

Life!

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026 SECTION B

EPA, states could consider regulating abortion pills as pollutants in 2026

By Sofia Resnick

STATES NEWSROOM

Going into the fourth year without federal abortion rights protections, groups that helped overturn Roe v. Wade are focused on cutting off access to abortion pills.

As multiple lawsuits over the abortion drug mifepristone unfold, state and federal proposals to regulate and restrict medication abortion are expected to continue in 2026. Abortion opponents argue that medication abortion, despite its strong safety record, is dangerous to patients and the environment.

Abortion bans are largely unpopular, but heading into a midterm election year, some lawmakers in states with strict abortion bans have already prefiled bills to add new restrictions. Here's a look at early legislative trends emerging in abortion-related bills recently introduced or prefiled ahead of the new year.

Proposals to restrict abortion pill or study environmental effects

Over the last few years, the national anti-abortion group Students for Life of America has spread unfounded claims that mifepristone pollutes U.S. waterways and drinking water, drafted model legislation to regulate the disposal of medication abortions, and requested environmental studies at the federal and state level.

Please see EPA | 2B



Understanding the difference in good and bad cholesterol and controlling the bad with lifestyle and diet changes could save your life.

Learn to control 'bad' cholesterol

FAMILY FEATURES

Getting your cholesterol checked and talking with your doctor about steps to control high cholesterol, could save your life.

If you, or someone you love, have experienced a heart attack or stroke, you know how life-changing those moments can be.

What many don't realize is high LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol often plays a silent role behind the scenes. Taking control of cholesterol numbers starts by knowing your LDL number and working with your doctor to put together an appropriate treatment plan.

Your body produces all the cholesterol it needs to stay healthy. Cholesterol helps make new cells, some hormones and substances that aid in food digestion. However, having too much cholesterol can contribute to serious health risks.

Knowing more about cholesterol and its role in your body and overall health can help you protect yourself from potential life-threatening conditions like heart attack or stroke - even if you've already had one.

Learn more with this information from the American Heart Association's "Lower Your LDL Cholesterol Now" initiative, nationally sponsored by Amgen, so

Please see LEARN | 2B

Low maintenance impatiens for sun, shade

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Impatiens' easy-care nature, season-long bloom, and shade tolerance made it one of the most popular garden annuals.

The introduction of downy mildew-resistant varieties has helped it maintain this status. For these reasons as well as its butterfly and hummingbird appeal the National Garden Bureau has declared 2026 Year of the Impatiens.

The name impatiens is Latin for impatient. It refers to the fact that the seeds abruptly exit the ripe seed pods. Orange jewelweed (Impatiens capensis) and yellow jewelweed (Impatiens pallida) are also known by the common

name touch-me-not since their ripe seed pods burst at a slight touch. These two North American native plants attract and support bumblebees, other long-tongued bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Some impatiens species' flowers undergo a sex change as they mature known as sequential hermaphroditism. Their flowers start as male and after the pollen sheds, they morph into a female.

Most gardeners are familiar with Impatiens walleriana, also known as Busy Lizzie, and have grown them in containers, hanging baskets and garden beds. You will find a variety of colors and double-flowered varieties like Musica, Silhouette series, Glimmer

and Fiesta. Look for Beacon, Glimmer, and Imara XDR which are resistant to downy mildew disease that devastated many plantings of impatiens starting in 2011.

New Guinea impatiens (Impatiens hawkeri) is resistant to downy mildew, grows 12 to 15 inches tall and prefers partial shade. Introduced to the United States in the 1970s, you'll find cultivars with dark green, bronze and variegated leaves and large white, pink, red, orange and violet flowers. Look for the flower color and plant size that best fits your container or garden design.

Interspecific hybrid impatiens were bred by crossing two different species of impatiens for some adapt-

ability or aesthetic benefit. Bounce, and Spectra grow well in part sun to shady locations while Solarscape XL and Sunpatiens thrive in a full or half day of direct sunlight. All are downy mildew resistant.

For something different try growing a few Garden Balsams (Impatiens balsamina). Popular during the Victorian era, its cup-shaped flowers grow by the leaves all along the upright stems. The peppermint stick garden balsam cultivar has red and white flowers that are spotted, striped and ruffled. Camellia balsam impatiens have large double flowers reminiscent of the flowers on a camellia shrub.

Keep the soil consistent and



The unique Impatiens balsamina has cup-shaped flowers that grow by the leaves all along the upright stems.



Stephanie-Xóchitl Garcia-Palma, a UNC Charlotte senior, has applied to 100 internships as part of her initiative to land a job upon graduation.

