Panthers wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan (4) celebrates a touchdown against the Los Angeles Rams on Sunday, Nov. 30, in Charlotte.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Regardless, the Panthers love him. Carolina coach Dave Canales calls McMillan a "baller" and a player who has a knack for making big plays in big situations. That was on display last Sunday against the NFC-leading Los Angeles Rams.

Trailing 28-24 with less than seven minutes remaining, the Panthers faced a crucial fourth-and-2 at the Rams 43.

"It was fourth down, so I had to make a play," McMillan said. And he did.

McMillan beat press coverage on a play-action pass, created 3 yards of separation on cornerback Emmanuel Forbes Jr. and hauled in a 43-yard touchdown pass from Bryce Young that proved to be the decisive score in Carolina's 31-28 win. It was the second long fourth-down scoring toss in the game from Young, who earlier connected with Jalen Coker on a 33-yard strike on fourth-and-3.

"I just trust my guys," Young said. "There's no big conversation. No big

hoorah. Again, for me, I'm super grateful to have guys like that down the perimeter that I trust and need to have in situations, fourth downs. Trust them to win one-on-ones. Trust them with 50-50 balls. Trust them to throw them open. Whatever it may be. We have a ton of competitors.

"They did a great job of going and getting those balls and putting themselves in those situations on those fourth downs, so, again, it's not a big speech. I know those guys are always ready."

To McMillan's credit, he was ready for the moment despite what had been a frustrating day in which he'd been held without a catch for more than three quarters.

"It's a pride thing, it's an ego thing," McMillan said. "I feel like everybody in the league, especially playmakers, want the ball in their hands. But when the offense is scoring and we are making plays I can't really say nothing."

Despite his one catch on Sunday, McMillan has been Young's best re-

ceiving option this season — and it's not even close.

He was handed the No. 1 receiver spot during the preseason when the Panthers traded veteran Adam Thielen to the Minnesota Vikings. Xavier Leggette, Carolina's other starting wide receiver and a first-round draft pick in 2023, has been highly inconsistent with just 27 catches for 287 yards and three TDs in 11 games.

The Panthers have also struggled to find a third receiving option, although Coker is beginning to produce after missing the first six games with a calf injury.

But for most of the season, McMillan has been the focal point of opposing coordinators when it comes to defending Carolina's passing game. He has drawn plenty of double coverage, making his numbers even more impressive. Furthermore, he's not had a veteran wide receiver to lean on with David Moore sidelined for most of the season.

Still, the surprising Panthers (7-6) enter the bye weekend nipping at the heels of the four-time defending NFC South champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers (7-5). The teams will meet twice over the final four weeks of the season, including a Week 18 season finale at Tampa Bay that could determine the division title.

The Panthers will be counting on McMillan to fight through the so-called "rookie wall" and help end the franchise's seven-year playoff drought.

When asked what it would take for him to elevate that C-plus grade over the remainder of the season, McMillan laughed and said: "Maybe win more games."

Seahawks visit Falcons in matchup of teams heading in opposite directions

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Talk about two teams heading in opposite directions.

The Seattle Seahawks have won six of their last seven games, putting them in the mix for an NFC West title and a top seed in the playoffs.

Then there's the Atlanta Falcons, who've lost six of seven to all but ensure their eighth straight losing season and another January spent watching from the couch as others compete for championships.

With so much at stake for Seattle (9-3) — and so little on the line for Atlanta (4-8) — the Seahawks can't afford a slip-up when they visit Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Sunday.

Especially when two other NFC West teams, the Rams and the 49ers, also have nine wins.

"We put ourselves in a good spot, but a couple of other teams have done the same thing," Seattle linebacker Ernest Jones IV said. "The NFC is a tough one right now, so we've got to just go out there

one game at a time. You don't help your case losing games."

The Seahawks are coming off a 26-0 rout of the Minnesota Vikings, their first shutout since the 2015 season.

Atlanta, meanwhile, kept up its habit of losing close games, falling to the last-place New York Jets on Nick Folk's 56-yard field goal as time expired. The Falcons have dropped two games in overtime, two more in the final minute of regulation and are 1-5 in one-score contests.

The hugely disappointing season has put second-year coach Raheem Morris on the hot seat.

"These guys, they are competitors. They love playing," Morris said. "I've got a lot of confidence they'll go out there and do that for us."

RIQ ON THE RISE

Ahead of the trade deadline, there was speculation that Riq Woolen's days in Seattle were numbered.

The fourth-year cornerback is in the final year of his rookie contract, and his spot in the

rotation looked tenuous after a couple of poor games.

But Woolen turned things around in recent weeks. He's defended eight passes in the past six games and came up with his first interception of the season last Sunday.

"He's doing a tremendous job," coach Mike Macdonald said. "He's had a great attitude, he's been a great teammate, so you do those things and you're practicing well, you're productive in practice, and now it starts to show up in games."

SEAHAWKS' 1-2 PUNCH

Leonard Williams and Byron Murphy II have formed quite the tag team for the Seahawks on the defensive line, tying for the team lead in sacks with seven apiece.

Williams is 4 1/2 sacks shy of his career high, while Murphy has long since surpassed the half-sack he had as a rookie.

Williams said playing alongside Murphy last year helped the two build trust and camaraderie.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Atlanta Falcons head coach Raheem Morris watches play against the New York Jets on Sunday, Nov. 30, in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"Especially for a young guy, I think he's impressed me a lot with the way he's been able to come in and just soak up knowledge," Williams said. "He's starting to have more of a voice out there."

The Seahawks have 40 sacks overall, fourth most in the NFL. They'll look to add to those numbers when they face Atlanta's Kirk Cousins, who took over as the starting QB when Michael Penix Jr. went down with a season-ending knee injury.

LOSING FALCONS

Atlanta is one loss away from matching the franchise

record for consecutive losing seasons.

The Falcons failed to reach .500 from 1983-90, when they posted a cumulative record of 38-88 — including six seasons with double-digit losses.

The team has been more competitive during this dry spell, going 44-77 since the beginning of the 2018 campaign, but the fall has been more dramatic since it began just two seasons after the Falcons reached the Super Bowl.

"Certainly the tough losses, you just go back to what are the inches we can find here and there to make the difference," Cousins said.

NFL mandates playing surfaces for all stadiums meet new standards by 2028 to enhance player safety

BY JOSH DUBOW

Associated Press

The playing surfaces at every NFL stadium will have to meet new enhanced standards set through lab and field testing by the start of the 2028 season.

NFL field director Nick Pappas detailed the plans for a program on Thursday that will provide each team "a library of approved and accredited NFL fields" before the start of next season. Any new field will immediately have to meet those standards and all teams will have two years to achieve the standards, whether they use a grass or synthetic surface or a hybrid.

Most artificial surfaces are replaced every two or three years, Pappas said. Natural fields can be replaced several times a season.

Pappas said the fields will have undergone extensive testing and been approved by a joint committee with the NFLPA.

"It's sort of a red, yellow, green effect, where we're obviously trying to



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NFL logo is displayed at midfield during the Super Bowl 59 on Sunday, Feb. 9, in New Orleans.

phase out fields that we have determined to be less ideal than newer fields coming into the industry," he said. "This is a big step for us. This is something that I think has been a great outcome from the Joint Surfaces Committee of the work, the deployment and development of devices determining the appropriate metrics and ultimately providing us with a way to substantiate the quality of fields more so than we ever have in the past."

Pappas said fields have been tested in labs and on site using two main tools. One is called the BEAST, which is a traction testing device that replicates the movements of an NFL player. The other is called the STRIKE Impact Tester, which helps determine the firmness of each field.

The goal of the league is to find fields that are as consistent as possible across all 30 NFL stadiums, as well as at each stadium throughout the season. Pappas said the "key pillars" for a field are optimized playability, reducing injury risk and player feedback.

The NFL has no plans to require natural grass fields across the league. The league's chief medical officer, Dr. Allen Sills, said there are no "statistically significant differences" in lower extremity injuries or concussions that can be attributed to the type of playing surface or a specific surface, despite widespread preferences by players for grass fields and complaints about surfaces such as the one at MetLife Stadium, where the New York Giants and Jets play.

"The surface is only one driver of

these lower extremity injuries," Sills said. "There are a lot of other factors, including player load and previous history and fatigue and positional adaptability and cleats that are worn. So surfaces are a component, but it is a complex equation, and so I'm excited about where we are in the work because I think we'll get away from a very crude measurement of artificial here and the grass here, and now we can say for any individual surface, let's look at the biophysical properties of that surface. How might those correlate with injury? And then, obviously, how do we optimize them?"

Pappas also shared plans for the Super Bowl to be held on Feb. 8 at the San Francisco 49ers' home at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. The field has been growing at a sod farm about two hours east of the Bay Area, with Pappas making several visits over the past 18 months to monitor the field.

The league will plan to install the field around the third week in January — or later if the 49ers could be hosting playoff games.

PATRICIA ANN ALVAREZ

Patricia Ann "Cookie" Alvarez, 83, of Morgantown, passed away Thursday, Nov. 27, 2025, at her home. She was born March 20, 1942, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a daughter of the late Joseph and Anna



ALVAREZ

(Tremko) Krupa. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother but also enjoyed working at various occupations as the family moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio and eventually South Carolina. She was an avid reader and especially enjoyed spending time with her family. She and her husband loved spending the winters with her son in Arizona.

She is survived by her sons, Mario Alvarez (Nancy), Vince Alvarez (Kristine) and Rick Alvarez (Lisa); grandchildren, Taylor Alvarez (Taryn), Brett Alvarez, Aaron Alvarez, Jonah Alvarez, Owen Alvarez and Dylan Kennedy; siblings Eugene Krupa (Ethel) and Michael Krupa (Kathy); and former daughter-in-law, Sue Alvarez.

In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband of 57 years, Roberto Alvarez; and siblings, Frank, Edward and John Krupa and Mary Ritchey and Dolores Inman.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to WVU Hospice, 12 Rousch Dr., Westover, WV 26501.

Hastings Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements and online condolences may be made at www.hastingsfuneralhome.com.

JAMES J. BYRD

James J. Byrd, 69, son of the late George Harry Byrd and Rebecca Katie McBride Byrd, was born on Sept. 30, 1956, in Clarendon County. He departed this life on Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Sumter.

Family visitation will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2025, from 4-6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Graveside services will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025, at Bethel Community Cemetery, Starks Ferry Road, Sumter.

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.

MICHAEL EDWARD BARRS

Michael Edward Barrs, 45, beloved husband of Chasity Shadoan, passed away Friday, Nov. 28, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of



BARRS

laughter, warmth and unforgettable moments. Michael was known by all as the life of the party.

Born Feb. 14, 1980, in Sumter, he was the son of Elwood Michael Barrs and Joye Helms Barrs. He was a graduate of Sumter Christian School. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and was a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom. Mr. Barrs was employed by Performance Food Group (PFG).

Survivors in addition to his wife and parents, all of Sumter, include a sister-in-law, Amberly Way of Sumter; and a brother, Chance Player (Katie) of Aiken. He also leaves behind a beloved fur baby, Abby.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, in the Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home Chapel officiated by the Rev. Donna Green. Burial will be in Evergreen Memorial Park Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be Chad Bryant, Garret Hodge, Tony Moss, Keith Poston, Brad Scott and Jason Shadoan.

The family will receive friends from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home and other times at the home.

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

DAVID MARSHALL HOLLIDAY

David Marshall Holliday, 64, died Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025, at his home.

Born April 14, 1961, in Sumter, he was a son of the late Marshall Lamar Holliday and Dorothy Jean Kirby Holliday. Mr. Holliday attended Wise Drive Church of the Nazarene. He worked as a painter.

Survivors include one sister, Carol Oliver; three brothers, Bobby Holliday, Ronnie Holliday and Donnie Holliday; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Betty Sherman; and two brothers, Raymond "Doc" Holliday and Tommy "Joe" Holliday.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, at Wise Drive Church of the Nazarene officiated by the Rev. Sammy Geddings. Burial was in Manning Cemetery.

Nephews will serve as pallbearers.

The family will receive friends from 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, at Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home.

Memorials may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association, 140 Stoneridge Dr. #640, Columbia, SC 29210.

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

SARAH A. DEAN

Sarah A. Dean, 90, widow of Henry R. Dean, died Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025, at her home in Sumter. Born July 2, 1935, in Lee County, she was the daughter of the late Joseph Anderson and Sally Lou Abraham Anderson.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 209 E. Moore St., Sumter.

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

WILLIAM JEROME SIMMONS JR.

