

the Sumter ITEM



For
unto
us a
Child
is
born

Isaiah 9:6



From our family to yours,
Merry Christmas

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DEATHS, A13

Minnie Bryant Gardner
Edna Josephine Dowdy
Scott L. Duke
Curtis McKenzie
Theodocius E. Smith
Calvin L. Leneau
Darius J. Ford
Carrie L. Hilton

Elizabeth Bolden
James L. Holloman Sr.
Ida M. Trammell
Ethel M. Stinney
King Charles Robinson
Jannie L. Dozier
Joseph Fortune
Harry Lamar Spigner Sr.

WEATHER, A14

NO WHITE CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR

Mostly cloudy and warm
today; partly cloudy tonight

HIGH 68, LOW 48

INSIDE

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VOL. 122, NO. 51

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Comics D1 Sports B1
Lotteries A14 Stocks C4
Opinion A12 USA Today C1
Panorama A5 Yesteryear D4



PHOTOS BY RICK CARPENTER / THE SUMTER ITEM

Universal Benefits Inc. employees Janiece English, left, and LaTeshia Thames were wrapping gifts Thursday for the Lou-Von Foundation's Christmas giveaway.

Lou-Von Foundation provides gifts for families, donation for church

BY ADRIENNE SARVIS
adrienne@theitem.com

Lou-Von Foundation is on a mission to raise holiday spirits this month with two projects to provide much-needed gifts to local families and a financial donation to a church in Fort Lawn.

The foundation, created by Ted Wilson Sr., CEO of Universal Benefits Inc., provided money to purchase gifts for 12 local families as well as present \$100,000 to Union Ezell AME Zion Church in Fort Lawn for a new fellowship hall.

Fran Geddis, chief operating officer of Universal Benefits Inc., said Wilson used to provide all of the money for the project in previous years. He was a private Santa of sorts, she said.

Now, money for the gift-giving project is provided through Lou-Von Foundation.

The foundation created a list of families along with a list of gifts for each family member and UBI employees who are also volunteers for Lou-Von purchased the gifts.

The gifts included clothes, toys and items for babies and small children.

"We try to provide what the families asked for," Geddis said.

She said some of the recipients are victims of the 1,000-year flood in October 2015 who still need assistance.

LaTeshia Thames, a conservation department manager at UBI, said it took three days and multiple shopping trips to purchase all of the gifts.

"I don't mind shopping and wrapping gifts," she said. "We're like Santa's secret helpers."

Each gift was wrapped and labeled on Thursday and delivered to more than 60 people from 12 families on Friday.

Volunteers purchased gifts for children and adults a few days before the delivery and wrapped gifts on Thursday.

The second Christmas gift, the donation of \$100,000 to Union Ezell in Fort Lawn, the church Ted Wilson's mother used to attend, will be delivered today.

Erin Wilson James, Ted Wilson's daughter, said the church plans to use the money to construct a fellowship hall. The church has been in need of a fellowship hall for a long



Universal Benefits Inc. employee Kisha Brown stuffs a sack full of goodies for a child as part of the gift giveaway.

time, she said.

The donation was made possible by a Lou-Von Foundation benefit concert that was held on Dec. 16 at The Imperial Restaurant on Broad Street.

Performers for the concert included singer Angie Stone and Tank.

Wilson James said the event was a success, and she hopes to work with those artists for other projects.

About \$20,000 was raised during the concert, and Ted Wilson provided a match to assist with making a donation to the church, she said. The rest of the money came from the foundation.

Wilson James said she is excited to see the foundation help others in the future.

Sumter High gets unique award from Special Olympics

BY KONSTANTIN VENGEROWSKY
konstantin@theitem.com

Special Olympics South Carolina has named Sumter High School as a Banner Unified Champion School for its efforts to provide inclusive sports and activities for students with disabilities to participate alongside students without disabilities.

The school is one of eight schools in South Carolina to receive the national honor out of 214 schools that are involved with Special Olympics South Carolina, said Barbara Oswald, the organization's senior director of programs. The school is also one of about 5,000 schools across the nation to receive the honor.

The announcement was made earlier this month, and the award presentation will take place in spring 2017, she said. The school will be presented with a banner to hang in its gymnasium and be included on a list of other schools that have received the award.

National standards of excellence had to be met in the areas of inclusion, advocacy and respect in order for the school to receive the award, as well as 10 national standards of excellence created by Special Olympics leaders and the education community, Oswald said.

"A Banner Unified Champion School has an inclusive

school climate and displays a sense of collaboration and engagement for all members of the student body and staff," Oswald said. "Sumter High School exemplifies those qualities."

Sumter High School has a unique program that brings special-needs and high school students together through a year-round physical education class called Unified Sports, she said. Through the program, high school students and special-needs students spend time together participating in different sports and even compete in state and national competitions.

Besides Unified Sports, the school also has an inclusive youth leadership, meaning students with disabilities are in leadership roles within programs at the school and there is whole-school engagement, meaning support from all faculty, staff and students.

Cylisa Quarles, a special-needs teacher at Sumter High School who applied for the award, said it was a great honor to receive it.

Quarles said the application included a data-driven report detailing the school's programs.

"The lasting friendships that develop between our students and the impact they have on each other is very unique," she said. "This means a great deal to the school to receive this award."

NATIONAL BRIEFS

FROM WIRE REPORTS

Cop does speeding college student a favor

MENOMONIE, Wis. — A Wisconsin police officer who stopped a speeding college student who was late for a presentation ended up tying his necktie for him.

WBAY-TV reported the Menomonie Police Department posted dash-cam video of the Nov. 30 traffic stop exchange on its Facebook page Tuesday.

The video shows Officer Martin Folczyk pulling up behind the University of Wisconsin-Stout student in a parking lot. The student explained he was speeding because he was late to give a presentation and was trying to find a friend who could tie his necktie.

Folczyk asked for the tie and made a knot for the student. He even adjusted it after the student put it on.

The officer sent the student on his way with a warning to slow down.

Police: Sandwich links man to burglaries

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich found at the scene led Wyoming police to arrest a burglary suspect.

The Wyoming Tribune Eagle reported that Zachery Munoz has pleaded not guilty to three counts of burglary.

Cheyenne police say someone on three separate occasions in September stole power tools and equipment from a business. In the first case, police say they found a half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich at the scene. They dubbed the suspect the "PB&J burglar."

Police say subsequent DNA testing done at the Wyoming State Crime Lab linked 26-year-old Munoz to the sandwich.

He entered a plea earlier this month, and his trial is scheduled for February.

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Heroin deaths on the rise in South Carolina

BY DANIEL J. GROSS
Herald-Journal of Spartanburg

SPARTANBURG — Miranda Gilbert always hoped her fiancé would get better.

Despite 10 weeks of rehab and several months of sobriety, Zachary Wenk couldn't get the better of his heroin addiction.

The 30-year-old Spartanburg man died Nov. 19 of an overdose inside his home.

"He always made everybody laugh. ... He was just so much fun to be around," Gilbert said.

Wenk's death is one of a growing number across the country linked to drug overdoses. Since 2010, heroin-related overdoses have more than quadrupled in the United States, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In South Carolina alone, heroin deaths were up 57.1 percent from 2014-15, according to the CDC.

Wenk's toxicology report is still being completed, but there have already been five other fatal heroin overdoses in Spartanburg County this year, said Spartanburg County Coroner Rusty Clevenger. There was just one fatal heroin overdose in 2015.

Nationally, heroin overdose death rates increased by 26 percent from 2013 to 2014, according to the CDC data.

Gilbert, who is still struggling to cope with the loss, has channeled her grief into action by planning a candlelight vigil to remember overdose victims and raise awareness about drug addiction.

The event is planned for Jan.

8 at Cleveland Park.

"I want people to understand how big of a problem drug addiction is here," Gilbert said.

Before Wenk's death, Gilbert never knew the extent of his addiction. He never used around her or kept paraphernalia with him. The track marks on his arms he would explain as scratches from his dog, Slash.

I feel like it's getting harder. Maybe because my birthday is coming up, and it's around Christmas. I feel like he should be here.

MIRANDA GILBERT

"He told me he didn't do it anymore," she said. "I could tell he was still doing it. I was always afraid that his body just couldn't handle it anymore."

He worked at Mellow Mushroom in downtown Spartanburg, Gilbert said, and never gave the impression that anything was wrong. The only way she could tell he was high was when his eyes appeared different and his usual boisterous laugh was softer and slower.

He had a glowing personality with an infectious sense of humor, something that drew



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miranda Gilbert of Spartanburg, seen on Dec. 13, is grieving the loss of her fiancé, Zachary Wenk, who died from a heroin overdose on Nov. 19. She is hosting a vigil in January to raise awareness about the crippling effects of drug addiction.

Gilbert to him during the two years they were together.

"This is really the only grief that I've had to deal with. I don't know what is the right way to feel," she said. "I feel like it's getting harder. Maybe because my birthday is coming up, and it's around Christmas. I feel like he should be here."

Gilbert said Sheriff Chuck Wright has been invited to speak at the vigil, along with a pastor from a Gaffney church who dealt with drug addiction earlier in his life.

She said names of overdose victims in Spartanburg County will be read during the vigil. The Forrester Center for Be-

havioral Health holds treatment programs and counseling sessions for those recovering from drug addiction.

Between Nov. 1, 2015, and Nov. 30, 52 individuals identified heroin as the primary, secondary or tertiary reason for seeking treatment, said Joe Pinnilla, the director of prevention services at the Forrester Center.

There were 204 additional individuals that identified "other opioids" as the reason for seeking treatment.

In terms of enforcement, the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office has arrested seven people so far this year on heroin possession or heroin trafficking charges. There were nine arrests in 2015 and just one in 2014, according to arrest data from the sheriff's office.

The Spartanburg Police Department made 23 heroin possession-related arrests in 2015 and 19 in 2014.

Clevenger said awareness and education are the keys to helping more users get treatment.

He said many incidents involve heroin that's been laced with other drugs such as fentanyl, an opioid that's 20 times more potent than heroin, and users don't know what they're taking.

Six overdose deaths were attributed to fentanyl so far this year, and there were 12 fentanyl-related overdose deaths last year, Clevenger said.

"The drug user culture is living on the edge anyway. If we can get them to seek counseling, the info is passed on," Clevenger said. "I have been to the jail and taught in inmate classes on the dangers associated now with heroin use."

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How's your Christmas trivia?

Try this easy quiz

It's very rare that there's a *Sumter Item* published on Christmas Day. For weeks we think about the day and all its trappings, both sacred and secular. Often bits of trivia come up, and we're surprised about how much we know — or don't know — about

Christmas. Here's a little quiz to test your knowledge while you're waiting for the kids to wake up or just relaxing in between dinner and football. Have a family contest: The loser gets to clean up the kitchen.

- The Christmas story is told in the New Testament book of:**
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
 - Matthew and Luke
- In which musical does the song "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" appear?**
 - Jesus Christ Superstar
 - Annie
 - Godspell
 - Cats
 - None of the above



- In the film "It's a Wonderful Life," this signals that an angel got its wings:**
 - a baby laughs
 - a bell rings
 - a good deed is done
 - a good person dies
 - a child is born

- The song "White Christmas" first appears on film in:**
 - White Christmas
 - Elf
 - How the Grinch Stole Christmas
 - Holiday Inn
 - Scrooged
- Judy Garland introduces the song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" in the film:**
 - White Christmas
 - Babes in Toyland
 - Meet Me in St. Louis
 - Easter Parade
 - A Christmas Carol



- Which Dickens character says "God bless us, every one!"**
 - Ghost of Christmas Past
 - Bob Marley
 - Bob Cratchit
 - Ghost of Christmas Future
 - Tiny Tim

- Bing Crosby's love interest in the film "White Christmas" is:**
 - Rosemary Clooney
 - Vera-Ellen
 - Peggy Lee
 - Veronica Lake
 - Julie London
- The service of Nine Lessons and Carols traditionally begins with:**
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - a reading of Matthew 1:18
 - the hymn "Once in royal David's city"
 - The First Noel
 - Ave Maria
- The Christmas tree originated in the 16th century by:**
 - Vikings
 - Swiss shepherds
 - devout Christians in Germany
 - Saint Nicholas, who tied his reindeer to a fir
 - lumberjacks who refused to cut down a beautiful evergreen



- What other name is Santa known by?**
 - Pere Noel in France and Belgium
 - Babbo Natale in Italy
 - Father Christmas in the United Kingdom
 - Papao Noel in Brazil
 - All of the above



Peter Paul Rubens painted his "Birth of Christ" in 1634.

BONUS: What is the significance of Jan. 6 to Christians?

ANSWERS

1. e — Luke 2:21-20 reads in part: "the angel said to them, 'today in the city of David, a savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ... You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger'"

Matthew 1:20 — " ... the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost'"

2. c — Godspell was originally a college thesis that became a popular musical. The only two named characters are Jesus and John the Baptist (also plays Judas).

3. b — Zuzu, the young daughter of George Bailey, played by James Stewart in "It's a Wonderful Life," hears a bell ring on the family's Christmas tree and tells her father it means an angel (Clarence, in this case) has gotten his wings. This signifies that Clarence has done well in helping a person on earth.

4. d — Irving Berlin wrote "White Christmas," which was first performed on the radio program Kraft Music Hall on Christmas Day, 1941, just 18 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was first sung on film in "Holiday Inn."

5. c — Judy Garland sings "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" to cheer up her younger sister Tootie, unhappy because their father planned to move the family from St. Louis to New York City.

6. e — Tiny Tim, the youngest and most sickly, yet most optimistic and loving character in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," says this line as a blessing at Christmas dinner.

7. a — Rosemary Clooney was 26 when she played the 51-year-old Bing Crosby's love interest.

8. c — The lyrics by (Miss) Cecil Frances Alexander include:
*Once in royal David's city
 stood a lowly cattle shed,
 where a mother laid her baby
 in a cradle for his bed.
 Mary, loving mother mild,
 Jesus Christ, her little child.*

9. c — The modern Christmas tree developed in Germany in the late 15th or early 16th century by Christians who brought decorated trees into their homes. It was likely modified from a pagan tradition and is a symbol of eternal life.

10. e — Today, Santa Claus is known by many, mostly similar names, but in Sweden, he's called Jultomten (Christmas brownie).

Bonus question: Jan. 6, also known as Epiphany or Twelfth Night, is celebrated by many Christians as the day the Magi, or wise men, reached the manger where the Christ Child lay. The Magi are mentioned only in Matthew.

ENGAGEMENTS

Catherall-Osteen

Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson Whitaker II (Anne Byrn) of Nashville, Tennessee, and Mr. Thomas Catherall of Atlanta announce the engagement of their daughter, Kathleen Anne Catherall, to Hubert Graham Osteen III, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Graham Osteen II (Julia Richmond) of Georgetown.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Mrs. Flowerree P. Oakes of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, and the late Mr. and Mrs. William Allen Byrn, Dr. Lawson Spires Whitaker, and Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Catherall. A graduate of The Harpeth Hall School in Nashville and Sewanee: University of the South, Miss Catherall is the marketing and operations manager for Culivino Restaurant Group in Jacksonville, Florida.

The bridegroom-elect is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Duvall Osteen of Sumter, and Mrs. Emmy Sparks Richmond of Georgetown and the late Dr. Marion Dickenson Richmond. He graduated from Salisbury School in Connecticut and Sewanee: University



MISS CATHERALL

of the South. As digital coordinator for Osteen Publishing Co., Mr. Osteen represents the sixth generation of the family's 122-year-old media company.

The couple celebrated their engagement with family and friends in Nashville at a party given by Mr. and Mrs. Whitaker.

The wedding is planned for May 6, 2017, in Nashville.

Faw-Cline

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery Hansford Faw of Sumter announce the engagement of their daughter, Larsen Meredith Faw of Sumter, to Jake Scott Cline of Sumter, son of Ms. Diane Merck Cline of Sumter and Mr. Scott Willard Cline of Tucson, Arizona.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Mrs. Phyllis Faw and the late Mr. Jethro Hansford Faw, and the late Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison Hensley, all of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She graduated from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor of arts degree in visual communications. She is employed by Continental Tire the Americas in Sumter.

The bridegroom-elect is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Leroy Merck of Sumter, the late Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Moll of Hubert, North Carolina, and the late Mr. Ronald Leroy Cline of New York. He graduated from Central Carolina Technical College with an associate of science degree in graphic engineering and from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor of science degree in business administra-



MISS FAW, CLINE

tion. He is employed by Thompson Construction Group Inc. in Sumter.

The wedding is planned for Feb. 11, 2017, at Trinity United Methodist Church in Sumter.

• • •

The couple is registered at Naomi and Warner, 13 N. Main St.; Silverpaper, 662 Bultman Drive; Nicole Norris Design Studio, 466 N. Guignard Drive; Belk, 1057 Broad St., www.belk.com; and Sumter Lighting and Home, 135 W. Wesmark Blvd.

Chappell-Rouse

Mr. and Mrs. M. Dennis Chappell of Sumter announce the engagement of their daughter, Parker Margaret Chappell of Columbia, to Michael Lovell Rouse of Columbia, son of the Rev. Michael Ellis Rouse of Moncks Corner and Ms. Julia Carolyn Lovell of Sunset Beach, North Carolina.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Mrs. Margaret Parker and the late Mr. Adrian Parker, Mrs. Carolyn Bradley, and the late Mr. Robert Chappell, all of Sumter. She graduated in 2011 from the University of South Carolina. She is employed as the catering manager at Ruth's Chris Steak House.

The bridegroom-elect is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Lovell of Conway and the late Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Rouse of Bennettsville. He graduated in 2011 from the University of South



ROUSE, MISS CHAPPELL

Carolina. He is employed as the inventory manager for Capitol Chevrolet.

The wedding is planned for April 15, 2017, at The Lace House in Columbia.

WEDDING

Burdette-Mathews

BEAUFORT — Brooks Christine Burdette of Columbia and Candler Grady Mathews III of Columbia, formerly of Sumter, were united in marriage at 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, 2016, at The Beaufort Inn.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Allen Ray of Columbia, and the granddaughter of Mr. Nate Rhodes and the late Mrs. Winona Rhodes of Columbia, and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ezell of Irmo. She graduated from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor of arts in public health. She is employed as an elementary school teacher with the S.C. Public Charter School District in Columbia.

The bridegroom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Candler Grady Mathews Jr. of Columbia, formerly of Sumter, and the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Raymond Avin of Sumter, and the late Mr. and Mrs. Candler Grady Mathews of Saluda. He graduated from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor of science in exercise science and is pursuing a doctor of medicine at USC School of Medicine.

The Rev. Josh Squires of The First Presbyterian Church in Columbia officiated at the ceremony.

Mrs. Amanda Tyner,

cousin of the bridegroom, chimed the hour with hand bells and performed the opening solo of "Holy Spirit." Guitarist and brother of the bride, Mr. Grant Burdette, played "Can't Help Falling in Love" as the bride entered. Mrs. Carrie Herlong, cousin of the bridegroom, sang "Good Good Father" for the wedding prayer as the first act of the newly married couple.

Escorted by her father, the bride wore a designer gown by Stella York featuring illusion lace detailing on the bodice, back and sleeves, with a skirt of fine French tulle over satin accented at the waist with a thin band and finished with pearl buttons. She carried a bouquet by Harvey Designs of Savannah of white Ohara garden roses, Sahara roses, Vendela roses and blush spray roses with eucalyptus and Italian ruscus.

Miss Hunter Burdette, sister of the bride, served as maid of honor. Bridesmaids were Miss Candace Mathews, Miss Clara Kinnison, Miss Mary Kate Korpita, Miss Shelby Tilley, Miss Shannon Wells, Miss Nicole Bulding, Miss Dana Hurtik and Miss Taylor Yellman. Miss Molly Anne Burdette and Miss Emma Katherine Tyner served as flower girls.

The bridegroom's father served as best man.



MRS. CANDLER GRADY MATHEWS III

Groomsmen were Mr. Spencer Brabham, Mr. Zachary Sherrill, Mr. Trent Pannell, Mr. Wesley Newsom, Mr. Grant Burdette, Mr. Chad Bowman, Mr. Tanner James and Mr. Matthew VanDyne. Mr. William Burdette and Mr. Jackson Connor served as ring bearers. The engagement ring is a family heirloom from the bridegroom's mother; the bridegroom's band is a family heirloom from his grandfather.

The cocktail social and wedding reception were given by the bride's parents at The Beaufort Inn.

The rehearsal party and oyster shucking were given by the bridegroom's parents at the Lucy Creek Dock House, Lady's Island, Beaufort.

Following a wedding trip to Turks and Caicos, the Caribbean, the couple resides in Columbia.

Use of free guest pass to gym isn't working out as planned

Needs guidance in Florida



Dear Abby

ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY — I go to the gym regularly. Part of my membership includes a free guest pass. Working out with others can be much more fun and a really good motivator. I have a friend who has taken me up on my offer to join me at the gym. She goes with me two to four times a week.

Initially, I made the offer to get her going.

Never in a million years did I think she'd still be piggybacking off my membership all these months later. Now that it has become routine, I feel bad saying anything to her. Should I suggest she get her own membership? Or must I just own this since I invited her along in the first place without clear and obvious boundaries?

Working out at the gym

DEAR WORKING — You have a right to draw the line. Tell your friend how pleased you are that she now works out regularly, and that because she seems to enjoy it, she should get a gym membership of her own. If she asks why, tell her it's so you can bring other people with you if you wish. If she objects, then she has been taking advantage of your generosity, and that's not how "friends" treat each other.

P.S. If money is an issue for her, you could always suggest she split the cost of your annual membership with you.

DEAR ABBY — I have been married to my wife for four years, but we have been together for 11. She has three children whom I love and treat as my own. My problem is that my wife is a baker and lets the kids eat whatever, whenever, and as much as they want.

My older daughter has graduated from college, where she worked out regularly and lost weight. However, my son and younger daughter have ballooned to obese. I have tried to talk to my wife about instilling better eating habits, but it never materializes. Food with no nutritional value is consumed each school night, along with bowls of my wife's homemade ice cream. I know being obese will have lifelong consequences for them. How can I fix the problem and help them change how they eat?

DEAR NEEDS GUIDANCE — You're correct that childhood obesity can set the stage for lifelong health problems. I'm surprised your wife hasn't been told this by their doctor. If she thinks stuffing them with unhealthy food and failing to instill good eating habits is showing them "love," she's misguided.