Work of landing a job has students' attention

Changes in skill requirements and AI means rethinking approaches

By Jaslynn Vorachith

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Stephanie-Xóchitl Garcia-Palma is worried about her career prospects.

Garcia-Palma, a senior communication studies major at UNC Charlotte, juggles multiple expectations, including applying to 100 internships while managing a full course load. Garcia-Palma's days typically run from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., with commuting, lunch breaks, and basic self-care consuming time she would prefer to dedicate to applications. She was accepted into five internships, opportunities that feel less aligned with her career goals.

"The job search in itself feels like a job," she said.

Students like Garcia-Palma are increasingly anxious about the future. The biggest contributor is the tightening job market and heightened competition. According to the National Association of College and Employers Job Outlook 2026 report, hiring projections rose only 1.6% from the previous year that was already challenging for graduates.

LinkedIn's "Future of Skills" report shows that skill requirements have changed 24% globally since 2015, and the rate is expected to increase to 39-44% by 2025. This shift reflects how remote work has reshaped collaboration and artificial intelligence redefining roles.

Garcia-Palma is involved in campus organizations such as Club de

Español Para Amigos and writes for MIDA magazine yet feels pressure to constantly add more skills and experiences. At times she feels tempted to join additional clubs "just to look better on a résumé," she admits, but acknowledges that it would be "consuming" to commit to so much at once.

"It's more like a dream to be able to do what you want to do," she said.

Baijian Robinson, a certified nursing assistant, is enrolled at Central Piedmont Community College to earn a nurse practitioner degree. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nurse practitioners rank third in fastest-

Please see WORK | 2B

Tips to tame family medication costs

FAMILY FEATURES

If you're the one tracking medications, scheduling appointments and making sure the whole household stays healthy, you're probably wearing the invisible badge of chief household officer - the one who keeps the family healthy and moving forward. Nearly 80% of women serve as their household's primary health care decision-maker, managing not just their own care, but also the needs of loved ones.

It's a big job, and it can come with financial pressure. Research shows women spend almost 30% more out of their own pocket on prescriptions than men, adding up to \$8.5 billion more in 2024 alone.

That's why many women are turning to GoodRx - a free, easy-to-use tool that helps you scout out affordable prices on both brand-name and generic medications, compare pharmacy options nearby and make confident choices for your family's

health and wallet. Think of it as your digital saddlebag: stocked and ready with savings, wherever the trail takes you.

As chief household officer, consider these simple, time-saving strategies to help keep everyone on track, spend less on medications, save time and feel more confident managing care:

1. Compare prices before heading to the pharmacy

Prescription prices can vary dramatically, even between pharmacies just a few blocks apart. These price differences can exceed \$100 for the same medication. That's why you should compare prices ahead of time at pharmacies near you by entering your prescription information and ZIP code.

Then, simply head to the location offering the most affordable price.

2. Save on generic and brand-name medications

Whether you're treating a simple infection or managing a chronic condition, there are discounts available on thousands of medications, including both generic and brand-name options. You can save up to 80% on generics, and in many cases, find prices online that are even lower than insurance co-pays.

For brand-name medications, GoodRx partners with pharmaceutical manufacturers to offer unique programs

where manufacturers offer discount prices for their medications, like insulin Lantus



Nearly 80% of women are their household's primary health care decision-maker, and many of them are turning to digital tools to scout out affordable prices for medications.

for just \$35 or a discounted cash price on Humira biosimilar adalimumab.

These savings extend to care for the four-legged family members, too. For example, pet owners can explore savings and have pet medications delivered right to their door, as well as access pet-specific medications that aren't available in retail pharmacies.

3. Ride steady with

Please see TAME | 2B



The unique Impatiens balsamina has cup-shaped flowers that grow by the leaves all along the upright stems.

Work of landing a job has students' attention

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growing occupations from 2024-2034, and support roles like CNAs continue to rise. Because of the demand, Robinson feels more secure in her career prospects. However, the industry is not without challenges, especially the emotional and physical toll.

"When it comes to nursing and healthcare, you need that human emotion when you're caring for people," she said.

Robinson is concerned about how nurse shortages can lead to lowered standards in hiring. "Sometimes you just catch an attitude, maybe it's not a good day for them and they end up flipping," she said. "I think jobs hire people also because they really need that role filled."

Still, Robinson believes the job market encourages creativity and adaptability. She cites examples of people she knows who used nontraditional

paths to find meaningful work.

"I know people who have gotten degrees in music, and they work at Guitar Center," she said. "But they're able to have music classes there because they have that little bit of background."