William Jerome Simmons Jr., affectionately known as BJ, was born on Dec. 25, 1993, in Augusta, Georgia, to Thomasina Robinson and William Simmons Sr. Growing up in Aiken, he received Christ early and was a hard and diligent worker in the church. He attended Aiken High School and graduated with the Class of 2012. He went to the University of South Carolina Aiken before transferring to University of South Carolina to study Integrated Information Technology. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree, he moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, and furthered his education and received a Master of Business Administration degree from East Carolina University. Toward the end of December 2020, Will literally matched with Whitley Shannon on a dating app called Hinge. After dating, they became engaged on June 18, 2022, and married the following year, June 11, 2023. Right after marriage, the couple became members of New Zion Church, which became their family away from home. God called him home on Thursday, Nov. 27, 2025, a month shy of his 32nd birthday.

William's legacy will live on, and he will be deeply missed by many who will cherish and honor his memory: his wife, Whitley Simmons; his daughter, Waverly Simmons; his mother, Thomasina Mahoney-Robinson (Harry); his father, Pastor William "Bill" Simmons Sr. (Jeanette); his siblings; and a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends and relatives at 2480

Elizabeth Drive, Dalzell.

Visitation will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at New Zion Church, 217 W. Todd Lane, Charlotte, North Carolina, followed by funeral services at noon. The funeral procession will leave immediately after services for burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Peach Orchard Road (S.C. 441), Dalzell.

Services directed by Grier Funeral Service Inc., 115 John McCarroll Ave., Charlotte, North Carolina, 28216, (704) 332-7109, and the management and staff of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter. Online messages may be sent to the family at www.williamsfuneralhomeinc.com.

WILHELMINA WILLIAMS HARRELL

Wilhelmina Williams Harrell, 55, wife of Charlie Harrell and daughter of the late William Calvin and Elouise Singleton Williams, was born on Feb. 2, 1970, in Sumter. She departed this life on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, at her residence.

Family will receive friends at the home, 8 Franklin St., Sumter.

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

JOHN THEODORE MATTHEWS

John Theodore Matthews, 70, died Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, at his home in Sumter. Born April 8, 1955, in Sumter County, he was the son of the late Wheler Matthews and Lottie Lucas Matthews.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 904 Legare St., Sumter.

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

CORINE WADE FUNCHERS

Corine Wade Funchers, daughter of the late Marion Wade Sr. and Edna Louise Bolden Wade, was born Nov. 5, 1946. She departed this earthly life on Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025, at home in Rembert. Corine was educated in the South Carolina Public School system.

She leaves to cherish her precious memories: her husband, Julius Funchers, her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 5125 Meta Wade Road, Rembert.

Celebration of Life Services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, at Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, 7355 Camden Highway, Rembert, with the Rev. Anthony L. Taylor, pastor.

Burial will follow in Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Yard Cemetery.

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

KENNETH LEROY SINGLETON

Kenneth Leroy Singleton, 72, son of the late Willie Singleton and Louise Harrison Singleton, was born on Jan. 5, 1953, in Sumter. He departed this life on Monday, Dec. 1, 2025, at his residence.

Public viewing was held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at Congruity Presbyterian Church, 3750 Congruity Road, Gable, with the Rev. Alonzo Washington officiating.

Interment will follow in Ruby M.B. Simon Cemetery, Gable.

Family will receive friends at the home of his sister, 1556 Paul St., Sumter,

starting Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, from 4 to 7 p.m. daily.

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.

YVONNE BELSER

Yvonne Belser, 45, daughter of George Belser and the late Lillie Mae Davis, was born on Jan. 6, 1980, in Sumter. She departed this life on Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, at Prisma Health Richland Hospital, Columbia.

Public viewing was held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, 155 Wall St., Sumter, with the Rev. Emma Mellerson officiating.

Interment will follow in Bradford Cemetery, Sumter.

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.

ROBERT BRYAN VAN METRE

EASTOVER — Robert Bryan Van Metre, 74, beloved husband of 33 years to Deborah M. Van Metre, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, at his home.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at 4 p.m. at Bullock Funeral Home Chapel.

The family will receive friends at Bullock Funeral Home on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, from 3 to 4 p.m., one hour prior to the memorial service.

You may go to www.bullockfuneralhome.com and sign the family's guest book.

The family has chosen Bullock Funeral Home of Sumter for the arrangements.

**FANNIE MCNEIL**

A public viewing for Fannie McNeil was held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the mortuary.



MCNEIL

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at 11 a.m. from St. James Holiness Church,

3655 Myrtle Beach Hwy., Sumter, with Elder Alfreda Johnson, pastor. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Fannie was born on Sept. 21, 1939, in Horatio to the late Luther Spencer and Virginia Harris Evely.

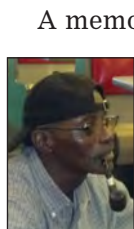
In addition to her parents, Fannie was preceded in death by her daughter, Yvonne McNeil; three sisters, Melissa Green, Thomasina Evely and Virginia Evely; a brother, Winfield Spencer; and three brothers-in-law, Albert McNeil, Douglas Johnson and Michael Johnson.

Fannie departed this life on Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025, in Sumter.

Fannie leaves to cherish her memories: three children, Yvette Graves, Elbert McNeil and Ta-Tanisha Pierre; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild; six sisters, Margaret Lawson, Cheryl Hardy, Barbara Gorell, Earleen Johnson, Patricia Johnson and Valerie Brooks; and an aunt, uncle, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, from 4 to 6 p.m. at 720 Orlando Circle, Sumter.

Ministry of Service entrusted to Whites Mortuary LLC - Dedicated to Excellence - Committed to Service.

ALBERT JENKINS

JENKINS

A memorial service for Albert Jenkins was held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, at 11 a.m. from the chapel of Whites Mortuary, 517 N. Guignard Drive, Sumter.

Albert "Bert" "Pipe Man" was born Aug. 27, 1951, in Sumter to the late Emma Jenkins Purnell and the late John Henry Wilson.

He departed this life on Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025, in Sumter.

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CALVIN TIMOTHY PHILLIPS JR.

A public viewing for Calvin Timothy Phillips Jr. was held on Friday, Dec. 5,



PHILLIPS

2025, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Whites Mortuary. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at 11 a.m. from the chapel of Whites Mortuary, 517 N. Guignard Drive, Sumter.

Timothy was born May 22, 1979, in Sumter to Calvin Phillips Sr. and the late Annette Burgess Phillips.

Timothy departed this life on Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025, in Sumter.

Ministry of Service entrusted to Whites Mortuary LLC Dedicated to Excellence - Committed to Excellence.

BOBBY LOUIS MAPLE

Bobby Louis Maple, 69, son of Ellen Bracey Maple and the late Isaiah Maple Sr., was born on Nov. 2, 1956, in Sumter. He departed this life on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, at McLeod Regional Medical Center of the Pee Dee, Florence.

Family will receive friends at the home of his brother, 995 N. St. Pauls Church Road, Sumter.

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

BARBARA JEAN MOSES

A public viewing for Barbara Jean Moses was held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the mortuary. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6,



MOSES

2025, at 2 p.m. from Church of God by Faith, #1 609 Atlantic Ave., Sumter,

with Elder Mack Wilson, pastor. Interment will follow at Bradford Cemetery.

Barbara was born Jan. 5, 1955, in Olanta to the late Willie and Pauline Wells McDowell.

She departed this life on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, in Sumter.

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LEGAL NOTICES

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF SUMTER IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT CASE NO. 2025CP4301131 SUMMONS (Jury Trial Demanded) ZACHARY TYLER GENE HEIN, Plaintiff vs. PEGGY L. MCALLISTER, TO THE DEFENDANT NAMED ABOVE: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint herein, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer to this Complaint upon the subscriber, at the address shown below, within thirty (30) days after service hereof exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. s/ Sarah A. Knox Sarah A. Knox, SC Bar No.: 106049 Attorney for Plaintiff HUNTER | EVERAGE PO Box 25555 Charlotte, North Carolina 28229 Telephone: 704.377.9157 Facsimile: 704.377.9160 Email: sak@hunter-everage.com Attorney for Plaintiff June 23, 2025

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COUNTY OF SUMTER SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF FILING OF COMPLAINT (NON-JURY MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE) C/A NO: 2025-CP-43-01483 DEFICIENCY WAIVED

Freedom Mortgage Corporation, PLAINTIFF, vs. Joseph L Culick; Portfolio Recovery Associates LLC aka Portfolio Recovery Associates; Midland Credit Management, Inc. aka Midland Credit Management, DEFENDANT(S)

Summons & Notice

TO THE DEFENDANTS, ABOVE NAMED: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint herein, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, or otherwise appear and defend, and to serve a copy of your Answer to said Complaint upon the subscriber at his office, Foundation Legal Group, P.O. Box 8237, Columbia, SC 29202, within thirty (30) days after service hereof, except as to the United States of America, which shall have sixty (60) days, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, or otherwise appear and defend, the Plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded therein, and judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Summons & Notice

YOU WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE that should you fail to Answer the foregoing Summons, the Plaintiff will move for an Order of Reference of this case to the Master-in-Equity/Special Referee in/for this County, which Order shall, pursuant to Rule 53 of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, specifically provide that the said Master-in-Equity/Special Referee is authorized and empowered to enter a final judgment in this case with appeal only to the South Carolina Court of Appeals pursuant to Rule 203(d)(1) of the SCACR, effective June 1, 1999.

TO MINORS) OVER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE, AND/OR TO MINORS) UNDER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND THE PERSON WITH WHOM THE MINOR(S) RESIDES, AND/OR TO PERSONS UNDER SOME LEGAL DISABILITY:

YOU ARE FURTHER SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to apply for the appointment of a guardian ad litem within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Notice upon you. If you fail to do so, application for such appointment will be made by the Plaintiff immediately and separately and such application will be deemed absolute and total in the absence of your application for such an appointment within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons and Complaint upon you.

Summons & Notice

NOTICE OF FILING OF SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT TO THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE NAMED: YOU WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the foregoing Summons, along with the Complaint, was filed with the Clerk of Court for Sumter County, South Carolina, on August 21, 2025.

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMMUNICATION IS TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE, except as stated below in the instance of bankruptcy protection.

IF YOU ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE BANKRUPTCY COURT OR HAVE BEEN DISCHARGED AS A RESULT OF A BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDING, THIS NOTICE IS GIVEN TO YOU PURSUANT TO

Summons & Notice

s/ Jacob H. Dippold Jacob H. Dippold Attorney for Plaintiff 1 Law Range Sumter, South Carolina 29150 (803) 774-8500 jake@shulerlawfirm.com

Sumter, South Carolina November 18, 2025

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COUNTY OF RICHLAND Civil Action # 2025-CP-40-4875 SUMMONS (Jury Trial Requested)

Kevin Prescott, Plaintiff, vs. Alkishia Bryant, Defendant.

Summons & Notice

STATUTORY REQUIREMENT AND FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES AND IS NOT INTENDED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT OR AS AN ACT TO COLLECT, ASSESS, OR RECOVER ALL OR ANY PORTION OF THE DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY.

s/ Gregory Wooten September 18, 2025 John S. Kay (S.C. Bar No. 7914) Ashley Z. Stanley (S.C. Bar No. 74854) Alan M. Stewart (S.C. Bar No. 15576) Sarah O. Leonard (S.C. Bar No. 80165) Gregory Wooten (S.C. Bar No. 73586) M. Celeste Bowers (S.C. Bar No. 100981) Attorneys for Plaintiff Hutchens Law Firm LLP P.O. Box 8237 Columbia, SC 29202 (803) 726-2700 john.kay@hutchenslawfirm.com ashley.stanley@hutchenslawfirm.com alan.stewart@hutchenslawfirm.com sarah.leonard@hutchenslawfirm.com k.gregory.wooten@hutchenslawfirm.com celeste.bowers@hutchenslawfirm.com Firm Case No: 27783 - 141562

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF SUMTER IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS Case No.: 2025-CP-43-01-969 SUMMONS

Jacqueline Dennis Britt, Plaintiff, vs. Heirs of Mamie Dennis, Sumter School District as successor in interest to Sumter School District No. 8, John Doe, Mary Roe and all other persons unknown claiming any right, title, estate, lien or interest in the real properties described in the Complaint, or any claim adverse to Plaintiff's ownership or any cloud on title thereto Defendants.

Summons & Notice

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint herein, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, or otherwise appear and defend, and to serve a copy of your Answer to said Complaint upon the subscriber at his office, 1 Law Range, Sumter, South Carolina, 29150, within 30 days after service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, or otherwise appear and defend, the Plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded therein, and judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Summons & Notice

That tract of land situate in Sumter County, State of South Carolina, which contains Sixty-one and one-half (61 1/2) acres, more or less, and is bounded by and adjoins lands now or formerly of Frierson, of Wilson, of Rembert, of Davis, Skinner and others, which lies on Rafting Creek; said tract of land is fully represented on plat made by Joseph Palmer, Surveyor, from survey made on October 7, 1933, which plat is of record in the office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Plat Book Z-5, at Page 2.