If she is doing this because of some emotional need of her own, she may need both nutritional and emotional counseling to get past it. A step in the right direction would be for you to involve your kids in family time that includes exercise and encourage them to choose a sport that interests them and to pursue it. If you ask your older daughter, I'll bet she would be glad to support the idea.

DEAR ABBY — One of my friends says I work too much, that I have little to no time for myself or her, and when I'm off, I spend the majority of my time sleeping.

Abby, I'm a certified nursing assistant and work in a hospital that requires me to work 12-hour shifts. (7 a.m. to 7 p.m.) What should I do? Yes, they are long hours, but I love what I do. Does this make me a workaholic?

Loves my work in Oklahoma

DEAR LOVES — No. It makes you a lucky person who is dedicated to a profession she enjoys. What matters is that your schedule works FOR YOU, not for your friend, and that you get sufficient rest to do it efficiently.

TO MY READERS: A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL!

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

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Study: U.S. women increasingly use pot during pregnancy

CHICAGO (AP) — U.S. women are increasingly using marijuana during pregnancy, sometimes to treat morning sickness, new reports suggest. Though the actual numbers are small, the trend raises concerns because of evidence linking the drug with low birth weights and other problems.

In 2014, almost 4 percent of pregnant women said they'd recently used marijuana, up from 2.4 percent in 2002, according to an analysis of annual drug use surveys.

Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said the results raise concerns and urged doctors and other health care providers to avoid recommending the drug for pregnant women. Volkow commented in an editorial published online with the study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

A separate study in the same journal found that almost 10 percent of adult marijuana users in the United States — 3 million people — have used

it at least partly for medical reasons; 20 percent of these users live in states where medical marijuana isn't legal.

Volkow noted that laws legalizing medical marijuana in 29 states and Washington, D.C., do not list pregnancy-related conditions among allowed uses. But the laws also don't prohibit that use and don't include warnings about possible harms to the fetus, she said.

Strong evidence of harms is limited, but besides low birth weights, newborns whose mothers used marijuana

while pregnant may face increased risks for anemia and other problems requiring intensive care. Memory and attention problems also have been found in older children whose moms used marijuana in pregnancy, Volkow noted.

How marijuana might lead to those problems is unclear, but Volkow said one theory is that it might interfere with formation of nerve cells and circuits in the brain during fetal development.

Holiday splurges not an option for many workers scraping by

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP Retail Writer

ELIZABETH, N.J. — At the brightly lit mall, clothing stores highlight holiday sweaters and big signs tout the sales, while Duquan Allen keeps his expectations in check.

Allen, who works full time cleaning planes at Newark Airport, says his mother doesn't expect anything big, and he usually gets a hooded sweatshirt. He plans to spend about \$150 on presents for his grandmother, mother and 21-year-old sister.

"I'm good at budgeting," says Allen, who makes \$10.10 an hour.

Heading into this holiday season, with gas and food costs down, unemployment at its lowest point since 2007 and clothing prices on the decline, economists and retail executives declared it a great time to be a consumer. But seven years into the recovery, there's a stubborn divide that hourly workers see more starkly during the holidays, between themselves and better-off consumers who have benefited more as the economy improved.

"I see people traveling. I wish I could afford it," Allen said.

Many workers are indeed earning more. Average hourly earnings have picked up

2.5 percent over the past year, and major retailers have raised wages as competition for workers has increased.

Thanksgiving weekend featured crowds of shoppers at stores and malls, snapping up new TVs and clothing. Luxury stores have promoted "feel-good" gifts such as \$1,000 silk pajamas. Americans spent \$3.45 billion online on Cyber Monday, according to Adobe Digital Insights, and nearly that much on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving. The National Retail Federation trade group expects holiday sales for the November and December period to rise 3.6 percent to \$655.8 billion.

From the data, people seem very able to buy. Overall, people plan to spend about \$935 per person this holiday season, according to an NRF survey. Behind that figure, though, there's a split.

Consumers with income under \$50,000 plan to spend a little more than \$362 on gifts for their family and friends, while for those with income of \$50,000 and higher, that number is about \$768. Throwing in decorations, greeting cards, flowers and food, the difference is even larger — about \$512, compared to about \$1,020. That divide also hasn't budged since the recession.

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RICK CARPENTER / THE SUMTER ITEM

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Researchers: Nearly 400 drug addicts helped in Massachusetts police effort

BOSTON (AP) — A novel drug addiction program developed in a small Massachusetts fishing town and since replicated in dozens of cities nationwide was able to place almost 400 addicts into treatment nearly each time they sought it during the first year of operation, researchers say in a report being published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The team from the Boston Medical Center and Boston University's School of Public Health say 376 addicts sought assistance 429 times from the Gloucester Police Department's Angel program from June 2015 to May 2016. They received the help they needed nearly 95 percent of the time, researchers say.

David Schiff, a Boston Medical Center doctor and lead author of the report, said that rate is far higher than the 50 to 60 percent for similar, hospital-based initiatives.

Part of the reason, she said, is that Gloucester's addicts were voluntarily coming to police seeking help. "They were motivated individuals that came to the station ready to engage in care," Schiff said.

The report also notes that Gloucester police established a relationship with a local treatment center to make placement easier. Its officers were working round the clock to secure the placements. And Massachusetts mandates health coverage for drug detoxification.

Law enforcement officials in communities that have adopted Gloucester-like heroin initiatives say the report helps validate their work.

"Police officers do not get to pick and choose who they help, and that puts us in a po-

sition to make a major impact on the heroin and opioid epidemic," said Frederick Ryan, police chief in the Boston suburb of Arlington.

The Angel program has been replicated in some form by more than 150 police departments in 28 states since it was launched in June 2015. It gained notoriety after the then-police chief promised heroin addicts they could turn in their drugs at the police station without fear of arrest, so long as they agreed to start treatment.

As part of the program, officers personally reach out to treatment centers on behalf of addicts, arrange their transportation to the facilities and, if needed, pair them with a volunteer "angel" for emotional support.

David Rosenbloom, a professor at Boston University's School of Public Health who helped write the report, suggested the program's success underscores the difficulty of accessing drug-treatment services.

Roughly half of the participants in the program had prior drug-related arrests, he noted.

"It says something when addicts are going to the police station for treatment," said Rosenbloom, a founding board member of the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit that supports the Angel program and partly financed the research. "It's a real condemnation of how the whole treatment system faces the public."

The next step for researchers is following up with first-year participants to see how they fared in treatment and beyond, he said. The researchers also hope to study similar programs nationally.

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WWII on www

Thousands of oral histories going online

BY JANET MCCONNAUGHEY
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — It's D-Days — that is, digital days — at the National World War II Museum, with historians seeking to storm the internet and move thousands of first-person accounts of the fighting online.

Executives at the National World War II Museum say creating a vast online collection of 9,000 existing oral and written histories will take longer than the war was fought: 10 years and \$11 million. There's more than 22,000 hours of audio and video to be handled, thousands of documents to be digitized and millions of words transcribed.

Ultimately, all these first-hand accounts of Pearl Harbor, the D-Day invasion, Germany's surrender, Hiroshima, the homefront and more will be online.

Founded in 2000, the museum is a top New Orleans attraction. The digital collection is open to the world. But only about 250 of its oral histories are online so far. Uploading more will take time, partly because the museum's six historians also are racing to interview the last veterans alive.

"It's a fine balance. We have a sense of urgency to collect as many stories as we can ... But we also know it's extremely important moving forward to provide access" online, said Stephen Watson, the museum's executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Since May, the World War II Museum has collected 500 oral histories. But the war generation is fading fast.

Even people with childhood memories of the war are now in their 70s, noted James Gilmore, archives specialist in oral history at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. He said the Holocaust Museum has about 10,000 oral histories available online. Those also are among more than 66,000 that can be viewed or listened to on site.

"Our oral histories have been invaluable resources in teaching about Holocaust history and fighting Holocaust denial. They'll become even more precious once the eyewitness generation is no longer here," Gilmore said.

Putting oral histories online is not just a matter of uploading and linking to huge audio and video files. The World War II Museum's six historians also help laboriously describe their contents for online searching, in a process more extensive than the Holocaust Museum's has been so far.

Take the four videos spanning two hours of interviews with Harold E. Ward, a Navy lookout on the cruiser San Francisco when Japanese warplanes struck Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The videos are divided into 12 segments, each with detailed annotations describing what Ward talks about section by section — like the one with Ward recalling the attack.

The San Francisco was being overhauled when the planes came in low and slow, leaving the fleet in flames. "I just stood and watched," Ward said. As a lookout, he was wearing headphones. An ensign somewhere else asked him to describe the scene.

"He says, 'What's going on there?'" Ward recounted. "So I told him we were being attacked by the Japanese Air Force." The ensign's response: "Don't you get wise with me, Ward. I asked you a question."

"So I began to describe what I was looking at," Ward continued. "And there was a dead silence when I finished speaking."

So far there are 4,000 staff-collected video oral histories, 3,000 video and audio recordings made by others and nearly 2,000 "written histories" like journals and diaries that can be photographed, annotated and transcribed for online research, said Keith Huxen, the museum's



In this undated photo provided by The National WWII Museum, Harold E. Ward smiles in a service era image. The National World War II Museum and its historians are seeking to storm the internet and move thousands of first-person accounts of the fighting online including four videos spanning two hours of interviews with Ward, a Navy lookout on the cruiser San Francisco when Japanese warplanes struck Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM VIA AP

senior director of history and research.

He said the six historians travel widely, scheduling at least four interviews per trip. Afterward, the historians add catalog information, including a short description of contents and when and where interviews were made. They then begin annotating the video with keywords mostly likely to be searched, Huxen said.

"Ultimately, the public will be able to go online, access the histories, search them, watch the video with face and voice ... with a verbatim transcription scrolling or at least accessible," he added.

The museum has allocated

about \$4.4 million for the project so far — about two-thirds from donations and grants and the rest from the museum's operating budget, Watson said. One records management company, Iron Mountain, gave \$100,000 to digitize 100 interviews this year and expects to donate a similar amount next.

"The commitment to this will never end" because there will be a constant need to update computers and software

ONLINE

www.nationalww2museum.org

and to move the collection "to new forms of data storage that we don't even know about now," Watson noted.

The idea of putting the collection online was born of bleak days after Hurricane Katrina flooded much of New Orleans in 2005. The museum didn't flood but was closed for months to repair damage from roof leaks and from looting in non-exhibit areas. Few visitors showed up when it did reopen, prompting executives to consider how they could still reach people even when a city was emptied out. "We had to think about how to fulfill our mission without people being here," said Nick Mueller, museum president and CEO.

Associated Press writer Bill Cormier contributed to this report from Atlanta.



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Palmetto Health Tuomey Community Calendar

January 2017

The Tuomey Foundation sponsors several local classes and events such as Joint Camp, CareReach, Safe Kids, car seat installations, Touching Hearts and various Cancer Support efforts. If you would like to help support these initiatives, consider a donation to The Foundation.



TuomeyFoundation.org

Women and Children

Please call 774-BABY (2229) to register for any of the classes listed below. Fees are waived for moms who deliver at Palmetto Health Tuomey. All baby classes are held in the Women and Infants Pavilion classroom.

Baby Basics

Learn all the basics of caring for your newborn before you deliver.

CLASS DATE Thursday, Jan. 19
CLASS TIME 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 6-8 p.m.
COST \$15

Breastfeeding Class

Informal class offers instruction and discussion time for breastfeeding for expectant mothers. Babies and dads welcome, too.

CLASS DATE Thursday, Jan. 5
CLASS TIME 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.
COST \$15

Women and Infants Pavilion Tour

Tours are by appointment only. Come let us show you our Birthplace. Call 774-BABY (2229).

Car Seat Installation

Learn how to properly install your child's car seat for maximum safety. The Tuomey Foundation, working with Safe Kids Sumter County, makes car seats available for pregnant women who attend this free class and deliver at Palmetto Health Tuomey. Discounted car seats available.

CLASS DATE Monday, Jan. 16
CLASS TIME 6-8 p.m.
COST free

Infant CPR

American Heart Association's Friends & Family course for expectant parents. Does not offer CPR certification.

CLASS DATE Monday, Jan. 23
CLASS TIME 6-8 p.m.
COST free

Labor and Delivery

Learn what to expect during the labor and delivery process. Includes a tour of the Birthplace.

CLASS DATE Thursday, Jan. 12
CLASS TIME 6-8 p.m.
COST \$15

Pumping Class

Class is offered to mothers returning to work and planning to continue breastfeeding. You will learn about the different kinds of pumps and how and when to pump, as well as storage guidelines. You will also learn how to teach your caregivers to gently bottlefeed your baby while you are away. It is best to wait until your baby is 4 weeks old to come to this class. All nursing babies are welcome to come along.

CLASS DATE Wednesday, Jan. 4 & 18
CLASS TIME 3-4 p.m.
COST free

Sibling Class

This class is designed for children ages 4 to 11 who will soon become brothers and sisters. They are welcome to ask questions about the expected newborn. This valuable time will help them with changes that will take place at home when baby arrives. Class includes a mini tour of our Birthplace/Women's Center and Nurseries. For January classes, please contact Anna Elmore at 774-2229.



January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

This is a chance to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. HPV is a very common infection that spreads through sexual activity. Each year, more than 11,000 women in the United States get cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can often be found early, and sometimes even prevented entirely, by having regular Pap tests. *Make an appointment today!*

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For information about our Pet Therapy Program, call the Palmetto Health Tuomey Volunteer Services at 774-8658 / 774-8660 or Lois McCracken at 774-8874

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L to R: F. Roosevelt Gilliam III, MD; Thomas W. Schultz, DO; and W. Strat Stavrou, MD

Support Groups

Breastfeeding Support Group "La Leche League of Sumter"

Women and Infants Pavilion Classroom. All breastfeeding mothers are welcome to join us. Class is led by a local mom who is also a La Leche League leader. She will be sharing her experience in breastfeeding. Group meets on the first Monday of each month. Call 774-BABY.

GROUP MEETS Monday, Jan. 2
TIME 10 a.m.
LOCATION Women and Infants Pavilion Classroom

Cancer Support

Sponsored by Women's Imaging and the Education departments at Palmetto Health Tuomey to provide educational and emotional support to individuals and their families dealing with cancer. Call Phyllis Buckner at 774-8678 or Susan Parnell at 774-9047

GROUP MEETS Monday, Jan. 16
TIME 6-7:30 p.m.
LOCATION Hospital Conference Room One

Families Fighting Prostate Cancer

A community support group for individuals and their families. For information about our next support group meeting, call 775-1324.

GriefShare

Palmetto Health Tuomey Hospice Services offers this support group for widows or widowers who have recently lost their spouse. Palmetto Health Tuomey Hospice Services offers this support group for widows or widowers who have recently lost their spouse. For information or to set up an appointment, call Linda Windley at 773-4663. Linda Windley at 773-4663.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Designed for the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients to share experiences, help each other and get information for the family. Group meets on the last Thursday of each month. Call Linda Windley at 773-4663.

DATE Thursday, Jan. 26
TIME 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
LOCATION Palmetto Health Tuomey Hospice located at 500 Pinewood Road, Suite 2



Education

Joint Camp

Joint Camp is designed for patients who are scheduled to undergo knee or hip replacement surgery. The camp educates patients on their surgery and expectations after surgery. The camp is run by our Care Management, Rehabilitation and Respiratory Therapy departments. For more information, call Lori Horton at 774-8661 or Ty Collier 774-9174.

CLASS DATE Wednesdays, Jan. 11, 18, 25
CLASS TIME 1 p.m.
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An American Cancer Society program. Helps women during cancer treatment with makeup, turbans, skin/nail care, scarves, wigs and hats. To register, call the ACS at 1-800-227-2345.

DATE Monday, Jan. 9
TIME 5 p.m.-7 p.m.
LOCATION Palmetto Health Tuomey Private Dining Room

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N.G. Osteen 1843-1936
THE WATCHMAN AND SOUTHRONH.G. Osteen 1870-1955
FOUNDER, THE ITEMH.D. Osteen 1904-1987
THE ITEMMargaret W. Osteen 1908-1996
THE ITEM

OPINION

Hubert D. Osteen Jr. CHAIRMAN & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Rick Carpenter MANAGING EDITOR

20 N. MAGNOLIA ST., SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA 29150 · Founded October 15, 1894

COMMENTARY

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

EDITOR'S NOTE: In keeping with many years' custom, we present the famous editorial, "Is There a Santa Claus?" written by the editor of the New York Sun, Francis Pharcellus Church, in 1897. The question of the editor was asked by Virginia O'Hanlon. His reply was the memorable "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," which has been quoted ever since by newspaper editors who agree with the sentiments of Mr. Church.

...

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*:

Dear Editor:

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety Fifth St.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Santa Claus is the late Hubert Duvall Osteen, longtime editor/publisher/owner of *The Sumter Item*. He's holding the Wednesday, Dec. 24, 1952, edition of *The Sumter Daily Item*. The darkroom photo magic — done long before Photoshop was imagined — was by the late Heyward Crowson, Sumter's photographer for many years.

COMMENTARY

A politically correct 'Night Before Christmas'

Twas the night before Christmas and Santa's a wreck.

How to live in a world that's politically correct?

His workers no longer would answer to "elves," "Vertically challenged" they were calling themselves.

And labor conditions at the North Pole
Were alleged by the union to stifle the soul.
Four reindeer had vanished, without much propriety,
Released to the wilds by the Humane Society.

And equal employment had made it quite clear
That Santa had better not use just reindeer.
So Dancer and Donner, Comet and Cupid,
Were replaced with four pigs, and you know that looked stupid!

The runners had been removed from his sleigh;
The ruts were termed dangerous by the EPA
And people had started to call for the cops
When they heard sled noises on their rooftops.

Second-hand smoke from his pipe had his workers quite frightened.
His fur-trimmed red suit was called "unenlightened."

And to show you the strangeness of life's ebbs and flows,
Rudolf was suing over unauthorized use of his nose

And had gone on "Geraldo," in front of the nation,
Demanding millions in over-due compensation.
So, half of the reindeer were gone; and his wife,
Who suddenly said she'd enough of this life,

Joined a self-help group, packed and left in a whiz,
Demanding from now on her title was Ms.
And as for the gifts, why, he'd ne'er had a notion
That making a choice could cause so much commotion.
Nothing of leather, nothing of fur,

Which meant nothing for him. And nothing for her.
Nothing that might be construed to pollute.
Nothing to aim. Nothing to shoot.

Nothing that clamored or made lots of noise.
Nothing for just girls. Or just for the boys.
Nothing that claimed to be gender specific.
Nothing that's warlike or non-pacific.

No candy or sweets ... they were bad for the tooth.
Nothing that seemed to embellish a truth.
And fairy tales, while not yet forbidden,
Were like Ken and Barbie, better off hidden.

For they raised the hackles of those psychological
Who claimed the only good gift was one ecological.

No baseball, no football ... someone could get hurt;
Besides, playing sports exposed kids to dirt.

Dolls were said to be sexist, and should be passe;
And Nintendo would rot your entire brain away.
So Santa just stood there, disheveled, perplexed;
He just could not figure out what to do next.

He tried to be merry, tried to be gay,
But you've got to be careful with that word today.
His sack was quite empty, limp to the ground;
Nothing fully acceptable was to be found.

Something special was needed, a gift that he might
Give to all without angering the left or the right.
A gift that would satisfy, with no indecision,
Each group of people, every religion;

Every ethnicity, every hue,
Everyone, everywhere ... even you.
So here is that gift, its price beyond worth,
May you and your loved ones enjoy peace on earth.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THANKS TO ALL WHO SHOWERED SHAW WITH COOKIES

Thanks community cookie bakers! You "Showered Shaw" with 3,825 dozen cookies in our 24th endeavor to sweeten up the holidays for our friends at Shaw Air Force Base. That's 45,900 cookies from a caring Sumter community. More than 5,100 cards accompanied the sweet treats delivered again this year to the Visitors Center at Swan Lake-Iris Gardens. We are grateful to the City of Sumter for its use.

Shiloh UMC is the 2016 Cookie Champion with 379 dozen, followed by Bethany Baptist (337 dozen), Crestwood High School (300 dozen), Lakewood High School (224 dozen), F.J. DeLaine Elementary School (175 dozen), Career and Technology Center (158

dozen), Willow Drive Elementary School (156 dozen), Sumter High School (120 dozen), First Presbyterian Church (115 dozen), Mayewood Middle School (105 dozen), Oakland Primary School (104 dozen), Crosswell Elementary School (100 dozen), Kingsbury Elementary School (97 dozen), Shaw Heights Elementary School (92 dozen), Cherryvale Elementary School (89 dozen), Ebenezer Middle School (85 dozen), Millwood Elementary School (82 dozen), Pocalla Springs Elementary School (75 dozen), Goodwill Presbyterian Church (72 dozen), Lemira Elementary School (71 dozen), Bates Middle School (70 dozen), Dalzell UMC Church (63 dozen), Chestnut Oaks Middle School (60 dozen), R.E. Davis Elementary School (58 dozen), Alice Drive Elementary School (55 dozen), Wilder Elementary School (54 dozen),

Furman Middle School (54 dozen), Hillcrest Middle School (53 dozen), Manchester Elementary School (53 dozen), Westminster Presbyterian Church (53 dozen), Alice Drive Middle School (52 dozen), High Hills Elementary School (51 dozen), Cherryvale (51 dozen), Grace Baptist Church (50 dozen), St. Anne/St. Jude (50 dozen).

Thanks to these leaders! Other schools providing cookies were: Rafting Creek Elementary School and St. James Lutheran School.

Other churches providing cookies were: First Baptist and Harmony. The remaining cookies were provided by DAR and individuals. Thanks to each of you!

Special thanks to Lakewood National Honor Society members, Christian Compton, Naomi Duran, Sydney Gonzales, Madison Harris, Shenja Ingram,

Sinan Jackson, Justin Johnson, Jonathan Roberts, Matthew Rodgers, Logan Singleton, Kyena Williams and advisers Jennifer Wolfe and Michelle Robinson for their outstanding assistance receiving and unloading cookies, and also helping Shaw chairwoman Kipsy Gould and her group with packing and loading the Shaw truck.

Once again during another Christmas season, this community tradition involving so many of all ages, has provided an opportunity to remind Shaw of our appreciation and support of 75 years here in Sumter.

