



Sumter High relaunches speech and debate team

A6

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Halloween is here!

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Pumpkins are arrayed at Dorr Farms in Gable, ready to decorate customers' homes for the season. Read more about the local farm's seasonal activities in our fall and Halloween section starting on A10. Scares, fun festivals and adults-only Halloween fun can be found throughout Sumter and beyond this year.




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Share ideas for annual City of Sumter community money at hearing

BY MELANIE SMITH

melanie@theitem.com

Every city resident has had opportunities throughout the fall to share their ideas on how the annual Community Development Block Grant money the city is allocated should be spent, and there's one last meeting you can attend if you haven't yet made it to one.

Public input is important, and the city wants to hear from you to shape the Annual Action Plan for the money.

Community Development Block Grants, or CDBG money, is awarded to the city each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to support low- to moderate-income city residents and projects.

Each year the city asks residents how they think this money can best be used in their communities, so if you have ideas on how to im-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CITY OF SUMTER

City of Sumter holds a public comment meeting about the future use of Community Development Block Grant funding on Tuesday, Sept. 30. The city's meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 18, is the last opportunity to tell the city how you would like for that annual money to be spent in the next fiscal year.

prove your neighborhood, this is your chance to tell the city.

On Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 6 p.m., meet at City Council Chambers on the 4th Floor Sumter Opera House at 21 N. Main St.

According to the city's

page on Facebook, "Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding helps cities and counties improve communities by supporting housing, infrastructure and economic development projects, especially in low- and moderate-income areas. It

can fund things like neighborhood revitalization, public facilities, small business support and programs that improve quality of life for residents."

Examples of previous projects are housing repair, youth employment, demoli-

tion of blighted properties and allocations for local programs, such as YMCA, Sumter United Ministries and HYPE After-School Program.

For 2025-26, the city received \$333,755 in CDBG money, and the fiscal year's budget has already been approved by Sumter City Council. This last public hearing in November is meant for everyone to talk about what they would like to see happen with the 2026-27 funding, whose budget will be approved next year. The fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31 of the next year, so the money discussed at this meeting would begin to be spent April 1, 2026.

Entry to all meeting places is handicapped accessible. Hearing impaired or deaf persons may call (803) 774-1649 for assistance. People needing an interpreter may call the same number for assistance.

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**House Speaker
Rep. Murrell Smith**



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Military

Air Combat Command commander visits Shaw

U.S. Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain, commander of Air Combat Command, visited Shaw Air Force Base on Sept. 17. The visit offered 20th FW leaders an opportunity to share current priorities and key successes, challenges and long-term readiness goals.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain listens intently while an airman with the 20th Fighter Wing discusses their mission during his visit.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. TERRENCE CLYBURN II
U.S. Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain, left, and Col. Hugh Walker, 20th Fighter Wing acting commander, tour the deployment processing center at Shaw Air Force Base on Sept. 17.



ABOVE: U.S. Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain coins airmen on Sept. 17. During the visit, airmen were recognized for going above and beyond.

BELOW: U.S. Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain receives a briefing while visiting Shaw Air Force Base on Sept. 17.



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Religion

As seasons change, maybe we can be more open to loving others

In Montana, locals observe that they have three seasons: “July, August and Winter!” I went on an amazing trip to Montana about four years ago, and it was in May, my boys were out of school, and so it was the ideal time for us to travel, but what we had not anticipated was the snow would still be a foot deep in places and the roads that we hoped to conquer were still closed to traffic. I learned that summer, indeed spring, had not arrived yet in the northern reaches of Montana.

The seasons change in South Carolina, but some do not last for long. Our summers can be oppressively

hot, but our springs and falls can be unbelievably pleasant. Winter does come, but there are certainly winters when we do not take our heavy coats out of the closet. Some people long for four distinct seasons. Some people who have moved to the South long for snow, and soon they realize they have to travel to feed their need.



Pastor Stewart Rawson

There are many people who love the fall ritual of leaves changing color. Some will drive to the mountains to capture the peak of color change. Trees that were boldly green before transform into vibrant reds, yellows and oranges; many trees are so intense they appear to be on fire. We know this period of intensity does not last for long, and so we learn to savor it when it comes.



The changing of the seasons is a part of the natural process that our earth goes through. The colors of the fall and the brilliant leaves fall to the earth, leading to the barrenness of winter. Winter often seems stark, but we know that it is a part of nature taking care of itself. We hope that it won't be long before the new buds of spring appear, leading to a lush canopy. Each year, in nature, there is birth and growth, death and renewal.

Though at a much slower and less

drastic pace, our lives follow a similar cycle. Those of us who have been around for more than a few decades can attest to the changes that happen, some welcomed, others not so welcome. Our hearts can change, too. This can happen slowly over time, or it may be more sudden. A grievance done to us can be forgiven, but sometimes it may be gradual, as our hearts soften and kindness guides our response. We often say that people can't change, but people can change. Sometimes we might need help from a power greater than we are, and sometimes the work of that power might even be undetectable to us, but it is there. Maybe as the seasons change and the trees embrace their temporary, vibrant color, maybe we can be more open to loving others as we love ourselves. This is my hope.

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



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The pursuit of dispute

Sumter High relaunches speech and debate team; program develops public speaking and research skills

BY BRUCE MILLS

bruce@theitem.com

In today's climate of social media and politics, facts, research and respect can take a back seat to misinformation and attacks, but a group of high school students is pursuing the finer elements of true debate.

After 24 years without an active speech and debate team, Sumter High School has reestablished a club and team under the leadership of three advisors and competed in its first official tournament since 2001 in late September in the Upstate, where three stu-



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Members of the Sumter High School Speech and Debate Club stand outside the school recently for a group photo. The club started in the spring, and now a team is competing in tournaments.

dents placed.

Current seniors Trillyon Glover and Dyquan Wilson initiated the idea for the club in the spring while they were still juniors and asked Sumter High teacher Joshua Miller to lead the group.

Both students said they like to watch

debates, including presidential debates.

Wilson said he and Glover were in a meeting last school year where debate was occurring, and the two said to each other, "You know what? We should start a debate club."

They said they did not know the school previously had one more than 20 years ago.

Miller started the club, which now consists of 33 students, as an informal discussion group, he said.

After winning a grant in the spring, Miller was able to pay for the school's membership fee to become an active chapter in the National Speech and Debate Association, which is the largest high school speech and debate organization in the U.S. The association offers a wide range of resources for students and advisors, or coaches as they are sometimes called.

This semester team members will compete in three tournaments, and Miller said he hopes to schedule three more tournaments in the spring.

SKILLS LEARNED IN SPEECH AND DEBATE

High school speech and debate teams function very differently from the current political climate in America today, according to Miller and members of Sumter High's team.

Skills learned include leadership, public speaking, civic engagement and research skills, Miller said.

"Those research skills are really important for college," he said. "Every time they prepare a speech or prepare

WANT TO SPONSOR THE CLUB AND TEAM?

If an individual, organization or business would like to sponsor the Sumter High School Speech and Debate Team, contact Lead Instructor Joshua Miller at his email address, joshua.miller6@sumterschools.net.

an argument for debate, it follows the basic outline of an essay that you would write in college."

Another key aspect of speech and debate among chapters in the national association is that high school students do not just pick whatever side they want to on a topic, Miller said. Instead, they must be prepared to give arguments for both sides on issues. In turn, students become more empathetic with the other side.

"That is what I find so refreshing about what we are doing with high school speech and debate," he added. "It is not the same kind of discourse that we see nationally. This is really a discourse that is bringing students together on topics that are usually divisive.

"They are not making unfounded statements. Every statement they make has to be supported by a source. You have to look at issues that not just reflect your own personal beliefs, but also you must think about the side you oppose and 'Why do they believe what they believe?'"

SEE DEBATE, PAGE A7

PASTOR

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DEBATE FROM PAGE A6

Sumter High sophomores Johonna Patterson and Brandon Reyes were part of the school's 10-member team that traveled to the first tournament on Sept. 27 in Greer at Riverside High School. Patterson and Reyes were two of seven students who competed in different events, and both noticed the civility in the debate atmosphere.

Patterson said after all the rounds, the team went and talked with all their opponents and became friends.

"We exchanged phone numbers and stuff and got close to them," she said. "It was really an interesting experience. They were defensive during the debate, but at the end, they were the nicest people."

Reyes said high school debate really shows the character of the person.

"After the rounds ended, there was a recess, and it felt like a welcoming and almost like a family," he added.

The initial tourney was named the Carolina Kickoff Novice Tournament and consisted of 12 teams, representing different high schools, and a total of 125 students, according to Miller.

Sumter High's team competed in four events to include Public Forum, Informative Speaking, Original Oratory and Congressional Debate.

Three students placed. Patterson and Corbin Weatherwax were the Sumter team's pair that competed in Public Forum and finished fourth in the event. The official topic they debated was if the UK should rejoin the European Union.

Miller said in Public Forum, the two-person teams debate a topic at a level that is easy enough for a lay audience to understand, and it is somewhat modeled after CNN's former political debate show "Crossfire" that aired until 2005.

Sumter High's Khloe Benson finished

SUMTER HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH AND DEBATE CLUB

Jmari Adams-Magazine

Jordan Anthony

Mary Baker

Khloe Benson

Aliana Black

Carmine Bookhart

Keishaud Bradford

Erial Bradley

Tavin Bunker

Lyla Burket

Ja'el Charles

Pasia Clark

Myleigh Cockerill

Celena Dawson

Chelsea DeLaVera

David DuBose

Gabriel Fleener

Ma'Kayla Gaymon-Reese

Zillyon Glover

Trillyon Glover (president)

Lauren Gristwood

Malaya Johnson

Larissa Kennedy

Tyasia McCoy

Jeremy Monubi

Sriya Patel

Johonna Patterson

Brandon Reyes

Savannah Richardson

Jakari Rogers

Rayjean Wallace

Corbin Weatherwax

Dyquan Wilson (vice president)

Bold and italics indicates club members who were part of team in first tournament.



Sumter High School Speech and Debate Team President Trillyon Glover, left, and Vice President Dyquan Wilson, right, flank teammates who placed in the school's first competitive tournament on Sept. 27 in Greer. The three who placed are, from left, Khloe Benson (in informative speaking), Corbin Weatherwax and Johonna Patterson (in public forum).

ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

sixth in Informative Speaking, and her topic was Anxiety in Today's Teens. That event requires students to write an original speech that is informative and must be 10 minutes.

Because the team is so new, Miller said whoever wants to compete at an event can do so, and he and fellow advisors Precious Bethel and Marra Masuhod are not making specific selections at this time.

Miller added the team must cover its own travel expenses, and a single bus

trip to the Greenville area, where the first tournament occurred, on a school activity bus costs \$1,200. To date, the Palmetto Optimist Club sponsored the team and gave them that amount to cover a team trip. He said he regularly seeks new sponsors.

MORE ON THE NEW TEAM

Because so many students compete in very different events, team practices are very individualized, according to Miller. "I walk from Student A to Student B

and just ensure what they are preparing in their speeches is according to the guidelines of the National Speech and Debate Association," he said.

Practice is on Tuesdays through Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m.

Students regularly must take work home with them and prepare independently, Miller added.

Some students may compete in sports and cannot make it to practices, but he said if they prepare adequately on their own, he still allows them to compete.

Sumter High Principal Anamaria Sandor said she is proud the team has relaunched after so many years, and she is excited to see what the future holds.

"I am especially proud to see Speech and Debate thriving once again at Sumter High," she said. "The program builds students' confidence, communication and critical thinking skills, which are essential tools for success in college, careers and life. We are excited to see this team continue to grow and inspire a new generation of Gamecock leaders."

Miller added he has been impressed with the group and the passion they bring to the team.

"They have far exceeded any standards that I had," he said. "Many of them sound like experts, I think, and could achieve a master's or PhD in education."

According to Miller, to participate in most tournament events requires "an intense amount of preparation."