Being the same property conveyed to Robert Dennis and Jacqueline Dennis (now Jacqueline Dennis Britt) as joint tenants with right of survivorship by deed dated November 21, 2000, and recorded in the Sumter County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 787 at Page 1853; and being further described on the plat recorded in Plat Book Z-5 at Page 2. Said plat reflects that the historical acreage included a 1/2-acre parcel purportedly conveyed to the School District, as referenced in the deed recorded in Deed Book FFF at Page 783, the location of which was not surveyed.

Tax Map Parcel No.: 087-00-03-024 NOTICE OF FILING YOU WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Summons & Complaint were filed with the Clerk of Court for Sumter County, S.C., on November 18, 2025. Creighton M. Segars, whose address is 115 East Church Street, Bishopville, South Carolina 29010, has been named Guardian ad Litem Nisi to represent any unknown minors, persons under disability or others who have or may claim an interest in the subject-property. SHULER LAW FIRM, LLC

Summons & Notice

s/ Jacob H. Dippold Jacob H. Dippold Attorney for Plaintiff 1 Law Range Sumter, South Carolina 29150 (803) 774-8500 jake@shulerlawfirm.com

Sumter, South Carolina November 18, 2025

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COUNTY OF RICHLAND Civil Action # 2025-CP-40-4875 SUMMONS (Jury Trial Requested)

Kevin Prescott, Plaintiff, vs. Alkishia Bryant, Defendant.

Summons & Notice

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT ALKISHIA BRYANT: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint in this action of which a copy is herewith served upon you and to serve a copy of your Answer to the said Complaint on the subscriber at his office, 1419 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, within thirty (30) days from the date of service hereof, exclusive of the date of such service; and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Summons and Complaint in the above-entitled action was filed in the Richland County Clerk of Court's Office, Columbia, South Carolina on July 15, 2025. YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that if you fail to answer the Summons and Complaint within the time aforesaid, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in said Complaint.

Summons & Notice

s/Barry B. George BARRY B. GEORGE (SC Bar #2417) PAIGE B. GEORGE (SC Bar #75124) ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF 1419 Bull Street Columbia, South Carolina 29201 (803) 254-7222 blair41@bellsouth.net October 28, 2025

Public Hearing

NOTICE OF PENDING ORDINANCE

The Sumter City Council at its meeting on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 1:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Sumter Opera House (21 N. Main St.), will give first reading to a proposed Ordinance imposing a temporary moratorium on acceptance of applications for approval of major residential subdivisions under the City of Sumter Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance. This temporary 180-day moratorium is intended to allow the Council adequate time to consider and adopt new technical and financial requirements for such subdivisions.

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Auctions

Notice of Public Sale Storage Rentals of America 2619 Broad St. Camden SC 29020 The property of the following tenant(s) will be sold for cash to satisfy rental liens in accordance with Title 39, Chapter 20, Section 10 through 50 of the South Carolina Lien Statutes. All items will be sold or otherwise disposed of. The sale will be conducted online at StorageTreasures.com on 12/18/25 at 10:00 AM EST. All goods will be sold in "AS IS" condition. All items or spaces may not be available at the time of sale. All sales are final, and a \$100 refundable cleaning deposit is required for all sales.

Unit # Tenant Name Items A113B LATOYA BRICE BOW, HEADBOARD, COUCH, BAGS, BOXSPRING, MATTRESS, HUTCH, CROCKPOT, SUITCASE C132S DOUGLAS MORROW BOXES, TOTES, DESK, CHAIRS, CHEST, CAR SPEAKERS, BAGS, CLOTHES, MATTRESS, BOX SPRING, VACUUM DA20 CASEY CATOE CLOTHES, SHOES, TV, DRILL, COMPUTER, STUFFED ANIMALS, TOTES, COOLER DA41 RONALD TRUESDALE SHOES, TOTES, TOOLBOXES, LAMPS, COMPUTER, MISC FURNITURE, BIKE DI05 RICHARD DOW COUCH, LADDER, HAND TRUCK, WASHER DM10 KILY MARTINEZ MATTRESS, HEADBOARD, MIRROR, BEDFRAME, VANITY, DEER HEADS, WASHER, DRYER, CUPS, BOOKBAG, VACUUM DI12 MUHAMMAD ALNUR WHEELBARROW, BIKE, LADDER, RADIO, WAGON, GARDEN TOOLS, WASHER, DRYER, TOASTER OVEN L187

To satisfy the owner's storagelien, People's Choice Storage, will sell at public lien sale on December 16th, 2025 @ 10:00AM, the personal property in the below listed units, which may include but are not limited to: household goods, personal items, office and other equipment.

People's Choice Storage 1180 Old W Liberty St Sumter, SC 29150 803-757-1368 Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com

Robert Glenn A43 Boxes, Electronics, Automotive Tools, Totes, Misc. Toletha Dixon B21 Appliances, Bags, Boxes, Electronics, Musical Instruments, Misc. Shawn Burgess C02 Boxes, Electronics, Furniture, Misc. Janiece Little C22 Electronics, Golf Equipment, Totes, Misc. Ahshad Jefferson C31 Appliances, Electronics, Furniture, Mattresses, Misc. Tanya Commodore D15 Boxes, Electronics, Furniture, Mattresses, Misc. Chenoa Currie D19 Appliances, Mattresses, Misc. Tekella Gregg E05 Bags, Boxes, Furniture, Shoes, Misc. Tuesday Yarbrough F02 Bags, Electronics, Totes, Misc. David Garrison F07 Appliances, Furniture, Totes, Misc. Darrell Mack J16 Appliances, Bicycles, Furniture, Tools/Toolboxes, Misc.

Property of the following tenants will be sold to satisfy rental liens ONLINE in accordance with Title 39, Chapter 20, Section 10 through 50 of the South Carolina Lien Statutes. The undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding starting December 8th, 2025, after 10:00 AM EST on WWW.STORAGE TREASURES.COM with pictures attached. The Auction will end on or after December 18th, 2025 at 10:00 AM. Said property is stored at Storage Rentals of America 4194 Broad St. Sumter, SC 29154

Unit # Tenant Name Items

0070 Brandon Galloway Totes, furniture, bed frame, dressers, electronics, karaoke machine, video games, appliances stove desk, luggage, bags of clothes, cooler. 0094 Boyd Johnson Boxes, totes, tools, toolbox, furniture, table and chairs, clothing seasonal decorations, fishing poles, hand truck

Purchases must be paid for at the time of purchase by cash only. All purchased items are sold as is, where is, and must be removed at the time of sale. Sale is subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between owner and obligated party.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

To satisfy the owner's storage lien, PS Retail Sales, LLC will sell at public lien sale on December 17, 2025, the personal property in the below-listed units, which may include but are not limited to: household and personal items, office and other equipment. The public sale of these items will begin at 10:00 AM and continue until all units are sold.

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Time: 10:00 AM
Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com. 228 - Page, Henry; 339 - Cooks, Brittany; 405 - Bell, Shyla; 429 - Antrell, Tony; 445 - felder, Tashauna; 565 - Newell, Shayla; 604 - James, Desheka PUBLIC STORAGE # 08604, 1277 Camden Hwy, Sumter, SC 29153, (803) 218-9507 Time: 10:20 AM Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com. A003 - smith, Randolph; A030 - Flemming, Antoneio; B017 - McFadden, Corey; B028 - George, Precious S; B084 - Wactor, Saquana; C072 - Greg, Darian; D024 - Greene, Justin; E027 - Graves, Brandon; F035 - Townsend, Tremaine; F073 - Williams, Aaron; G025 - Bailey, Wendell; J010 - Williams, Corine PUBLIC STORAGE # 25925, 3785 Broad St, Sumter, SC 29154, (803) 282-9826 Time: 10:40 AM Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com. 0105 - Dyer, William; 0108 - Collins, Christopher; 0141 - Pelzer, Theresa; 0205 - Washington, Anthony; 0416 - Pelzer, Theresa; 0517 - Nathaniel, Chaniece; 0531 - Jones, Gregory; 0726 - Abraham, Carol; 0744 - Clark, Jessica; 0750 - Smith, Latoya

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Miscellaneous Rentals

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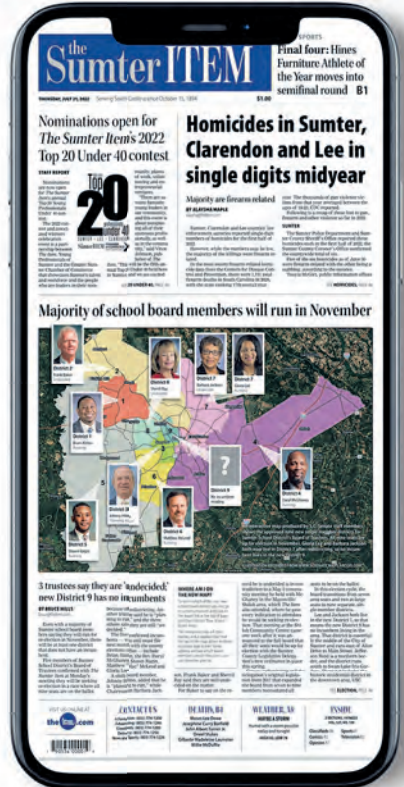
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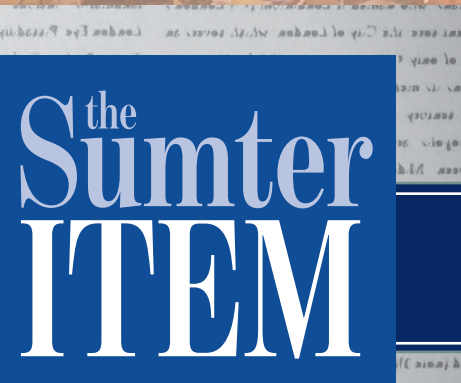



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6 Viewers can dream of a 'White Christmas' again



7 Waking the dead: Benoit Blanc returns in third 'Knives Out Mystery'



7 Sensational Ms. Swift: Docuseries takes fans behind the scene of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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

The Summer Scene

December 06 - December 12, 2025



After the 'Hunt': Elise Benson, others visit partners abroad in 'Before the 90 Days'

BY DANA SIMPSON

Ninety days of anything is a big commitment. It's the length of one trimester of pregnancy, the approximate span of an entire season (for those who live in a four-season climate) and the maximum length of time many countries allow a foreigner to stay within their borders without a visa. This last metric is of particular importance to many who have chosen to balance their lifestyle with that of a long-distance, international partner — something the cast of TLC's "90 Day Fiancé" is well acquainted with.

Enter "90 Day Fiancé: Before the 90 Days." Premiering its eighth season Sunday, Dec. 7, on TLC, the "90 Day" spinoff series follows eight (mostly) new couples as they meet in person for the first time, learn more about one another and ultimately decide if they wish to proceed with applying for the American K-1 fiancé(e) visa.

As is frequently the case with reality TV spinoffs, there is one familiar face among the crowd of new participants. Elise Benson, 32, a Miami real estate agent and former contestant on "90 Day: Hunt for Love," was unlucky in her previous screened endeavors to find a partner, but she has since found love Down Under in Joshua, 39, a Sydney, Australia-based yacht broker. The pair met on Instagram and quickly bonded over their similar careers and aspirations, but as stated by online enter-

tainment magazine Deadline, "with Elise's history of broken engagements and her resolve not to disappoint her family again, combined with Josh's thrill-seeking lifestyle and friends on both sides sounding alarms, this whirlwind romance could end in smooth sailing or a spectacular wipeout."

Elise and Josh are joined in Season 8 by seven other couples: Aviva and Stig, Lisa and Daniel, Emma and Ziad, Forrest and Sheena, Laura and Birkan, Jovon and Annalyn, and lastly, Rick and Trisha, whose relationship is off to a tumultuous beginning in Madagascar.

Rick, a 52-year-old divorced father from California, began this year thinking that he had found the next big love of his life, and for a while, his counterpart, 25-year-old Malagasy midwife Trisha, seemed to agree as they began planning their lives together from a distance. As of late, however, Trisha ghosted Rick, leaving the fate of their relationship in uncertain waters. Now, with the 90 Day team filming his journey to Africa, Rick is hoping an in-person meeting with Trisha could get the star-crossed pair back on the right track.

Lisa, 51, and Daniel, 39, are battling a few issues of their own in Nigeria, too, as their 12-year age difference has many questioning their relationship, which began when Daniel reached out to Lisa on social media. Lisa is ready to take the

leap and get serious with Daniel, but she wonders how his traditional Nigerian family will look upon her.

Meanwhile, 26-year-old Arizonan Aviva travels to sunny Belize to visit her boyfriend Stig, a 30-year-old rapper known as Stig Da Artist, whom she met over social media two years ago. Emma, 28, and Ziad, 27, this season's youngest couple, have some serious explaining to do. As Emma ditches the dating app to meet her Moroccan boyfriend in person for the first time, she still hasn't told him about her previous engagement to a different Moroccan man.