Many thanks again for making "Shower Shaw with Cookies 2016" so very special.

Have a wonderful Christmas.
Gratefully,

JO ANNE MORRIS
director, Sumter Volunteers

MINNIE BRYANT GARDNER

Minnie "Mindy" Bryant Gardner, 52, wife of Robert Gardner, went to be with her Lord and savior on Thursday, Dec. 22, 2016, at McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence.



GARDNER Born Sept. 21, 1964, she was a daughter of the late Bobby Jordan Bryant Sr. and Alethia Jonell Scurry. Mindy had a strong Christian faith and was a member of Northside Memorial Baptist Church. She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother.

Survivors include her husband of Dalzell; a daughter, Ashley Goodwin (Johnathon) of Dalzell; two grandchildren, Abigail Lee and Nova Goodwin; four brothers, Bobby J. Bryant (Elizabeth) of Jackson, Joseph Bryant of Buford, Georgia, William Bryant and Steve Scurry (Angie), both of Sumter; and a number of nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Monday at Northside Memorial Baptist Church with the Rev. Jimmy Holley officiating.

Memorials may be made to Northside Memorial Baptist Church, 1004 N. Main St., Sumter, SC 29153 or to Samaritan's Purse-Operation Christmas Child, PO Box 3000, Boone, North Carolina 28607.

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

IDA M. TRAMMELL

Dr. Ida Mae McBride Trammell, 72, wife of Jimmie L. Trammell, died Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2016.



Funeral services for Mrs. Trammell will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Liberty Hill A.M.E. Church, Summerton, the Rev. Robert China, pastor, presiding, Pastor Devon Coker, officiating, Minister John Nelson and Minister Gregory D. Wilson assisting. Burial will follow in the churchyard cemetery.

The family is receiving friends at the residence, 406 Drayton St., Manning.

These services have been entrusted to Samuels Funeral Home LLC, Manning.

SCOTT L. DUKE

MANNING — Scott Laverne "Pete" Duke, 87, husband of Willadean Brunson Duke, died Friday, Dec. 23, 2016, at his residence.

Born June 27, 1929, in Manning, he was a son of the late David Presley Duke and Teresa Evans Duke. He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War, a member of the American Legion and a member of the Steering Committee at Lawrence Manning Academy. He was a founding member of New Covenant Presbyterian Church, where he served as an elder for more than 24 years.

He is survived by his wife of Manning; a son, Scott L. Duke Jr. of Manning; two daughters, Carol Dean Eaddy (Cecil) of Manning and Barbara J. Allen (Raymond) of Kingstree; nine grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held at 3 p.m. Monday at New Covenant Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Jon Beane officiating. Burial will follow in Clarendon Memorial Gardens.

Grandsons will serve as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers will be past and present deacons and elders.

Visitation will be one hour prior to the service from 2 to 3 p.m. in the church fellowship hall and at other times at the residence, 6903 Raccoon Road, Manning.

Memorials may be made to New Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2833 Alex Harvin Highway, Manning, SC

29102.

Stephens Funeral Home & Crematory, 304 N. Church St., Manning, is in charge of arrangements, (803) 435-2179. www.stephensfuneral-home.org

EDNA JOSEPHINE DOWDY

Edna Josephine Dowdy, better known by family and friends as "Dooda," 87, transitioned to her final rest on Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2016, at Palmetto Health Tuomey Hospital. Born on April 14, 1929, in the Colclough area of Sumter County, she was the daughter of the late Fred Dow and Gertrude Dowdy. She was a longtime resident of Green's Residential Care in Sumter. She was a devoted Christian and a lifetime member of Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church.

She leaves to cherish her memories: a great nephew and niece, Aaron Deas Dowdy of Atlanta and Gertrude Dowdy of Sumter; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Homegoing services will be held on Tuesday at 11 a.m. from Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church, 2738 Woodrow Road, Woodrow, with the Rev. Dr. Friendly J. Gadson, pastor, eulogist.

Viewing will be after 2 p.m. Monday in John Wesley Williams Sr. Memorial Chapel, Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St.

The remains will be placed in the church at 10 a.m.

The family procession will leave from Williams Funeral Home at 10:20 a.m.

Burial will be in Colclough Cemetery, Dubose Siding Road

These services have been entrusted to the management and staff of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St.

Online memorial messages may be sent to the family at williamsfuneralhome@sc.rr.com.

Visit us on the web at www.williamsfuneralhomeinc.com.

CURTIS MCKENZIE

MANNING — Curtis McKenzie, 58, died Thursday, Dec. 22, 2016, at his residence, 109 Walnut Village. He was born Nov. 11, 1958, in Clarendon County, a son of the late George McKenzie and Catherine Kennedy McKenzie.

The family is receiving friends at the home of his sister, Mary McKenzie, 1953 Black River Road, Gable.

These services have been entrusted to Samuels Funeral Home LLC, Manning.

THEODOCIOUS E. SMITH

Theodocious "Theo" Eliza Pogue-Moore Smith was born Nov. 17, 1919. She departed this earthly life on Dec. 15, 2016. Born in Sumter County, she was a daughter of Frank Pogue Sr. and Robina Emma McDuffie Pogue.

Theo, as she was fondly called by family members and friends, was educated in the schools of Sumter County and was a graduate of Lincoln High School. She attended Morris College and Sumter Technical College. She was employed for many years by Sumter School District 17, retiring in 1982. She later worked for Sumter County Council on Aging, Neal's Restaurant and Jehovah Child Development Center.

Theo was united in marriage in 1949 to Wesley Moore Jr. To this union, six children were born. In 1997, God saw fit to put someone else in her life, and she married Henry Smith.

In her youth, Theo joined Second Presbyterian Church, where she served faithfully in several ministries including the Chancel Choir, the Willing Workers, Presbyterian Women and the Trustee Board and as a Sunday Church School teacher. Upon her second marriage, she joined Taw Caw Missionary Baptist Church, where she ordained as a deaconess. After the passing of her husband, she reunited with Second Presbyterian Church.

In earlier years, Theo was very actively involved with

Sumter Chapter Women United and served on the Sumter YWCA Board of Directors when it was planning the Dignity Village Housing Project.

Theo will be forever cherished by her children: one son, Jeffert Moore, and three daughters, Cheryl M. Coleman, Nadine C. Moore and Loretta M. Walker, all of Sumter; four grandchildren, Nikki C. Moore of Manassas, Virginia, Alex (Kenya) Walker of Atlanta, Alicia (Demarius) Gaither of Columbia and Renata L. Walker of Hopkins; five great-grandchildren, Michael Gaither, Savannah Gaither, Alyssa Walker, Wesley Walker and Alexa Walker; one brother, Frank A. Pogue of St. Albans, New York; five stepchildren, the Rev. Jonathan (Bertha) Smith and Retha Thompson of Summerton, Willie Mae Montgomery and Odether Peguese of Thomasville, North Carolina, and Stella (Hoise) Brown of Newport, Alabama; one goddaughter, Kim (Vick) Wilson of Sumter; two special friends that she talked to daily, her cousin Mazola Asie and the Rev. Emma W. Thompson (honorably retired), both of Sumter; along with a host of loving nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Public viewing was held on Friday from 2 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary.

Mrs. Moore-Smith was placed in the church on Saturday at noon for viewing until the hour of service.

Funeral service was held on Saturday at 1 p.m. at Second Presbyterian Church (USA), 1125 Old Pocola Road, with Rev. Ella F. Busby officiating and the Rev. Jonathan Smith, eulogist.

Interment will follow in Hillside Memorial Park.

CALVIN L. LENEAU

Calvin Leon (Always Smiling) Leneau, son of Evette Leneau, was born on Feb. 25, 1982, in Sumter County. He departed his life on Sunday, Dec. 18, 2016. He was educated in the public schools of Sumter County. He later received his General Educational Development diploma. He held a certificate in welding from Central Carolina Technical College, brick masonry and was a forklift operator. He recently received his commercial driver's license permit to pursue his career as a business owner in the trucking industry. He was employed by Thompson Industrial Services in Sumter as an operator/CDL driver. In addition, he has held various titles to include crew leader, salesperson, lead inventory control personnel, manufacturing assembler and many more. He was a loving and self-driven individual with dreams of becoming a homeowner, business owner and above all owning his own trucking company.

He took pride in his experiences (good and bad) and accomplishments, using them for motivation to help uplift and inspire others around the world. During his 34 years of life, Calvin has left behind an enduring and permanent legacy of selfless service to his family, friends and all of whom he met or came into contact with.

He loved to travel the world while gaining new perspectives on life. Calvin was an incredible person who enjoyed life and spending time with family and friends.

He leaves to cherish his precious memories: his mother, Evette Leneau of Sumter; two stepfathers, Harold C. Tindal of Sumter and Calvin Johnson of North Little Rock, Arkansas; two brothers, Eric Leneau and Isaiah Hannah, of Sumter; three sisters, Gwendolyn Leneau of North Little Rock, Kimberly Leneau of Charleston and Monique Smith (Tramaine) of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; four stepbrothers, Fred Mitchell, Harold C. Tindal Jr., Calvin Butler and Harris Tindal; three stepsisters, Kimberly Mitchell, Takela Butler and

Ramonaethia Jackson (Chase); and a host of uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins and a very close friend of the family, Terry Wiley.

Memorial services will be held Monday at 3 p.m. at Greater Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, 609 Miller Road, with the Rev. Marvin Hodge, pastor, eulogist.

The family is receiving relatives and friends at the family home, 455 Allen Drive.

The procession will leave the home at 2:20 p.m.

Services directed by the management and staff of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St.

Online memorial messages may be sent to the family at williamsfuneralhome@sc.rr.com. Visit us on the web at www.WilliamsFuneralHomeInc.com.

DARIUS J. FORD

Darius Jaquez Leroy Ford "Peedee" was born on Jan. 3, 1994, to Leroy Dixon and the late Teresa Ford. He entered into eternal rest on Dec. 18, 2016.

He was educated in the public schools of Sumter County.

Memories of Darius "Peedee" will live forever with his father, Leroy (Latanya) Dixon of Sumter; sisters, Victoria (Twuan) Wright, Amanda (Rashan) Ramsey, Yvette Green, Yvonne Blair and Sandra Green; stepsisters, Shidrae Myers and Shakeema Myers, both of Sumter; an additional sister, Kalendra (Trenton) Peterson; brothers, Leroy Dixon Jr., Devonte Ford and Darkus Ford; stepbrothers Thomas Myers and Tyrease Myers; additional brothers, Juan Tindal, Andre Tindal and Isiah Tindal, all of Sumter; special caregiver, Charlotte Walters; aunt, Beverly (Isaac) Peterson, who raised him; paternal grandmother, Ernestine Goodman; maternal grandmother, Carolyn Wells of Sumter; godmother, Glenda Scott of Wilmington, Delaware; godsister, Vakiema R. Dunham; the love of his life, London McBride of Charleston; favorite nephew, Treshaun Wilson; aunts, Carolyn Dixon and Kenyardetta Ford; uncles, Jasmine (Ronnita) Williams, Wesley (Geneva) Williams, Lamont (Kia) Ford, Quintez (Yolanda) Ford and Antonio Ford, all of Sumter; and a host of grand-aunts, granduncles, cousins, other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother; brother, Antonio Dixon; grandmother, Juanita Ford; grandfather, Sammie L. Ford; great-grandmother, Sarah Frieron; great-grandfather, Simon Leneau; and uncles, Markeith Ford and Vernell Jackson.

Funeral service will be held on Monday at 1 p.m. at Salem Chapel and Heritage Center, 101 S. Salem Ave.

Interment will follow in Bradford Cemetery.

The family is receiving friends at the home, 902 Manning Ave., and at the home of his grandmother, 116A King St.

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

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

CARRIE L. HILTON

On Monday Dec. 19, 2016, Carrie Lucille Bethune Hilton, widow of the late Louis Hilton Sr., heard her master's call at Medical University Hospital in Charleston.

Born on May 28, 1941, in Manning, she was a daughter of the late Mirah Bethune and Johnny Lee Thompson Sr.

Service of remembrance shall take place on Monday at 1 p.m. at Williams Chapel Christian Church, 1072 Forest Trail, Manning, where the Rev. Emanuel Evans serves as pastor. Elder Kenneth Murray, pastor of Holy Rock Holiness Church, Foreston, shall preside. Words of consolation shall come from Rev. Elton Hilton Sr., associate pastor of

St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church, Foreston, and son of the deceased. The service of committal shall follow in the Hilton family plot in Society Hill A.M.E. Church, Jordan Community of Manning.

The family is receiving relatives and friends from 3 to 8 p.m. at the residence of her son and daughter-in-law Pastor Louis Hilton Jr. and the Rev. Linda Whack Hilton of 3943 Kingstree Highway, Manning.

Fleming and DeLaine Funeral Home and Chapel of Manning is in charge of these services. Online condolences for the family may be sent to www.flemingdelaine.com or flemingdelaine@aol.com.

ELIZABETH BOLDEN

Ms. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bolden, formerly of Camden, entered eternal rest on Dec. 24, 2016, at Cottonwood Villa, Bishopville. Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Wilson Funeral Home, 403 S. Main St., Bishopville.

JAMES L. HOLLOMAN SR.

James L. Holloman Sr. entered eternal rest on Dec. 19, 2016, at Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. The family is receiving friends at the residence, 520 Davis St., Bishopville. Visitation will be held today from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the funeral home. Funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday at Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church, Woodrow, with the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Friendly J. Gadson, officiating. Interment will follow in Mt. Olive Memorial Garden.

Wilson Funeral Home, 403 S. Main St., Bishopville, is in charge of arrangements.

ETHEL M. STINNEY

Ethel Mae James Stinney, 78, departed this earthly life on Friday, Dec. 23, 2016, at McLeod Hospice House in Florence.

Born in Clarendon County on Nov. 23, 1938, she was a daughter of the late Willie James and Lizzle Gibson James.

The family will receive friends at the home, 1047 Hall St., Summerton.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Summerton Funeral Home LLC, 23 S. Duke St., Summerton. (803) 485-3755

KING CHARLES ROBINSON

King Charles Robinson, infant son of Charlie Robinson and Nakeya Spann, was born on Dec. 21, 2016, in Sumter. He departed this life on Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2016, at Palmetto Health Tuomey.

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

JANNIE L. DOZIER

MANNING — Jannie Lee Mouzon Dozier, 83, widow of the Rev. Hayes William Dozier, died Friday, Dec. 23, 2016, at National Health Care. She was born May 3, 1933, in the Foreston Community of the Clarendon County, a daughter of the late Sam James Mouzon and Mollie Samuels Mouzon.

The family will receive friends beginning Monday at her residence, 1128 Yellow Bank Lane, Manning.

These services have been entrusted to Samuels Funeral Home LLC, Manning.

JOSEPH FORTUNE

LYNCHBURG — Joseph Fortune died Friday, Dec. 23, 2016.

The family is receiving friends at 1200 Sandy Grove Church Road in Lamar.

Funeral arrangements will be announced by Jefferson Funeral Home Service Inc. of Lynchburg.

HARRY LAMAR SPIGNER SR.

Harry Lamar Spigner Sr., 89, husband of the late Grace Dellaney Derrenbacher Spigner, died Saturday, Dec. 24, 2016, at NHC Healthcare in Sumter.

Services will be announced by Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home and Crematorium of Sumter.

NFL FOOTBALL



Atlanta's Matt Ryan, right, looks to pass under pressure from Carolina's Wes Horton during the Falcons' 33-16 victory on Saturday in Charlotte.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ryan, Coleman lead Falcons past Panthers

Carolina officially eliminated from playoff contention

BY STEVE REED
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE — Matt Ryan threw for 277 yards and two touchdowns, Tevin Coleman had 135 yards from scrimmage, including a pivotal 55-yard fourth-quarter TD run, and the Atlanta Falcons moved a step closer to wrapping up a postseason berth with a 33-16 win over the Carolina Panthers on Saturday.

The Falcons (10-5) can clinch their first NFC South title since 2012 if Tampa Bay loses or ties New Orleans on Saturday. Atlanta can also clinch a playoff berth with a

Detroit loss or tie against Dallas on Monday night.

A few straggling Falcons fans chanted "MVP!" at Ryan in the game's closing minutes while most Panthers fans had already headed for the exits.

The Panthers (6-9) were officially eliminated from playoff contention after making the Super Bowl last season.

Ryan torched the Panthers for the second time this season. He threw for 503 yards and four TDs in Atlanta's win over Carolina earlier this season at the Georgia Dome, a victory that set the stage for the Falcons' playoff

push.

After piling up 300 yards receiving in the last meeting with Carolina, Julio Jones had a relatively quiet day in his return from a toe injury — four catches for 60 yards. But Ryan spread the ball around effectively, throwing tight ends Joshua Perkins and D.J. Tialavea, who was signed from the practice squad earlier in the week.

The Panthers had battled back to cut Atlanta's lead to 23-13 and had Ryan backed up to his own 14 on third-and-21 early in the fourth quarter. But Ryan completed a 31-yard swing pass in the

left flat to Coleman, who raced past Thomas Davis for a 31-yard gain. On the next play, Coleman broke through a big hole up front and raced 55 yards for a touchdown to push Atlanta's lead safely back to 17.

Cam Newton, last year's league MVP, struggled with accuracy throughout the day, completing 18 of 43 passes for 198 yards with two interceptions. His only highlight came on a 26-yard touchdown pass to Kelvin Benjamin in the back of the end zone on the final play of the third quarter.

SEE PANTHERS, PAGE B2

USC FOOTBALL

Benching sparks big season for Lammons

BY JOSH KENDALL
The State

COLUMBIA -- Chris Lammons is one of eight South Carolina players who started every game during the regular season.

Finishing games was another matter.

The junior cornerback was on the sideline or in the locker room at the end of games

three times this season. Once he was ejected for throwing a punch; once he was ejected for targeting, and once he was benched by head coach Will Muschamp.

It was that benching that sparked a season in which Lammons had 46 tackles, five pass breakups, four tackles-for-loss, three interceptions, a sack and a forced fumble.

"He responded the right way, instead of going into a shell or not responding and not practicing the right way or blaming the coach, he took it on himself, which is what good players do," Muschamp said.

Muschamp wasn't happy with his team's tackling in a 27-14 loss to Mississippi State on Sept. 10. He was the least happy with Lammons, who found himself on the bench for most of the second half.

"To play defense, you've got to tackle," Muschamp said. "The Mississippi State game, there were some missed tack-

SEE USC, PAGE B3

YOUTH FENCING

Wilson Hall's Reuwer qualifies for Junior Olympics

BY JUSTIN DRIGGERS
justin@theitem.com

It was a big step in his fencing career when Luke Reuwer qualified for the Junior Olympics last year.

A previous commitment kept the now Wilson Hall sophomore from attending the competition, however.

Fortunately, that won't be the case this year.

After earning his way into the Junior Olympics in one event a year ago, Reuwer outdid himself this time around by earning gold in three events at the South Carolina Division Junior Olympic Qualifier in Columbia on Dec. 11.

Reuwer took first in the Men's Cadet Foil, the Men's Junior Foil and the Cadet Men's Epee. The 16-year-old will now get the chance to face some of the best under-20 competition in the country at the Junior Olympics, which are being held in Kansas City, Mo., from Feb. 17-20.

"I'm just really excited and hope greatly to do well," Reuwer said. "I'm honored to represent South Carolina in a such an amazing sport and event like the Junior Olympics."

While he was hoping to qualify in both foil events, the



REUWER

NBA BASKETBALL

James, Wade looking to join 300-point Christmas club

BY TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

Only Kobe Bryant and Oscar Robertson have scored more than 300 points on Christmas in their NBA careers.

Cleveland's LeBron James and Chicago's Dwyane Wade might join the club Sunday.

Wade enters this year's Christmas Day quintuple-header as the league's leading active scorer, with 277 points. It's unlikely he'll still have that designation when his game starts in San Antonio, given that James and the Cavaliers host Golden State immediately before that matchup — and James enters with 270 points in his Christmas career.

Bryant is the all-time Christmas leader with 395 points. Robertson scored 377, Wade is third for now, followed by Shaquille O'Neal (272) and James rounding out the top five.

The schedule starts at noon, with the Boston Celtics visit-

ing the New York Knicks. The rest of the schedule (all times Eastern): Golden State at Cleveland at 2:30 p.m., Chicago at San Antonio at 5 p.m., Minnesota at Oklahoma City at 8 p.m., and an all-Los Angeles matchup with the Clippers at the Lakers at 10:30 p.m.

It's the ninth consecutive year that the NBA features five games on Christmas.

Here's more of what to know going into the NBA's big slate of Christmas games:

BY THE DOZEN

Assuming he plays Sunday, Wade will become the eighth player to appear in at least 12 Christmas games. Bryant played in 16, O'Neal, Dolph Schayes and Earl Monroe played in 13 and Robertson, Dick Van Arsdale and Johnny Green are the others in the NBA's 12-timers club for Dec. 25. Wade still can't believe he got to play on Christmas even once. "It means a lot about what the NBA thinks of me in



Chicago's Dwyane Wade, right, and Cleveland's LeBron James look to join the 300-point Christmas club today.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEE NBA, PAGE B2

SEE REUWER, PAGE B5



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Atlanta and Carolina players form a prayer circle after Atlanta's 33-16 victory on Saturday in Charlotte.

PANTHERS

FROM PAGE B1

Carolina will finish with its fourth losing season in six years under coach Ron Rivera. Rivera was named NFL coach of the year in the two seasons in which the Panthers had winning records.

OLSEN SETS RECORD

Carolina's Greg Olsen has become the first tight end in NFL history to record three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. Olsen did it with a 17-yard reception from Newton in the second quarter.

RYAN BREAKS MARK

Ryan broke his own franchise record with his 33rd TD pass of the season when he fired a dart to Perkins in between double coverage for a 26-yard first-quarter score.

SPREADING IT AROUND

Ryan set an NFL single-season record by throwing TD passes to 13 different receivers. Taylor Gabriel has six TD receptions, while Julio Jones (5), Muhammad Sanu (3), Jacob Tamme (3), Austin Hooper (3), Justin Hardy (3), Devonta Freeman (2), Tevin Coleman (2), Aldrick Robinson (2), Levin Toilolo (2), Patrick DiMarco (1), Perkins (1) and Tialavea (1) also caught TD passes.