"So, these students are dealing with all their schoolwork that they have for their classes," he said. "But on top of that, and outside of practices even, they are working on their speeches, which are essentially essays. So, it takes a lot of work, a lot of dedication and commitment, and I don't think they would have that if they were not passionate about what they are doing. So, I can tell they really enjoy debate and are passionate about it."



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Government

4 headlines to know this month: rate increase proposal, private road residents can apply for maintenance, parks enhancements

BY RHIANNON O'BERRY

rhiannon@theitem.com

COUNTY PRIVATE ROADS ORDINANCE PASSES, APPLICATION PROCESS BEGINS

Stringent requirements for private roads to be transferred to county ownership and maintenance were lessened with Ordinance 25-1034, Sumter County Private Road Policies, at Sept. 23's Sumter County Council meeting.

Private roads maintenance in Sumter County has been an issue since the 1990s. Concerns about this ordinance include funding and fairness to taxpayers who live on public roads. Benefits anticipated by proponents, including private road residents, include emergency service accessibility, equity and improved quality of life.

The initial application period began on Oct. 6 and remains open through Dec. 31, after which county council will select candidates eligible to submit final applications that must include a resident-procured deed of the right-of-way. In spring, county council will make final selections for approval. How many roads will be approved is based on available funding — applications not selected this cycle could be considered in the future.

As dirt roads have been paved, money to care for new dirt roads has become available. New roads will be added to the existing schedule for rotational maintenance and maintained at the same time as other roads in their areas.

AFTER 3 LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS ON DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS RATE INCREASE, PSC HEARING BEGINS OCT. 27

Public hearings in Florence, Bishopville and Sumter gave Duke Energy Progress customers a chance to provide feedback in front of the Public Service Commission on the utility provider's proposed rate increase. If approved as-is, an average residential customer's monthly bill would increase by about 15 percent, or \$20, per



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Residents of Raiswyn Road in Pinewood can apply for Sumter County to adopt and maintain their road after a new ordinance was passed in September.

the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff.

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. The public expressed concerns including unfair tiers for increases, heightened burden on families amid inflation and years of electricity bill increases, stress on the already strained agricultural industry and more.

One more public hearing will happen on Monday, Oct. 27, in Columbia that the public can attend and speak at virtually or in person. The meeting will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Public Service Commission Hearing Room, 101 Executive Center Drive, Columbia. On the same day, the official PSC hearing will begin, from 4 to 8 p.m. in the same location, culminating in a decision by Dec. 12 at the latest,

with any approved rate increase going into effect in February.

CHANGES COMING TO SUMTER PARKS

On Oct. 7, Sumter City Council also approved a bid for designs for Bobby Richardson Sports Complex renovations. This almost \$1.2 million contract awarded to Fit Fields includes designs for sports developments like six synthetic turf fields and bleachers, as well as comprehensive plans for parking, plumbing, stormwater control and much more.

At its Sept. 24 meeting, Sumter Planning Commission approved Sumter County's Major Site Plan request for Phase 2 of the Patriot Park expansion. Patriot Park has been a hub for sports games, community festivals, law enforcement training and much more through the years. With Phase 2, it will grow to include 57 new trees, three

new pavilions, 15 pickleball courts and additional parking.

At their Oct. 8 meeting, the Board of Zoning Appeals granted variances to City of Sumter that enable construction of a 2,900-square-foot maintenance building at Riley Park. The building will include fencing to minimize traffic infringing on park grounds.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TACKLED AT CITY, COUNTY AND BEYOND

County council passed the first two readings of an ordinance that refines and condenses development standards in the Sumter County Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance. Entire paragraphs were deleted in some places, while some term definitions were clarified and consistency with city code was optimized.

From county council to the Board of Zoning appeals, local government dealt with a variety of cases in which they weighed benefits and downsides to new developments in residential areas. For instance, a proposal to change a residential lot to general commercial zoning to enable construction of a Dollar General met strong opposition from neighbors, who filled standing room out of council chambers at a city council meeting. After lengthy public feedback and a petition submitted to council, at its next meeting, council unanimously voted to deny the request.

Duke Energy Progress received approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals to construct two 120-foot telecommunications towers in Sumter residential areas at their substations. Duke said this will decrease reliance on outside carriers and thus improve resilience and efficiency of substations. Amid resident concerns about aesthetics, the Board of Zoning Appeals added the condition that forest cover at one location would remain untouched. A Duke representative answered resident questions and heard other concerns such as property value depreciation.

Education

Consultants outline leader search; Morris, SHS also make headlines

BY BRUCE MILLS

bruce@theitem.com

CONSULTING FIRM OUTLINES DISTRICT'S SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Sumter school board's search for its next superintendent had its "kickoff" at the trustees' meeting on Oct. 6.

That was the phrase used by Kevin Castner of BWP and Associates, which is the consulting firm hired by the full board to help facilitate the search for Sumter School District's new leader, and he and a fellow consultant discussed the process in detail to include timelines and community engagement.

Other aspects of BWP's search will include background checks of candidates, a community survey, developing a leadership profile of preferred qualities in the next superintendent and candidate recommendations that the firm will provide to the school board. However, Castner made it clear the board ultimately decides who it wants to interview and select as the district's new leader.

With BWP's assistance at the meeting, the full board unanimously agreed to a Jan. 3 deadline for applications and a 60-day advertising window, which will attract a larger pool of candidates, he added.

As far as community engagement activities, the firm will spend two or three days in the district later this fall to interview all nine board members individually and also host up to 32 meetings with various stakeholder groups approved by the trustees.

Castner said half of those meetings will be internal to the district to include staff and even students and half will be external and could include the faith-based community, city and county government, chamber of commerce, local colleges and more.

BWP has done more than 800 national searches for superintendents, and Castner said he personally has been a part of more than 50 searches. His team helping the board includes Percy Mack, who was also in attendance at the meeting, and Frank Morgan.

The same three-member BWP team helped a previous Sumter school board in 2019 in its search that ultimately hired Penelope Martin-Knox, who served one term locally. Four cur-



rent trustees served on that nine-member board to include Chairman Shawn Ragin, Vice Chair Brian Alston, the Rev. Ralph Canty and Matthew "Mac" McLeod.

HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE HONORS SUMTER HIGH WITH MAJOR SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Earlier this fall Sumter High School's athletics program received a top honor, but it was not associated with any scoreboard results from a game.

On Sept. 11, the South Carolina High School League announced the school was the only 5A high school in the state to earn the association's Sportsmanship Award Banner, which is the league's highest recognition for excellence in sportsmanship.

According to Shelly Galloway, Sumter School District's executive director of communication and community engagement, the honor celebrated the dedication and character of Sumter High's athletes, coaches, students, staff, supporters and the broader community.

"It reflects the collective commitment of all stakeholders to fostering respect, integrity and pride both on and off the field," Galloway said.

The South Carolina High School League formally presented the banner to the school during its homecoming pep rally on Sept. 19.

Sumter High Principal Anamaria Sandor said she was excited to receive the award.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Sumter High School family," she said. "We are excited to celebrate this milestone together."

MORRIS TO BENEFIT FROM \$70M GIFT TO UNCF

Billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott made one of her largest single donations ever in late September to financially strengthen historically Black colleges and universities, and Morris College will benefit.

On Sept. 23, Scott provided a \$70 million gift to the United Negro College Fund, which is the nation's largest private provider of scholarships to Black students. The landmark gift will be invested in the UNCF Member Pooled Endowment Fund, which is designed to strengthen the long-term financial health of all UNCF member HBCUs.

Private HBCUs benefit from UNCF, and there are six in South Carolina to include Morris. Across the nation, there are 37 member schools.

According to a news release from UNCF, the fund aims to form a pooled endowment of \$370 million — \$10 million for each member school, including Morris.

The South Carolina High School League honored Sumter High on Sept. 19 with a presentation of the association's 2024-25 Sportsmanship Award Banner, which is the league's highest recognition for excellence in sportsmanship.

PHOTO PROVIDED

The school's \$10 million will include \$5 million from UNCF, with a matching \$5 million raised by the college, said Morris Vice President of Institutional Advancement James Tyson.

That funding will be invested and pay out at 4% of net gains annually, he added.

The pooled \$370 million would increase the median endowment of UNCF member schools by 63%, from \$15.9 million to \$25.9 million, according to the organization.

Tyson said Morris currently has an endowment of about \$15 million.

"The average endowment across HBCUs for members of UNCF is about \$15 million, so \$10 million represents a huge increase on a percentage basis," he said. "Endowments are used to fund scholarships, operations and other areas. So having an additional \$10 million in the principal of your endowment allows a college to have a higher draw, which may be used on an annual basis to support the ongoing progress of the school."

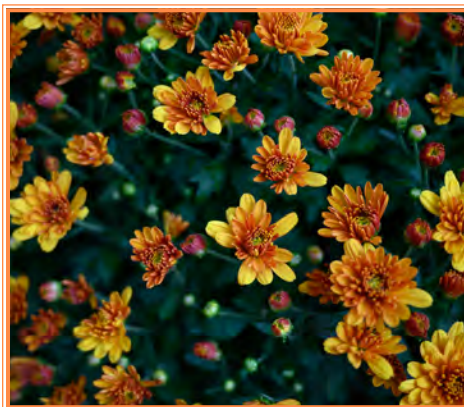
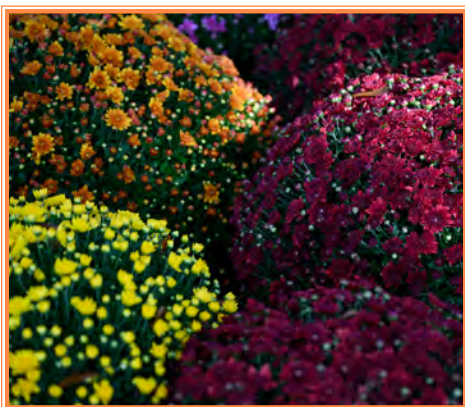
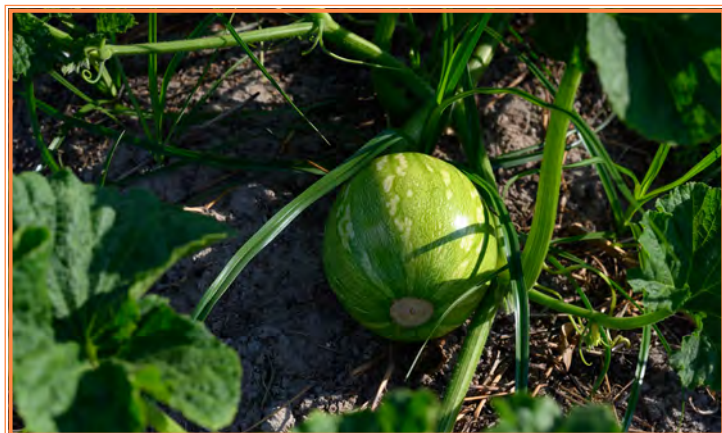
"To have a single campaign double the amount that any school can access on an annual basis is huge, particularly when you are talking about smaller HBCUs. A million dollars here and there for a school like Morris is not a small amount of money. This will be a tremendous boon to the college."

Fall and Halloween

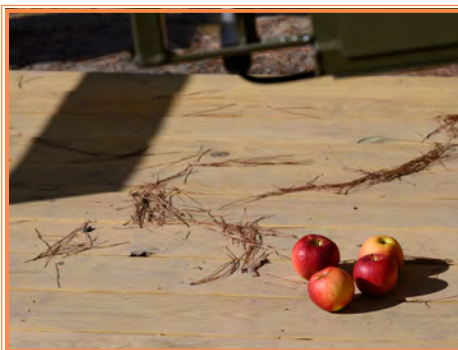
Dorr Farms celebrates fall by growing its own pumpkins

Dorr Farms is one of the only farms in Sumter County that grows its own pumpkins for fall. It also hosts fall farm days throughout October, and the festivities include an apple cannon this year. Pumpkins from Dorr Farms in Gable were stacked for customers to choose from on Sept. 26.

PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM



Kristen Dorr, whose parents own the farm, shows off some of the pumpkins at the farm that are stacked for customers.



Dorr Farms visitors can launch apples with a cannon this year during fall farm days.





Stay safe, spooky this Halloween with safety tips for everyone

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE

alaysa@theitem.com

It's the spookiest time of year, and little ghouls and goblins will soon be trotting about, their vibrant pumpkins brimming with treats and their giggles loud.

And despite the terror and fright that comes from well-thought-out costumes and horror films of what goes bump in the night, the festivities can be both safe and a scary good time.

Which is why Safe Kids Worldwide urges families to take the necessary precautions to make the most of the Halloween weekend this October.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit organization working to reduce preventable injuries to children ages 0-19 and build sustainable systems that support injury prevention. A Safe Kids

coalition exists in Sumter County, led by Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital.

On average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car on Halloween than on any other day of the year. Injuries can vary and can even be fatal.

Safe Kids Worldwide offers several tips to ensure parents and children can follow to stay safe on the spookiest of holidays.

FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Costumes can be both creative and safe. The most important thing is to make sure you can be seen by drivers. Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.

Masks can obstruct your vision, so choose non-toxic face paint and make-up whenever possible.

Children under the age of 12 should be accompanied when trick-or-treating. If children are mature enough to be out without supervision, they should stick

to familiar areas that are well-lit and should trick-or-treat in a group.

Carry glow sticks or flashlights so you can see better, as well as be seen by drivers. Liquid in glow sticks is hazardous, so parents should remind children not to chew on or break them.

Cross the street safely at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks. Look left, right and left again when crossing, and keep looking as you cross.

Watch for cars that are turning or backing up. Teach children to never dart out into the street or cross between parked cars.

Put electronic devices down and keep heads up as you walk and don't run across the street.

Walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.

Once the treats have been secured, go the extra mile and double check them before eating.

Check treats for signs of tampering before allowing children to eat them.

Remind children to only eat treats in their original, unopened wrappers.

Candy should be thrown away if the wrapper is faded or torn or if the candy is unwrapped.

While parents and children should be alert while searching for treats, those who occupy the roadways should also be mindful of the environment and the excitement that surrounds it.

Here's how:

Slow down in residential neighborhoods. Remember that popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.

Be especially alert and take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs. Children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.

Reduce any distractions inside your car, such as talking on the phone or eating, so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.

Celebrating Halloween today

BY U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Halloween is a festive celebration characterized by activities like carving pumpkins and donning masks and costumes to trick-or-treat. Some trace the spooky tradition to the festival of Samhain among the Celts of ancient Britain and Ireland.

When large numbers of Irish and other immigrants went to the United States beginning in the mid-19th century, they took their Halloween customs with them. In the 20th century, Halloween, celebrated Oct. 31 (the night before All Saints' or All Hallows' Day), became a favorite pastime, especially among kids.

Trick or treat!

133.2 million

The number of occupied U.S. housing units — potential stops for trick-or-treaters — in 2023.

Source: 2023 American Housing Survey

73.1 million

The estimated number of U.S. children under the age of 18 (read: potential trick-or-treaters) as of July 1, 2024.

Source: Vintage 2024 Population Estimates

Sweet economic statistics

56.6 million

The number of occupied U.S. housing units with steps that trick-or-

treaters had to climb to collect their treats — or tricks — in 2023.

Source: 2023 American Housing Survey

3,409

The number of U.S. confectionery and nut stores in 2023.

681

The number of U.S. formal wear and costume rental establishments in 2023.

280

The number of U.S. establishments that primarily produced products from cacao beans in 2023.

Source: 2023 County Business Patterns

Spooky-sounding places

Casper, Wyoming (2024 population: 58,823)

Deadwood City, South Dakota (2024 population: 1,347)

Devils Lake, North Dakota (2024 population: 7,314)

Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina (2024 population: 7,742)

Scarville, Iowa (2024 population: 75)

Seven Devils Town, North Carolina (2024 population: 316)

Slaughter Beach, Delaware (2024 population: 247)

Slaughter Town, Louisiana (2024 population: 989)

Sources: City and Town Population Totals 2020-2024

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Why do we carve pumpkins for Halloween?

Pumpkins start showing up in shops about September, and many families enjoy carving intricate designs into them each year ahead of Halloween.

According to Britannica, "Their origin comes from an Irish myth about Stingy Jack, who tricked the Devil for his own monetary gain. When Jack died, God didn't allow him into heaven, and the Devil didn't let him into hell, so Jack was sentenced to roam the earth for eternity. In Ireland, people started to carve demonic faces out of turnips to frighten away Jack's wandering soul. When Irish immigrants moved to the U.S., they began carving jack-o'-lanterns from pumpkins, as these were native to the region.

"But how did jack-o'-lanterns become associated with Halloween? Halloween is based on the Celtic festival Samhain, a celebration in ancient Britain and Ireland that marked the end of summer and the beginning of the new year on Nov. 1. It was believed that during Samhain the souls of those who had died that year traveled to the other-world and that other souls would return to visit their homes.

"In the 8th century CE, the Roman Catholic Church moved All Saints' Day, a day celebrating the church's saints, to Nov. 1. This meant that All Hallows' Eve (or Halloween) fell on Oct. 31. Traditions from Samhain remained, such as wearing disguises to hide yourself from the souls wandering around your home. The folklore about Stingy Jack was quickly incorporated into Halloween, and we've been carving pumpkins — or turnips — ever since."



Sumter Little Theatre's 'Ghouls Night Out: A Toast to Poe' to celebrate mysterious work of famous American poet

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE

alaysha@theitem.com

Edgar Allan Poe was a man of many firsts. Highly regarded for his tales involving mystery and macabre, he was one of the central figures of romanticism and gothic fiction in early American literature, one of the country's first successful authors of short stories, the inventor of the detective fiction genre and is the first well-known American writer to earn a living exclusively through writing.

With so much passion, purpose and curiosity about the human psyche behind his pen, it's no wonder Sumter Little Theatre has curated a night to celebrate his work.

For 86 years, Sumter Little Theatre has served as a cultural cornerstone for Sumter's theater scene with decades of being a safe haven to explore different characters, costumes and corners of one's creative mind. Though small, it is mighty in its ability to put on performances that leave attendees anticipating the next showstopping production — which will be this Halloween.

"Ghouls Night Out: A Toast to Poe" is the quaint theater's inaugural fundraiser of this genre. Sumer Jarvis, the show's director, brainstormed the idea of a fundraiser themed around the festivities of Halloween that would be perfect for adults.

The name's versatility allows the theater to adapt for future shows. But for this inaugural show, Jarvis wanted to share her love for the mysterious yet intriguing works of fiction Poe authored. And she had a few fellow enthusiasts who felt the same.

Poe's work is thought to have influenced the development of literature throughout the world and im-

pacted specialized fields of study. Since his death at the age of 40, he and his writings have appeared in various pop culture areas including art, photography, music, movies and television. It will soon appear on the SLT stage.

"I love Poe. And also, so many of his works can be so well dramatized, and that is what we're doing. This is not just a restoration. This is actually a dramatization of his works," she explained. "The event is for Poe fans but also anybody who just enjoys theater and is looking for something to do on a Friday night."

That is a dilemma she has faced many Halloweens ago: searching for an outing that is adult appropriate and frighteningly festive for Halloween.

Which is why the nights of Oct. 30-31 will be bubbling with activities for all to enjoy.

To aid in creating the perfect atmosphere, there will be a costume contest for attendees to dress as either their favorite Poe character or as Poe himself. The audience's applause will determine whose costume wins.

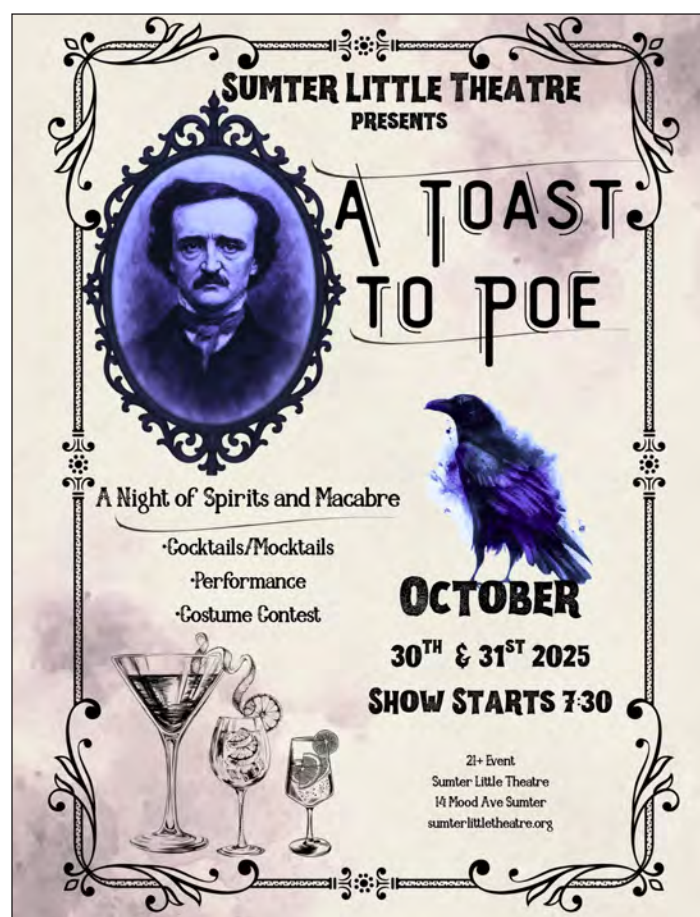
There will also be pre-show games to play and cocktails/mocktails to enjoy before the show starts.

The cast, composed of lovers of Poe's work, will perform eight of Poe's well-known works, including "The Masque of the Red Death," "Telltale Heart," "The Raven," and "Annabel Lee" as well as a few hidden gems in his archives.

"This has been very collaborative since it is a fundraiser," Jarvis said. "We've put a lot of heart into it."

"Ghouls Night Out: A Toast to Poe" will be on stage at SLT on Oct. 30-31, beginning both nights at 7:30 p.m. at 14 Mood Ave. This event is for adults ages 21 and up.

For tickets, visit www.sumterlittletheatre.org.



Sumter Little Theatre will host "A Toast to Poe" on Oct. 30-31 at 14 Mood Ave., beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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What's each state's favorite candy?

DoorDash recently released its list of the top candy in each state, based on the top uniquely popular candy purchases in the month leading up to and ending on Halloween, Oct. 1-31, 2024. A few are candy brands, such as Trolli, which makes gummy candies, and Sweet Smiles, a value candy brand.

Alabama: Sweet Smiles candy

Alaska: Nerds

Arizona: Red Vines

Arkansas: Sweet Smiles candy

California: Snickers

Colorado: Haribo

Connecticut: Sour Patch Kids

Delaware: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Florida: Skittles

Georgia: Trolli

Hawaii: Cadbury

Idaho: Red Vines

Illinois: Twizzlers

Indiana: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Iowa: Laffy Taffy

Kansas: Sweet Smiles candy

Kentucky: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Louisiana: Sweet Smiles candy

Maine: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Maryland: Snickers

Massachusetts: Airheads

Michigan: Twizzlers

Minnesota: Laffy Taffy

Mississippi: Sweet Smiles candy

Missouri: Twizzlers

Montana: Red Vines

Nebraska: Laffy Taffy

Nevada: Snickers

New Hampshire: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

New Mexico: SweetTARTS

New Jersey: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

New York: Twizzlers

North Carolina: Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bars

North Dakota: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Ohio: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Oklahoma: SweetTARTS

Oregon: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Pennsylvania: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Rhode Island: Trolli

South Carolina: Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bars

South Dakota: SweetTARTS

Tennessee: Sweet Smiles candy

Texas: Trolli

Utah: SweetTARTS

Vermont: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Virginia: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Washington: Twix

West Virginia: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Wisconsin: Twizzlers

Wyoming: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups



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Nights of frights and fun

There are plenty of Halloween and fall-themed events coming up, and a few events are meant for just the adults to have their own holiday fun. Enjoy time together and make memories this fall.