Forrest and Sheena, unlike most couples in "90 Day Fiancé: Before the 90 Days," have already been in a long-distance relationship together for the better part of seven years. Now 32 and 40, respectively, Forrest and Sheena are meeting in the Philippines, home to Sheena and her "mysterious family" (per Deadline).

The last two couples are Washington native Laura, 47, and Turkish-born Birkan, 26, who, despite their 21-year age gap, hope to marry and to prove all their doubters wrong, while Jovon and Annalyn, both 38, who are legally wed despite never having met in person.



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Horoscopes

The luckiest signs this week:

VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO

ARIES

When your boss goes on holiday, you'll have the chance to step up and replace them. This opportunity will mark a positive turning point in your career. If you feel like you're lacking affection in your relationship, be mindful that love can fade over time.

TAURUS

You may find yourself in the spotlight this week for one reason or another. You'll also have a chance to lend a sympathetic ear to someone in need, which will earn you their heartfelt gratitude.

GEMINI

You'll spend freely to spoil your loved ones, and this generosity will make you feel like a good person. However, you'll need to think carefully before making a decision about a family project.

CANCER

Despite being busy at work, making time for yourself is essential. Don't shy away from moments of relaxation and fun with your loved ones. Accept their invitations to go out and try new things.

LEO

You'll receive a sum of money that will allow you to treat yourself. Whether you want to buy real estate or start a business, you'll finally be able to finance your project.

VIRGO

This week, you'll start sending out invitations for holiday parties. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the many positive responses you receive. If you're an artist, inspiration will strike, allowing you to create something truly unique.

LIBRA

Your artistic potential will blossom. Be sure to jot down your ideas so you don't forget them. This way, you can bring them to life one day instead of letting them fall by the wayside.

SCORPIO

You'll receive numerous invitations to go out, which you'll gladly accept. Although this may sometimes feel overwhelming, remember to take breaks and recharge when you feel the need.

SAGITTARIUS

If you want to celebrate the holidays in a special way, planning ahead is important. Time is running out, but the results will exceed your expectations. In your love life, remember that small acts of kindness can really help your relationship grow strong and go the distance.

CAPRICORN

It's time to step out of your comfort zone and embrace new adventures. The new year will bring opportunities for you to explore fresh perspectives. By signing up for a training course, you will open the door to rewarding opportunities.

AQUARIUS

A particular person or situation will deeply move you this week. The changes you make at work will yield positive outcomes. If you're single, love may unexpectedly come your way, taking you by surprise.

PISCES

Your colleagues will enjoy working with you because you're not afraid to tackle challenges or step up and take initiative in organizing upcoming events. However, family tensions could throw everything out of balance.

New Streaming Movies & Shows



"Merv" (Dec. 10)

When their beloved dog Merv loses his spark after their split, Anna (Zooey Deschanel) and Russ (Charlie Cox) are forced into the world's most awkward co-parenting arrangement. Hoping to shake Merv out of his funk, Russ takes him to Florida for a much-needed getaway—only for Anna to show up unexpectedly. As Merv slowly gets his groove back, turns out fixing their dog's broken heart may lead to a few sparks of their own.



"Dance Moms: A New Era" - Season 2 (Dec. 8)

After Studio Bleu suddenly closes, Glo scrambles to rebuild as Project X with her daughter Kaeli coaching beside her. Tensions rise when a new mom and dancer join the team, and one mom's personal struggle has a devastating effect on the studio in this newest iteration of "Dance Moms."

Word Search

Y O R T H R E E S T R I K E S
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 L E E H W G I B E B E F E M Z
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| CAREY | GAME | PLINKO | TEN CHANCES |
| CBS | HI-LO | PRIZE | THAT'S TOO |
| CHECK-OUT | HOLE IN ONE | PUNCH-A- | MUCH! |
| CLIFF | (OR TWO) | BUNCH | THREE |
| HANGERS | LUCKY SEVEN | RANGE GAME | STRIKES |
| COVER UP | MONEY GAME | SECRET "X" | |

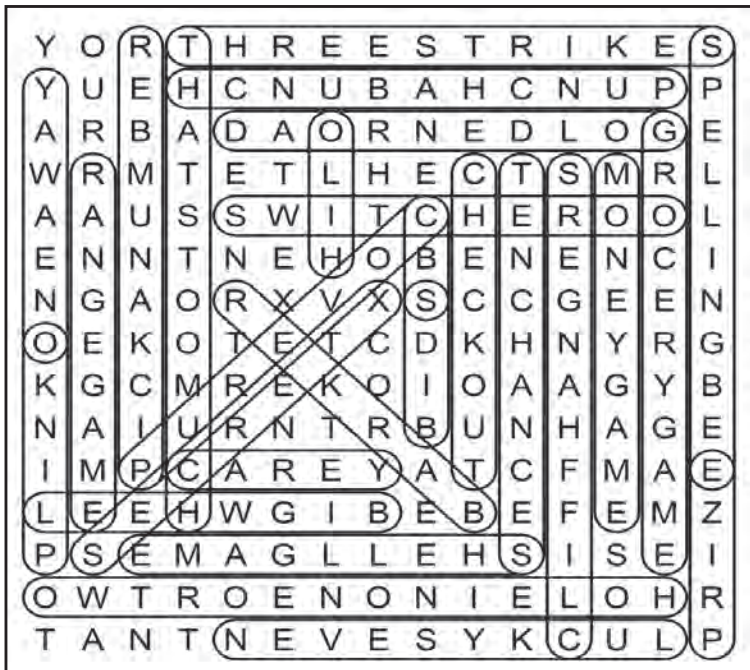
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Q&A: Jessica Camacho

BY ADAM THOMLISON

Q: I was sorry to see that Prime Video canceled "Countdown." If there would have been a Season 2, would Jessica Camacho have been in it?

A: As the question suggests, things weren't looking great for her character when the show concluded what turned out to be its only season. Camacho's DEA operative Amber Oliveras was on the run, very literally, from the kidnapper who had her in the sights of his weapon ... and Season 2 presumably would have opened with the outcome of that cliffhanger. Series creator and executive producer Derek Haas played coy in post-finale interviews he gave, though some remarks he made did suggest that Oliveras would have survived her plight.

It's always a gamble when show makers end a season with big questions and without already having a renewal. From a creative standpoint, it can be a way to try to maneuver a network or streamer into picking up the show for another round. However, if that fails, it can leave followers of the program disappointed that they won't get a definitive resolution to any loose ends that were left. And Oliveras's fate certainly was an enormous loose end for followers of "Countdown."

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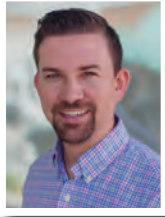


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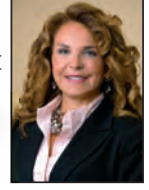


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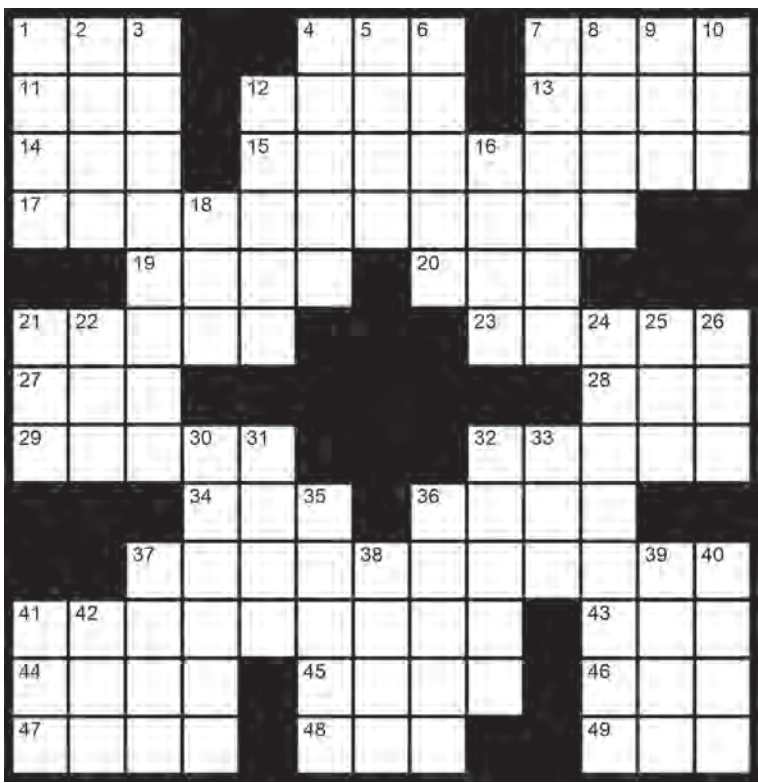
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Crosswords



Across

1. Stop on the RR
4. Alternative to All
7. Rural road-sign image
11. It might follow a master's degree
12. Arcade game starter
13. Shoe man Picone
14. MP3-player battery
15. HBO series where 2% of the population disappear, with "The"
17. "The Chair Company" comedian
19. Curd's partner
20. Sun Devils of the Pac-12
21. Treats that come in Thins and Double Stuf varieties
23. Mountain nymph of myth
27. "Metroid" console
28. Aftermath Records founder, familiarly
29. Perfume providing an accent?
32. Perform a cook-out job
34. "I cracked the code!"
36. Food in a Mumbai bread basket
37. Dramatic series starring Denzel Washington
41. TV drama starring Michael Chiklis
43. "Atonement" author McEwan
44. "Psycho" (1960) actress Miles
45. Treaty signatory
46. You might trip on it, for short
47. Hit, as a fly
48. Full of tricks
49. Some records: Abbr.

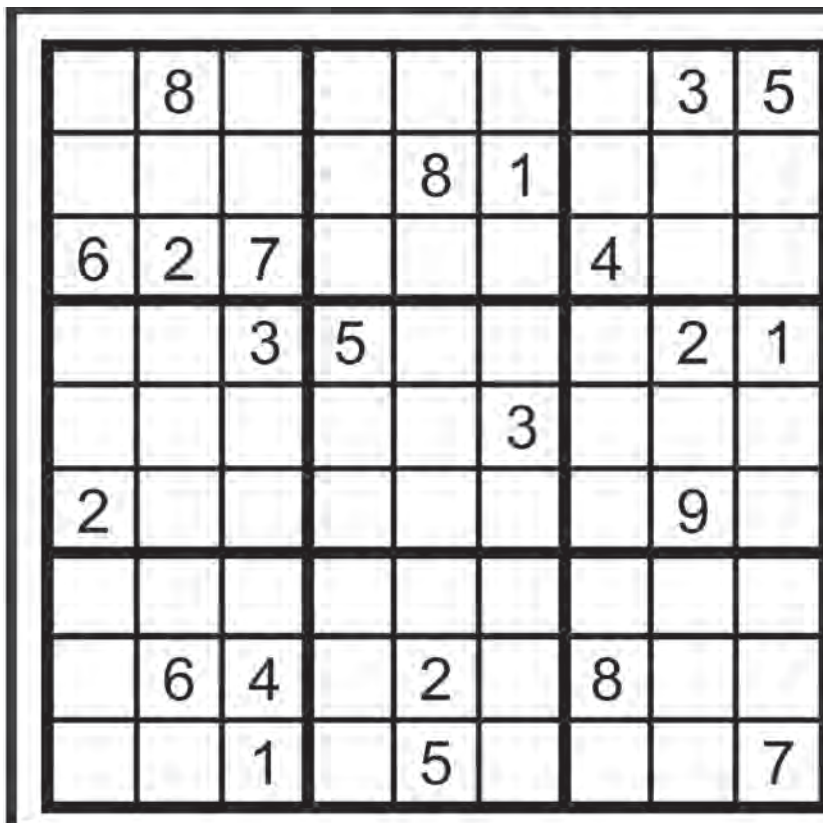
Down

7. Consume
8. Like eight
9. Either end of a wide grin
10. "Angels of mercy," briefly
12. Prunus spinosa plants
16. ___ buco (veal dish)
18. Homophone of "row"
21. Area-code preceder
22. Legal term
24. "Married...With Children" co-star
25. Horror film director Aster
26. CTRL-ALT-___
30. Patronizes, as a restaurant
31. Querying sounds
32. Like many double entendres
33. Show team spirit
35. Jennifer Garner series
36. "I'm Like a Bird" singer Furtado
37. Hospital need
38. Go like hotcakes
39. Smoother
40. Is done
41. Soap boxes?
42. Give the ax?