INTERESTING CALL

Down 17 and facing a crucial third-down situation with 10 minutes left, the Panthers left their top two receivers Benjamin and Olsen on the sideline and inserted backup quarterback Joe Webb for the injured Devin Funchess (knee). Newton threw to Webb near the goal line and he couldn't handle the pass, forcing the Panthers to settle for a third Graham Gano field goal.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carolina's Cam Newton (1) runs as Atlanta's Deion Jones chases during the second half of Saturday's game in Charlotte. Mike McCarn



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cleveland's LeBron James (23) needs 30 points to join the NBA's 300-point club for Christmas Day games.

NBA

FROM PAGE B1

this game," he said.

FIRST-TIMERS

Minnesota will play on Christmas for the first time, visiting Oklahoma City. "We're all young kids, and no matter, young, old, we all love Christmas and we love spending it with our families — but for an opportunity like we have, we're more than willing to play on Christmas," Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns said.

STILL WAITING

Charlotte and Memphis haven't played on Christmas. Boston is in the lineup for the first time since 2012, but the Celtics waited much less time than other franchises to get an invite to the league's holiday party. Milwaukee hasn't played on Christmas since

1977. Other long droughts: Atlanta (since 1989), Utah (1997), Toronto (2001), Philadelphia (2001), Sacramento (2003), Indiana (2004) and Detroit (2005).

FELIZ NAVIDAD

No fewer than 23 countries are represented on the rosters of this year's Christmas-game teams. Of the countries outside the U.S. who have players in these games, Spain leads the way with five.

TRIPLE DOUBLES

Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook is the NBA's triple-double king this season. He already has one of those in his Christmas career as well, and he and James have a chance to become the first players with two such statlines on Dec. 25. There's only been five in NBA history. Those who did it: James, Robertson, Westbrook, Billy Cunningham and John Havlicek.

SCOREBOARD

TV, RADIO

TODAY

Noon — NBA Basketball: Boston at New York (ESPN).
12:30 p.m. — College Basketball: Diamond Head Classic Seventh-Place Game from Honolulu (ESPN).
2:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Golden State at Cleveland (WOLO 25).
2:30 p.m. — College Basketball: Diamond Head Classic Third-Place Game from Honolulu (ESPN).
4:30 p.m. — NFL Football: Baltimore at Pittsburgh (NFL NETWORK, WVFN-FM 100.1, WNKT-FM 107.5).
5 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Chicago at San Antonio (WOLO 25).
6 p.m. — College Basketball: Diamond Head Classic Third-Place Game from Honolulu (ESPN).
7 p.m. — International Soccer: Mexican League Match — Tigres vs. America (UNIVISION).
8 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Minnesota at Oklahoma City (ESPN).
8 p.m. — College Basketball: Diamond Head Classic Championship Game from Honolulu (ESPN2).
8:20 p.m. — NFL Football: Denver at Kansas City (WIS 10, WVFN-FM 100.1, WNKT-FM 107.5).
10:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Los Angeles Clippers at Los Angeles Lakers (ESPN).

MONDAY

7:25 a.m. — International Soccer: English Premier League Match — Crystal Palace vs. Watford (NBC SPORTS NETWORK).
9:55 a.m. — International Soccer: English Premier League Match — Sunderland vs. Manchester United (NBC SPORTS NETWORK).
10 a.m. — International Soccer: English Premier League Match — West Brom vs. Arsenal (CNBC).
11 a.m. — College Football: St. Petersburg Bowl from St. Petersburg, Fla. — Mississippi State vs. Miami (Ohio) (ESPN).
12:10 a.m. — International Soccer: English Premier League Match — Manchester City vs. Hull (NBC SPORTS NETWORK).
2:30 p.m. — College Football: Quick Lane Bowl from Detroit — Boston College vs. Maryland (ESPN).
3:30 p.m. — High School Basketball: Beach Ball Classic from Myrtle Beach — Jonesboro (Ga.) vs. Westchester (Calif.) (TIME WARNER 1250).
5 p.m. — College Football: Independence Bowl from Shreveport, La. — Vanderbilt vs. North Carolina State (ESPN2).
5:15 p.m. — High School Basketball: Beach Ball Classic from Myrtle Beach — McQuaid Jesuit (N.Y.) vs. Pace Academy (Ga.) (TIME WARNER 1250).
6:05 p.m. — Talk Show: Sports Talk (WDXY-FM 105.9, WDXY-AM 1240).
7 p.m. — High School Basketball: Beach Ball Classic from Myrtle Beach — Providence (Fla.) vs. Evanston Township (Ill.) (TIME WARNER 1250).
7:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Charlotte at Brooklyn (FOX SPORTS SOUTHEAST).
8 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Indiana at Chicago (NBA TV).
8:15 p.m. — NFL Football: Detroit at Dallas (ESPN, WVFN-FM 100.1, WNKT-FM 107.5).
8:45 p.m. — High School Basketball: Beach Ball Classic from Myrtle Beach — Scott County (Ky.) vs. Myrtle Beach (TIME WARNER 1250).
10 p.m. — Professional Boxing: Taras Shelestyuk vs. Jaime Herrera in a Welterweight Bout from Corona, Calif. (SHOWTIME).
10:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Denver at Los Angeles Clippers (NBA TV).

NFL STANDINGS

By The Associated Press

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	13	2	0	.867	406	236
Miami	10	5	0	.667	349	345
Buffalo	7	8	0	.467	389	348
N.Y. Jets	4	11	0	.267	245	399
SOUTH						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	8	6	0	.571	250	294
Tennessee	8	7	0	.533	357	361
Indianapolis	7	7	0	.500	362	339
Jacksonville	3	12	0	.200	298	376
NORTH						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	9	5	0	.643	341	276
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	306	263
Cincinnati	5	8	1	.393	288	293
Cleveland	1	14	0	.067	240	425
WEST						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Oakland	11	3	0	.786	377	336
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	319	274
Denver	8	6	0	.571	299	258
San Diego	5	10	0	.333	383	386

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Dallas	12	2	0	.857	366	258
N.Y. Giants	10	5	0	.667	291	274
Washington	8	6	1	.567	386	364
Philadelphia	6	9	0	.400	340	318
SOUTH						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	10	5	0	.667	502	374
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	313	322
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	406	392
Carolina	6	9	0	.400	353	385
NORTH						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	9	5	0	.643	301	285
Green Bay	9	6	0	.600	401	364
Minnesota	7	8	0	.467	289	297
Chicago	3	12	0	.200	269	361
WEST						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Seattle	9	4	1	.679	298	235
Arizona	5	8	1	.393	340	325
Los Angeles	4	10	0	.286	197	328
San Francisco	1	13	0	.071	264	434

x-clinched playoff spot
 y-clinched division

THURSDAY'S GAME

Philadelphia 24, N.Y. Giants 19

SATURDAY, DEC. 24

New England 41, N.Y. Jets 3
 Jacksonville 38, Tennessee 17
 Washington 41, Chicago 21
 Green Bay 38, Minnesota 25
 Cleveland 20, San Diego 17
 Atlanta 33, Carolina 16
 Miami 34, Buffalo 31, OT
 Indianapolis at Oakland, 4:05 p.m.
 Arizona at Seattle, 4:25 p.m.
 Tampa Bay at New Orleans, 4:25 p.m.
 San Francisco at Los Angeles, 4:25 p.m.
 Cincinnati at Houston, 8:25 p.m.

SUNDAY, DEC. 25

Baltimore at Pittsburgh, 4:30 p.m.
 Denver at Kansas City, 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 26

Detroit at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

NBA STANDINGS

By The Associated Press

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	21	8	.724	—
Boston	17	13	.567	4½
New York	16	13	.552	5
Philadelphia	7	22	.241	14
Brooklyn	7	22	.241	14
SOUTHEAST DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	17	13	.567	—
Atlanta	15	15	.500	2
Washington	13	16	.448	3½
Orlando	14	18	.438	4
Miami	10	21	.323	7½

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	22	6	.786	—
Milwaukee	14	14	.500	8
Indiana	15	16	.484	8½
Chicago	14	15	.483	8½
Detroit	14	18	.438	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	24	6	.800	—
Houston	22	9	.710	2½
Memphis	20	12	.625	5
New Orleans	11	21	.344	14
Dallas	9	21	.300	15
NORTHWEST DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	18	12	.600	—
Utah	18	13	.581	½
Portland	13	19	.406	6
Denver	12	18	.400	6
Minnesota	9	20	.310	8½

PACIFIC DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	27	4	.871	—
L.A. Clippers	22	9	.710	5
Sacramento	13	17	.433	13½
L.A. Lakers	11	22	.333	17
Phoenix	9	21	.300	17½

FRIDAY'S GAMES

Charlotte 103, Chicago 90
 Orlando 109, L.A. Lakers 99
 Cleveland 119, Brooklyn 99
 Golden State 119, Detroit 113
 Oklahoma City 117, Boston 112
 Memphis 115, Houston 109
 Milwaukee 123, Washington 96
 New Orleans 91, Miami 87
 Sacramento 109, Minnesota 105
 Atlanta 109, Denver 108
 Phoenix 123, Philadelphia 116
 Toronto 104, Utah 98
 San Antonio 110, Portland 90
 Dallas 90, L.A. Clippers 88

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Boston at New York, 12 p.m.
 Golden State at Cleveland, 2:30 p.m.
 Chicago at San Antonio, 5 p.m.
 Minnesota at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
 L.A. Clippers at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

MONDAY'S GAMES

Memphis at Orlando, 7 p.m.
 Milwaukee at Washington, 7 p.m.
 Charlotte at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
 Cleveland at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
 Atlanta at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
 Dallas at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
 Indiana at Chicago, 8 p.m.
 Phoenix at Houston, 8 p.m.
 Toronto at Portland, 10 p.m.
 Denver at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
 Philadelphia at Sacramento, 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY'S GAMES

Memphis at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
 Oklahoma City at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
 Houston at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
 Utah at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

NHL STANDINGS

By The Associated Press

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION							
	GP	W	LOTpts	GF	GA	GA	
Montreal	34	21	9	4	46	104	76
Ottawa	34	20	11	3	43	88	89
Boston	36	18	14	4	40	85	87
Tampa Bay	35	17	15	3	37	100	98
Florida	35	15	14	6	36	85	97
Toronto	33	14	12	7	35	97	95
Detroit	34	15	15	4	34	83	96
Buffalo	33	12	13	8	32	71	91
METROPOLITAN DIVISION							
	GP	W	LOTpts	GF	GA	GA	
Columbus	32	23	5	4	50	110	65
Pittsburgh	35	22	8	5	49	121	100
N.Y. Rangers	36	23	12	1	47	119	89
Washington	32	20	8	4	44	87	69
Philadelphia	36	20	12	4	44	110	108
Carolina	33	15	11	7	37	88	90
New Jersey	34	13	14	7	33	80	102
N.Y. Islanders	33	13	14	6	32	90	102

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION							
	GP	W	LOTpts	GF	GA	GA	
Chicago	36	22	9	5	49	102	86
Minnesota	33	21	8	4	46	102	66
St. Louis	35	18	12	5	41	98	103
Nashville	33	15	13	5	35	94	94
Dallas	35	14	14	7	35	89	106
Winnipeg	36	16	17	3	35	95	105
Colorado	33	12	20	1	25	67	106
PACIFIC DIVISION							
	GP	W	LOTpts	GF	GA	GA	
San Jose	34	21	12	1	43	87	75
Edmonton	36	18	12	6	42	105	97
Anaheim	35	17	12	6	40	96	99
Los Angeles	34	17	13	4	38	87	

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Throughout his first two years at Washington, wide receiver Dante Pettis was regularly regarded as having the potential to be great. At times that potential would emerge and the Huskies would be teased by what Pettis might become

FILE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Washington's Pettis realizing his potential

BY TIM BOOTH
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — Throughout his first two years at Washington, Dante Pettis was regularly regarded as a player with the potential to be great.

At times the Huskies would be teased by what Pettis might become. Then the wide receiver would disappear for long stretches and remain invisible while standing on the field.

"I think maybe it was a little bit of confidence," Washington quarterback Jake Browning said. "I think he's done a good job. Last year people would get kind of physical with him and he was kind of having to work to get off that. Now I think the confidence part, going into his third year of playing — he played a lot as a freshman and then last year as a sophomore — you know just taking that next step."

That next step has come for Pettis this season as he has grown into an invaluable part of Washington's offense and one of the reasons the Huskies find themselves in the Peach Bowl opposite top-ranked Alabama. While teammate John Ross has gotten plenty of headlines for finding the end zone 19 total times this season, Pettis isn't far behind with 14 touchdown receptions and perhaps the biggest special teams play of the year when he returned a punt 58 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter to give Washington a 31-24 win at Utah.

"I knew that (my) numbers would increase," Pettis said. "I wasn't sure by how much."

Pettis has regularly been praised as one of the most improved offensive players from the end of the 2015 season along with running back Lavon Coleman. Pettis said that bump in productivity and success came from fully buying into coach Chris Petersen's program.

"Coming to workouts, coming to practice every day fully prepared," Pettis said. "Not like, 'Oh, we have another workout. Oh, we have to do squats today, or we got a 24-period practice.' It's we're here to work and get better."

Browning framed it differently. The Huskies quarterback believes Pettis has gotten better at many of the little things that ultimately make a difference. Browning, a sopho-

more, hopes he can make a similar jump between his second and third seasons.

"I think he's always worked hard but you kind of get over that curve where you have these little things you need to work on," Browning said. "I'll probably have the same thing. You've got this curve you have to get over and once you get over that curve then you start playing a lot better. I've thought he always worked hard, always was a very productive receiver. Last year he showed up on third down and in the red zone a ton and I think he's done that this year and obviously playing really well."

Pettis had 47 combined catches between his freshman and sophomore seasons, but just two receiving touchdowns. He has surpassed that total this season, finishing with 50 catches and his 14 touchdowns receptions were tied for seventh in the country. The reception numbers were low compared to Ross, but Pettis isn't often used on wide receiver screens the same way as Ross.

"Jake's obviously doing a lot better. Ross coming back helped a lot. He cleared a lot of stuff up for everyone else on the offense," Pettis said. "We switched up some of the plays we were calling. There was a lot of stuff that went into it. I wouldn't say there was one thing I've done that made me better this year."

Like a number of others on the offensive side of the ball, Pettis has benefited from the return of Ross. The speed and big-play ability of Ross have forced defenses to base much of their coverage on where he is on the field.

Pettis has been the biggest beneficiary. And it's why he could play such a key role against Alabama. Ross is likely to get plenty of attention from the Crimson Tide secondary, meaning Pettis, Chico McClatcher, Darrell Daniels and others must win their matchups to provide Browning with the options he needs.

Pettis will likely be one of Washington's most important players on the field on Dec. 31. And that's saying something.

"He's special," Ross said. "Everything about him, his work ethic, just his mental game, everything that he's been working for is showing up."

Alabama's Evans hopes to shine on big stage again

BY JOHN ZENOR
AP Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Rashaan Evans has had some of his biggest moments in Alabama's most important games. Now, he has a chance to create some more.

The junior is likely to make his first career start against Washington in the Peach Bowl semifinal game on Dec. 31. Evans was the backup to middle linebacker Shaun Dion Hamilton, who's out for the rest of the season with a knee injury sustained in the Southeastern Conference championship game.

Evans, one of the top-ranked Tide's most heralded recruits three years ago, quickly allowed a touchdown pass after relieving Hamilton against Florida but also made a pivotal goal line stop in the third quarter that coach Nick Saban called "the turning point in the game."

He had his best performance last season with two sacks in the national championship game against Clemson.

"I'm embracing this moment a lot," Evans said. "Whenever I get out on the

field anytime — regardless if it's the championship game or not, man — I try to do my best. Just with this game upcoming, I'm going to try to do the same thing I've been doing."

Evans moved to inside linebacker this fall after two seasons on the outside. The 6-foot-3, 230-pounder is a prime example of the luxury of Alabama's string of top-rated recruiting class.

One guy goes down, a five-star prospect replaces him. It happened with All-American Minkah Fitzpatrick moving over from cornerback earlier this season to replace injured safety Eddie Jackson.

Now, it's Evans' turn. He has played in 39 games over the past three seasons without a start, recording 2.5 sacks and 35 tackles so far this year.

"He's embracing it well, getting in extra film (work), working hard," said fellow inside linebacker Reuben Foster, the Butkus Award winner. "The toughness is already there. I ought to know, I play with him. It's comfortable, I like it. It's bad news for Shaun Hamilton but he got the rest of his college career to get back out there."

Both Evans and Foster

were highly rated recruits from Auburn High School, who left for Tuscaloosa instead of staying at their hometown school.

Evans was rated a top 20 recruit out of high school but has had to wait his turn in a loaded linebacker corps led by Foster, Hamilton, Tim Williams and Ryan Anderson.

Even Foster, now a unanimous All-American, only started nine games his first three seasons. Evans admits it's been difficult waiting his turn.

"As a player, you just really have to think of the bigger picture," he said. "This whole thing is a lot bigger than just you and any other player that feels the same way I do. So that's kind of the mentality that I have to have. Once I had that, as you can see, your chances will come, you've just got to wait your turn."

Evans' role had already changed. He has 10 more tackles than his first two seasons combined.

Saban has said the coaches viewed Evans as akin to a starter all season, and that he was the first guy off the bench if anything happened to either Foster or Hamilton.

BOWL ROUNDUP

La. Tech beats Navy on last-second FG

Louisiana Tech senior quarterback Ryan Higgins was bawling like a baby even before Jonathan Barnes' game-ending kick went through the uprights to win the Armed Forces Bowl.

"As soon as (the holder) put the ball down, I felt like the kick was money," Higgins said. "Each person that I hugged after that, it was just getting worse and worse. I just couldn't be happier to send my class and this team out on a high note."

Higgins threw for 409 yards and four touchdowns, two each to Trent Taylor and Carlos Henderson, and Barnes' 32-yard field goal broke the game's fourth tie as the Bulldogs beat Navy 48-45 on Friday.

"Excellent win would be an understatement," coach Skip Holtz said.

"If you want to be a kicker, you live for that," Barnes said. "I'm lucky to be able to share it with a bunch of guys that are like my brothers."

The Bulldogs (9-5) drove for the winning score after Navy freshman quarterback Malcolm Perry ran 30 yards for a touchdown on his only play. Higgins was then 4-for 4 for 58 yards on the final drive.

Navy (9-5), which was trying for its first consecutive 10-win seasons, instead ended with its third straight loss. The Midshipmen lost the American Athletic Conference title

game before its first loss to Army since 2001.

DOLLAR GENERAL BOWL

TROY 28

OHIO 23

MOBILE, Ala. — The Troy Trojans polished off their best season as an FBS program thanks largely to a defense that kept taking the ball away.

Jordan Chunn had three short touchdown runs and the Trojans intercepted four passes and recovered a fumble in a victory over Ohio in the Dollar General Bowl on Friday night.

The Trojans (10-3) finished off their first 10-win season since moving up to the FBS in 2001, thanks largely to a defense that came up with three big fourth-quarter stops. The first Sun Belt Conference team to crack the Top 25, Troy forced 18 turnovers in its last five games.

The Bobcats (8-6) settled for field goal attempts twice in the fourth quarter, making one, and got one more chance from their own 15 with 2:20 left and no time-

outs. They managed one first down, but Windham couldn't throw for another one under heavy pressure.

BAHAMAS BOWL

OLD DOMINION 24

EASTERN MICHIGAN 20

NASSAU, Bahamas — David Washington threw three touchdowns passes, Ray Lawry ran for 133 yards and Old Dominion beat Eastern Michigan 24-20 on Friday in the Bahamas Bowl.

Old Dominion (10-3) didn't play football for 69 years before restarting the program in 2009. The Monarchs started at the FCS level and made the transition to the FBS in 2013, where they play in Conference USA.

Eastern Michigan (7-6) lost in its first bowl appearance since 1987. The Eagles were led by Brogan Roback, who completed 26 of 46 passes for 300 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. Roback threw for at least 300 yards in six of his final seven games.

From wire reports

PO BOY'S TREE SERVICE FREE ESTIMATES

TREE CARE

- TRIMMING
- TREE REMOVAL
- STUMP REMOVAL



TREE REMOVAL

- TOPPING
- SPRAYING
- PRUNING
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PRO FOOTBALL

Playoffs start early for Steelers, Ravens today

BY WILL GRAVES

AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — When safety Mike Mitchell arrived in Pittsburgh in 2014, it didn't take long to get indoctrinated into his new team's particular distaste for the Baltimore Ravens.

"It was just you don't like Baltimore," Mitchell said. "It was like growing up in the Cold War, you don't like Russia."

Call it the byproduct of a decade-plus of trying to wrest the AFC North title from the other (save for the occasional intrusion by Cincinnati). The two teams that have claimed 10 of the 14 division crowns since the AFC North was formed in 2002 meet at Heinz Field on Christmas night. The winner earns a very direct path to the playoffs. The loser is almost certainly out.

"I'm assuming this is what the NFL wanted," Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said.

Considering the occasionally wayward paths Pittsburgh (9-5) and Baltimore (8-6) took to get here, they'll take it, too. Both teams have endured four-game losing streaks that evaporated their early-season momentum. Both have rebounded late in the year. The Steelers have won five straight while Baltimore is 5-2 since its bye week, the two setbacks coming in competitive losses on the road to New England and Dallas.

Baltimore is 6-1 in its last seven meetings with Pittsburgh, including a playoff win at Heinz Field in 2014. In a 21-14 victory at home on Nov. 6, the Ravens completely shut down Roethlisberger, Le'Veon Bell and Antonio Brown for three quarters in Roethlisberger's first game back from knee surgery. The Steelers insist they're far better than they were six weeks ago. Then again, so is Baltimore, a team that seems to thrive when playing in front of a sea of yellow Terrible Towels.

"It is not about being comfortable there or not being comfortable there," said quarterback Joe Flacco, who is a respectable 5-6 in Pittsburgh. "It is just about the fact that it is a big game in a high-pressure situation. They don't like us, and that is what it is all about."

The Steelers can lock up the division and earn a third straight playoff berth with a win. Baltimore needs to top Pittsburgh, then win in Cincinnati on New Year's Day to return to the postseason after missing out in 2015. Just another layer to add to a combustible mix on a day designed to celebrate peace and joy.