SUMTER COUNTY

Sumter's own **Terror Trail at Second Mill Pond** is back and spooky as ever. Fittingly, it's celebrating its 13th year this year. Support the Boy Scouts and Elks Lodge charities while getting your adrenaline going with a good scare. While you're waiting to see if you can survive the trip, there is a covered pavilion, campfires and picnic tables, along with hot soups/

snacks, cookies, chips and hot/cold drinks. The haunted trail is at 1104 Old West Liberty St., Sumter and runs Oct. 24, 25, 31 and Nov. 1 starting at 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$17 per person.

Join Grace Baptist Church's **Fall Festival 2025** from 5 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 26, at the church, 219 W. Calhoun St. This free event will include Trunk-or-Treat Alley, face painting, popcorn, cotton candy, games, bounce houses and family fun.

"The BEST place to be for family fun!" That's the promise of the deputies at Sumter County Sheriff's Office this October, as its **Annual Trunk or Treat** is coming up. On Thursday, Oct. 30, from 5 to 8

p.m., everyone can enjoy free hot dogs, chips, drinks, popcorn and of course plenty of candy to go around. And

this year the office has added a hayride, so "Come join the fun and make memories with your family!" Don't forget to wear your favorite costume. The event will be at Sumter County Sheriff's Office, 1281 N. Main St.

Learn more about the works of Edgar Allan Poe and join Sumter Little Theatre for some adults-only Halloween fun with an immersive fundraiser celebrating Poe's haunting genius. **Ghouls Night Out: A Toast to Poe** is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Oct. 30–31. This fundraising



SEE **FRIGHTS**, PAGE A16



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

The annual Terror Trail at Second Mill Pond will be open for its 13th season of scares throughout this month.



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FRIGHTS

FROM PAGE A15

theatrical experience features dramatic performances of Poe's works, signature themed cocktails and a costume contest. Come dressed as your favorite Poe character, in Victorian funeral attire or as Poe himself for a chance to win prizes!" the theater says. Tickets are \$55, with discounts for groups of two, three and four people. No one under 21 will be admitted, and everyone must bring ID. Learn more at SumterLittleTheatre.org/Poe. Read more on A13.

Have a night of spooky fun at Sumter Mall's annual **Malloween Celebration!** Visit the mall on Friday, Oct. 31, at 6 p.m. for trick-or-treating at participating stores, free candy (while supplies last), and plenty of chances to show off your best costumes. Kids will fill their buckets with candy, while guests can also scan QR codes around the mall for a chance to win a \$100 gift card to their favorite store. This free, family-friendly event is the perfect way to celebrate Halloween safely and in style, so bring your little ghouls, goblins and superheroes for a frightfully good time.

Trick or treat with Sumter's superheroes! Every year our own first responders host a Halloween celebration for local children, spending time meeting the kids and enjoying the festivities together. Join Sumter Police Department and meet your local superheroes during this fun Halloween event sponsored by the department in partnership with Sumter School District, Sumter Fire Department, Sumter Emergency



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Detective Sgt. Howie Austin of Sumter Police Department and DJ Howie D Entertainment supplied the music and dressed as Batman for the trick-or-treat event in 2023 at Crosswell Drive Elementary School. The annual event will be on Friday, Oct. 31, at 6 p.m. at the school, 301 Crosswell Drive.

Medical Services, state Department of Juvenile Justice-Sumter and state Highway Patrol. The event will be at Crosswell Drive Elementary School, 301 Crosswell Drive, on Friday, Oct. 31, at 6 p.m.

Put on your costume and drop by the Wesmark Branch Library for **Halloween @ The Library** from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 31. The event will include a story stroll, Halloween trivia, face painting, coloring, activity sheets and take-and-make crafts. Halloween cartoons will be shown in the meeting room.

All the fun isn't just for the kids. Adults 18 and up are invited to the third **Sumter Crimestoppers Halloween Bash**. You must wear a costume, and there will be prizes for the costume contest winners. The group says, "Join us for the most epic, eerie and excit-

ing adult-only Halloween event of the year. It's the perfect night to grab a friend and show off your most creative (or terrifying) alter-ego!" There will be music by DJ Howie D. No illegal drugs or weapons allowed. You do need tickets, so snag yours at <https://tinyurl.com/bp9sr74u>. Then show up at The Hive, 1695 N. Main St., Sumter, from 7 p.m. to midnight on Saturday, Nov. 1.

LEE COUNTY

Up for a scare? **Scream Acres** is your kind of place. This haunted destination has been operating since 1989 and includes an original haunted house built in the early 1880s. It runs Friday and Saturday nights starting Sept. 12 through Nov. 1 from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. A no-scare event will be on Sunday, Oct. 26, from 7 to 10 p.m. General admission costs \$25, or snag a fastpass for \$40. Both can be purchased on-site, but you can buy the fastpass online at www.screamacreshauntedhouse.com. This attraction supports charity. The haunting starts at 1137 Old Camden Road, Bishopville.

Three miles away but also in Bishopville is **Kreepy Hollow**, if you haven't gotten your heart rate up enough. This haunted attraction features an expanded two-story haunted house, a two-mile hayride journey through the swamps of Lucknow Bottom to see seven deadly scenes and Zombie Break-out, where you can find out if you have what it takes to survive a zombie attack. This fall, Kreeper's Bus ride is even Kreeper than ever, too. Hours are: Fridays and Saturdays: 7:30 p.m. — 12:30 a.m.

Thursdays and Sundays: 7:30 p.m. — 10:30 p.m.

November Friday/Saturday: 7:30 p.m. — 11 p.m.

Get scared at 1155 Joe Dority Road, Bishopville. Tickets are available online at www.kreepyhollowhauntedattraction.com/ticketing.

CLARENDON COUNTY

East Clarendon Middle/High School is hosting its **Fall Festival** from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 27, at Shad Hall Field. The festival will feature dancing, music and much more. If anyone or any business in the community would like to participate in the festival, contact Tiffany Rauch at tiffany.rauch@clarendonsd.org.

The Lighthouse Foundation of SC and Summerton Community Partners will present the **Fifth-Annual Summerton Trunk-or-Treat** at 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 30, in Summerton. Sponsored by Community Partners and Friends of the Lighthouse, the Trunk-or-Treat will feature music, vendors, food trucks and giveaways. To reserve your space or for more information, contact The Lighthouse Foundation of SC Team at (803) 825-2118.

The City of Manning hosts its **Trick-or-Treat** event from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 31, at the Manning Fire and Police department on West Boyce Street. Stop by and show off your costume.

The fun doesn't stop in October! Carolina Dance Academy hosts a **Fall Festival** at 3 p.m. Nov. 2 at 2218 Old Georgetown Road. The festival offers family fun for everyone with performances, Trunk or Treat, s'mores and more! Wristbands for entry are now available.

Sumter Senior Living

A supplemental publication to the Sumter Item Impact



How to prepare for an emergency for those with functional needs



BY S.C. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

For individuals with functional needs, planning in advance for an emergency is crucial to their well-being. Each person's needs are different, and this requires an individualized plan that can anticipate and meet needs during an emergency. The individual or a caregiver is in a unique situation to plan for an

emergency because they know the person's functional abilities best and can best anticipate any needs that may arise.

Steps that can help you plan for any emergency

- *Create a support network.* Be sure to include at least three people in

your network that are familiar with your abilities. These should be people that you trust and are willing to check to see if you need assistance if an emergency should arise. It is also important to have a list of out-of-state emergency contacts who need to be notified that you are safe and well.

- *Complete a personal assessment.* It is essential to know what your needs are or may be before the incident occurs so that you and your support network can plan appropriately. There are several tools you can use to help you assess and determine your needs.

- *Be informed.* Make sure you are informed about the potential risks that could affect you. You could be more vulnerable for certain risks because of your environment, functional abilities or the area in which you live. Know your evacuation routes to leave both your house and your neighborhood.

- *Make a plan.* Using the resources and information that you have gath-

ered in the first three steps, develop a plan that will work for any disaster or emergency. You may already have an emergency plan in place in case of fire, but if there is a widespread disaster, this plan may not be enough to meet your needs. Make sure to share your emergency plan with your support network. If you require sheltering during a disaster, Special Medical Needs Shelters may be available.

- *Build an emergency kit.* There are some general guidelines for creating an emergency supply kit available, but be sure to tailor this kit to meet your specific needs. Make sure to include medical records, medical insurance information, a week's supply of all medications you take and medical alert tags or bracelets that explain medical needs you have. In addition, you may need to include supplies for your service animal, extra batteries for devices (e.g. hearing aids, wheelchairs, oxygen, etc.), wheelchair, visual aids or an extra pair of glasses.



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Sumter Grove is Sumter's choice for assisted living

Sumter Grove Senior Living is Sumter's choice for active assisted living. If you or your loved one is having difficulty managing day-to-day activities and has the desire to be around others who share a zest for life, assisted living at Sumter Grove is an excellent option.

At Sumter Grove, we cater to seniors who want an active, independent lifestyle but need a little help with daily tasks such as daily meals, self-care and housekeeping. Our residents enjoy a robust activity program in a home-like environment with as much independence as they want, along with the comfort and security of knowing that care and support are available if needed.

Apartment homes at Sumter Grove are designed to provide residents with a comfortable and gracious senior living environment. They are generously sized, well-equipped and clean. We offer a vari-

ety of floor plans ranging from cozy suites to spacious one- or two-bedroom apartments. Every apartment has a kitchenette and utilities provided, some with access to our private, secure courtyards.

Our team members get to know each resident and their family members personally and become members of a large extended family. Our community exudes warmth and southern charm from your very first visit. Come see why Sumter Grove has been repeatedly voted the best in assisted living in The Item's Best of Sumter contest and why so many are making Sumter Grove their home.

Contact Melissa Colvin Bean, executive director, at (803) 469-4490 or melissa.bean@sumtergroveseniorliving.com for family guidance and to schedule your personal visit to Sumter Grove Senior Living.

Assistive technology tools to improve the everyday



Family Features - Most Americans want to stay in their homes as they age. Not a bad plan, but what if your home doesn't fit you as well as it once did?

Often, aging can be accompanied by a change in your ability to manage and move around in your home. That's where assistive technology – better known as AT – comes in. No matter your age or what

type of disability you may have, chances are there is an AT device out there that can help you with everyday tasks.

AT isn't a new concept. In fact, most people have probably used an assistive device without realizing it. Smartphones, voice command technology and certain types of software all fall under the AT umbrella. AT also includes plenty of low-tech devices, like

adapted pencil grips for students with disabilities.

There's an ever-growing variety of AT tools available to help with household chores, work functions, getting around, seeing, hearing, learning and living independently in general. These devices and technologies are designed to help older adults and people with disabilities, but you may find that these tools can make life easier for anyone.

Examples of AT devices and tools include:

- Hearing aids
- Vehicle modifications, such as hand controls or wheelchair lifts
- Devices that help with bathing and eating
- Software modifications for those with hearing and visual challenges
- Equipment, such as grab bars in a shower, to help prevent falls

vent falls

- Eye glasses and magnification devices to help individuals with low vision
- Communication devices for individuals with speech disabilities
- Wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility devices

The right AT for you

At first, trying to find the right AT tools and solutions can feel overwhelming. The network of State Assistive Technology Act Programs is a good place to start. Your state AT Act program can provide information and support to help you identify and acquire AT that meets your needs.

These programs offer:

- Device demonstration and short-term loan programs that allow you to try out equipment before purchasing
- Reuse programs that provide gently used devices at

substantial savings

- Financing options, such as cash loan programs, that can help you get the AT devices you need

South Carolina's Assistive Technology Program is at 8301 Farrow Road, Columbia, directed by Rachell Johnson, MCD, CCC-SLP, ATP. Call (803) 935-5263 or toll-free (800) 915-4522 for more information. You can also email Rachell.Johnson@uscmed.sc.edu or visit <https://sc.edu/medicine/scatp>.