- Down**
1. Kerfuffle
 2. Cuisine with fried rice
 3. '60s Batman portrayal
 4. Beat, just barely, in sports headlines
 5. Mortgagor's choice, for short
 6. Oxford rival

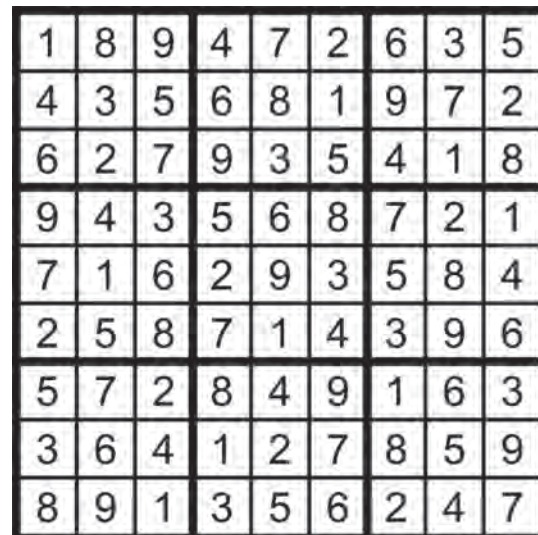
Sudoku



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.

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Table for DECEMBER 7, 2025. Columns include SUNDAY EVENING, SP=Spectrum, FTC=Farm, DTV=DirectTV, MOVIES, SPORTS, KIDS, and DECEMBER 7, 2025. Rows list channels (WIS, WKTC, WOLO, etc.) and their respective programs.

Table for DECEMBER 8, 2025. Columns include MONDAY EVENING, SP=Spectrum, FTC=Farm, DTV=DirectTV, MOVIES, SPORTS, KIDS, and DECEMBER 8, 2025. Rows list channels (WIS, WKTC, WOLO, etc.) and their respective programs.

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Viewers can dream of a 'White Christmas' again

BY JAY BOBBIN

Some people don't feel the holidays are complete without certain movies, and for many fans, "White Christmas" is one of them.

Incorporating elements of 1942's "Holiday Inn" — such as star Bing Crosby and Irving Berlin-composed music — the 1954 classic, directed by Michael Curtiz ("Casablanca," 1942), has its place in film history. It was the first title released by Paramount Pictures in the studio's widescreen VistaVision process, and AMC gives it one of its multiple seasonal telecasts Sunday, Dec. 7.

Crosby plays Bob Wallace, a popular song-and-dance man whose military service places him in the company of fellow soldier Phil Davis (Danny Kaye), with whom he performs shows for the troops. After saving Bob from possible injury during an attack, Phil suggests that they team up permanently upon their return stateside. Bob resists at first but ultimately agrees, and the duo becomes one of the most popular acts in show business.

Another Army comrade asks them to have a look at the act performed by his sisters (Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen), and the fellows become intrigued, also from the standpoint of potential romance. They all head for Vermont, where Wallace and Davis have a booking at the inn operated by their former general (Dean Jagger), but the place is pretty desolate — as is the general — because of the lack of snow.

Bob then comes up with a plan to bring their entire regiment back together at the inn, using another associate's TV variety show to issue the invitation. Meanwhile, love grows (with a few stumbles, of course) between the Crosby and Clooney characters, and also for Kaye and Vera-Ellen's alter egos.

"White Christmas" simply is a delight, ideally capturing the feel of the season ... though Christmas was just one of the occasions celebrated in "Holiday Inn," which partnered Crosby with Fred Astaire (who reportedly was approached first for this revision but turned it down). It's notable to spot then-future "West Side Story" (1961) Oscar winner George Chakiris as one of the dancers swirling around Clooney during the number "Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me."

"Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)," "Sisters," "Snow," "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" and "Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army" are among the other great songs in the score, and all of the stars are hugely agreeable in delivering them.

Watching "White Christmas" truly is like curling up under a comfortable blanket, so cozy is the feeling that it generates. Right along with such other staples of this time of year as "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946) and "Miracle on 34th Street" (1947), it's a cinematic essential as people look to revisit traditions that just make them feel good, time and time again.

Best BRAD PITT MOVIES

BY JAY BOBBIN

"Thelma & Louise" (1991): Pitt made a big impression as a young drifter who crosses paths with the title fugitives (played by Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis).

"True Romance" (1993): Pitt has an effective supporting role as the roommate of a would-be actor (Michael Rapaport) involved in a drug deal in this vivid, Quentin Tarantino-written crime drama.

"Interview With the Vampire" (1994): The movie version of Anne Rice's novel features Pitt as a vampire's (Tom Cruise) victim and subsequent companion.

"Seven" (1995): Pitt and Morgan Freeman make a memorable police detective team seeking a killer who applies the seven deadly sins in director David Fincher's dark thriller.

"12 Monkeys" (1995): Director Terry Gilliam's sci-fi tale presents Pitt as an institutionalized patient who may have involvement in the release of a lethal virus.

"Meet Joe Black" (1998): Pitt does a solid job as a human representation of death in this modernization of the story "Death Takes a Holiday."

"Fight Club" (1999): Pitt portrays the co-founder of the underground title club, which no attendee is supposed to talk about, in this controversial drama that reunited him with director Fincher.

"Ocean's Eleven" (2001): In a star-studded cast, Pitt is enjoyable as a member of a casino-robbery gang in this franchise-launching remake of a 1960 caper.

"Mr. & Mrs. Smith" (2005): Pitt and Angelina Jolie play spouses, each of whom doesn't realize that the other is a professional assassin.

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" (2008): In yet another teaming with filmmaker Fincher, Pitt plays a man who experiences the aging process in reverse in this F. Scott Fitzgerald story.

"Inglourious Basterds" (2009): Director Tarantino's Oscar-winning war satire stars Pitt as a military lieutenant planning an assault on Nazi leaders at a French movie theater.

"Moneyball" (2011): A baseball team manager (Pitt) applies analytics in making his decisions on who will play on the squad.

"Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood" (2019): Working with filmmaker Tarantino again, Pitt plays a would-be stunt man associated with a fading actor (Leonardo DiCaprio).

"Bullet Train" (2022): An ex-assassin (Pitt) with a problematic history gets caught among various lethal parties while on a mission aboard the title vehicle.

"F1" (2025): Making its Apple TV streaming debut Friday, Dec. 12, one of this year's top box-office hits — directed by Joseph Kosinski ("Top Gun: Maverick," 2022) — casts Pitt as a former Formula driver who resumes his career to help a team-owning friend (Javier Bardem).



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Waking the dead: Benoit Blanc returns in third 'Knives Out Mystery'

BY DANA SIMPSON

The avid filmgoer or attentive pop culture aficionado has likely noticed a trending return toward gothic sensibilities over the past year or so. Sure, Robert Eggers' "Nosferatu" (2024) and Guillermo Del Toro's "Frankenstein" (2025) are firmly planted in the horror genre, but that doesn't mean the gothic vibes need to stay sequestered with the monstrous forever. Rian Johnson ("Poker Face"), for one, had other plans, and now the newly repopularized aesthetic has expanded into the realm of whodunnit comedy.

"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery" is in select theaters now and makes its worldwide streaming premiere Friday, Dec. 12, on Netflix.

The third film in Johnson's Knives Out franchise, featuring suave Southern detective Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig, "Casino Royale," 2006), "Wake Up Dead Man" initially premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival this past September. Then described as "a seemingly impossible locked-room scenario involving a corpse" that remains "as strong, inventive and entertaining as ever," Johnson trades in the sun-soaked luxury of the Grecian mansion in "Glass Onion" (2022) for the grim-yet-beautiful artistry of a Gothic-era

church in soggy Upstate New York, a setting befitting of the themes at the film's core.

"Themes of guilt, mystery, morality and fallible humanity all feel right at home in a church, with a man of God in the center of the mix," Johnson explains in an interview for Netflix's Tudum. "I have strong feelings about faith: both my own personal experience and how it intersects with our country's cultural and civic life, and the ways that intersection touches all of us differently. So it felt like rich ground for a good story."

And that story, per the trailer, goes a little something like this: "A man gives a sermon. He then, in plain sight of everyone, walks into a sealed concrete box, and 30 seconds later, that man is lying dead. A classic impossible crime."

At the heart of the crime is, of course, the victim: Mons. Jefferson Wicks, played by "Weapons" (2025) and "Avengers: Endgame" (2019) star Josh Brolin. Upon the discovery of the priest's body, the film series' dapper Det. Blanc (this time with a luscious mane of hair) is called in to solve the unlikely crime. As always, Blanc is tasked with questioning a small group of would-be witnesses, any one of whom could be the killer.

Among the rag-tag group of suspects are Father Jud Duplenticy (Josh O'Connor, "The Crown"), who has taken up the mantle as Blanc's assistant and right-hand man; devout Catholic Martha Delacroix (Glenn Close, "Fatal Attraction," 1987), who is as shady as she is religious; local doctor Nat Sharp (Jeremy Renner, "The Hurt Locker," 2008); cynical bestselling author Lee Ross (Andrew Scott, "Ripley"); former concert cellist Simone Vivane (Cailee Spaeny, "Civil War," 2024); the Dravens, including uptight lawyer Vera (Kerry Washington, "Scandal") and aspiring politician Cy (Daryl McCormack, "Peaky Blinders"); as well as the church's risk-averse groundskeeper Samson Holt (Thomas Hayden Church, "Sideways," 2004).

Mila Kunis ("Black Swan," 2010) also stars as small-town New York police chief Geraldine Scott.

"We've been very lucky with each of these movies to have gathered some of my favorite actors on the planet, and that's absolutely the case here," Johnson reported to Tudum.

"They're also all lovely folks who get along," the writer-director noted, adding, "When you're making an ensemble movie like this, I think that's key."



View from the Couch



"AIRPLANE!"

One of the most successful satires made gets its debut as a solo 4K Ultra HD title, after being included in an earlier set with other films from the Zucker-Abrahams-Zucker creative team. Borrowing heavily from the premise of the 1957 drama "Airport" — but also from the "Airport" disaster-movie series — the 1980 comedy stars Robert Hays as a former military pilot haunted by bad aerial memories. He struggles to get past those when he has to take over for the incapacitated crew aboard a passenger jet on which his ex-girlfriend (Julie Hagerty) is a stewardess. The movie set a blueprint for enlisting normally serious actors to spoof their usual images — in this case, Leslie Nielsen (who went on to work for

BY JAY BOBBIN

the same filmmakers in the "Naked Gun" franchise), Peter Graves, Lloyd Bridges and Robert Stack. **** (PG: AS, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

The animated Disney-studio comedy marks its 25th anniversary with a new 4K Ultra HD edition, as David Spade voices the title emperor whose seemingly ideal existence comes crashing down when he's turned into a llama by his counselor and her sidekick (voices of Eartha Kitt and Patrick Warburton). To try to restore things properly, the suddenly transformed ruler partners with a peasant (voice of John Goodman), and the two of them share misadventures. The Sting-performed song "My Funny Friend and Me" was Oscar-nominated, and the movie inspired the Disney Channel series "The Emperor's New School." Wendie Malick, John Fiedler (who voiced Piglet in Disney's "Winnie the Pooh" cartoons) and pop-music legend Tom Jones also are heard in the 2000 feature. *** (G) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"HEARTS OF DARKNESS: A FILMMAKER'S JOURNEY"

The making of Francis Ford Coppola's famously controversial 1979 Vietnam War drama "Apocalypse Now" is traced by his wife Eleanor — initially, at least, since she ultimately handed completion of the project over to George Hicklenlooper and Fax Bahr — in this

acclaimed 1991 documentary, now on 4K Ultra HD for the first time. The production of "Apocalypse Now" was plagued by numerous difficulties, ranging from a typhoon that destroyed many of the picture's sets in Manila, to the heart attack suffered on location by co-star Martin Sheen (whose brother doubled for him while he recovered). Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, Frederic Forrest, Laurence Fishburne, Dennis Hopper, Harrison Ford and Scott Glenn also were in the cast of "Apocalypse Now," which was inspired by the Joseph Conrad novella "Heart of Darkness." George Lucas, who helped longtime friend Coppola with funding, is among the interviewees here. **** (R: AS, N, P, V) (Also on Blu-ray)

"AWAKENINGS"

Director Penny Marshall's excellent 1990 drama, newly available on 4K Ultra HD, adapts the same-named memoir by neurologist Oliver Sacks — who gets a fictionalized counterpart here in a doctor played by Robin Williams. He discovers that a drug evidently will awaken patients who have been in catatonic states, with one such person portrayed by Robert De Niro; the latter revels in his new condition, to the extent that he rebels against restrictions placed on his new situation that encompasses his romance with another patient's daughter (Penelope Ann Miller). Eventually, the health reversal may prove only temporary. John Heard,

Sensational Ms. Swift: Docuseries takes fans behind the scene of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour



BY CAROLINE COLLACUTT

Five continents. Twenty-one countries. Fifty-one cities. Go behind-the-scenes of one of the largest international tours ever completed, with the premiere of "Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour | The End of an Era," a six-part docuseries making its debut on Disney+ Friday, Dec. 12.