"There is a professional hate with each other," Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith said. "It is also (that) the Pittsburgh and Ravens rivalry is pretty fierce, pretty intense, hard hitting. It has been that way for a long time. Our fans hate them. Their fans hate us. It is a great divorce."

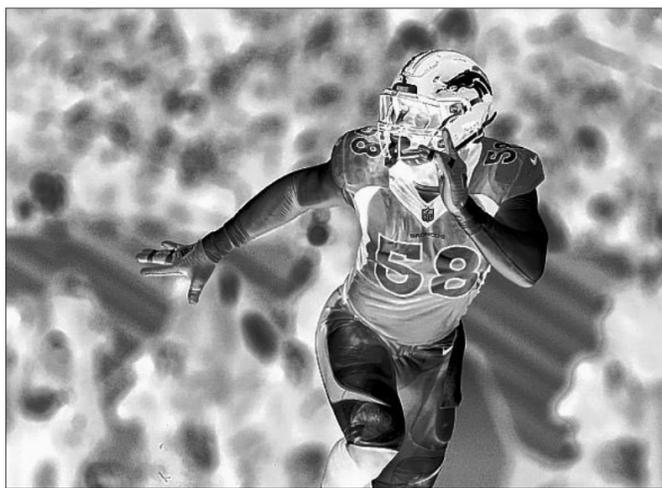
Merry Christmas.

GROWING UP

Pittsburgh's defense found itself ranked 30th in October, but has risen all the way to eighth in yards allowed after limiting the Bengals to 222 yards in a 24-20 comeback win last week. While some of the credit goes to a weak stretch in the schedule (Cleveland and Buffalo), the Steelers are also benefiting from the rapid maturation of rookie defensive backs Artie Burns and Sean Davis and rookie nose tackle Javon Hargrave.

"They're finding their rhythm," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "They're finding what works for them. I think when they do that, and as they continue to do that, it's reasonable to expect a more consistent floor in their performance, and a higher ceiling in their performance. And we've been increasingly getting that from him."

Denver outside linebacker Von Miller and the rest of the Broncos will travel to Kansas City today to face the Chiefs. KC could have its playoff berth assured before kick-off provided Pittsburgh knocks off Baltimore earlier in the day.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Broncos, Chiefs have postseason hopes on line

BY DAVE SKRETTA

AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Chiefs could have their playoff berth assured before kickoff against the Broncos on Sunday night, provided the Pittsburgh Steelers knock off the Baltimore Ravens earlier in the day.

That hardly diminishes the importance of the game.

Kansas City would need to beat its bitter AFC West rival to clinch its postseason spot if the Ravens win. But more importantly, the Chiefs (10-4) could move atop the AFC West, position themselves for a first-round bye and earn some level of home-field advantage if Oakland loses to Indianapolis on Saturday, and then they beat the Broncos (8-6) at what should be a festive Arrowhead Stadium.

Got all those scenarios straight?

If not, the Chiefs' Dontari Poe can help you out.

"We have to win. It's pretty much that simple," the big defensive tackle said. "They're coming into our place and it's the Broncos. It's no more intense than that. We have to be ready."

The Chiefs have won nine straight within the division, including their dramatic win in Denver last month. They scored on

their final possession to force overtime that night, then got two field goals from Cairo Santos in overtime — the second ricochet off the upright — to escape with a 30-27 victory that has proven to be massive in the playoff chase.

Without the win, the Chiefs would be in a much more dire situation Sunday night.

In other words, they would be in Denver's situation.

The Broncos' best chance of making the playoffs and defending their Super Bowl title is to beat Kansas City and Oakland in the final two weeks. If they split and finish 9-7, their chances of earning a wild card become slim, and would require help from a whole bunch of other teams.

"We have to win out," Broncos wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders said. "We have to win out."

So, both teams believe their divisional showdown is a must-win game. Here are some of the key points that will determine which team is successful:

WIN THE SECOND HALF

The Chiefs' offense has become anemic in the second half the last three weeks, averaging 124 yards over that span. They also haven't scored an offensive touchdown in any of those games, and that proved to

be debilitating in a 19-17 loss to Tennessee last Sunday.

Tight end Travis Kelce blamed overly conservative play calling afterward, though he later backtracked. But he may have been right: The Chiefs rarely push downfield in the second half of games.

"I look at all of that," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said when asked whether he needs to be more aggressive. "I go through and look at all that."

LOCKER ROOM RIFF

The Broncos downplayed disharmony in their locker room this week, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Their dynamics became a hot topic after last week's 16-3 loss to New England when squabbling began between cornerback Aqib Talib and left tackle Russell Okung.

That led to a shouting match between defensive players who have held some of the NFL's best defenses in check, and a line that's been blamed for the Broncos' ugly offense.

"There's no division. That's battling and that's part of football," Broncos coach Gary Kubiak said. "Defensively, we should feel really good about ourselves and how we played. Offensively, we should look at it and say, 'We did some good things, but we should have scored some points.'"

NFL ROUNDUP



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Diego running back Ronnie Hillman (36) is tackled by Cleveland free safety Ed Reynolds, left, and defensive back Joe Haden in the first half on Saturday in Cleveland. The Browns won their first game of the year 20-17.

Christmas present: Browns get 1st win

CLEVELAND — The Browns are winless no more.

Cleveland avoided that fate Saturday by beating the San Diego Chargers 20-17 for their first victory in more than a year. San Diego's Josh Lambo missed a 45-yard field goal as time expired, giving the Browns (1-14) their first win in 377 days.

When the kick sailed right, Cleveland's small crowd erupted in celebration and Browns players poured off their sideline as if they had just won the Super Bowl.

The Browns avoided becoming the second team to go 0-15, and no longer have to worry about joining the 2008 Detroit Lions as the only teams to lose all 16 games.

Cleveland built 10-point lead in the third quarter and hung on — defensive tackle Jamie Meder blocked a potential tying field goal with 3:49 left — to give coach Hue Jackson his first win with the Browns.

The Chargers (5-10) lost their fourth straight and one that could sting for a while.

PACKERS 38

VIKINGS 25

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Aaron Rodgers threw for 347 yards and four touchdowns, Jordy Nelson shredded Minnesota's secondary for 154 yards and two scores, and resurgent Green Bay beat Minnesota 38-25 on Saturday.

The Packers' fifth straight win set up a winner-take-all showdown next week with Detroit for the NFC North title, while extinguishing the Vikings' faint postseason hopes.

Green Bay (9-6) built a 28-13 lead at halftime, with Rodgers accounting for all four scores in the half. He finished 28 of 38, and shrugged off his right calf injury after scrambling for a 6-yard touchdown late in the second quarter and making a rare Lambeau Leap.

Playing again without running back Adrian Peterson, the Vikings (7-8) had success through the air after Sam Bradford threw for 382 yards and three touchdowns, including a 71-yard touchdown pass to Adam Thielen in the second quarter.

REDSKINS 41

BEARS 21

CHICAGO — Kirk Cousins threw for a touchdown and ran for two more, and the Washington Redskins gave their fading playoff hopes a boost with a victory over Chicago.

DeSean Jackson added 114 yards receiving, and Washington (8-6-1) intercepted Matt Barkley five times. It added up to an easy win for the Redskins after they relinquished control of the second wild card with a loss to Carolina on Monday night.

Eighth in the NFC behind Green Bay and Tampa Bay

coming in, Washington scored 14 points in the first quarter after struggling early in recent games and never really was threatened by the struggling Bears (3-12).

DOLPHINS 34

BILLS 31 (OT)

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Jay Ajayi ran for 206 yards and broke loose for a 53-yarder in overtime to set up Andrew Franks' 27-yard field goal with 47 seconds left to lead Miami over Buffalo.

In winning for the ninth time in 10 games, the Dolphins (10-5) inched closer to their first playoff berth since 2008.

Miami can secure the AFC's final wild-card berth as early as Sunday if Denver loses to Kansas City.

The Bills (7-8) were eliminated from contention and extended the NFL's longest active playoff drought to 17 seasons.

JAGUARS 38

TITANS 17

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Blake Bortles' best game of the season helped Jacksonville and end a nine-game losing streak.

Bortles threw for 325 yards and a touchdown, and was on the receiving end of a 20-yard trick play that sealed the win with 5:25 remaining. Rookie Jalen Ramsey returned an interception 30 yards on the ensuing play to set off a raucous — and long-awaited — celebration in Jacksonville.

Bortles and the Jaguars (3-12) played inspired football from the opening kick and won for the first time this season at EverBank Field. Their last victory at home came Dec. 13, 2015, against Indianapolis.

Maybe they rallied around interim coach Doug Marrone. Maybe they played for ultra-popular ex-coach Gus Bradley, who was fired six days earlier. Maybe they just wanted to avenge an embarrassing loss to the Titans (8-7) on national television in late October.

PATRIOTS 41

JETS 3

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Tom Brady passed for 214 yards and three touchdowns, and the Patriots moved a step closer to securing home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

A loss or tie by the Raiders against the Colts later Saturday would officially give New England the AFC's top seed.

Malcolm Butler added two interceptions and a fumble recovery, and LeGarrette Blount had a pair of 1-yard touchdown runs.

New England (13-2) took advantage of New York miscues all day, scoring on three of its first four possessions.

From wire reports

CAMPS, CLINICS & MORE

BASKETBALL

DISTRICT 9 OFFICIALS TOURNAMENT

The 20th Annual District 9 Officials Christmas Basketball Tournament will be held Tuesday through Thursday at Crestwood High School's The Castle and the Chestnut Oaks Middle School Gymnasium.

The 16-team event will have games on Tuesday and Wednesday at both sites beginning at 10 a.m. with the last games slated for 6:30 p.m. The championship games are scheduled for Thursday at Crestwood with the girls starting at 6 p.m. followed by the boys at 7:30.

Admission is \$6 for students and \$8 for adults on each day. Tickets are good for both sites and last all day.

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

TUESDAY At Crestwood High School

Crestwood vs. Spring Valley (Girls), 11 a.m.

Blythewood vs. Manning (Girls), 12:30 p.m.

Lamar vs. Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate (Boys), 2 p.m.

Lakewood vs. Spring Valley (Girls), 3:30 p.m.

Crestwood vs. Newberry (Girls), 5 p.m.

Lee Central vs. Manning (Boys), 6:30 p.m.

At Chestnut Oaks Middle School

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate vs. Lee Central (Boys), 10 a.m.

Newberry vs. Lee Central (Girls), 12:30 p.m.

Hammond vs. C.E. Murray (Boys), 2 p.m.

Hartsville vs. Kingstree (Girls), 3:30 p.m.

Manning vs. CA Johnson (Girls), 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY At Crestwood High School

Hartsville vs. CA Johnson (Girls), 11 a.m.

Manning vs. Newberry (Girls), 12:30 p.m.

Manning vs. Hammond (Boys), 2 p.m.

CA Johnson vs. Lee Central (Girls), 3:30 p.m.

Crestwood vs. Kingstree

(Girls), 5 p.m.

Hammond vs. Lee Central (Boys), 6:30 p.m.

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate vs. C.E. Murray (Boys), 8 p.m.

At Chestnut Oaks Middle School

Lee Central vs. Blythewood (Girls), 11 a.m.

Kingstree vs. Lakewood (Girls), 12:30 p.m.

C.E. Murray vs. Lamar (Boys), 2 p.m.

Spring Valley vs. Hartsville (Girls), 3:30 p.m.

Lakewood vs. Blythewood (Girls), 5 p.m.

Lamar vs. Manning (Boys), 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY At Crestwood High School

Girls Championship, 6 p.m.

Boys Championship, 7:30 p.m.

BASEBALL

P-15'S BRICKS

The Sumter P-15's American Legion baseball program will be placing bricks for former players at the front of Riley Park in January.

The cost is \$50 per brick. For more information, contact Post 15 athletic director Billy Lyons at (803) 968-5115.

UMPIRES NEEDED

The Sumter County Recreation Department is in search of umpires for its spring youth league baseball season. For more information, contact Glenn Button at (803) 983-9934.

U.S. BASEBALL ACADEMY SPRING TRAINING

U.S. Baseball Academy's Spring Training 2017 will be held at the University of South Carolina Sumter's Nettles Gymnasium beginning in January.

The camps, which are open to children in grades 1-12, will be held on Jan. 7, Jan. 14, Jan. 21 and Jan. 28. USC Sumter head coach Tim Medlin will be the program director.

With the player-to-coach ratio at 7 to 1, space is limited. Students can register at www.USBBaseballAcademy.com or

by calling (866) 622-4487.

For more information, contact Medlin at (803) 938-3904 or (803) 944-0612.

BOWLING

GAMECOCK LANES SCORES

OCT. 7-20

Industrial Mixed: Thomas Jackson 278-721; Jerry Beasley 264-658; Carl Thompson 510; Chuck Scott 234-634; Doug Oliver 228-619; Earl Fronabarger 255-624; Gwen Cofield 539; Rowland Yates 664; Judy McDonald 230; Scott McDonald 599; Dennis Nickens 239-619; Angela Wills 160-418; Steve Anderson 256-707; Ron Rath 232-627; Raynard Jackson 533; Leo Mickens 236; Willie Graham 557; Doug Oliver 231.

Friday Night Mixed: Sam Green 232-661; Gene Jenkins 246-679; Tim Hudnall 278-763; Shawn Matter 277-778; Loretta Friday 539; Sue Bailey 254-669; Eva Jackson 244-614; Shar Jeffcoat 495; Danielle Riles 188-488; Marc Harton 255-664; Richard Allen 268; Greg Jones 661; Gregg Anderson 300; Phillip June 266-676; Curtis Anderson 260-690; Thomas Jackson 669; Rowland Yates 268; Reggie Ratcliff 236; Victor Baker 536; Tony Friday 579; Paul McClam 450; Maceo Pack 225; Aaron Green 231-672; Chris Armstrong 267-749; Martha Gregg 181-507; Tyrone Jacobs 288-611; Shar Jeffcoat 526; Greg Jones 698; Tim Jenkins 246-643; Sean Chapman 245-653; Keith Pardorf 659; Sam Green 235-620; Bobby Holladay 682; Phillip June 259-695; Ricky Dinkins 713; Pam Clark 506; Bill Riles 240-614; Michael Gregg 636; Mickayla Ketter 524; Jackie Jones 542; Kenneth Jenkins 243; Mike Hodge 258.

Bumpers: Wesley Johnson 147. **Jr./Maj./Sr.:** AJ Smith 96; Austin Kirby 171-481; Ian Morris 201-519; Brooklyn Horner 130; Brandon Trimm.

Sunday Night Mixed: Tom Teigue 201-511; Chris Lyles 212-549; Daniel Bochette 359; Maritza Hogan 301.

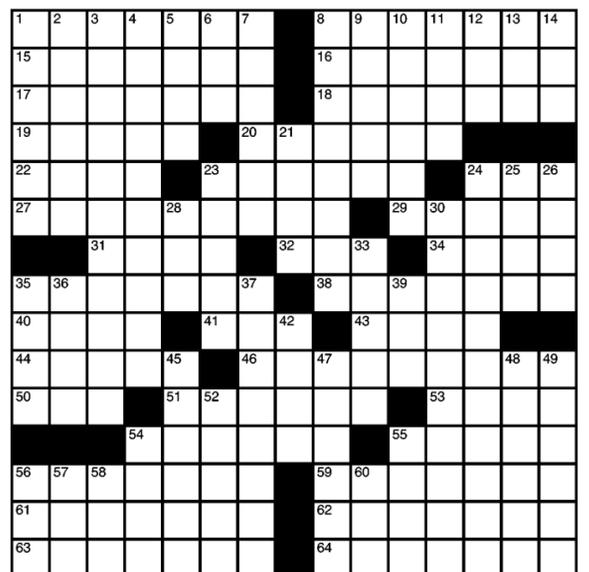
Tuesday Night Mixed: Emily Batey 233-678; John Faragi 522; Terence Williams 278-704; Larry Schultz 269-717; Joann Goins 655; Byron Phillips 710; Leslie Bruner 217-581; Troy Blake 597; Sherry Lauchart 553; Stephanie Barbare 483; Joe Blake 534; Cindi Shirley 503; Debbie Tutton 189-460; Daniel Girdvainis 243; Jay Gillion 235-595; Paul Foster 240-668; Joshua Sweeney 243; Phillip June 258; April Price 150-348; Tucker Tumblyn 570; Tyrone Bailey 673; Mike Hodge 673; John Garrett 623; Larry Schultz 684; Daniel Girdvainis 641; Cindi Shirley 509; Shay Gathers 515; Terry Starnes 438.

Close Encounters: Anthony Thomas 201-429; Johnny Evans 496; David Outlaw 236-596.

Afternoon Delight: Kenny Smith 269; Kenny Smith 268; Earl Fronabarger 232. **Capt. & Crew:** Kenny Smith 266-726; Tucker Tumblyn 232-570; Richard Allen 259-697; Kerri Clark -221-591; Scott McDonald 617; Gregg Anderson 269-730; Chris Johnson 622; Michael Starnes 548; Alex Clark 496; Josh Sweeney 244-626; Marc Harton 253-710; Kenny Smith 278-679; Gregg Anderson 280; Judy McDonald 227; Alex Clark 513; Scott McDonald 603; April Price 412.

SATURDAY PUZZLES

THE DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



By Matt Skoczen

12/24/16

ACROSS

- 1 It's commonly read by waiters
- 8 Place to meet
- 15 1992 Mame! play
- 16 Cork holder
- 17 Enterprise enterpriser
- 18 They're usually kept
- 19 1976 Sports Illustrated Sportswoman of the Year awardee
- 20 E major scale note
- 22 Hawthorne cover image
- 23 Quiet
- 24 Ben, to Jerry
- 27 Truce emblem source
- 29 John Paul's successor
- 31 Movie
- 32 Pollutant banned by Cong. in 1979
- 34 Sights from la mer
- 35 Subjects of family disputes
- 38 Erupted
- 40 Call to a line
- 41 -Man
- 43 Singer Lovato
- 44 Renée Fleming et al.
- 46 Great extent

- 50 Fed. assistance program
- 51 Conniving, with "in"
- 53 Durango demonstrative
- 54 _ camera
- 55 Shares, with "out"
- 56 Where to hear a lot of talk
- 59 Rayed flowers
- 61 Bond choice
- 62 Charlie McCarthy feature
- 63 Significant supply
- 64 Sounded like a flute duet?

- 12 Popular store opening?
- 13 Periodo de tiempo
- 14 NFL stats
- 21 Small distance
- 23 Higher than you might have hoped
- 24 Phone accessory banned at Disney parks
- 25 "That's _ haven't heard"
- 26 Cartoon award eponym
- 28 Sinusitis-treating MD
- 30 1993 "Ethan Frome" star
- 33 It can get you in
- 35 Extreme pair
- 36 Paquette de _; peruze purchase
- 37 Iceberg topper

- 39 One of Donald's pair
- 42 Pen
- 45 Tried to make it home
- 47 Hip-hop group at Live Aid's 1985 Philadelphia concert
- 48 Holt's detective partner in '80s TV
- 49 Mouthed off at
- 52 Minneapolis suburb
- 54 Excrete
- 55 Revealing garb
- 56 Chicago-based professional org.
- 57 Warp, e.g.
- 58 Board game spots with nine sqs. between them
- 60 Mifephone owner

DOWN

- 1 One facing charges?
- 2 Two-part British academic exam
- 3 Noted 2013 resignee
- 4 Opera originally titled "Violetta"
- 5 "Doing that right now!"
- 6 Where there may be no room
- 7 Typographical symbol
- 8 Modern, in a way
- 9 Font choice
- 10 1852 literary villain
- 11 Turn preceder, in Texas Hold 'em



Friday's Puzzle Solved

COUP DRAMA TIED
ALSO COLIN ANTE
BEESEXTING GLUT
SORES VERB IDO
RAGGEDYANNEX
RAM TRE HOE
EVER ENSEARWIG
FETALEXPOSITION
ICESIN ABS ETTA
OTB OED HAT
SPRAYONTEXAN
TRI AMIE MOCHA
AUTO EXCESSPOOL
IDEA GERRY IAMB
DESK ASSES EXES

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

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

FROGO

MUGOB

LATWUN

SOIFUN

Answer here:



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

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: WHIRL DITTO FLAUNT DEVOUR
Answer: Aliens decided to take over Earth because they thought — THE WORLD OF IT

SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY:

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

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

12/24

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REUWER

FROM PAGE B1

epee gold medal came as a little bit of a surprise, Reuwer said.

"I was kind of doing the epee as just a warmup, kind of a 'just have fun' event," he said. "But doing so well in that was really exciting. I don't know. I was just really on my game and didn't make a lot of mistakes."

Even so, the Men's Cadet Foil event will be Reuwer's major focal point going forward.

"That's the one I'm going to focus on," he said. "I'm going to train for all of them, but that's where my main focus is going to be. That's the age group for 17-and-under, so that's more around my age."

Reuwer will get some good practice time in as the Men's Junior Foil and Cadet Epee events will take place before the Men's Cadet Foil one, giving him two days of good preparation.

Aside from good competition, Reuwer is also hoping the Junior Olympics will help catch the eyes of some college coaches as well.

"I'm hoping to fence in col-

lege, so hopefully I can do well here and get some exposure to some college coaches," he said.

The Barons sophomore did get some first-hand exposure with a college this past summer -- something that helped him leading up to the Junior Olympics qualifier, he said.

"I worked a lot over the summer," said Reuwer, who trains with the Columbia Fencers' Club. "I worked at Princeton (University's) fencing camp, which I think helped a lot. That and just being a little bit older and fencing a lot more helped a lot."

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THE ANSWERS TO THESE PUZZLES CAN BE FOUND ON TODAY'S DAILY PLANNER PAGE.



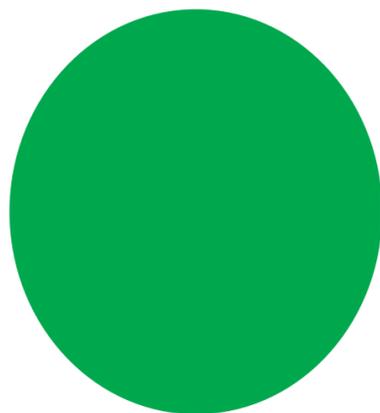
Merry Christmas

from our NEW Digs!