At acl.gov/AT, you'll find additional information on state AT programs, data about the network of state AT programs and additional resources to help you find and obtain AT that fits your needs.

With more research and awareness around the importance of AT, the future possibilities for living independently in the place of your choosing are almost limitless.



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Sumter Grove — Where Southern Charm Meets Supportive Living

Sumter Grove Senior Living is Sumter's trusted choice for active assisted living, offering a warm, home-like environment. Our community is designed for seniors who value independence but need a little help with daily tasks like meals, self-care, and housekeeping.

McLeod Physical Therapy Sumter: Getting you back to your best

McLeod Physical Therapy Sumter, a department of McLeod Health Clarendon, provides personalized rehabilitation services to help patients restore independence and improve overall wellness. At 1185 Wilson Hall Road in Sumter, the clinic offers expert physi-

cal and occupational therapy for individuals recovering from surgery, injury, chronic pain or managing long-term conditions.

McLeod physical and occupational therapists treat a wide range of conditions, including orthopedic injuries,

joint replacements, back and neck pain, arthritis, balance disorders, hand weakness, sports injuries and work-related injuries. Whether dealing with a short-term issue or a chronic condition, patients receive customized treatment plans tailored to their specific needs and recovery goals.

McLeod Physical Therapy Sumter is known for its patient-focused approach and commitment to high-quality care. The therapy team uses evidence-based techniques to improve mobility, reduce pain, restore function and enhance overall quality of life.

As part of McLeod Health Clarendon,

McLeod Physical Therapy Sumter benefits from a collaborative health care network that promotes continuity of care and improved patient outcomes. This connection allows patients to access a broader range of medical resources and support, all while receiving therapy in a convenient, local setting.

McLeod Health Clarendon is dedicated to providing advanced, accessible and compassionate care throughout the region. To schedule an appointment with McLeod Physical Therapy Sumter, call (803) 469-3213. Referral required.

It is Medicare Open Enrollment time and there is help available



STAFF REPORT

According to the S.C. Department on Aging website, it is time to prepare for Medicare Open Enrollment, which is Oct. 15-Dec. 7.

To get help enrolling in Medicare, visit the resource site at GetCareSC.com.

If you need help with knowing your options, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) offers free, one-on-one insurance counseling to Medicare beneficiaries, their families and caregivers. SHIP is a grant-funded project of the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services (HHS), Administration for Community Living (ACL).

SHIP counselors can:

- Answer questions about Medicare benefits and coverage.

- Help compare and enroll in Medicare Advantage (Part C) and Prescription Drug (Part D) plans.

- Provide guidance on Medigap (Supplemental) policies and how retiree insurance works with Medicare.

- Assist with Medicaid, Medicare Savings Programs, and Low-Income Subsidies.

- Help resolve billing problems, explain appeal rights, and connect people with low-income assistance programs.

SHIP assists beneficiaries in choosing from 38 Medicare Advantage plans and 11 Part D Prescription Drug Plans, plus multiple Medigap options. Referrals come from Social Security, CMS, Medicare plans and elected officials who rely on SHIP's expertise.

For more information, call the South Carolina Department on Aging at 1-800-868-9095.

If you haven't received one in the mail, view or download the 2026 Medicare and You handbook at visit <https://tinyurl.com/2sx4jx6d>.

Seniors and the risk of falls

STAFF REPORT



More than 38,000 deaths were caused by falls among adults 65 and older in 2021 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and emergency rooms recorded nearly 3 million visits in the same year for falls in seniors.

Falls can be prevented. The CDC recommends the following:

- Speak with your doctor / health care provider about fall risks and prevention, and tell them immediately if you fall, worry about falling, or feel unsteady on your feet. All the medicines you take, both prescription and over-the-counter, should be reviewed by your doctor / pharmacist. As we age, the way medication works in the body can change. Some medication or combination of them can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause a fall. Ask your provider about taking vitamin D supplements to improve bone, muscle and nerve health.

- Exercise to improve your balance and strength lowering your chances of falling. Ask your doctor about the

best type of exercise for you.

- Both your eyes and feet should be checked once a year. Poor vision can increase your chance of falling. Talk to your physician about proper footwear and see a foot specialist if advised.

- Make your home safer by: Removing items you can trip over such as paper, books, clothes and shoes from stairs and paths in your home where you walk; remove throw rugs or secure them with double-sided tape to prevent them from slipping under your feet; keep items you use regularly in cabinets you can reach easily without using a stool; install grab bars next to and inside the tub and next to the toilet; use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on tub/shower floors; improve the lighting in your home — as you age, you need brighter lights to see well; install handrails and lights on all staircases; and wear well-fitting shoes with good support inside and outside your home.

A photograph of a physical therapist, a young Black woman with braids, smiling and assisting an elderly white woman. The therapist is standing behind the patient, holding her shoulders to provide support. The patient is wearing a pink shirt and is pulling on a teal resistance band with both hands. The background is a bright, modern interior with a white shelf and some plants.

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Golden Connections, A Senior Community Health & Resource Fair Oct. 29



Sumter County Recreation Department, in conjunction with South Carolina Attorney General's Office, will host "Golden Connections, A Senior Community Health & Resource Fair" on Wednesday, Oct. 29, at Sumter County Civic Center. This is a free event and will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Local and state agencies will be on site. There will be prevention information and guest speakers. Activities will include entertainment, bingo and giveaways. Refreshments will be available. For more information, email recreation@sumtercountysc.gov or call (803) 436-2248.



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Sumter Item - 221623_25

Know where to find services, report abuse, volunteer and more

BY STAFF REPORT

The closest resources for seniors in Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and Sumter counties is the S.C. Department on Aging's regional partner, the Santee-Lynches Area Agency on Aging, reachable through www.santee-lynchescog.org/aging. The main office is at 3219 Broad St., Sumter. Call (803) 775-7381 to learn about the Family Caregiver Support Program, insurance counseling, legal assistance and more.

GetCareSC.com is for seniors, caregivers and adults with disabilities. You can search for service providers in your area. Type in a keyword and enter your zip code.

GetCareSC.com also offers Articles on Aging — These are articles written by S.C. Department on Aging. Visit <https://www.getcaresc.com/blog> to see the myriad articles available.

The website also has a Guide to Services page on the following topics:

- Adult advocacy
- Assisted living and nursing Homes
- Caregiver support
- Emergency financial assistance
- Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
- In-home care
- Insurance counseling (Medicare/Medicaid)
- Social connection
- Transportation
- Dementia services

Alzheimer's and Dementia Resources

For Alzheimer's Disease facts and figures in South Carolina, you can visit <https://tinyurl.com/yps26ham>. Learn about dementia care specialists across the state at <https://aging.sc.gov/dementia>. There is also a South Carolina Dementia Toolkit for families at <https://tinyurl.com/8s8uw6c7>. It includes information on myths about the disease, next steps after diagnosis, lowering your risk of developing the disease, resources available for support and more.



Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

If you suspect abuse or neglect in a long-term care facility, call the South Carolina Department on Aging Long Term Care Ombudsman at 1-800-868-9095.

Volunteer opportunities

- To serve as a volunteer ombudsman, contact the ombudsman's office at 1-800-868-9095.
- South Carolina Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem of South Carolina. If interested in volunteering, submit a volunteer application or email Brenda Marchant at bmarchant@aging.sc.gov.

Speaker request form

Want someone from S.C. Department on Aging to speak at your church or office? Fill out a request form at <https://tinyurl.com/2n6hmd-up>.

Other items of interest

Join the Race for the Ages Rockin' 5K on Nov. 1, 2025, at 8 a.m. in Columbia at Saluda Shoals Park, 6071 St. Andrews Road. This '80s-themed event supports the SC Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, aiding displaced adults with essentials like relocation bags, clothing and toiletries. Registration is \$40, including a T-shirt. Sign up at strictlyrunning.com or contact Desmond Harrison at dharrison@aging.sc.gov. For sponsorship, reach Sarah Dunning at sdunning@aging.sc.gov.

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Fall Feast, festivals, craft shows, truck and bike show and more

Save your appetite on Thursday, Oct. 23, for that evening because the annual **Fall Feast** is back. Enjoy fabulous food and drinks from more than 30 local businesses with family and friends at this outdoor event that benefits Sumter Green. The band Chief Complaint will provide the jams while you sample chefs' favorite dishes cooked just for the crowd. Only guests 18 years and up can attend, and you must have ID for adult beverage participation. Ticket donations in advance are \$40 each, and tickets are limited. Group pre-sale ticket discount of \$35 each begins at the purchase of 20 or more. Ticket donations at the door are \$50 if available, but this event is known to sell out. Buy tickets at www.sumteroperahouse.com/fall-feast-2025.

Shiloh Project Lift will hold its annual Fall Festival on Saturday, Nov. 1, at the St. John School building, 4515 Narrow Paved Road, Lynchburg. Barbecue will be available for purchase. Attendees may enter for chances to win prizes such as a TV, an air conditioner and cakes. Activities will include cake



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

The annual Sumter County Veterans' Affairs' annual Veterans' Day Parade will be held Tuesday, Nov. 11.

walks, hayrides, corn hole toss, sack races, kickball, basketball and horse-

back riding. All ages are welcome to attend. This event supports fundrais-

ing efforts for the renovation of St. John School. Residents of surrounding communities are invited to attend. For more information, please call (803)459-7463.

Shop from over 20 local and area artists for hand-crafted goods at **Sumter First Church of God Craft Show** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 1, in Sumter FCG Fellowship Hall, 1835 Camden Highway. Handmade and boutique items will include clothing and accessories, coastal decor, handmade soaps, crochet items, ornaments, sublimation tumblers, T-shirts, baked goods and more.

Celebrate and support veterans at the **VFW Car, Truck and Bike Show** in Sumter, coming Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be patriotic trophies for winners, food and drinks, 50/50 and cash giveaways. Cost to register a vehicle is \$20. The public is welcome to this free show hosted by VFW Post 3034 and Head Turnerz Car Club, sponsored by Patriot Auto Parts-CAR-

SEE **EVENTS**, PAGE A27



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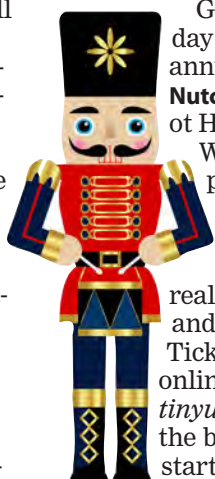
EVENTS FROM PAGE A26

QUEST. Proceeds benefit the post. The show will be at 1925 Gion St. Rain date is Saturday, Nov. 15. Call David Dury at (803) 316-1052 for more information.

The annual **Sumter County Veterans' Affairs' annual Veterans' Day Parade** will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 11, starting at 10 a.m. on the corner of Main and Bartlette streets and going down Main Street. After the parade, the annual ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on the front lawn of the courthouse, 141 N. Main St. After the parade, vendors will be set up on the back lawn of the courthouse. Want to register to participate in the parade? Go online to Sumter County's website, sumtercountysc.gov. At the site, scroll down to the "Sumter Now" section and click on the Sept. 18 Sumter County Parade news release. The link will take you to the 2025 Veterans Day Parade entry form, which can be downloaded, printed and completed and then sent to Sumter County Veterans Affairs Director Valerie Brunson by mail, FAX or email. You can also stop by the county Veterans Affairs Office at 141 N. Main St., Room 100, in the old Sum-

ter County Courthouse and pick up an entry form or call Brunson (803) 436-2303 for an entry form. The deadline for parade entry is Oct. 24.