Promising an "intimate look at Taylor's life as her tour made headlines and thrilled fans around the world," this special feature chronicles the "development, impact and inner workings that created the phenomenon that was Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour," according to the streamer. "The illuminating docuseries gives an intimate look at Taylor's life as her tour made headlines and thrilled fans around the world. In addition, the series spotlights performers, family members and friends — including Gracie Abrams ["Close to You"], Sabrina Carpenter ["Espresso"], Ed Sheeran ["Perfect"] and Florence Welch ["Cosmic Love"] — offering never-before-seen insight into what it took to create a phenomenon," Disney says.

Attended by 10.1 million fans across the globe, the record-breaking Eras Tour began in March 2023 and concluded in December 2024, seeing 149 shows and 18 impressive opening acts — including Paramore ("Still Into You"), HAIM ("Summer Girl"), MUNA ("Silk Chiffon") and

Phoebe Bridgers ("Scott Street") — across its run. According to a report given by NPR, the 21-month-long tour grossed over \$2.7 billion in ticket sales, reaching "Swifties" everywhere from the United States to Brazil, Japan and Australia.

This docuseries takes fans behind the curtain, speaking with concert guests, Swift's band, dancers, crew and family members — including Swift's football-playing fiancé, Travis Kelce — as it reflects on the once-in-a-lifetime tour.

During her last Eras Tour performance (in Vancouver, B.C.), Swift thanked her fans by saying: "Making friends and bringing joy to each other, that is I think the lasting legacy of this tour, ... the fact that you have created such a space of joy and togetherness and love. You're why this is so special. And you supporting me for as long as you have is why I get to take these lovely walks down memory every single night because you cared about every era of my entire life that I've been making music, so thank you."

Releasing in tandem with "Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour | The Final Show," which details Swift's final Eras Tour performance, "Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour | The End of an Era," premieres on Disney+ Friday, Dec. 12.

AS Adult situations
P Profanity

Family Viewing Ratings

V Violence
N Nudity

GV Graphic Violence

Julie Kavner, Ruth Nelson, Max von Sydow, Anne Meara and Bradley Whitford are also featured in the film. A "making-of" documentary is included. **** (PG-13: AS, P) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"MINORITY REPORT"

Originally intended as a sequel to 1990's "Total Recall," director Steven Spielberg's 2002 take on a Philip K. Dick sci-fi novella comes to 4K Ultra HD, casting Tom Cruise as the leader of a futuristic police division that relies on information from psychics to track and capture criminals before they can commit their felonies. The cop is troubled by the visions had by one of the so-called "precogs" (Samantha Morton), foreshadowing his involvement in the death of someone he has no knowledge of in the present moment. He then goes rogue to try to determine how the situation applies to him and what, if anything, he should do about it. Max von Sydow, Colin Farrell, Neal McDonough, Lois Smith, Kathryn Morris and Mike Binder also appear, and the score is by frequent Spielberg collaborator John Williams. The movie inspired a 2015-16 Fox television series of which Spielberg was an executive producer. *** (PG-13: AS, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

"ANACONDA"

Populated by a better cast than might be expected of a film of its type, this 1997 horror-adventure — soon to have a somewhat satirical reboot in theaters — gets 4K Ultra

HD Steelbook treatment. Jennifer Lopez, Ice Cube, Eric Stoltz and Owen Wilson play members of a documentary team that ventures to the Amazon rainforest to film a project about a tribe that resides there. They encounter a snake hunter (Jon Voight) who draws them into a search for an enormous anaconda that he wants to capture alive, making his initially trusting new acquaintances bait for his quarry. Director Luis Llosa ("The Specialist," 1994) makes commendable use of the atmosphere and the visual effects; Jonathan Hyde, Kari Wuhrer and Danny Trejo also have roles in the melodrama (which inspired several sequels), and the music score is by Randy Edelman. Deleted and extended scenes are among the special features. *** (PG-13: AS, N, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

Coming Home Soon

"BABE" (4K ULTRA HD) (DEC. 16)

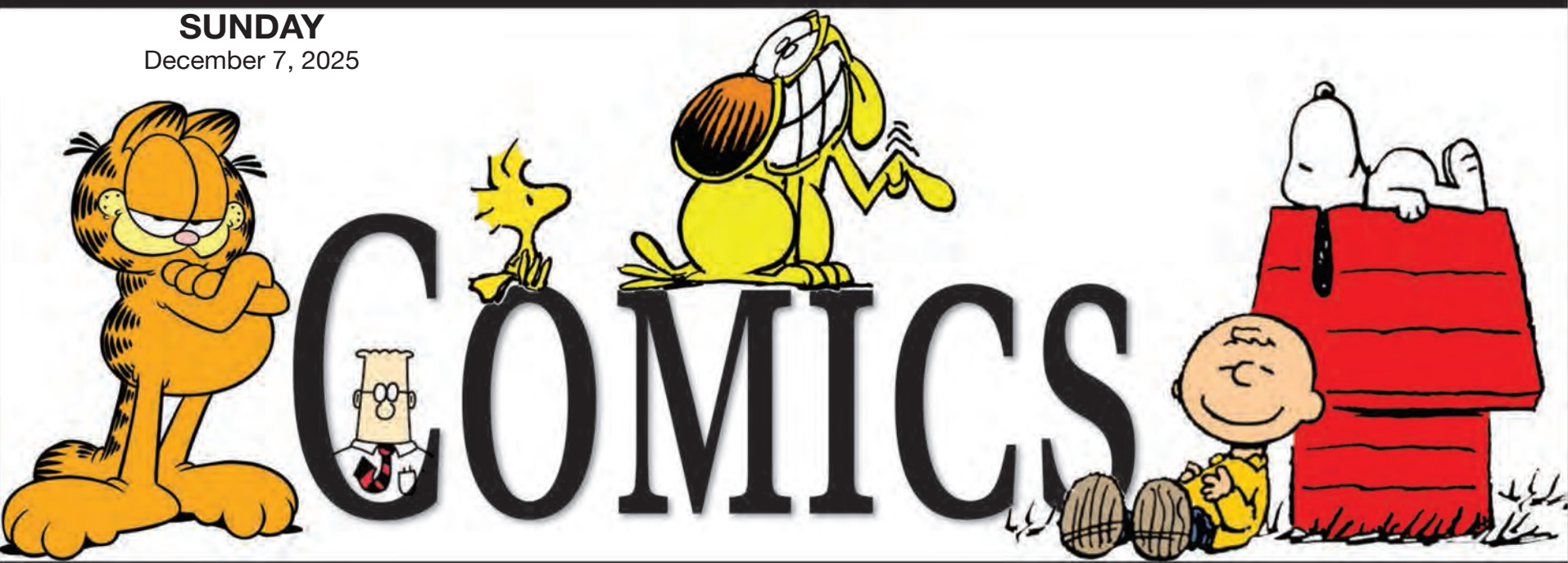
"LEAVING LAS VEGAS" (4K ULTRA HD) (DEC. 16)

"PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE" (CRITERION COLLECTION) (DEC. 16)

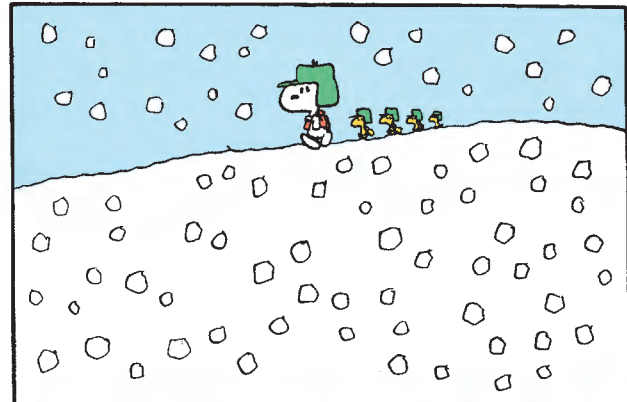
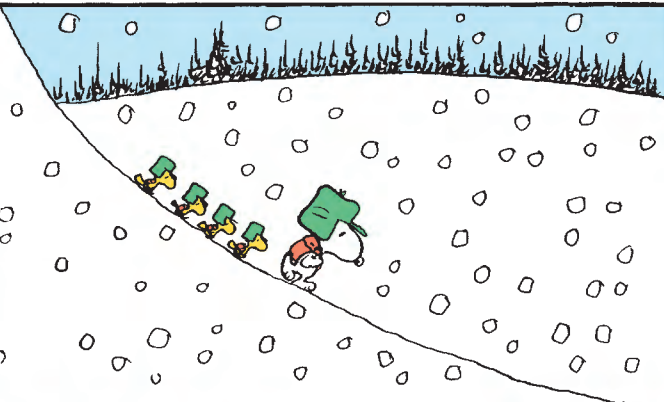
"A BIG BOLD BEAUTIFUL JOURNEY" (DEC. 23)

"BLACK PHONE 2" (DEC. 23)

SUNDAY
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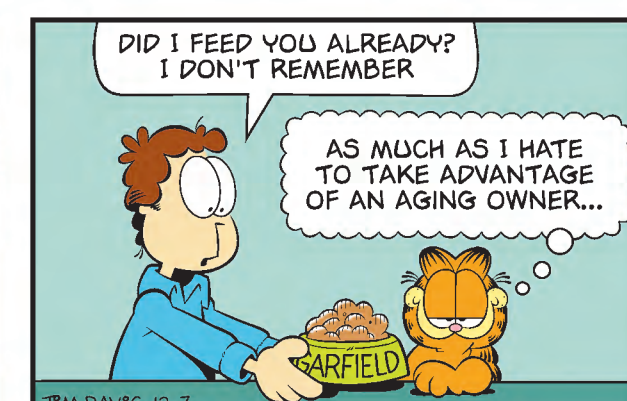
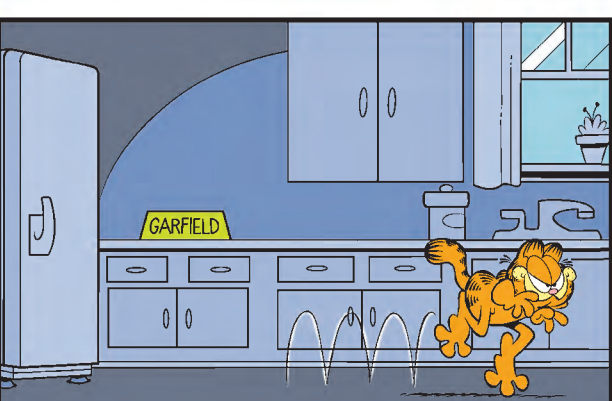
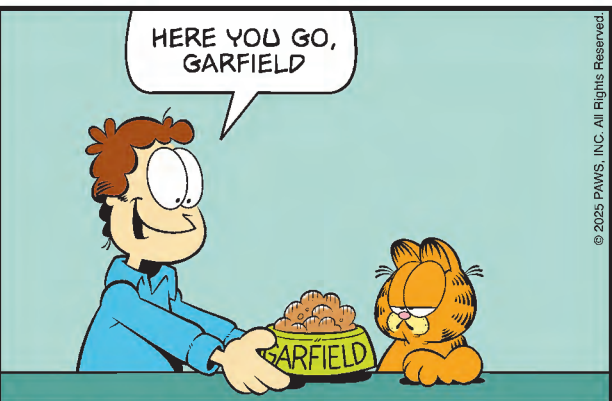