James Austin • Michele Barr • Rhonda Barrick • Trevor Bauknight
 Denise Belk • James Bradley • Dennis Brunson • Alexander Burrows
 Richard Carpenter • Karen Cave • Maria Chandler
 Michael Clift • Mary Cockerill • Justin Driggers • Ryan Galloway
 Keith Gedamke • Leonard Girdvainis Jr. • Angela Gordy
 Michael Harrison • Marjorie Hill • James Hilley • Penny Hodge
 Sandra Holbert • Reda Holliday • Cary Howard
 Cynthia Ivey • Sabrina Kind • Michelle Lee • Samuel Legg
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USA TODAY PERSONAL FINANCE

THIS WEEK

More than half of working Americans are leaving some of their company-paid vacation time on the table in 2016, according to a new Bankrate.com survey. Other findings:

59%
Percentage of younger Millennials (age 18-25) not taking paid vacation time

25%
Percentage of younger Millennials who use none of their paid vacation days

7
Median number of days workers are giving up

19
Average number of days workers are giving up

ON THE MOVE STOCK STORIES OF THE WEEK

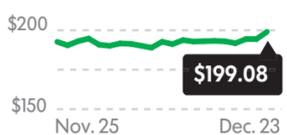
WALT DISNEY

The family entertainment company stock climbed Monday after "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" raked in \$155 million in the opening weekend, exceeded the \$130 million expectations. It acquired Lucasfilms in 2012.



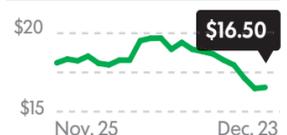
ALLERGAN

The Botox maker is acquiring LifeCell, a regenerative medicine company, for \$42.9 billion. It plans to apply regenerative medicine to apply to plastic surgery. Its stock price dipped early on Tuesday following the news.



TWITTER

In October, the social networking service said it would eliminate 9% of its workforce. In November, the CFO left. Wednesday, the CTO said he's leaving the company. The stock price has dropped six consecutive days and reached December's low.



WEIGHT WATCHERS

Shares of the weight loss/maintenance services company surged Thursday after Oprah Winfrey dropped 40 pounds and invested another \$100 million.



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USA SNAPSHOTS®

Business best sellers

Shown in proportion of sales. For every 10 copies of **Tools of Titans** sold, **Trump: The Art of the Deal** sold 2.0 copies:

Tools of Titans Tim Ferriss	10.0
Trump: The Art of the Deal Donald J. Trump and Tony Schwartz	2.0
How to Win Friends & Influence People Dale Carnegie	1.8
StrengthsFinder 2.0 Tom Rath	1.3
Grit Angela Duckworth	0.9

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JAE YANG AND VERONICA BRAVO, USA TODAY



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Unsatisfied receivers, gifters: Watch out for return policies

Courtney Jespersen | NerdWallet

You might find yourself trudging through a congested shopping center the day after Christmas carrying bags full of pants that are too short and sweaters that aren't your style. But the crowds and the heavy load might not be your biggest frustrations. Before you embark on your post-holiday mall trip, beware of the following:

RETURN WINDOWS

It's wise to bring misguided gifts back sooner than later. Kmart is allowing shoppers until Jan. 31 to return items purchased between Nov. 1 and Dec. 24. But it applies only to items that typically have a 30-day return window. Some are excluded, including those sold by third-party sellers, floor care equipment, vacuums and major home appliances. Don't assume your product qualifies for a retailer's extended window. Look online to see which deadline fits your gift.

process the return. Macy's, for instance, sends back gifts returned by mail that are missing an invoice or gift receipt.

REIMBURSEMENTS

If you're returning a gift you purchased, you might receive a refund to your card, a store credit or cash. For instance, Best Buy will reimburse you for most returned items the same way you paid. But if you paid more than \$800 in cash or more than \$250 by check or a debit card without a major credit card logo, you'll be mailed a refund check within 10 business days.

DOCUMENTATION

To avoid a wasted trip, arrive armed with ID, your receipt or packing slip and all packaging and parts of the product. Sometimes tags must be attached, too. Most stores require a gift receipt and/or order number to

WARRANTY LOOPHOLES

The Better Business Bureau warns that warranties sometimes exempt stores from liability for damaged products. Send those items directly to the manufacturer for a replacement.

FINAL SALE ITEMS

Some products can't be returned at all. At Wet Seal, lingerie, swimwear, jewelry and clearance purchases aren't eligible for return or exchange. At Steve Madden, purchases of clearance items and jewelry are final. Tory Burch won't accept anything that has been worn, altered or washed. If you're unsure of a retailer's return policy, call customer service or look it up online before you make a trip to the store or post office in vain.

Courtney Jespersen is a staff writer at NerdWallet, a personal finance website. Email: courtney@nerdwallet.com. Twitter: @CourtneyNerd. NerdWallet is a USA TODAY content partner providing general news, commentary and coverage from around the Web. Its content is produced independently of USA TODAY.

INVESTING ASK MATT

Can investments cut my taxes?



Matt Krantz
mkrantz@usatoday.com
USA TODAY

Stocks and bonds are best known for being great tools to help you meet financial goals, such as retirement. But investments can also be useful at tax time. You just need to understand the rules.

So-called tax-loss harvesting is one of the best ways to lower your tax bill. There's still time to

use this technique for the 2016 tax year because the year isn't over yet. If you sell your money-losing stocks or bonds, you can use those losses to offset capital gains you might have generated during the year if you sold profitable stocks.

Even if you don't have any capital gains, it can still be lucrative to sell losers. You can deduct up to \$3,000 a year in capital losses against your ordinary income. If you have more than \$3,000 in capital losses, you can use those to offset gains and income in the future. There are additional rules to be aware of, the biggest one being that if you sell a loser, you must

wait more than 30 days before buying it back or the tax loss is invalidated.

Funding a traditional individual retirement account, or IRA, might be an excellent way to further reduce your taxable income. You will need to pay taxes on the money when you take it out, but that could be decades away, giving you an excellent tax break now.

USA TODAY markets reporter Matt Krantz answers a different reader question twice a week. To submit a question, e-mail Matt at mkrantz@usatoday.com or on Twitter @mattkrantz.

Make a plan to improve finances

With Jan. 1 around the corner, time to act for 2017 is now

Jeff Reeves
Special for USA TODAY

With the turn of the calendar, it's the perfect occasion for many Americans to think about doing things differently starting Jan. 1.

A recent survey from investing giant Fidelity shows that simply making a plan to improve in the coming year can be an important part of your overall financial health.

Fidelity surveyed more than 2,000 Americans and found that, of those who made financial resolutions, 52% felt they were better off financially; only 41% of those who didn't make a plan a year ago felt they got ahead. Similarly, 52% of those who made a financial resolution in 2016 felt confident about their finances improving in the coming year vs. just 37% of those who didn't make a plan.

The Fidelity survey found 75% of respondents said seeing tangible progress toward their goals was a big motivator that helped them stick with their plans.

Whatever your plan, the simple act of making any financial resolution is a good sign you're on the path to more secure finances, said Ken Hevert, senior vice president of retirement at Fidelity. "Sometimes, a financial resolution doesn't require a cash outlay," Hevert said, pointing to things like learning more about your 401(k) and rebalancing your portfolio.

The survey found 75% of respondents said seeing tangible progress toward their goals was a big motivator that helped them stick with their plans.

Resolutions to consider:
Save 100% of bonuses and raises: "While it's easy to see this increase in pay as extra money to spend, it should be set aside and put toward reaching your savings goals," said Travis Sollinger, director of financial planning at Fort Pitt Capital Group in Pittsburgh.

Compare quotes: Many people don't think about insurance if they're not filing a claim, but it's worth comparing rates in 2017 to see if you can save on your monthly premiums.

Review documents: If you haven't made a will or medical power of attorney, make this the year you craft them. If they exist but you haven't reviewed them in a decade, then take the time to ensure they reflect your present situation.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Dow Jones Industrial average ▲0.5% week ▲4.5% month ▲9.2% 3 months	S&P 500 ▲0.3% week ▲2.7% month ▲4.6% 3 months	Nasdaq Composite index ▲0.5% week ▲1.5% month ▲3.0% 3 months	Wilshire 5000 ▲0.3% week ▲2.6% month ▲4.9% 3 months	Gold Ounce, Comex ▼0.3% week ▼4.8% month ▼15.4% 3 months	Oil Light sweet crude ▲2.2% week ▲10.6% month ▲19.2% 3 months	Euro Dollars per euro (week) ▲0.0019 ▼0.0097 month ▼0.0779 3 months	Yen Yen per dollar ▼0.75 week ▲4.66 month ▲16.17 3 months
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USA TODAY PERSONAL FINANCE

PETE THE PLANNER



ISTOCKPHOTO

Don't use Roth IRAs to cover expenses, with this exception ...

DEAR PETE: Married in March, fired in September, and expecting our first baby in March 2017. I have \$45k in credit card debt (\$35k of which is 0% until July 2017), I own a property with a tenant, which cash flows \$30/month. I have \$121K in a Roth account that I recently rolled over. Finally, I'm starting a new career as a 100% commissioned real estate agent this month. Do I make a withdrawal to cover expenses for the first six months of my real estate career? A \$37,500 distribution would net \$30K. Our monthly expenses shortfall is \$5K a month.

— TOM, PITTSBURGH

Peter Dunn
Special for
USA TODAY



DEAR TOM: somehow you strike me as a man of action — maybe it's your writing style. You also have a somewhat reasonable plan on the table, although you have a pretty significant detail wrong.

But first, we must tackle the realities of beginning a 100% commission income career. If you stay disciplined and work your plan, you can rebuild your financial life. However, if you make too many false steps early in the game, you will make your problems worse.

Over the years, I've found true financial emergencies don't really come in events such as a job loss. Instead, they come with people's reaction to unsettling events. Sure, losing your job six months after getting married stinks, but overreacting will make the situation much worse.

Your job is to not overreact.

Back in high school physics, of which I paid partial attention, I remember Newton's Third Law of Motion — for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. You need to look through a similar lens when evaluating your financial emergency.

Clearly, I don't know all the details of your job loss. But you've either survived over the last three months because of a severance package or you had an emergency fund. My gut tells me it was a severance because you are just now emailing me.

No matter how you survived the last three months without a job, you survived. And better yet, you know exactly how much money you need each month to survive. It's worth noting that it seems as though you lost a pretty high-paying job, around \$85,000-\$90,000 a year (my guess).

Allow me to oversimplify your reality for a moment. All you need to do is to sell roughly \$3 million worth of real estate (calculated at a 3% net commission) to replace your previous income. The \$30,000 net you're considering withdrawing from your IRA is equivalent to \$1 million in real es-

tate sales. Like you, I'd rather you sell \$3 million worth of real estate instead of \$2 million.

Neither of us want you to take money out of your Roth IRA right now. I'm almost always opposed to robbing from your future to provide for your present, but if it's truly your only chance to survive, then it's your only chance to survive.

Now for the major detail you got wrong. You can withdraw deposits you've made to a Roth IRA without tax consequences. You just can't withdraw the earnings prior to age 59½ without getting taxed and penalized.

In other words, you don't need to withdraw \$37,500 to net \$30,000. You only need to withdraw \$30,000. As long as you've contributed \$30,000 to your Roth IRA and you can document it, you can withdraw \$30,000 from your Roth IRA without worrying about taxes.

The best plan of attack, if you're going to supplement your current income with Roth withdrawals, is to only withdraw what you need each month. Don't take a giant withdrawal at the beginning.

Let's make a visit to the truth tree. You might not make a dime in real estate sales in your first two months. If this possibility turns into your reality, withdraw the first two month's worth of expenses (\$10,000) now.

If you happen to earn \$4,000 in commissions in your third month, set money aside for taxes and then take the rest as income. At this point, you can supplement your commission income with a withdrawal from your Roth.

It might look like this: \$4,000 commission turns into \$3,200 after setting aside 20% for taxes, and then you would supplement your income with \$1,800 from your IRA. And just like that, you'd have the \$5,000 you need to survive.

If your real estate career takes off quickly, once you create a degree of stability consider replacing your Roth IRA withdrawals to help preserve your future. Talk to a tax accountant about the specific rules surrounding replacing your Roth withdrawal.

Finally, don't forget the three cardinal rules of real estate: location, location — and replace your Roth IRA withdrawals.

Peter Dunn is an author, speaker and radio host, and he has a free podcast: Million Dollar Plan. Have a question about money for Pete the Planner? Email him at AskPete@petetheplanner.com

DIGITAL DOLLARS

DirecTV Now is newest option for cord cutters

Mike Snider
@mikesnider
USA TODAY

AT&T is making its play for cord cutters and mobile video junkies with DirecTV Now, a Net TV service that has been live more than three weeks now.

Many consumers are likely wondering whether this video streaming service is a fit for them. The answer so far? Maybe.

During its introductory launch period, DirecTV Now is letting newcomers check out more than 100 channels for free for seven days and after that for \$35 monthly. You can keep that monthly price as long as you remain a customer — no word yet on when that deal ends.

What channels are we talking about? Popular networks such as AMC, CNBC, CNN, Discovery, Disney, ESPN, ESPNU, Fox News, MSNBC, NBC Sports, Nickelodeon and TBS, as well as some local broadcast channels and regional sports networks in certain markets.

Eventually, that package will cost \$60 monthly, with others ranging from \$35 to \$70 monthly. You can add HBO and Cinemax for \$5 each monthly.

In addition to linear live-streaming channels, DirecTV Now has on-demand programming, too. For instance, all eight episodes from this season of *The Walking Dead* were available to watch on demand.

Among the major pluses: There's no annual contract and you don't need a satellite dish, as with standard DirecTV, or a pay-TV set-top box.

But there are some nits, too. If you are a Roku devotee, you will have to wait. So far, the service is available on Apple TV, iPhones and iPads, Amazon Fire TV devices, Chromecasts, Android phones and tablets, computers

Is AT&T's new streaming service a fit for you? Maybe

and Google Cast TVs from China's LeEco. Roku TVs and set-top boxes will come later.

Watching recently, I encountered little of the freezing video and error messages some viewers have reported. I watched on a tablet and smartphone connected via Wi-Fi at home and at work, and on an Ethernet cable connected to my router to an Apple TV to watch on a big screen.

With the free seven-day trial you can see if DirecTV Now is a fit for you. A few takeaways:

► **Features you might like:**

Your account allows two users to watch different programs at the same time. If you are an AT&T wireless customer looking for both a home cord-cutting option and mobile video service, DirecTV Now makes sense because your video use doesn't count against your data limit. And if you were in the market for an Apple TV, you can get a free one if you prepay for three months of DirecTV Now (\$105).

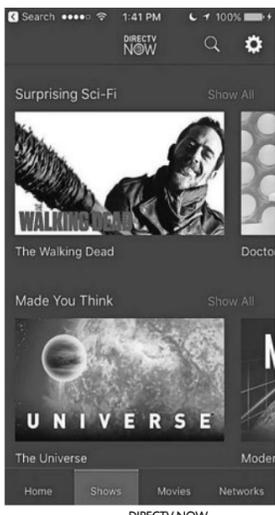
► **Possible deal-breakers:**

For now, CBS, as well as CBS-owned premium network Showtime, are not on the service, although talks are ongoing. And if you need a DVR, you may want to wait for DirecTV Now to add that functionality, something it has in the works.

However, its on-demand library is stocked with 15,000 titles already. If you like your pay-TV remote, you may miss some features such as a Recent or Previous Channel button.

Sports fans, take note: DirecTV Now doesn't gain you access to the satellite service's popular NFL Sunday Ticket service.

► **The bottom line:** If you are a TV viewer looking to reduce your monthly bills, you might want to try DirecTV Now. It doesn't have all the bells and whistles of DirecTV or other top pay-TV systems. What it does have? Fewer strings.



AT&T's DirecTV Now streaming video service on a smartphone.

"Cutting the Cord" is a regular column covering Net TV and ways to get it. If you have suggestions or questions, contact Mike Snider at msnider@usatoday.com.

THE WEEK AHEAD



KENA BETANCUR, AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Are consumers still feeling buoyant as new year dawns?

Paul Davidson
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USA TODAY

This week brings some illuminating data as the country heads into 2017 on the mood of consumers and the state of the housing market. Both recently hit post-recession milestones.

A closely watched index of consumer confidence surged to 107.1 in November, the highest level since July 2007, five months before the Great Recession began. Americans are enjoying solid job and income growth, still-cheap gas despite a recent uptick, and record stock and home prices.

In the November survey, most consumers responded before the election. At the least, Donald Trump's win did nothing to ding optimism despite pre-election fears. And the stunning post-election stock market rally stoked by soaring business confidence has further lifted spirits. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index reached a 12-year high in December.

Economists estimate the Conference Board on Tuesday will report that its confidence index, which can foretell future spending, also remained in rarefied territory this month.

One reason consumers are content is record home prices. In September, the S&P CoreLogic

Consumer confidence has been strong recently.

Case-Shiller national home price index exceeded its pre-recession high, marking a symbolic recovery from the housing crash. But the aggregate numbers don't tell the whole story. After accounting for inflation, home prices are still about 20% below their peak, notes Ralph McLaughlin of real estate research firm Trulia.

While rising prices have created challenges for homebuyers, whose incomes generally have not kept pace, the trend has been good news for homeowners. Many were burdened by mortgage debts that exceeded their home values. The S&P index for October should show continued advances in housing prices.

Much of the rise in home prices has been fueled by limited inventories, which have constrained sales. Still, the National Association of Realtors reported last week existing home sales rose 0.7% in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.6 million, the fastest pace in nearly a decade. Rising mortgage rates, which climbed from 3.47% in late October to 4.3% recently, may have nudged some fence-sitters into buying before rates increase further. But higher borrowing costs eventually may crimp sales. The Realtor group's pending home sales index for November, which tracks contract signings and foreshadows closings, is out Wednesday and could reveal if a slowdown is on the way.

One reason consumers are content is record home prices.

USA TODAY PERSONAL FINANCE

Don't 'anchor' yourself to minimum credit card payments

Research shows it's costing U.S. consumers millions of dollars in needless interest

Robert Powell
Special to USA TODAY



Do you carry a balance on your credit cards from month to month? Do you pay just the minimum or near-minimum due on your monthly statement?

You're not alone. In fact, three in 10 card holders (113 million credit card accounts) do just that, and it's costing them millions of dollars in needless interest payments, according to new research published by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

For starters, something called "anchoring" is to blame for card holders paying just the minimum, according to the co-authors of the research, Benjamin Keys, an assistant professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and Jialan Wang, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois.

In the world of behavioral finance, anchoring is a bias toward salient — but sometimes irrelevant — cues, Keys and Wang say. And in the case of credit card statements, the big cue is the "minimum amount due."

According to Keys and Wang, the minimum payment — which typically represents 1% to 2% of the outstanding credit card balance — is



Jialan Wang, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, is one of the research co-authors along with



... Benjamin Keys, an assistant professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Robert Powell is editor of Retirement Weekly and contributes regularly to USA TODAY, "The Wall Street Journal" and MarketWatch. Got questions about money? Email Bob at rpowell@allthingsretirement.com.

the amount needed to stay in good standing with the lender and avoid any late fees or trigger higher interest rates.

And what's interesting to note, Keys and Wang say, is that the minimum payment is based on a formula which is applied to millions of accounts that might not be related to how much a customer can afford to pay or how much they would need to pay to get out of debt. In fact, the researchers estimate that some 9% to 20% of credit card holders could afford to make higher payments on their credit card debt.

By way of history, in the 1970s, the minimum amount due on credit card balances was much more like 5% of the balance, which, the authors say, led borrowers to pay off their debts much faster. And this change in the minimum amount due on balances from 5% then to 1% or 2% now has had "important implications for how much outstanding debt households have," the authors say. Of note, credit card debt in the U.S. totaled \$665 billion in 2015.

To be fair, some consumers may be making near-minimum payments because they are struggling with financial difficulties and cannot afford to pay more. However, the researchers say a significant number of consumers aren't sure how much to pay, are strongly influenced by the required minimum and could save a significant amount of money by paying more each month. "Paying more would speed up the repayment period and sharply reduce the cumulative interest paid," Keys and Wang say.

The researchers also say a sizable fraction of credit card holders — young and old, rich and poor — make relatively small payments and thus incur interest each month. "This behavior isn't isolated to a small part of the credit card population," Keys and Wang say.

"It's surprisingly universal."

THE CHALLENGE OF CREDIT CARD DEBT

To be fair, it's somewhat understandable that consumers anchor to the minimum amount due on their monthly credit card statement.

"Credit card debt is challenging for households because there's no set schedule for how to pay it back in a timely fashion," Keys and Wang say. "This makes it very different from a mortgage, auto loan or student loan, which tend to have a fixed amortization schedule — a 30-year mortgage or 10-year student loan, for example — and a predictable repayment date."

In contrast, the researchers say it would take more than a decade for a consumer with just \$2,000 in credit card debt to pay it off by making only the typical minimum payment, and that would

entail thousands of dollars in interest costs.

What's more, most consumers continue to spend on their cards, making it even more difficult to figure out how much they should repay, Keys and Wang say. "Our research suggests that many consumers could be paying down more on their credit card debt," they say. "Tools and techniques that help them set and achieve repayment goals could save consumers billions of dollars per year in interest costs."

So, what are some of the tools and techniques that you can use to save money each year in interest costs?

Researchers say it would take more than a decade for a consumer with just \$2,000 in credit card debt to pay it off by making only the typical minimum payment, and that would entail thousands of dollars in interest costs.

► **Anchors away.** According to Keys and Wang, credit card holders should resist, when making financial decisions, the urge to "anchor" to an easily-available benchmark and instead carefully choose the repayment amount that best meets their goals. "Instead of anchoring to the minimum payment on their credit cards, consumers should pay down as much as they can on high-interest debts given their budgets to minimize their interest costs."

► **Try the 36-month plan.** Credit card holders — thanks to the CARD Act of 2009 — also learn on their statements what payment is required to pay off their balance in 36 months. According to Keys and Wang, 1% of credit card holders adopted this alternative suggested payment, and that resulted in \$62 million in interest savings per year. However, the savings could have been \$2 billion per year if all anchoring consumers had adopted the new suggested 36-month payment.

► **Create a monthly budget.** Keys and Wang say consumers ought to create a monthly budget and allocate any money that isn't being used for immediate needs, 401(k) matching contributions, or their emergency fund toward paying down their debt.

Tools such as Mint, Chase Blueprint and ReadyForZero can help consumers create a budget, pay down debt faster and reduce interest costs.