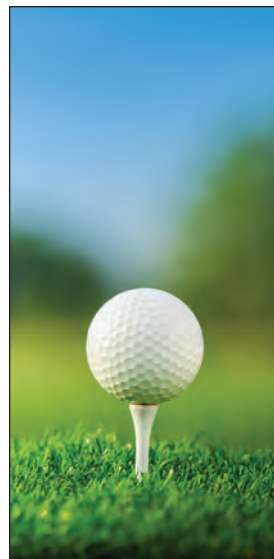
Catch Sumter Little Theatre's "Beyond Glory," starting Nov. 11. Matt Williams returns with an encore performance. This production will follow the city's Veterans Day events on Veterans Day. More information will be released on this event as the date approaches. To reserve tickets, visit <https://ticketpeak.co/sumterlittletheatre/events>. For more information and updates, visit Sumter Little Theatre on social media.



Get yourself into the holiday spirit with this year's annual production of **"The Nutcracker,"** coming to Patriot Hall on Saturday, Nov. 22. Watch William Starrett's play with Southern charm that follows Clara's journey through magical realms with snowy trees and beautiful ballrooms. Tickets can be purchased online at any time at <https://tinyurl.com/4p82wydy> or at the box office at Patriot Hall starting one hour before the

performance. The performance will start at 3 p.m. at 135 Haynsworth St.

Support students and athletes at USC Sumter by spending a day on the links this November. USC Sumter Alumni Association will host the **31st Alumni Golf Tournament** on Monday, Nov. 17. Check-in starts at 8 a.m. with shotgun start at 9 a.m. at the Links at Lakewood golf course, 3600 Green View Pkwy., Sumter. Cost is \$125 per player or \$500 for a foursome and \$10 for two mulligans. Price includes green and cart fees, balls for driving range, breakfast, lunch, beverages, swag bag and a chance to win door prizes. Awards will be given for first, second and third place and also for



closest to the pin and longest drive. Proceeds benefit USC Sumter student and athletic scholarships. Get tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/384x7m67>. If you have questions, call Robin Miles at (803) 938-3782 or email crm73@mail-box.sc.edu.

Sumter Museum will hold the popular **Carolina Backcountry Oyster Roast** from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, at the Museum, 122 N. Washington St. Entertainment will be provided by Chappell Court Band. Purchase your tickets now at <https://tinyurl.com/495hbc8d>.



Get some shopping done at the **Sumter Farmers Market Holiday Market** from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5, at USC Sumter, 200 Miller Road. Available will be locally grown produce, talented artisans, crafters, holiday decor, sweet treats, jams, jellies, sauces, soaps, lotions, candles and more. Multiple food trucks will be on site. Santa Claus will visit.

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Entertainment

'The Following' series is underrated thriller

BY ISIAH RIDLEY

Community contributor

I have always maintained a sincere fascination with series or films utilizing conceptual basis of literature and history combined with aspects of creating a suspenseful story line. One of my main disappointments with "The Following" series is how it only lasted for three seasons.



A REVIEW BY
ISIAH RIDLEY

My initial discovery happened by complete accident without any prior knowledge of this series. One evening I was at a Target in Columbia scanning through the DVD section when my eyes caught a glimpse of "The Following." It had actors Kevin Bacon and James

Purefoy on the front, and becoming even more curious about the story, I read the synopsis. My curiosity transformed into interest, and I immediately purchased the first season.

"The Following" follows character Ryan Hardy, portrayed by Kevin Bacon, as a tormented former FBI agent obtaining a legendary status for capturing notorious serial killer Joe Carroll. Hardy's emotional and physical connection with Carroll yielded deep wounds, creating an element of an unhinged nature to his character. Bacon's performance as lone, bitter, tormented soul is an organic and authentic portrayal of an individual gradually slipping in and out of reality. Despite the notoriety and adulation after apprehending a sadistic serial killer, it has left him in a completely fractured state of existence.

On the surface, Carroll has the appearance of a charming, articulate, intelligent, mild-mannered, brilliant literature instructor fascinated with the era of romanticism and Edgar Allan Poe. Deep within his psyche lies a sinister force of nature, an appetite for carnage and violent destruction.



PHOTO BY FRANK MICELLOTTA / INVISION FOR FOX / AP FILE IMAGES

From left, cast members Kevin Bacon and James Purefoy participate in FOX's "The Following" panel at the FOX Winter TCA Press Tour on Jan. 13, 2014, at the Langham Huntington, in Pasadena, California.

What makes his character approach exceedingly dangerous is his reliance on his meticulous intellect. Another unique element is his ability to create a spellbinding relationship that has transformed into a cult. He successfully shaped, molded and became the leader of an organized murderous sect capable and willing to continue his legacy.

James Purefoy's performance as Carroll resembles a classic and perfect representation of how even the most notorious serial killers, at first, offer themselves as well-meaning, charming and warm personalities, successfully hiding the brutal, cold and sadistic nature deep inside their soul. I found his acting very authentic in how an individual of his intellect and personality could blend in with society.

"The Following" follows a well-

known formula of familiar tropes appearing in every episode in repetitive fashion. There are far-fetched scenarios occurring, consistent to the point of being unrealistic in every way imaginable. However, even with those unrealistic approaches, entertainment, suspense, intensity and shock value never deviate from the aftermath, which always brings forth a conclusion that leaves an impression.

The second season is a continuation of the cat-and-mouse game with Hardy developing and gaining new allies on his quest in investigating Carroll and his cult. It expands into a darker and more vast territory, with Carroll's cult forming an uneasy alliance with another organization. Season two offers more of the same with the familiar repeated formula of its predecessor. The driving force of its quality is the electric chemistry be-

tween Bacon and Purefoy, combined with top-notch writing, dark atmosphere and horrifying revelations sending chills throughout the body.

Season three is the story taking a different approach with new characters and themes exploring Hardy's darker side. While I hold enjoyment for all three seasons, I have to say the third happens to be my favorite with how well it's acted, its complex story line and the inclusion of Michael Ealy as Theo Noble, making for elite television. It is important with this review to remain vague. "The Following" is a series with untapped potential and flew under the radar with little to no extensive advertising.

My disappointment came with the third season ending on a dramatic and exciting cliffhanger. How it ended left me as a viewer wanting more with the possibilities of further exploration into the world of "The Following." The fact that a spin-off or a singular film tying up loose ends has not manifested is equally perplexing. Once I watched the finale, my reaction was as follows: "Surely, there has to be more." I hope Bacon and Purefoy find a way to revive "The Following" with closure.

The characters of Hardy and Carroll remind me of the antagonistic nature of Batman and The Joker, how neither character in their physical and mental existence cannot exist without the other and how both are carrying an equal amount of twisted torment and bring out the worst in each other in their struggle. Difference is Hardy knows Carroll is beyond the point of redemption and rehabilitation, whereas Batman maintains a strong belief The Joker can change.

"The Following" is another favorite series of mine I wholeheartedly recommend for those with an interest in suspenseful and disturbing thrillers. It is an underrated, 10/10 unexpected gem that should have received far more exploration in the end.

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

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Former Sumter High defensive coordinator sparks turnaround for Wilson High's team

BY TIM LEIBLE

tim@theitem.com

Sumter has a penchant for producing excellent coaches. You don't have to look far to see the results, as Drew Marlowe helped turn South Florence into a juggernaut during the past five years. Now, there's another former SHS coach making a splash in the Florence area, as Brian Wilson didn't need long to bring Wilson High School into a relevant position in one of the most challenging regions in the state.

When the former Sumter High defensive coordinator took over as the head coach at Wilson, he found a program coming off a one-win season. Seven games into his first season, the Tigers have already won more games than they did in the previous two seasons combined. It all started with a mindset shift and a few lessons from his time at Sumter High.

"When you look around over here, basketball has always been successful, and the football program hasn't really had success since Coach (Derek) Howard left and went to Ridge View. It's just bringing in a different mindset of winning," Wilson said. "Just showing them the culture of what winning looks like, getting up early, being on time, going to class, doing the little things right."

"I took a lot of what we did at Sumter and implemented it here, but I also took some things we did in college. I played for a guy named Bobby Bentley (at Presbyterian), and if you know



NICH PITTS / ITEM CONTRIBUTOR

Former Sumter High defensive coordinator and current Wilson High School head coach Brian Wilson watches from the sideline during the Tigers' matchup with Crestwood on Friday, Oct. 3.

anything about high school football in the state of South Carolina, he had a lot of success at Byrnes. This is not something that has been a one-year or two-year plan. It's been something I've been working on since 2010, so to see it come to fruition is special."

Wilson took over the job in January and knew pretty early on that the Tigers had the chance to do something special this year.

"When I got hired, I met with them the same day, and the energy I felt from them, these kids wanted to win, they just didn't know how," Wilson

said. "There are always struggles with getting kids to do the right thing; unfortunately, some kids cut themselves from the program, but the ones who stuck around are seeing the fruits of their labor."

"I saw in the spring that we were going to be pretty good. I remember meeting with different media folks, and they'd ask what I thought our year would be like. I told everybody, 'We're going to win some games,' and they just looked at me. I said, 'We're going to shock a lot of people.' They just look at the 1-9 the year before and

the losing record over the years, but one thing I always tell people is, if you know one thing about high school football in South Carolina, you better not bet against a guy from Sumter. I won't ever bet against a guy from Sumter County."

One key part of the equation for Coach Wilson is his son, Brian Wilson II. Having his son on the team gives him a built-in leader who knows the mission of the head coach. Not to mention the fact that the Tigers know their head coach means business when his son is being coached with the same intensity as the rest of the team.

"Initially, he was still coming back from his knee injury, so he was around those guys, but he wasn't able to lift and run with them. The days he could, he would run, and it showed them that this kid had knee surgery and he's still out here doing what we're doing," the Wilson head coach said. "He was able to talk to them in a different way than I can to try to help them see what I wanted. He did a great job of leading by example. He was here early. He used to beat me here during the summer. We both drive, so I'd be 30 minutes to an hour early, and he was here before I get here, so kids saw that he was always early and the way he went about it, he worked hard."

"He took a big leap in leading vocally this year, too. It's awesome as a parent to watch his growth. He's able to get my point across for me at times. He's taught them how to deal with me, as well."

Coach Wilson also credits his coaching staff, a mix of returners from the previous staff and an influx of newcomers, for helping him shape the game plan around the team they have. Offensive coordinator Braxton Ivery

WILSON FROM PAGE A30

and defensive coordinator Jerran Devlin both came over from West Florence and have helped find the best schemes for their players. The Tiger coaches haven't been afraid of mixing things up, either. Most of the players are in new positions this year in order to best take advantage of their abilities.

"We changed maybe 85% of the kids' positions that they played last year. The only person that played the position they played last year was the quarterback, center and the left guard. Everyone else was moved to a different position," Coach Wilson said. "Defensively, we were very multiple at Sumter, so I'm well-versed at different looks, so when I came here, we're based out of 3-4. I would love to do more, but coming in and trying to teach football, we can't be as well-versed as I would like. But we have a lot of athletic kids, so that fits us defensively.

"Offensively, I can't say we're set in stone; I'm adjusting every week. Coming in, I thought I'd take the same approach as Coach Marlowe took at South Florence and be a 12-personnel team (one running back, two tight ends) and run the ball down people's throats, but that's just not us at the moment. My offensive coordinator did a great job of adjusting to what our personnel was. They've always been a spread team, so we got back to that. That was something I had to adjust to, but we're really explosive on offense."

Explosive is definitely the right word, as the Tigers have scored at least three touchdowns in all of their games outside of their season-opening win over Conway by a score of 13-9. Senior quarterback Tristen Howard threw for 1,114 yards and 13 touchdowns through their first seven games, while Myquan McWhite hauled in 40 of those passes for 608 yards and six scores. The Tigers have also averaged 108.6 yards per game on the ground.

Defensively, the Tigers have gotten pressure to the tune of 29 tackles for a loss through seven games and six sacks. Davon Bowman leads the defense with four interceptions.

The winning culture started in the spring, when Wilson tried to bring a game-week feel to every practice with their structure.