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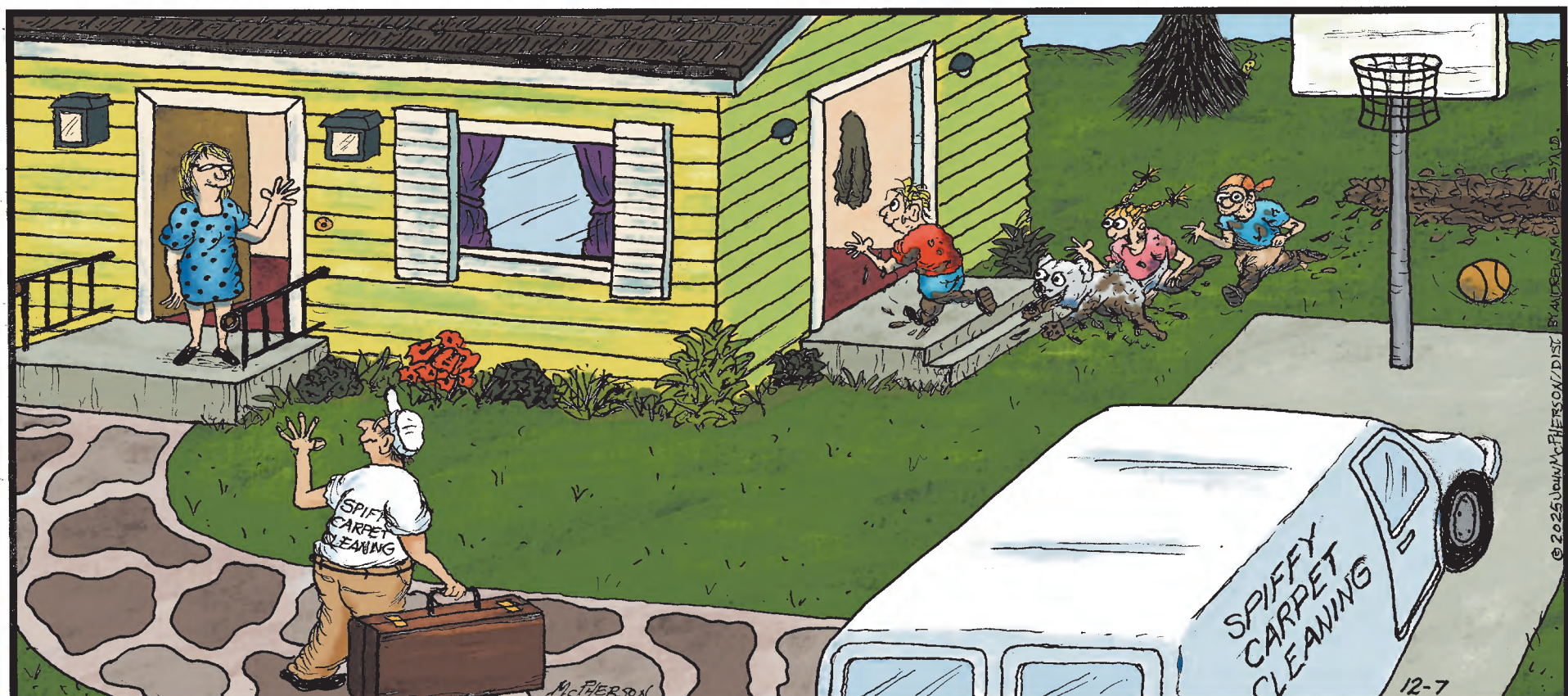
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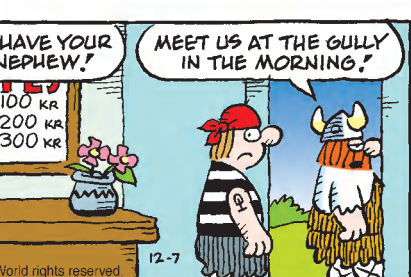
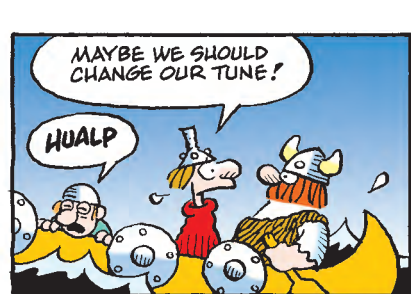
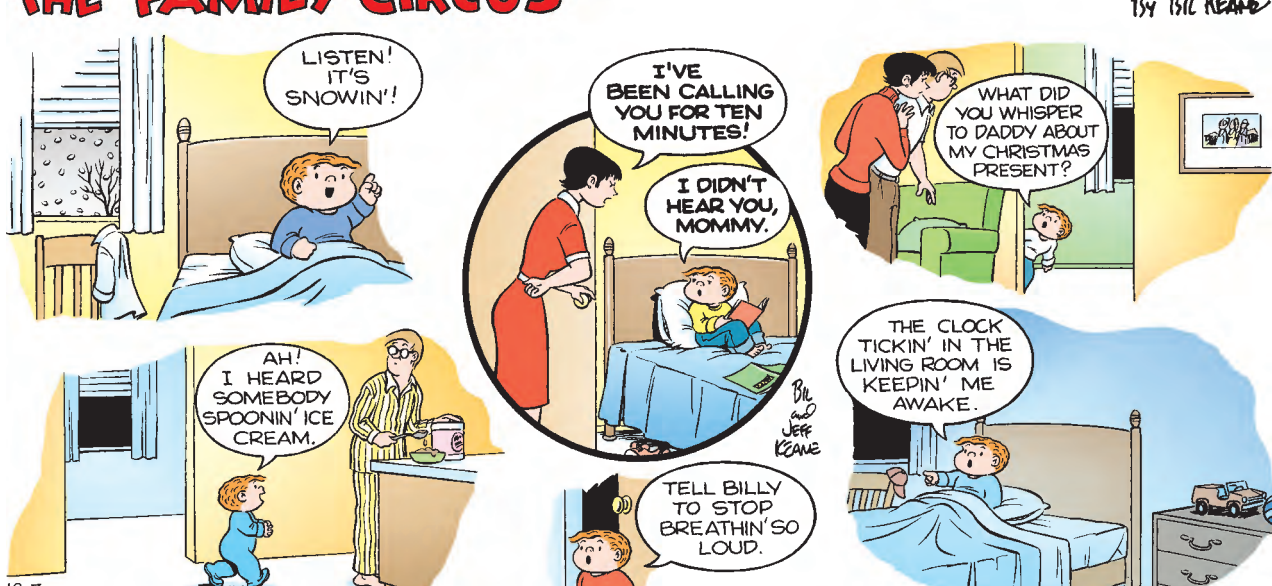
FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



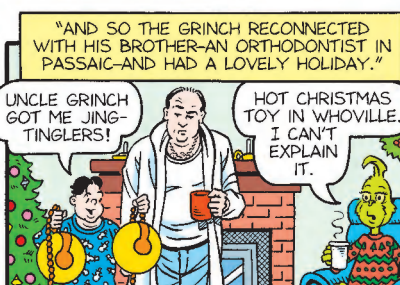
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

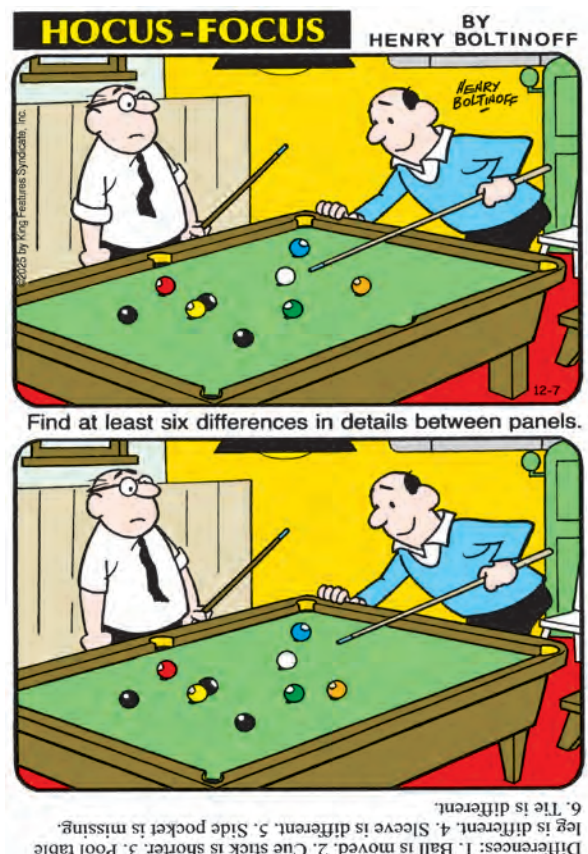
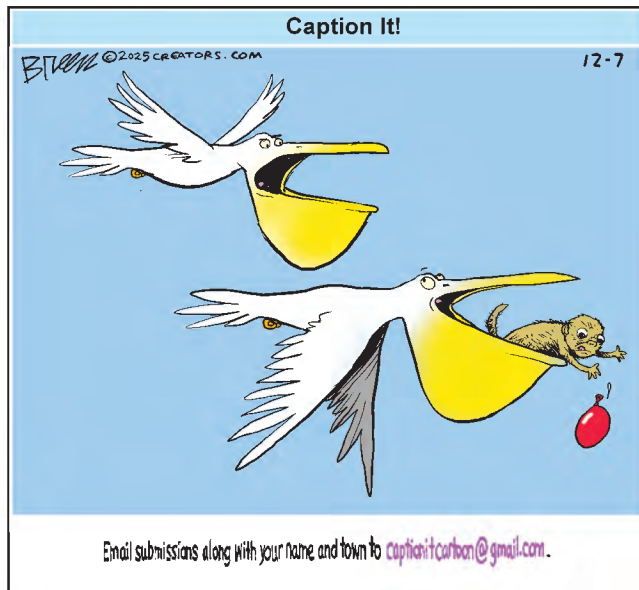
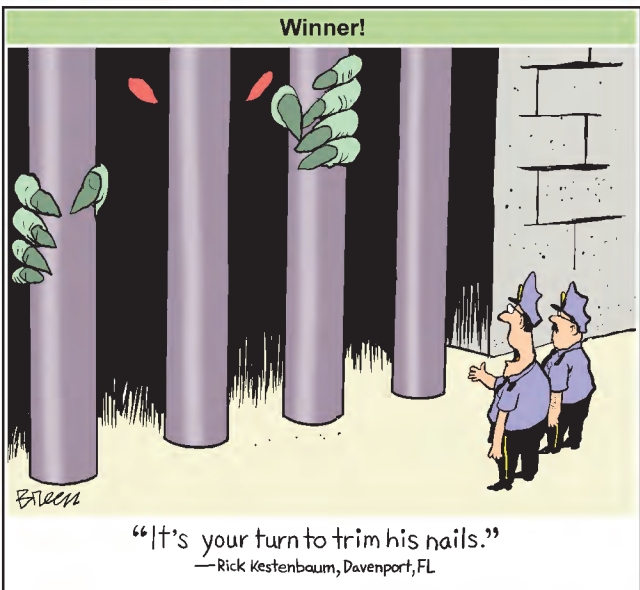
By Bill Keane



SALLY FORTH

BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE





FRANK AND ERNEST



THE BORN LOSER



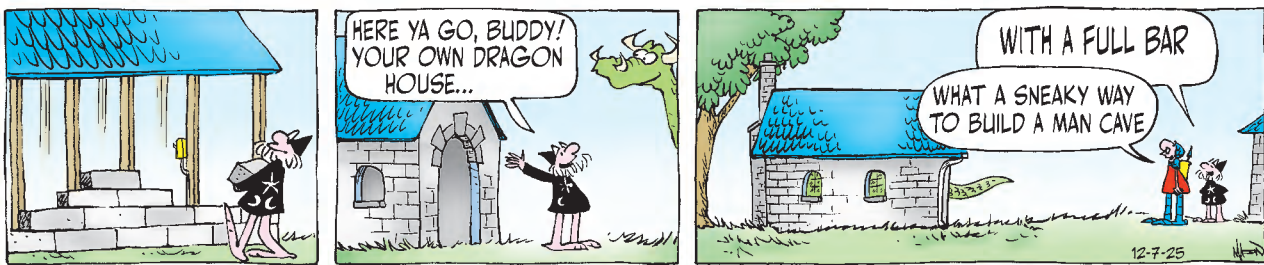
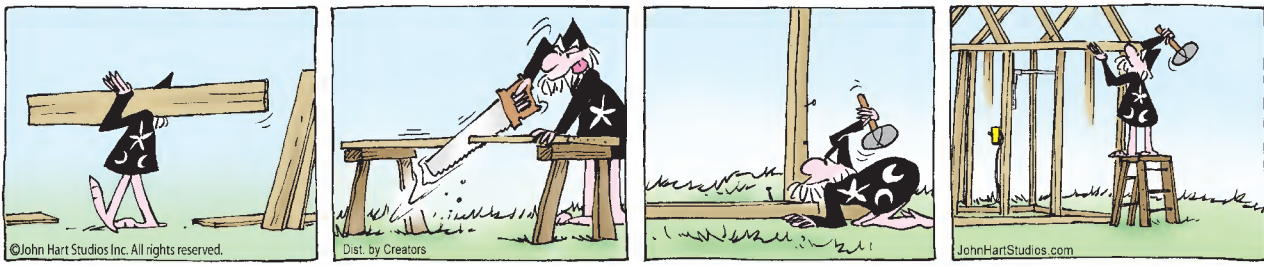
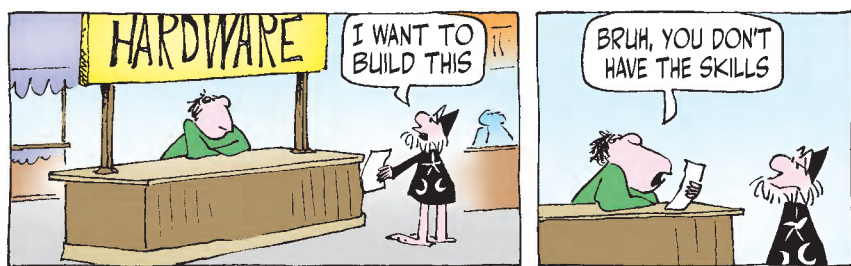
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS



WIZARD OF ID

by Hart, Mastroianni and Parker



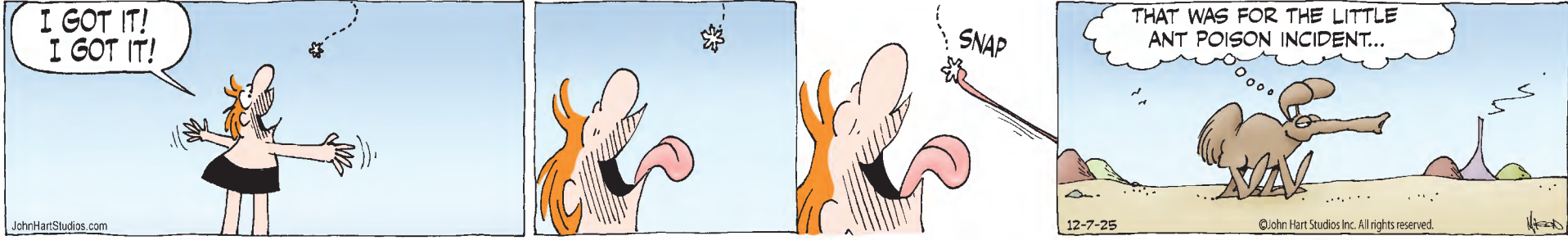
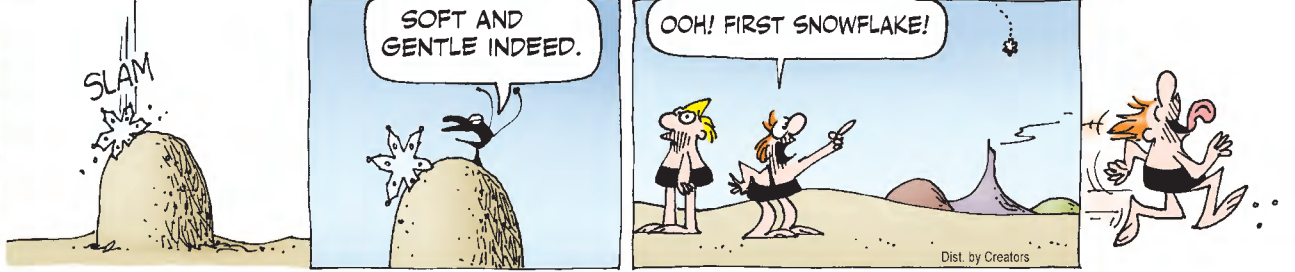
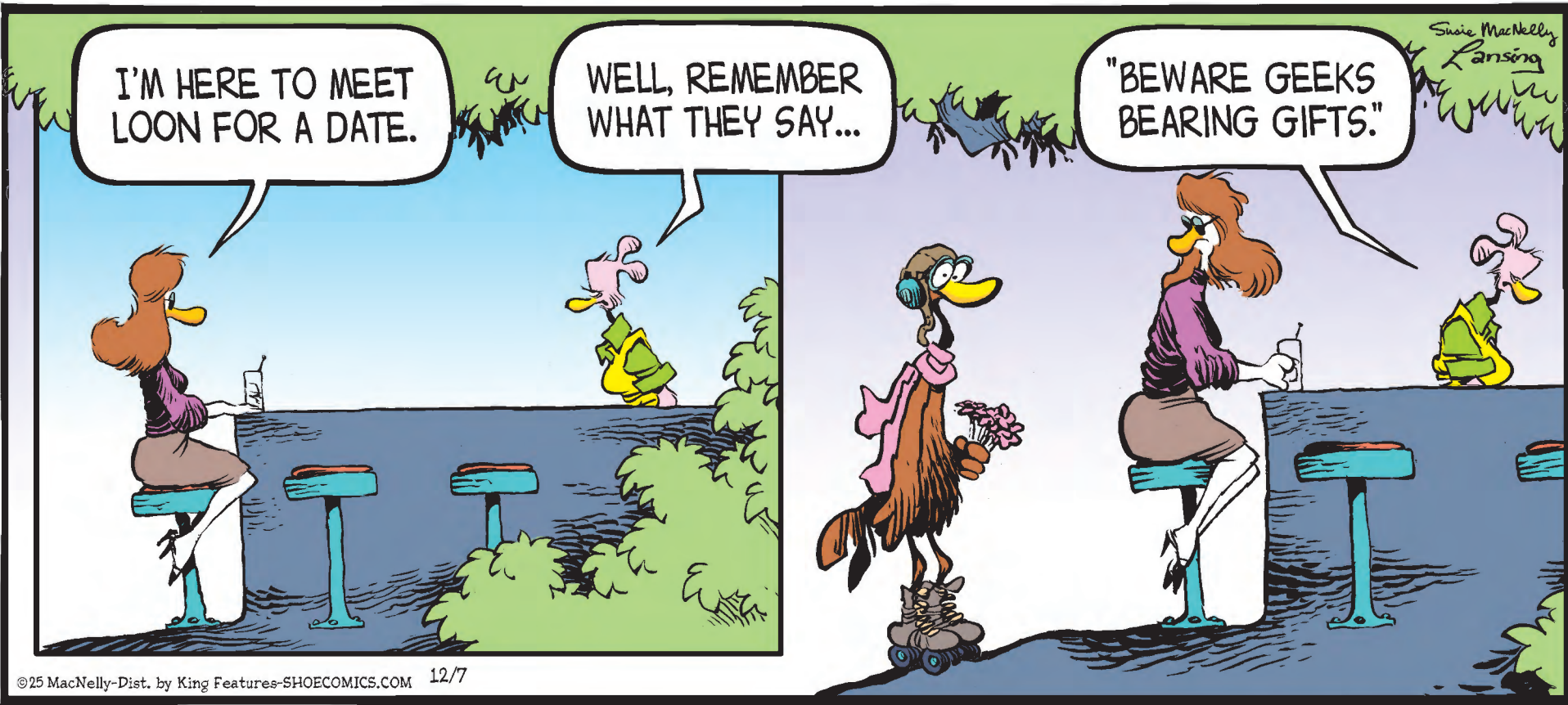
GET FUZZY

BY DARBY CONLEY



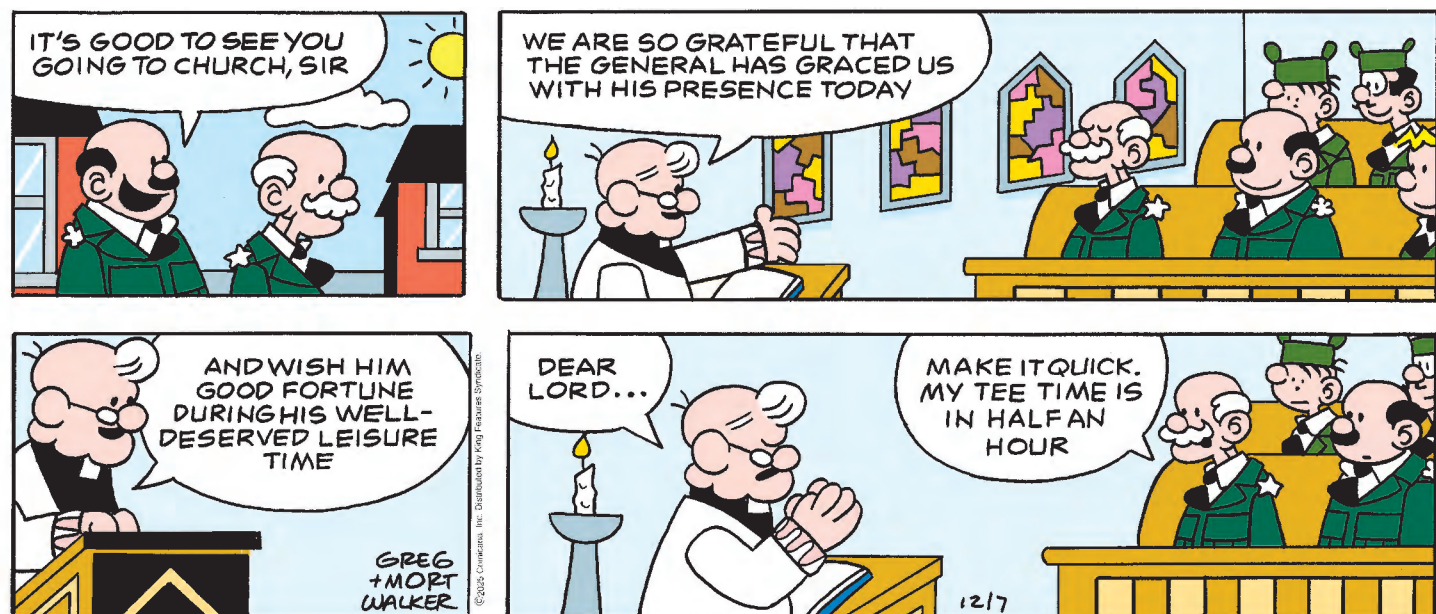
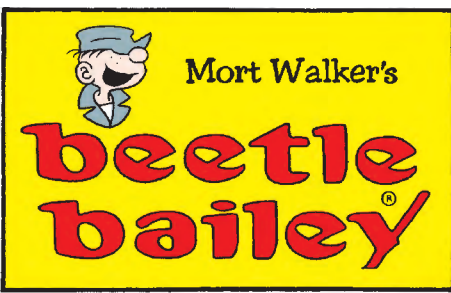
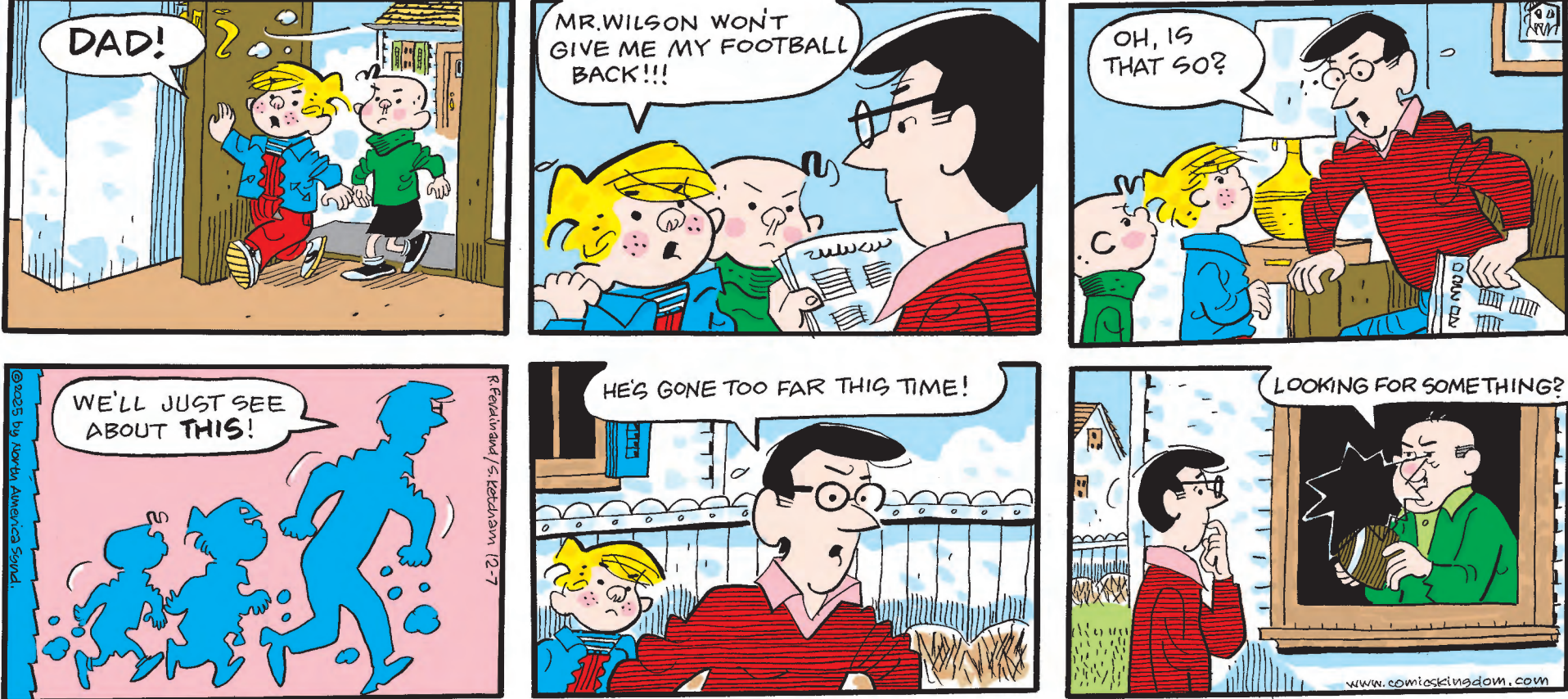
SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY



DENNIS THE MENACE

BY HANK KETCHAM



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