"For many households, the interest rate on the credit card is their highest-cost debt, so they should make it a priority to pay it back," Keys and Wang say.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

10 SMART INSURANCE RESOLUTIONS

Insurance is a financial safety net for when life just doesn't go your way, but that doesn't mean you should ignore it when things are going well. Here are 10 things you can do in 2017 to strengthen your net and avoid common insurance claims.

Lacie Glover
@LacieWrites
NerdWallet

1 MAKE A HOME INVENTORY

Making a list of items in your home before a disaster occurs helps guarantee you won't forget to claim anything, but 48% of homeowners say they don't have an inventory, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

2 READ YOUR INSURANCE POLICIES

The key to making a claim is understanding your policy. For auto and home insurance, look for the policy's declarations page. For health insurance, look for the summary of benefits. Make sure you understand the limits and deductibles of each policy, along with the co-payments and co-insurance for health insurance.

3 QUIT SMOKING

If you smoke, your insurers want you to quit. Both health and life insurance typically cost less for nonsmokers, and your health plan might even help by paying for counseling and medication to help you quit.

If you're shopping for life insurance, you need to be smoke-free for at least a year to get non-smoking rates, says Robert Wolfe, managing director of United Capital, a financial advising firm.

4 IMPROVE YOUR CREDIT

Bad credit may be having a bigger impact on your car insurance bill than you realize. Credit history can impact your rates more than your driving record, according to *Consumer Reports*. Only California, Hawaii and Massachusetts ban the practice.

The worse your credit, "the higher the risk your insurer sees you as," Wolfe says.

5 STOP LEAVING THE KEYS IN YOUR CAR

One in eight stolen cars is a "freebie" for the thief, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau. Auto theft with the keys or an electronic fob inside the car is up 31% since 2013, with a car stolen this way every 6½ minutes. If you don't have comprehensive coverage and your car is stolen, you'll have to buy another car with your own money.

6 STAY IN THE KITCHEN WHILE YOU'RE COOKING

You can help avoid the time loss and frustration of a common insurance claim by staying in the kitchen when you cook.



ISTOCKPHOTO

Insurance quotes. A policy might be cheaper than you think.

► **8 TELL YOUR LIFE INSURANCE BENEFICIARIES ABOUT YOUR POLICY**
Letting your life insurance beneficiaries know where to claim money if you die seems simple enough. But \$8.8 billion in life insurance benefits are unclaimed nationwide, according to the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation.

7 FIND OUT THE REAL PRICE OF LIFE INSURANCE

The biggest reason 64% of consumers with some or no life insurance don't purchase more is because they think it costs too much, according to industry research group LIMRA.

If someone depends on you financially, consider getting life insurance.

make a claim; they only need to know which insurer you bought from.

9 DON'T OVEREXERT

If you plan to get in shape after the New Year, ease into your routine slowly.

"Unintentional overexertion" is one of the top three causes of injuries that land adults in the emergency room, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ER visits are rarely cheap, so don't let getting fit lead to extra bills.

10 DOWNLOAD YOUR INSURERS' APPS

Currently, 46 states allow drivers to provide electronic proof of car insurance during a traffic stop, according to Property Casualty Insurers Association of America. That means you no longer have to remember where you put your paper insurance card. Some auto insurers will even let you start a claim and see your policies on their apps.

Lacie Glover is a staff writer at NerdWallet, a personal finance website. Email: lacie@nerdwallet.com. NerdWallet is a USA TODAY content partner providing general news, commentary and coverage from around the Web. Its content is produced independently of USA TODAY.

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

Table of stock prices for NYSE, including columns for Name, Last, Chg, Wk, and various stock symbols like A-B-C, D-E-F, G-H, I-J, K-L, M-N, O-P, Q-R, S-T, U-V, W-X, Y-Z.

How To Read The Market in Review

The list includes the most active stocks in each exchange, as well as stocks of local interest. Stock Footnotes: co - PE greater than 99. cid - issue has been called for redemption by company...

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NASDAQ NATIONAL MARKET

Table of stock prices for NASDAQ, including columns for Name, Last, Chg, Wk, and various stock symbols like A-B-C, D-E-F, G-H, I-J, K-L, M-N, O-P, Q-R, S-T, U-V, W-X, Y-Z.

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MUTUAL FUNDS

Table of mutual fund prices, including columns for Name, NAV, Chg, Wk, and various fund symbols like A-B-C, D-E-F, G-H, I-J, K-L, M-N, O-P, Q-R, S-T, U-V, W-X, Y-Z.

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Sumter ITEM OUTDOORS

Call the newsroom at: (803) 774-1225 | E-mail: trevor@theitem.com

A Christmas morning hunt

Christmas morning has always been a special time. I grew up in a large family, and Christmas morning was family time. If my Dad, brothers and I managed to slip in a hunt, it would be a short, mid-day foray. Then off to Grandma's house for a Christmas night gathering.

During my time in the military, I wasn't always able to do the family thing. I even spent one Christmas Day on a recon patrol in the DMZ, along the border between North Korea and South Korea. It was just another day over there. I'm sure some of our soldiers will be doing the same thing this year there — and in other parts of the world.

When my kids were small, their mother and I divorced. Christmas turned into a little bit of a challenge. We tried alternating Christmas mornings with the kids from year to year, but they usually spent Christmas Eve and Christmas morning with their mom.

Then one year I ran into my friend Donnie Brown while I was out doing some last-minute shopping. As we talked, we both realized we'd be alone on Christmas morning. Donnie's kids were with his ex-wife in North Carolina. Mine would be with their mom in Orangeburg.

The duck hunting had been very good that year in Sparkberry Swamp. Work commitments had caused our days in the swamp to be precious few. So, we decided to go. The forecast was for a cold, clear day. Excellent!

Donnie picked me up at 4 o'clock in the morning, and we headed out to Packs Landing. There was no one at the boat landing or in the parking lot. We had the place to ourselves. The stars were sparkling in a jet-black sky as we loaded our gear and launched the boat. Our destination was Indigo Flats at the upper end of Broadwater.

Broadwater is a long boat ride from Packs. The water was up, and we had to watch for logs and debris floating in the Santee River current.

Broadwater Creek is a slow and bumpy ride because of

the stumps and logs encountered in the narrow, twisting waterway. It empties out into Broadwater Lake, where you can wind out the motor for a little ways. Then back into the winding, narrow creek. In the predawn darkness, we passed the cut to Little Creek and passed Broughton's Mound. Indigo Flats loomed ahead.

Instead of making the righthand turn around Indigo Flats, we went straight ahead to where the main creek seems to dead end. I knew of a little cut through the brush into a smaller, unnamed creek. There were some small flats and potholes along that little creek that the ducks favored when the water was up.

Just as we turned into the creek we hit a stump, and the boat glided to a stop. Donnie went to work on the motor while I paddled the boat on ahead. We were almost to our spot when Donnie said, "This motor's busted." We were miles and miles from Packs Landing.

We hadn't seen another boat or even a distant spotlight. I didn't think we would see very many people in the swamp on Christmas morning, but I was surprised that we hadn't seen a soul. "What are we going to do now?" Donnie asked. "Hunt ducks" was my answer. We were sitting in a pretty little spot, so I started tossing out decoys.

Daylight wasn't very far away. By the time we got the decoys out and the boat covered, it was getting light. Ducks were flying, and we had the entire swamp to ourselves.

Flocks of mallards drifted by and turned to our calling. They circled lower and lower, set their wings and pitched into the decoys. There was no one else around to mess us up. No competing callers, no sky busters, not another shot in the entire swamp. Soon we had

hulls and feathers all over that small pothole. We limited out on mallards and blacks. It was one of those rare days that you live for.

Now, we had to think about getting home. We retrieved the boat, picked up the decoys and paddled out to Broadwater Creek. There was a pretty good current, and it was downstream all the way. I was sure there would be other people in the swamp and we would eventually get a tow or some kind of assistance. In the meantime, we drifted along on the current, paddled a little to keep on course and worked on solving all the world's problems. I kept an ear cocked for the sound of distant motors.

It was a long way out and was nearly noon when we slipped into the river's stronger current. We had to work harder on the paddles to keep the boat straight and headed downstream away from the banks, littered with overhanging trees. It was mid-afternoon when I heard the distant sound. A boat was coming from downstream toward us. It's hard to believe how far you can hear the sounds of civilization, and it can be a relief to hear sometimes. When the boat rounded a bend in the river, we waved until he turned our way. It was a fisherman, and he was glad to help.

We weren't that far up, and he offered to pull us back to Packs. We were worn out from wrestling with the river's current and ready to go. We thanked him and offered to pay him for his trouble, but he would have none of that. If he told us his name I don't remember, but I do remember that day. Spent with a good friend, on a hunt, on Christmas morning.

Dan Geddings is a weekly columnist for The Sumter Item. Email Dan at cdgeddings@gmail.com.

No competing callers, no sky busters, not another shot in the entire swamp. Soon we had hulls and feathers all over that small pothole. We limited out on mallards and blacks. It was one of those rare days that you live for.



BY S.C. DNR

A young elk caused a stir earlier this year, appearing in backyards in northern Pickens County after wandering across the mountains from North Carolina, where the species was reintroduced in 2001. The elk seen was moved to Charles Towne Landing in Charleston, a historical park that features flora and fauna originally native to South Carolina but which may have disappeared from the state centuries ago.

Wandering S.C. elk moved to wildlife exhibit in Charleston

COLUMBIA (AP) — An elk that wandered into South Carolina's mountains and wouldn't go home has been moved to a wildlife exhibit in Charleston.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources said Wednesday the 500-pound elk has a new home at Charles Towne Landing, a state historic site that includes a natural habitat zoo.

The elk was first spotted roaming the woodlands of Pickens County in October. State wildlife biologists think larger bulls pushed the young bull from its home territory in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina.

Biologists tranquilized the animal Dec. 16 and moved it to remote Oconee County, hoping it would keep moving north and rejoin its herd.

But it didn't, and photos and video posted on social media showed people continuing to disregard biologists' warnings not to approach or feed it. So biologists decided the move to Charleston was best for the elk and public safety.

"It has become accustomed to people, so it will allow people to approach it, but it is unpredictable, and this behavior can create dangerous situations," state wildlife biologist Tammy Wactor said in a release.

It's unclear when visitors to Charles Towne Landing will be able to see the elk. The release says it will be quarantined until biologists determine it's ready to join other animals behind the open fencing.

The animals once were native to the Lowcountry but were wiped out in the Carolinas in the 1700s. The species was reintroduced to North Carolina in 2001.

Charles Towne Landing conserves the site where English settlers arrived in 1670 to start the Carolina colony.

FISHING REPORTS

Information on fishing trends provided courtesy of www.AnglersHeadquarters.com, South Carolina's premier fishing report source. Customers of the Angler's Headquarters online tackle store have access to daily updates and full-length reports on its site.

DHEC Fish Consumption Advisories: www.scdhec.gov/environment/water/fish.

Freshwater Fishing Report: Santee Cooper (12/4)

Santee Cooper water levels are down to 73.7 in Lake Marion (full pool is 76.8) and 73.5 in Lake Moultrie (full pool is 75.5). Main lake surface temperatures range from about 60-61 degrees.

Catfish: The bite for numbers of catfish continues to be good, but Captain Jim Glenn (843-825-4239) suspects that the big fish bite is about to be wide open. On recent trips Jim's boat has continued to catch tons of 1-6 pound fish, with the biggest fish recently in the 15-19 pound range. There have been some trips where barely any fish broke 10 pounds, but anglers still got their line pulled plenty. However, with the cold weather coming the big fish should turn on soon. This week last year Jim's boat caught two 50 plus pound fish, and the 10th they boated an 82-pound catfish. At times there have been severe winds which have made fishing a challenge, while at other times there has been so little wind that drifting without a motor was impossible. Overall the best action has come either drifting when there is wind or down-rodging when it is calm (dropping baits vertically over fish, without an anchor) in the mid-20s to about 30 feet of water. Most any fresh cut bait will catch fish.

Crappie fishing has not been wide open according to Captain Steve English (843-729-

4044), but they have caught some very nice fish including the 17-incher pictured below. Brush in about 18-25 feet of water has been the most productive, and they have been fishing about 12-20 feet down over that brush. Excellent numbers of bream have been caught over the same depth brush, and on a recent trip they kept 160 bream (and threw back at least that many) fishing 10-15 feet down with crickets. Some brush has more bream, while some has more crappie. If both are present the bream are usually more aggressive at getting to baits.

There are still a lot of bluegill and white perch in the canal, but soon English says that they will leave and then the shellcracker will take over.

Lake Wateree (12/2)

Lake Wateree is at 98.1 percent of full pool, and water temperatures continue to range widely from the upper 50s to mid-60s.

Bass are acting peculiarly on Lake Wateree, and CATT owner Brett Collins and tournament angler Dearnal Rodgers both concur that the fish just aren't in the grass. Dearnal says that the only way he has been able to catch fish has been around docks, but they have generally been smaller bass. They caught a bunch of 14-inch fish his last time out but just couldn't find the big ones. Brett and his partner did find the big ones — at least relatively speaking — in the last Wateree Open tournament on Saturday. They finished in first place with 14.59 pounds, and Brett says they also couldn't find anything in the grass. Even though water levels were high and there was good water around the grass the fish just weren't in it, and they found everything off main lake points in 2-6 feet of water. They caught all their fish flipping a jig.

Lake Murray (11/30)

Lake Murray water levels are down to 353.97

(full pool is 360.00) and water temperatures at the dam are ranging between 62 and 63 degrees. Clarity remains pretty good.

Bass: It continues to be a pretty tough fall for bass fishing on Murray, and veteran tournament angler Captain Doug Lown reports that it's been hard to establish a consistent pattern for catching fish. Even when anglers find numbers of fish it has been hard to find good ones — a 4 ½ pounder has been a big bass in most recent tournaments. For the most part Doug says that the fish that he and his tournament partner have been catching have been fairly shallow, and they haven't caught much in more than 10 feet of water. Most of the fish they are catching have been in less than 4 feet, but deeper water has been close by. Fish are not scattered out in certain depth ranges but instead are holding to certain little spots, and it has been hard to locate them as they move around a lot. Doug suspects that constantly dropping water levels have forced the fish to constantly reposition. At times rock has been the best cover, and with water levels low a lot of docks don't have any decent water. Most of the fish they are catching are coming on shaky head worms and jigs, and Doug believes that if water levels will stabilize fishing could get more consistent.

Channel and blue catfish bite is still pretty strong, although Captain Chris Simpson (864-992-2352) warns that the recent warm weather has scattered fish out and slowed the bite just a little. The best action is still coming drifting cut herring across main lake humps and points in 20-40 feet of water, as well as exploring certain feeder creeks which are holding good numbers of fish. With weather fluctuations anglers need to assess where the fish are holding on a particular day and then cater their game plan accordingly.

Lake Monticello (11/28)

Bass: Good. Andy Wicker reports that bass are starting to group up (with the white perch) in their winter holes, and vertically fishing a jig

has been very effective.

Catfish: Fair to good. Captain Chris Simpson (864-992-2352) reports that the big fish bite is improving on Lake Monticello as temperatures drop. Fishing on the bottom in deep water with cut gizzard shad or white perch is the best option for catching big fish.

Lake Wylie (12/4)

Lake Wylie is at 95 percent of full pool, and water temperatures are in the upper 50 to lower 60s.

Bass: It was a rough fall for bass fishing on Lake Wylie, but Guide and FLW Angler Bryan New (704-421-5868) reports that things are finally improving. In a recent tournament Bryan and tournament partner Todd Auten managed a 13- or 14-pound bag, which would have made for an easy win a month or so ago. Instead there were a couple of 16-pound bags ahead of them, a sure sign that things are improving. Bryan says it's now pretty easy to catch 10-15 fish (including small ones) and have a fun day of fishing again. Right now the bite is all about the bait, and in order to catch fish you have to be around schools of shad. That means that Bryan is leaning very heavily on his electronics during this part of the fall. There is one group of shad that is in the very backs of creeks, and then there is another group of shad out on the main lake. They could be around drop-offs, other structure, or frankly anywhere else, and so following your graph is crucial. Bryan is also spending some time running windblown pockets. The best baits right now include Alabama rigs, jerkbaits, crankbaits and jigs. Fish can be found from a few feet of water out to 25 or 30 feet, but over the deeper depths they are more likely to be suspended than hugging the bottom right now.

South Carolina freshwater recreational fishing regulations: (Pdf file): www.dnr.sc.gov/reg/pdf/freshfishing.pdf.

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Debra Canty, President

In Memory



Mr. Willie Holmes
1/8/44 - 4/10/09
Merry Christmas, Wife Mary, Children: Chris, Tiffany & Derrick, Grandchildren, Sisters, Brothers.



Reginald "Noble" Tirrell Holmes
12/24/72 - 04/06/11
It has been 6 years and we are still missing you. *Happy Birthday and Merry Christmas Your Mother: Mary, Sister: Tiffany, Brothers: Chris & Derrick, Children: Melody, Cameron, (Heidi), Family & Friends. We Miss You.*

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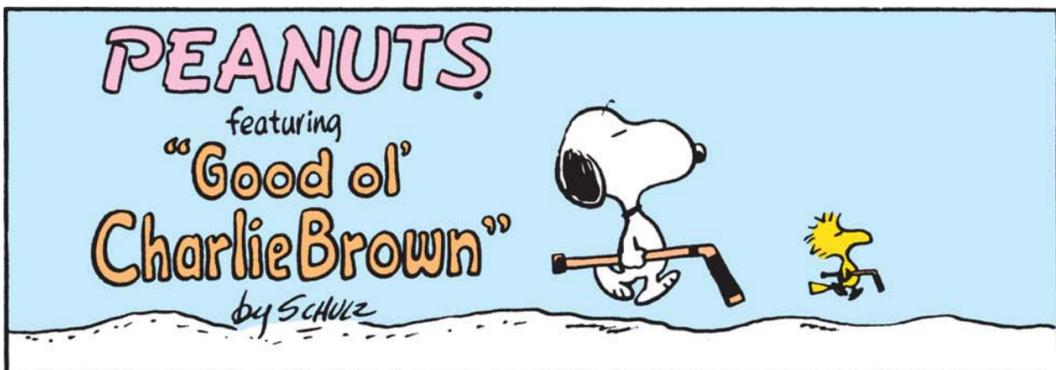
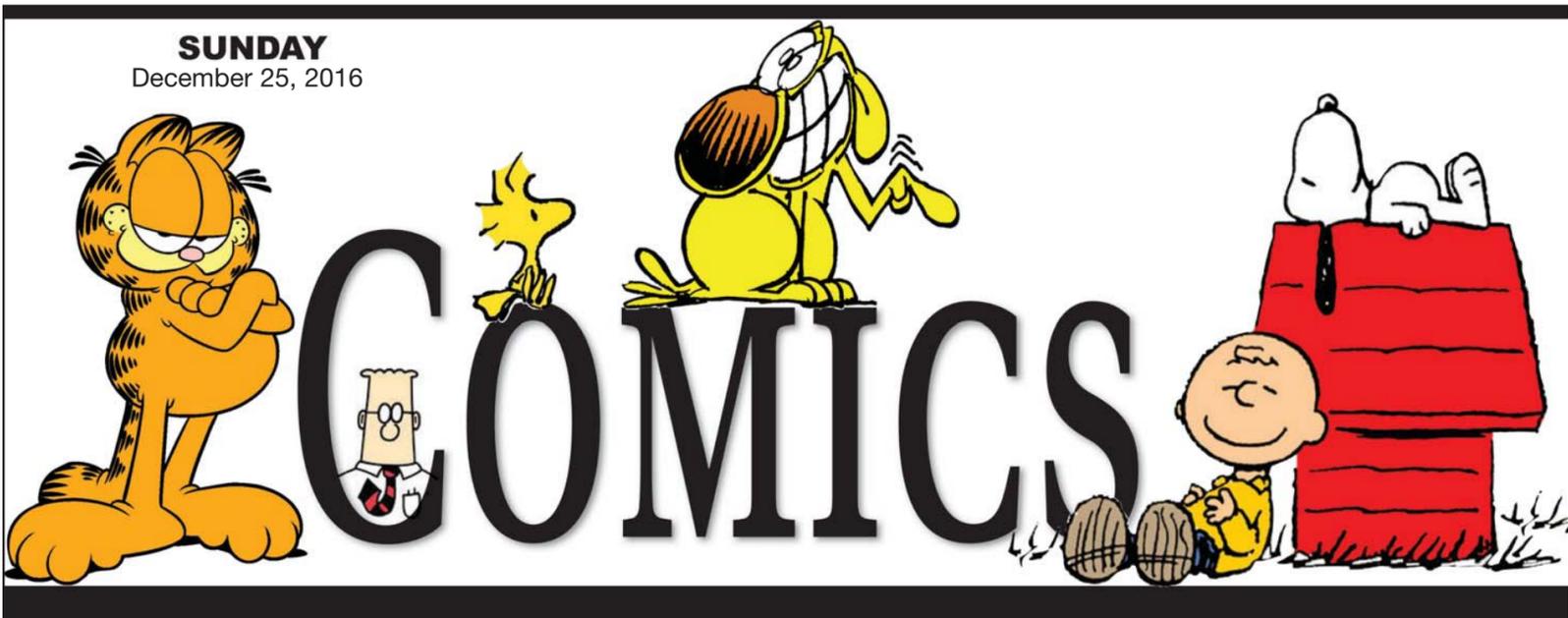
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Friday, December 23rd	Wed. December 21st @ 11:30
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Have a safe and Merry Christmas!
Business office will be closed December 23rd, 26th and January 2