"We treated every week like game week so that kids were familiar with it early on. Every Thursday, we had a walk through, every Friday, it was like

"This is not something that has been a one-year or two-year plan. It's been something I've been working on since 2010, so to see it come to fruition is special."

BRIAN WILSON

Wilson High School head coach and former Sumter High defensive coordinator

it was a game, so we mentally got them prepared and showed them what we wanted, so when we got into the season, they'd be able to adapt to it," Wilson said. "We also change up a lot of how we practice throughout the year. That's something I have to give a lot of credit to Coach (Mark) Barnes for; I think people wouldn't believe how much we used to change up the practice structure at Sumter. We always changed the practice structure to fit who we were at the moment, and that's something I took from him."

The Tigers won five of their first seven games and have been within a score in each contest. Wilson took a little extra pride in returning to Sumter County for two games and coming home with a pair of wins, beating Lake-wood 26-0 on Sept. 19 before winning a

wild 27-21 shootout with Crestwood to open October.

"The air tastes a little better when you win," Wilson joked. "I had a selfish moment, but I thanked my kids for making my first year undefeated in Sumter County; it meant a lot that they were able to help me accomplish that."

Those were the first two region wins for the Tigers, who split those games with a tough 27-21 loss to Hartsville. Region V-4A is considered one of the most difficult in the state thanks in large part to Marlowe's powerhouse South Florence program. Wilson's Tigers haven't backed down from the challenge, which means he's doing something right.

"It's been awesome to watch these kids grow in that aspect. I don't really talk about wins and losses or the

score; we just talk about competition," Wilson said. "Coming in the first year, there are a lot of things you kind of take for granted as an assistant. I came in and thought everyone knew how to practice correctly. Having the success in this region, it shows the hard work that these kids and these coaches have put in to be in a position to win. It's a tough region. Losing to Hartsville like that was tough, but it showed that we're not far off from being where we can be, and it's only going to get tougher."

Coach Wilson isn't looking past the rest of this season, but he also knows this fall is setting the foundation for years to come. After a solid first season, his top goal will be making sure his players don't want to settle for solid.

"We've just got to learn not to be complacent and happy where we are," Wilson said. "The foundation has been set. We talk a lot about being competitive on varsity, but the JV team is blowing everybody out. I think these kids are starting to get it; I hope they're starting to get it. We've just got to learn not to be complacent and build on the foundation we've already set of being competitive and being a physical football team."



Former Sumter High assistant coach Brian Wilson took over the program at Wilson High School and helped the Tigers win five of their first seven games.

TIM LEIBLE / SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Sumter High boys volleyball takes big strides in Year 2

BY TIM LEIBLE

tim@theitem.com

Last fall, the Sumter High volleyball team was just happy to get in the win column near the end of its inaugural season. They developed throughout the fall and won both games of a double-header with South Florence in their final home games. This fall, they were ready to take another step.

The Gamecocks put in plenty of work this offseason. The players brought in a few friends to deepen the bench and bring in a bit more competition. After hours of practice, they matched last year's win total by their fourth match and finished the regular season with eight victories. They may even have a playoff berth in their future, though they're still waiting for word on the postseason, which begins next week. Head coach Terri Wood-McCray loved the way her team just kept improving, culminating in a sweep of Airport to cap

off the regular season on Wednesday, Oct. 8.

"Last year was kind of trial and error on a lot of stuff, so we knew coming into the season a lot of the stuff that worked and what didn't work," Wood-McCray said. "We had our returning players, and they were able to add a lot to the team and help us coach the new players. The dedication, as usual, was wonderful. We have a fantastic group of boys, and I'm so proud of them. They made so many improvements, and we did a lot better than we did last year."

While they didn't tally a ton of wins in Year 1, the Gamecocks were able to firmly establish their program, which helped them grab the attention of newcomers. Their bench was completely full on game days, and that depth also allows for more efficient practices with enough players to properly scrimmage. That helped them earn multiple wins against Airport, South Florence, Ridge View, West Florence and a new program



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

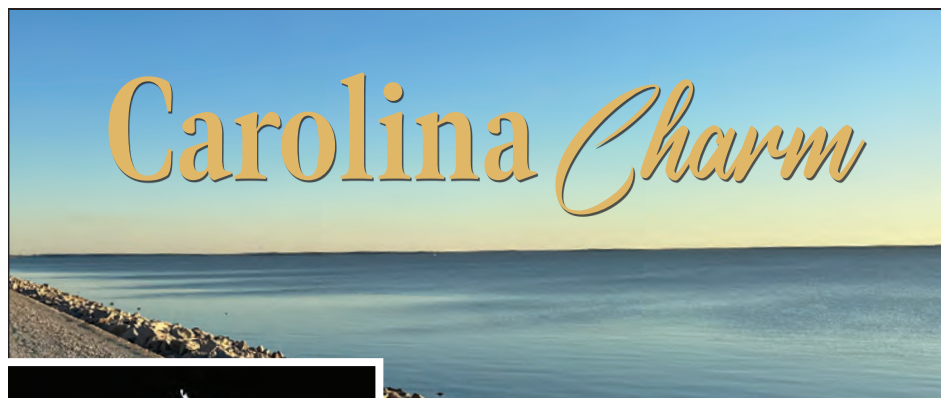
The Sumter High boys volleyball team celebrates a victory over Airport to cap off their regular season on Oct. 8.

over at Manning. SHS finished their season by winning six of their final eight matches.

"A lot of the people that came out to tryouts were by word of mouth," Wood-McCray said. "The boys from last

year, returning or not, spread the word. They talked to all of their friends, people at the church, people everywhere, and we had people come out who I never

SEE **VOLLEYBALL**, PAGE A33



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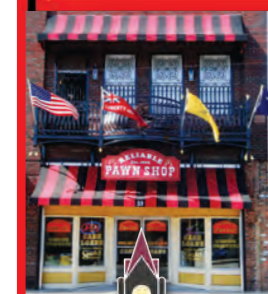


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VOLLEYBALL

FROM PAGE A32

would've had contact with."

The Gamecocks had three dedicated seniors, Alfredo Gutierrez, Joey De-Guzman and Trillyon Glover, as well as a stable of underclassmen who gained critical experience last year. David Vizcarra is a high-energy leader alongside fellow captain Noah Grossman. Owen Sunderland returned as their top offensive player. His leaping and strength helped deliver a team-high 73 kills on the year, while he also had seven aces. Vizcarra led the team with 25 aces, while Grossman had 13 kills and four aces. Gutierrez added an additional 14 aces and eight kills.

"Owen has an incredible vertical and a great ability to hit. He really is a well-rounded player," Wood-McCray said. "David is a great player, and he's really good at communication. He, overall, does really well communicating with the guys, whether it's on the court, in practice, even through our text threads. Noah is also a great communicator, and he's very good at taking the lead with exercises and getting the



guys to go where they need to go."

Of the newcomers, Wood-McCray was really impressed by the way Tyler Lighty stepped onto the scene. He finished the regular season with 19 aces and 15 kills.

"He admitted when he got here that he didn't really play organized volleyball, but he's doing really well," the SHS head coach said. "He has a great



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

ABOVE: Sumter High's Joey DeGuzman is one of three seniors on the team this fall.

LEFT: Sumter High's David Vizcarra is a captain for the Gamecocks in his second season.

vertical, and his speed is incredible. He'd be great whether we put him as one of our hitters or as a libero. He's doing really well."

While coaches can hammer home technique every day in practice, there are some things you just need to learn by playing in games. Wood-McCray said her team's volleyball IQ has improved leaps and bounds simply because they

have more reps against real competition.

"I term it 'P.E. volleyball,' which is everyone goes for the ball at once and hit it as hard as you can every time," Wood-McCray said of the initial brand of volleyball most of the boys adopted early. "They had to learn when to really hit it and how to hit it and when to just lob it in."

The Gamecocks are also trying to take new strides off the court, using websites like MaxPreps to have stats and results available, while also filming games in order to send tape to college coaches.

"I'm going to update MaxPreps as much as I can so that we can get data for the guys' futures who want to take their game to the next level," Wood-McCray said. "Noah's taken a role in taping the games, helping us get film."

Overall, this season was a massive step for the program. A trip to the playoffs would be great, but Wood-McCray thought this season was the perfect followup for what they established last fall. She plans to keep the arrow pointing upward.

"Coach (Crasten) Davis has already told me that he's working on a feeder program," she said. "A JV team would be absolutely amazing because then I won't be starting with fresh freshmen."






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Sweet apple flavor in every bite

BY FAMILY FEATURES

Fall means many things: leaves changing color, cool breezes and plenty of apples to pick.

This recipe for Orange-Glazed Apple Tarts from Small Sweet Treats (Gibbs Smith) by Zac Williams is a fall treat that blends apples (or pears) with the bright flavors of orange and cinnamon.

ORANGE-GLAZED APPLE TARTS

Serves 4

- 1 package (17.3 ounces) puff pastry sheets, thawed
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon cream (egg wash)
- 2 to 3 firm apples (Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, Gala) or pears (D'Anjou or Bartlett) cored and peeled
- 1/2 cup finely chopped hazelnuts, almonds, walnuts, pecans, or pine nuts
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup orange marmalade
- 2 tablespoons dark rum (optional)
- Vanilla or seasonal ice cream, or whipped cream

Place 1 sheet of the puff pastry on a work surface and roll out any creases. Cut the pastry into fourths. Place the four pieces on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Place the second sheet of pastry on the work surface. Cut the pastry into eight strips lengthwise and then cut in half horizontally to make 16 strips. Brush the edges of each of the 4 squares with the egg wash and then place a strip of pastry on each edge to make a border. Brush the edges again with egg wash, and score the edges every 1/2 inch to



decorate the border.

Thinly slice the apples or pears. Place the fruit slices on the pastry, within the border, in a decorative pattern. Sprinkle lightly with nuts, sugar and cinnamon. Bake the tarts on the middle rack of a preheated 425 F oven for 15 minutes, and then reduce heat to 375 F for an additional 10 minutes. The fruit should be cooked and the pastry golden brown and puffed. Remove from oven.

While pastry is baking, heat the marmalade and rum in a small saucepan just until the marmalade has melted. As soon as the pastries are removed from the oven, brush the tops with the warmed marmalade to form a glaze. Cool to room temperature and serve with ice cream or whipped cream.



Find fall comfort in a bowl of Pumpkin Crumble

BY FAMILY FEATURES

If you're ready to embrace the flavors of fall, look no further than a classic: pumpkin desserts. Instead of the typical pumpkin pie, mix things up this year with this Pumpkin Crumble treat from Cookin' Savvy, an easy, delicious solution for satisfying that sweet tooth. Once you've finished enjoying every last bite, head to Culinary.net for more comforting dessert inspiration.

PUMPKIN CRUMBLE

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 8-12

- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin spice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 box cake mix (yellow, white or spice)
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans
- 3/4 cup chopped white chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 cups melted butter

Whipped Cream:

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Heat oven to 350 F.

In bowl, mix pumpkin, evaporated milk, brown sugar, eggs, pumpkin spice and cinnamon. Pour into greased 9-by-11-inch baking dish.

In separate bowl, mix cake mix, pecans and white chocolate chips. Sprinkle over pumpkin mixture. Pour butter evenly over top. Do not mix or stir. Bake 1 hour.

To make whipped cream: Using hand mixer, whip heavy whipping cream and sugar until thick.

Serve crumble with whipped cream.

Source: Culinary.net

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This one-pan chicken recipe is full of flavor

BY FAMILY FEATURES

After a long day of completing fall chores like raking leaves, trimming bushes or cleaning gutters, dinner may be the last thing on your mind. Take the hassle of cooking off your plate and let your grill do the work for you with this Grilled Chicken Bundt recipe, which combines the hearty fall flavors of veggies and chicken to rest and recharge after all that work. To find more family-friendly meals from Cookin' Savvy, visit *Culinary.net*.