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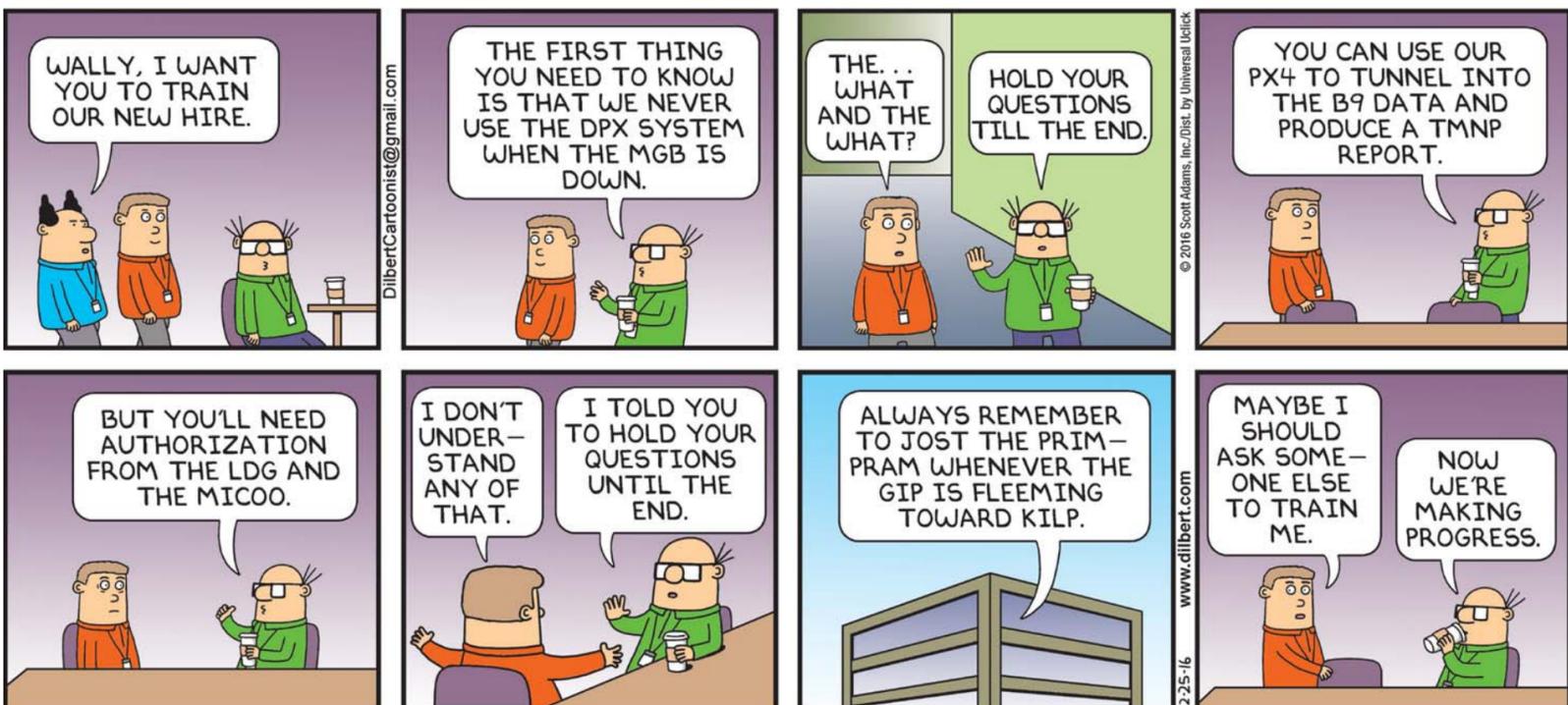
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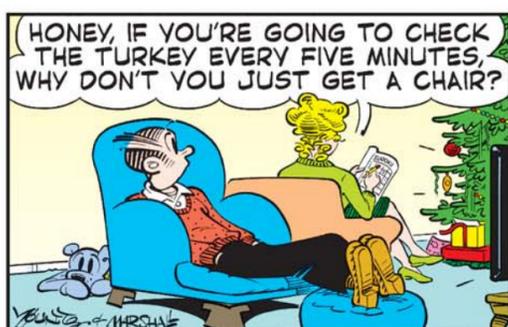
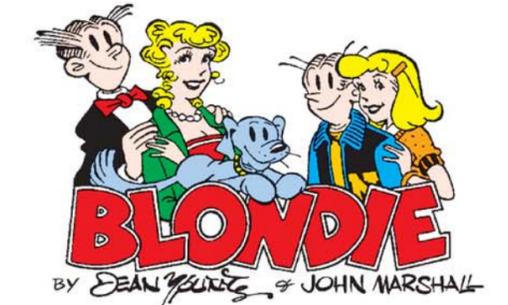
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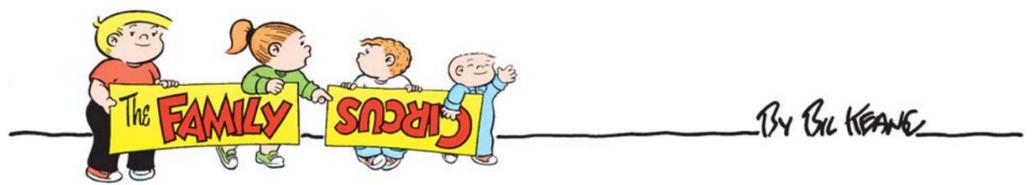
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REFLECTIONS

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Shaw service members dine on Christmas dinner.

Christmas at Shaw, 1941

The first Christmas dinner held at Shaw Field was on Dec. 25, 1941, in honor of the hundreds of young cadets, many of whom were away from family and friends for the first time.

The young reporters who wrote the article were biased against military food and did not relish dining at the Shaw facility. Their preconceived ideas were



Sammy Way
REFLECTIONS

dashed as they were treated to a sumptuous meal prepared by the young military cooks. The gourmet meal helped establish Shaw as one of the leading military mess facilities in the armed forces.

The first Christmas dinner was designed to also help the soldiers deal with homesickness and anxiety created by being away from home.

This article has been edited for length.

"They told us to go down to the Consolidated Mess Hall and talk with Captain Carl D. Stier, mess officer. We groaned a little, because we didn't like the idea of even talking about Christmas dinner in the army, but in the past fifteen minutes we've changed our minds. You couldn't hire us to eat off post.

"Instead of the usually drab-looking mess hall, we walked into the large consolidated mess and sighed a breath of amazement. You see, the place was all shined up; there was a Christmas tree in the center, all the centers had been brightly painted and the walls and ceilings were all decorated. "Heck" we thought, "This is the wrong place. This must be the officers mess." But no, there was Capt. Stier himself, flanked by interior



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

CHRISTMAS SCENE, 1941: Soldiers and civilians join voices in welcoming the yuletide at the Army's Basic Flying School at Shaw Field. Gathered in front of one of the squadron dayrooms to sing out their greetings are the Misses Pansy Howell, Mary Elizabeth Rigby, Sherry Hook, Margarita Baldwin and Claire Gregg, all post HQ employees; and Staff Sgt. Jack Lewis, Cpl. Vincent Sherwin, Cpl. Bill Jones, and Pvt. Buster G. Thornton, members of the 454th Flying Training Squadron.



A service member purchases snacks from the base canteen.

decorators, asking questions, cooks asking questions, and us asking questions. Capt. Stier says that 800 pounds of turkey, 1,500 pounds of apples and oranges, and 1,000 pounds of nuts will be served in the enlisted men's mess hall in addition to the regular menu. The daily allowance of ra-

tion has been increased for the Air Corps to the tune of 50 percent to satisfy our unbelievable appetites.

"The menu for Christmas dinner: Fruit juice cocktail, beet salad, spiced whole peaches and crabapples, assorted preserves, choice of roast turkey with oys-

ter dressing, roast beef, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, rice, asparagus au gratin with mushrooms, assorted fruit and nut bars, cigars, cigarettes, mince-meat pie, chocolate cake, fruit cake, pumpkin pie, coconut cake, hot rolls, graham and white bread and butter, and of course, coffee, tea and milk.

"Twenty cooks and mess sergeants are to work steadily from Wednesday noon through the night Thursday noon to prepare the food.

"All bread and rolls are to be handmade by our own cooks and bakers. The fruit cake was made in November and weighs approximately 125 pounds. The turkeys, to get back to the meaty proposition, weighed approximately 35 to 40 pounds on the hoof, and dressed are to weigh 17 to 25 pounds. The mess sergeant, Staff Sgt. Thomas LaPoint of Portland, Maine, reports that it will be the finest Christmas dinner he has ever sacrificed: Capt. Carl D. Stier, the mess officer, says that if anyone goes away hungry it will be his own fault, and we are inclined to agree.

"There is to be a stuffed pig with an apple in his mouth on either side of the mess hall, and Capt. Stier added jovially that there would be nothing left out, even to the inevitable apple in his mouth. The decorations are being supervised by Private DeCoursey of Boston and two newly arrived selectees, Pvt. Howar Adler of Baltimore, who before his induction was employed as a commercial artist, and Pvt. George W. Crocker of southeastern Virginia, who worked as commercial artist and sign painter for Colonial Stores Co. So, all in all, we guess the Christmas dinner proposition doesn't look too dull after all; as a matter of fact, we can hardly wait!"

Information from Sumter Item archives.

Reach Item Archivist Sammy Way at waysammy@yahoo.com or (803) 774-1294.



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YESTERYEAR

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'Calfeteria' set up on farm; Tuomey begins recycling plan

75 YEARS AGO — 1942

June 12-18

Eighteen cadets, all citizens of the U.S. but trained in the Royal Canadian Air Force, recently returned to Shaw Field. They are the first group of RCAF cadets to be assigned to flying school in this country. Anxious to fight with the Allies, these cadets enlisted in the RCAF several months before the U.S. entered the war.

• During the last week in April 1942, the Sumter chapter of the Game and Fish Association obtained from the Orangeburg hatchery approximately 38,000 largemouth bass fry and placed these in the rearing pools at Burnt Gin branch. The game wardens of Sumter County had prepared the pools for the rearing of these fry, and they have grown amazingly. These fry were approximately one-half inch in length when they were placed in the rearing pools and now will average 2 inches.



Yesteryear in Sumter

SAMMY WAY

William David Bernshouse, who arrived upon the scene at Tuomey Hospital at 3:05 p.m., found himself financially stable and already with a hand in the war effort, thanks to Boy Scout Troop 38. The baby's father, Wilbert Bernshouse, is Scoutmaster of the group. When his son arrived, they were prepared to present him with a fat defense savings bond, for which all of them had sold papers and done various other odd jobs to earn money. Mrs. Bernshouse is the former Virginia Reardon.

• W.N. Offley, navigation instructor at Shaw Field since February, has been appointed a civil service pilot and will begin training immediately at the army's basic flying school. Upon completion of the intensive course which consolidates primary and basic training, he will be commissioned a service pilot. Offley is former president of Sumter Aviation Service Inc., operators of the municipal airport.

50 YEARS AGO — 1967

March 13-18

• Marion Myers, prominent Sumter County native, died at Tuomey Hospital. He was born in Sumter County on July 17, 1887, a son of the late Jerry David and Mary Elizabeth Bradford Myers. A devoted member of First Baptist Church, Myers served many years on the Board of Deacons. He served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Old School District No. 34 and was elected to serve as a trustee of the reorganized School District No. 17, a position he held for many years.

• The coast-to-coast Associated Press Wirephoto Network — the world's greatest system for picture transmission — will be extended directly into the offices of the *Sumter Daily Item* by means of a remarkable development in news picture reception — AP Photofax. AP Photofax is a facsimile machine which receives pictures, ready for immediate use, directly from any part of the United States and from most nations in the world. The machine eliminates the time lag of developing a negative and making a photographic print.

• Sumter has its new YMCA secretary. He is Jack B. Harvie, 37, a YMCA professional, ex-Marine and a native of Richmond, Virginia. He is leaving a position as executive secretary of the Arlington Branch of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington.

• Sumter County School District Two is under court order to integrate school buses, faculty and staff positions and all school activities and vocational programs. The order came from federal Judge Robert W. Hemphill in Columbia after he ruled the school district's latest integration plan was inadequate.

• A new furniture store, Phoenix Furniture Store, located on Broad Street extension adjacent to Wesmark Plaza shopping center, opens its doors



1967 — Furman High School's three senior baseball players talk about the coming season with Indian diamond coach Joe Davis. From left are shortstop Larry Avins, catcher Tommy Jones, first baseman Calhoun Aycock and Davis. Furman opens its campaign Tuesday against Hillcrest.

to the public. It is one of 33 Phoenix stores in the South and the ninth to open in South Carolina.

• Operation BAM — That will be the key to Sumter's baseball fortunes this spring. BAM just happens to represent the Gamecock pitching trio of Eddie Belken, Billy Ardis and Cleve Marsh. If these three come through, Sumter coach Bob Matthews can entertain thoughts of improving last season's 7-5 record.

• There were no records snapped, but Sumter's track team had an easy time of it as the Gamecocks breezed to a 104-19 win over Camden at the Alice Drive track. It was the second-straight track victory of the season for Sumter, which defeated Manning 40-0. High-point man for the Gamecocks was senior Jimmy Scales, who captured the 100-yard dash, the 220-yard dash, ran a leg of the winning 880-yard relay team and placed second in the high jump.

• Coffee Day for Crippled Children will be observed on Good Friday, sponsored for the 15th year by the South Carolina Restaurant Association, assisted for the ninth year by the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers' Association. Local chairmen of "Coffee Day" is Vince Sutter for the Restaurant Association and Sheriff Byrd Parnell for the Law Association.

• "No one is going to be able to count us as a pushover," says coach Joe Davis about his prospects for the 1967 Furman High School baseball quad. The Indians face the coming campaign with little experience but a group of guys "that will battle you all the way," according to Davis. "Our hitting is going to be weak, but the boys are looking pretty good, and after they gain some experience, we should do all right."

• The Shaw Air Force Base Food Services organization received the "Best in TAC" food service award in ceremonies held in the office of the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing commander, Col. Victor N. Cabas.

• A "New Look" in raising prime veal calves has come to this part of the country. The "Calfeteria," housing 120 calves — the first of its kind for South Carolina — has been set up in the Du-Bose section by Jerry Page on his dairy farm. The calf-raising project is operated on a parallel basis with broiler production; that is, the calves are kept in confinement, and the environment is under strict control.

• Officers for the coming year of the Gay Gardeners Club were installed at a luncheon meeting at Wongreys' restaurant. Outgoing president Mrs. Perry Randle Jr. turned the gavel over to Mrs. Leslie Boney Jr., who will serve as president during the coming year. Other officers are Mrs. John Chappell, vice president; Mrs. W.P. Betchman, first vice president; Mrs. David Colquitt, secretary; Mrs. James Munn, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. R.J. Mathis, treasurer.

• When Sumter Raceway opens its 1967 season, a field of veteran drivers will be on hand, which should delight local racing fans. Clinnie Hyatt, manager of the Sumter track, reports that the enthusiasm is really growing as registration pours in for the Late Model division. Leading the returnees will be Jimmy Allsbrook, a 10-year veteran of limited and late-model sportsman competition. Allsbrook, who will be steering a 1955 Chevrolet, is a former track champion.

• Sumter grabbed 10 first places and romped to its third-straight track win of the season with a 71-52 victory over A.C. Flora here. The Birds, who swept all three relays, have now outscored their opponents in three meets, 224-71. Sammy Way was the winner in the 880, with a time of 2:08.7. Eddie Connor continued his winning ways for the Birds in the mile run by doing the four laps in a time of 4:46 while also running a leg on the winning mile relay team. Sam Tindal captured two prizes in the field events by winning the shot put and placing first in the discus.

• Bishop Paul Harden of the S.C. Conference of the Methodist Church was the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club meeting. His topic was "The American Way of Life." The Support of Churches Committee, Barnes Boyle, chairman, arranged the program. Although the term "American Way of Life" has been used too much, misused, and is almost hackneyed, the Bishop pointed out that there is a real "American Way of Life."

25 YEARS AGO — 1991

Dec. 12-18

Sumter County is making plans to rebuild a dam that broke during torrential rains. Sumter County Administrator Bill Noonan said the Federal Emergency Management Agency has received approval to spend more than \$250,000 to rebuild the Second Mill Pond dam. Sumter County Council Chairman Ruben Gray said the grant will cover the cost of rebuilding the dam. "It will have to be because there will not be any local tax funding available for the project," Gray said.

• While many Sumterites worry about a rising crime rate in the city and the bored youths in part responsible for that rise, at least one man has set out to do something about his fears. Norman China, director of the recreation center at South Sumter Park, on Saturday celebrated the successful conclusion of the fifth year in a program he helped create — the Sumter County Youth Football League. China and the 25 players on the team he sponsors, the South Sumter Park Bulldogs, celebrated the fifth year of the program at an awards banquet in peerless fashion — as 1991 Sumter County champions.

• Sumter's Tuomey Regional Medical Center has started a recycling program that is expected to reduce the amount

of waste it sends to the Sumter County landfill by 50 percent, a hospital official said. The hospital currently sends about 12 tons of waste per week to the landfill. "We had to do something," said Isabel Berry, a Tuomey engineer who works in environmental control. "We are sending everything to the landfill." Products being recycled include cardboard boxes, computer paper, newspapers, aluminum cans and other paper products.

• The Air Force said goodbye today to a longtime friend. A noon ceremony at Shaw Air Force Base attended by Air Force and Sumter officials commemorated the deactivation of the OV-10 Bronco aircraft, which has been a part of the U.S. military since 1967. The planes were first flown at Shaw in 1988, said Dave McMahon, chief public relations officer at Shaw.

• When publisher Horace Greeley said, "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country" more than 140 years ago, he couldn't have known he was offering sound advice to John M. Brabham Sr. While Brabham may seem to have taken stock in the adage, he didn't appear to pay much attention to the direction — John Brabham went east. As a representative on the state Development Board, Brabham recently accompanied Gov. Carroll Campbell and an economic development delegation on a tour of the Far East. Brabham represents the 3rd Circuit on the Development Board, which includes Sumter, Lee, Clarendon and Williamsburg counties.

• The Sumter County 7- and 8-year-old All Stars won the South Carolina State Soccer Championship on Saturday with a 1-0 victory over Lancaster. Lancaster dominated the first 10 minutes of play, but Sumter began to take the momentum in the second period and controlled the game's tempo after that. The only score of the contest came early in the fourth quarter as left wing Jim Morrison passed to forward Ben McGaw in front of the Lancaster net. McGaw's shot was stopped, but forward Billy Stemberger got the rebound and pumped a shot past Lancaster's goalie.

• It may seem like only yesterday that USC Sumter welcomed its first group of Peace Scholars, when in fact two years have passed since their arrival in the country. The time has come to say goodbye. Having completed their coursework toward an associate degree with emphasis on small business management, the 21 Caribbean and Central American students will be recognized for their accomplishments in a special ceremony to be held in Nettles Auditorium.

• Senior tailback Steve Davis, who rushed for more than 2,000 yards and led Spartanburg to the Division I 4-A state title, was a unanimous choice as The Associated Press high school football player of the year. Sumter Coach Tom Lewis earned a share of the AP's coach-of-the-year honor. He and Jerry Stoots of Stall share the award, each receiving three votes.

• A derelict pickup received some free bodywork, and some defenseless parachutes were turned into wide-gauge cheesecloth at the Poinsett Weapons Range, courtesy of Shaw Air Force Base's 3363rd Fighter Wing. The awesome power of the F-16 fighter jet's M-61A1 20mm, multi-barrel cannons came to light as members of the 33rd and 17th fighter squadrons spread a little daylight throughout outstretched aircraft drag parachutes that serve as targets at the range.

• Sumter School District 17 finished its 1990-91 fiscal year with a general fund budget surplus of \$68,244. In the board of trustees meeting, district finance director Joe Klein presented the board with its annual audit report. The surplus was a "dramatic change" over last year's figure, said Klein. The district ended last year with a deficit of \$152,190.

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DOODLE ZOO

I HEARD A STORY ABOUT MELTED BUTTER... IT'S SPREADING FAST.

DRAW!!

DRAW A SLED!

RIDDLES!!!

Q. WHAT DO YOU CALL A GUY LAYING ON YOUR FRONT STEP?
A. MATT.
Randy Veitch, Blaine, MN

Q. WHY CAN'T YOU TRUST PIGS WITH A SECRET?
A. THEY ALWAYS SQUEAL.
Bryn Gladstone, Salem, MA

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

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Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Tire is missing. 2. Headlight is smaller. 3. Tire is not showing. 4. Window is smaller. 5. Steering wheel is moved. 6. Leaf is lower.

FRANK AND ERNEST

SURE, WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN BETTER MILEAGE TONIGHT WITHOUT IT, BUT ALL THE STARTING AND STOPPING WAS JUST PART OF THE JOB.

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THE BORN LOSER

by Art & Chip Sansom

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS...

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS

HA... I KNEW IT!

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TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE WE GO...

THE HORSE KNOWS THE WAY TO CARRY THE SLEIGH...

THROUGH THE WHITE AND DRIFTED SNOW

WIZARD OF ID by parker and hart

EVERYBODY RUN!

ZOT

SCHLOORP

HENRY, I SUMMON THEE!

FRUITCAKE'S DONE

SORRY, IT WAS HIS TURN TO MAKE IT

ONE MORE TIME! YEAH!

GET FUZZY BY DARBY CONLEY

OOF... I ATE SOMETHING THAT DIDN'T AGREE WITH ME.

YEAH, I DO THAT ALL THE TIME. THE TRICK IS TO SNEAK UP ON IT FROM BEHIND.

NO, I MEAN IT HURT MY STOMACH.

THAT'S WHY I AMBUSH THEM. IT MINIMIZES RISK.

NO, IT WAS JUST A LITTLE LUMP OF BLUE CHEESE. I THOUGHT IT WAS FRENCH, BUT IT TURNS OUT IT WAS JUST ROTTEN.

WHAT'S BLUE CHEESE?

CHEESE WITH MOLD ON IT.

WHAT? YOU EAT MOLDY CHEESE?

HEY, IT'S REVERED IN FRANCE.

SO ARE CLOWNS AND PUPPETS, BUT YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO EAT 'EM.

YOU DOGS HAVE NO RULES ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN EAT! YOU'RE GOING FOOD ROGUE!

IF DOGS COULD UNHINGE THEIR JAW'S LIKE SNAKES, I'D COME IN HERE ONE DAY AND YOU'D HAVE THE SOFA STICKIN' OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!

IF IT WAS UP TO ME, DOGS WOULD BE ILLEGAL. LIKE LEAD SPOONS.

I CAN NEVER TELL IF YOU'RE JOKING OR SERIOUS...

HUMOR IS FOR THE WEAK, SATCHEL.

HA HA! GOOD ONE.

IT'S BAD ENOUGH WE SPEND THE DAY TRAVELING TO YOUR MOTHER'S FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER. MUST YOU SING ABOUT IT THE WHOLE WAY!?

SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY



DENNIS THE MENACE

BY HANK KETCHAM