GRILLED CHICKEN BUNDT

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 4-6

4 potatoes
2 carrots
8 Brussels sprouts
oil

2 tablespoons garlic powder, divided
2 tablespoons onion powder, divided
2 teaspoons salt, divided
1 whole chicken (4-5 pounds)
1/2 stick butter, softened

Heat grill to 350 F with one burner off for indirect heat.

Cut potatoes, carrots and Brussels sprouts into bite-sized pieces. Drizzle with oil and mix in 1 tablespoon garlic powder, 1 tablespoon onion powder and 1 teaspoon salt; set aside.

Rub chicken with softened butter, remaining garlic powder, remaining onion powder and remaining salt.

Place some veggies in bottom of bundt pan. Place chicken on top of chimney or tube of bundt pan. Fill pan with remaining veggies.

Place pan over indirect heat and grill 1 hour, 30 minutes, or until chicken reaches internal temperature of 165 F.

Source: Culinary.net

Fall has just begun, but preparations have begun for Operation Christmas Child

BY SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Operation Christmas Child is preparing for its National Collection Week, Nov. 17-24, and is asking Sumter residents to get involved. Nearly 5,000 drop-off locations will open across the United States in November.

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering gift-filled shoeboxes to children, including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster. Operation Christmas Child hopes to reach an additional 12 million children in 2025 with the hope of Jesus.

Shoebox packing is fun for individuals, families and groups. You can find a step-by-step guide on the How to Pack a Shoebox webpage, <https://tinyurl.com/53984j94>. The project partners with local churches across the globe to deliver these expressions of God's love to children in need. Participants can donate \$10 per shoebox gift online through "Follow Your Box" and receive a tracking label to discover its destination.

"Samaritan's Purse works around the world to help people in need, but it's not about good works

— it's about the Gospel," said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse. "Please prayerfully consider packing a shoebox this year with Operation Christmas Child. These simple gifts open the door for us to share the true meaning of Christmas."

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered

more than 232 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

Westside Baptist Church, 554 Pinewood Road, Sumter, is the local dropoff site. Days for dropoff are:

— Monday, Nov. 17: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
— Tuesday, Nov. 18: 4-8 p.m.
— Wednesday, Nov. 19: 3:30-9 p.m.
— Thursday, Nov. 20: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
— Friday, Nov. 21: 4-8 p.m.
— Saturday, Nov. 22: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
— Sunday, Nov. 23: 1-8 p.m.
— Monday, Nov. 24: 8-11 a.m.



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**the
Sumter ITEM**

Watchman and Southron described in State newspaper article

Today's readers of Reflections could be thankful for the tabloid known as *The Watchman and Southron*, Sum-



Sammy Way
REFLECTIONS

ter's contribution to the newspaper field in the later part of the nineteenth century. Its pages measured 520 square inches, in comparison to 34 square inches

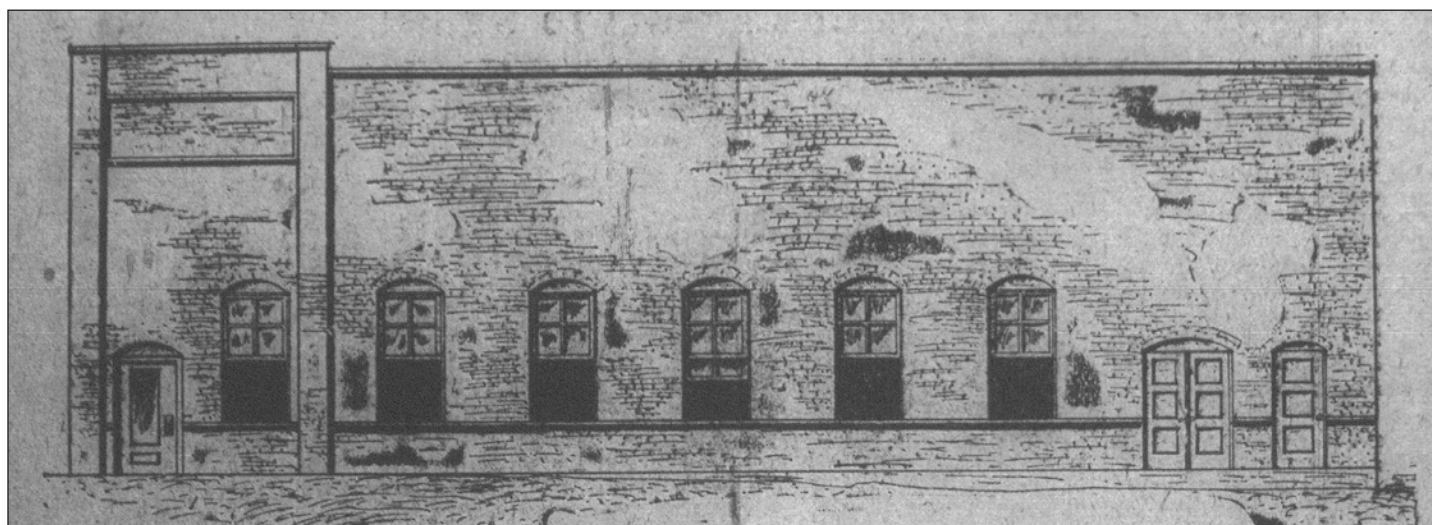
per page in today's papers. The data and information and photos used to prepare this piece were acquired from *The Item* archives.

Selections of stories, too, were different from the procedures currently in use. Instead of reserving page one for sports, local, state, national and international news, "The Watchman" of Jan. 4, 1887, devoted five columns to an essay by Dr. E.J. Rembert on "Agriculture." The remaining columns were divided among advertisements, the masthead and short stories concerning the "Anderson County License Bill," "Our Girls," and "Too Good a Preacher."

On page two appears a variety of editorial page copy, as well as 20 inches of short news summaries, which, in reversal of news policies of today, were strongly opinionated. Editorials were devoid of any mention of the Civil War or the condition of the state as the result of the war. Instead, thought was given to the year 1886 when many South Carolinians



Noah Graham Osteen
edited and published
The Watchman and Southron.



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

A drawing of how the new building for *The Watchman and Southron* would look was published on Aug. 3, 1921.

were injured, killed or made homeless by an earthquake.

One of the editorials is particularly worthy of note, as it points out the "Picture of the State" as of Jan. 4, 1887. "In 1886, 114 miles of railway were built ... the number of manufacturing establishments has increased from 1,230 in 1860 to 3,242 ... capital invested has increased from \$6,931,756 to \$21,327,970," it says in part.

A "Watchman" editorial writer obviously had a sense of humor. To quote from an editorial concerning "the penalizing of ladies who smuggle foreign goods into this country in tin bustles," "If she wishes to smuggle anything in her bustle why for heaven's sake, let her smuggle. By common consent, a woman's bustle is considered a part of herself, and a big part of that. Congressmen had better touch gingerly upon this subject. For woe unto them when they undertake to oversee women's bustles in this country."

On page three a reader could find news of friends, weddings, religious rites, meetings, anniversaries and al-



Sumter Dry Goods employees dress in costume for the sesquicentennial in Sumter in 1950. They may have worn bustles as part of their costume, which *The Watchman and Southron* wrote about in an article in 1887.

most any other type of local news available at publication time. A regular correspondent in Washington sent news of recent events from the nation's capital. The Interstate Commerce bill was the highlight of national news, with the millions of dollars of surplus in the treasury a close second.

A continued story runs through two columns of the fourth and last page, with advertisements consuming the remainder of the page. Ads, incidentally, were varied. They ran the gamut from attempting to lure customers with promises to paint their

carriages for one dollar to advertising "Fresh bread, sweet rolls, cakes, pies, and cream puffs ... beware of imitators."

The Watchman and Southron evolved from the 1881 consolidation of the *Sumter Watchman*, established in 1850, and the *True Southron* established in 1866. Edited and published by N.G. Osteen, the newspaper was distributed to subscribers every Tuesday for "two dollars per annum - in advance." Advertisements were sold for one dollar for one square, first insertion, and 50 cents for each subsequent insertion.

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS
1. Dock

6. Portray

9. Word of inquiry

12. Knowing

13. Baseball's Gehrig

14. Chopping tool

15. Fasten again

16. Designated

18. Punches

20. Great deal

21. Similar

24. Bring

26. Electrified particle

27. Fore's opposite

28. Sound systems: hyph.

32. Pilfer

34. Severe

35. Some chess pieces

36. Patrolman

38. "When Harry _____ Sally ..."

39. Squash

41. Adjusts in length

42. On the cutting

45. Poor

47. Grasp clearly

49. Resolve a debt

53. Heidi's mountain

54. End

55. Weld

56. Brother's sib

57. Observe secretly

58. Shipboard buddies

- DOWN
1. Obstacle

2. Pasture mom

3. Informer

4. Clan

5. Back of the foot

6. In error: 2 wds.

7. Glide

8. Bath basin

9. Crown of light

10. Yoke of _____

11. Ties the knot

17. Moral precept

19. Not at work

21. Mispronounce

22. Pinch

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

23. Recognized
25. Gent
27. Additionally
29. Seethe
30. Newsy bit
31. Collections
33. Guardian _____
36. Eerie
37. "_____ on Melancholy"
40. Open a jacket, maybe
41. Laughing _____
42. Divisions of time
43. Cold-cut shop
44. Openings
46. Bongo, e.g.
48. _____ a boy!
50. Cherry center
51. Finished lunch
52. Okey-dokey

SOLUTION

S	E	S		M	A	T	E	S		S	I	S	S	I	S
E															
A	L	P		T	I	P									
R	E	A	L	I	Z	E									
E	D	G	E		N	E									
S				H	E	M									
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SUDOKU

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

HOW TO PLAY:

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

SOLUTION

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

Social Security Matters

Reader wonders whether to file early because of fear SS is going bankrupt

BY RUSSELL GLOOR

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

Dear Rusty: My best friend is going to be 62 and wants to begin taking her Social Security immediately. Her reasoning not to wait is the thought that it is going to run out in 10 years, so she wants as much of her money before that happens. I have paid into Social Security my entire working life (44 years and counting). What are your thoughts on taking it as soon as you are eligible?



GLOOR

Uncertain what to do

Dear Uncertain: Deciding when to claim Social Security is a some-

times-confusing task, but no one should ever claim SS early because they believe Social Security will go bankrupt in the near future. Social Security cannot and will not go bankrupt. What your friend may be referring to is the fact that Social Security will be facing some financial issues in 2033 unless Congress acts soon to reform the program. And they will act, but likely not until they must.

The fact is, Social Security still has about \$2.7 trillion in reserved funds which are now being used to pay full benefits. If that Reserves balance were to be fully depleted, then Social Security would need to go to a "cash basis" (essentially, paying out in benefits only what is received in SS taxes), which would result in about a 21% cut in everyone's benefit. In other words, even if Congress neglected to reform

the program, beneficiaries would still get about 79% of their monthly benefit starting in about 2033/2034. Hardly anyone believes that Congress will fail to eventually reform Social Security, and, in fact, they already know how to do that reform (they just currently lack the bipartisanship to accomplish it). But neglecting reform would amount to political suicide for all members of Congress, which is extremely unlikely to happen.

Here at the AMAC Foundation, we are confident that Congress will soon address Social Security's future financial dilemma, and we have been working on potential solutions. We have, for several years, been providing these suggestions to various members of Congress, and those members are now considering our proposals. Thus, we do not suggest making a Social Security claiming decision based on fear of the program going bankrupt. That fear is unfounded. Instead, we suggest that everyone decide when to claim based upon their individual personal situation, considering their need for the SS money, their life expectancy and their marital status. And remember, claiming early (before one's SS full retirement age (FRA) also means

Social Security's Annual Earnings Test will apply (the AET limits how much can be earned from working before FRA is attained).

So, our thought on the wisdom of taking Social Security as soon as you are eligible is that it is often not a wise decision, and certainly not if that decision is made based on fear of Social Security "not being there" soon. Instead, we suggest making your Social Security claiming decision based upon your unique personal circumstances, including, especially, your life expectancy, financial need and marital status.

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



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