NACE reports that employers highly value practical experience: "Nearly all respondents cited U.S.-based internships as valuable, while slightly more than three-quarters find value in co-ops," the organization said.

More than 40% employers consider on-campus work experience and apprenticeships important. As LinkedIn reported, graduates must adapt to new skills companies increasingly expect of employees. "Employer use of skills-based hiring has grown over the last year, with nearly 70% now saying they are using it," NACE reported. In fact, 13.3% of jobs now require AI skills, including 10.5% of entry-level postings.

Tame family medication costs and become a real health hero

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trusted health info

The health care landscape can feel like the Wild West at times, but there are tools available to help you ride steady.

Beyond prescription savings, expert-written articles can empower you to understand your medications, insurance coverage and care options. Whether you're gearing up for a doctor's visit or figuring

out the next steps in a new diagnosis, these resources can help you ask the right questions and take the reins on your family's care.

4. Be your own health hero

From birth control and menopause treatment to hormone support and fertility medications, women often face higher costs for life's milestones.

Look online for savings on many commonly pre-

scribed medications for women. Some medications, like progesterone for fertility treatment, may be available for as little as \$20.

Resources like the GoodRx Women's Health Center feature expert-reviewed information to help you navigate every stage of care, whether you're managing symptoms, exploring treatment options or planning ahead.

Learn to control the risk factors for impact of 'bad' cholesterol

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you can take control of your heart health.

Know your numbers

Keeping tabs on your cholesterol is an important step toward managing potentially serious risks to your heart, brain and overall health. LDL cholesterol, also known as "bad" cholesterol, can cause fatty buildup called plaque in your arteries.

Nearly 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. has high bad cholesterol, but many don't know until it's too late. Having too much LDL cholesterol can silently increase your risk for heart attack and stroke when it goes unchecked, but you have the power to change that.

"A lot of people don't realize they have high LDL cholesterol because it doesn't have symptoms," said Dr. Amit Khera, American Heart Association national volunteer expert and cardiologist. "That's why I always encourage my patients to get their cholesterol checked and have honest conversations with their doctors."

Knowing your LDL number is one of the most important things you can do to protect your heart."

Studies show an LDL at or below 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) is ideal for most adults. If you have a history of heart attack or stroke and are already on a cholesterol-lowering medication, your doctor may aim for your LDL to be 70 mg/dL or lower.

Get tested

Don't wait; schedule a cholesterol test as soon as possible.

High cholesterol often has no symptoms, so it's important to get your cholesterol checked even if you feel fine. In fact, the American Heart Association recommends all adults 20 and older have their bad cholesterol checked every 4-6 years as long as risk remains low.

If you have had a heart attack or stroke, talk to your doctor about the right frequency of testing.

A blood test to measure your cholesterol numbers, called a "fasting" or "non-fasting lipid profile or panel," assesses several types of fat in the blood. The test gives four results: total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fats).

Talk to your doctor

Your doctor is there to help you reach your health goals, including keeping your LDL cholesterol at a healthy number.

Making decisions together is the best way to create a treatment plan you'll be more likely to stick to. If you don't understand something, ask for further clarification.

Discuss your risk factors, including your personal and family medical history. Having a candid conversation about your lifestyle can also help pinpoint potential risk factors and areas you can work to reduce your risk and improve your health.

If your LDL cholesterol number is high, your doctor may recommend treatment options. Together, you can review the benefits, risks and side effects to decide on the treatment plan that works best for

you.

Take action early

The sooner you manage high LDL cholesterol, the more you can reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. Proactively monitoring and taking steps to slow or reverse your numbers can halt or delay buildup in your arteries. In addition, treatment options can be more effective when a high LDL number is detected early.

Learn more about the steps you can take to combat high bad cholesterol at heart.org/LDL.

Living with high LDL cholesterol

If your LDL cholesterol is elevated, lifestyle changes can help lower your overall risk of heart disease but may not be enough to counteract individual risk factors such as genetics and family history.

Check your bad cholesterol number then talk to your doctor about next steps, including these changes to take back control of heart health.

Eat a heart-healthy diet

From a dietary standpoint, the best way to lower your cholesterol is to follow a balanced diet, which is low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol.

Following a heart-healthy diet means limiting your intake of fatty meats and dairy products made with whole milk. Choose lean cuts of meat and skim, low-fat or fat-free dairy products instead. It also means limiting fried foods and cooking with healthy oils, such as liquid vegetable oils instead of butter or coconut oil, which are high in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Be more physically active

A sedentary lifestyle lowers HDL (good) cholesterol. Less HDL means there's less good cholesterol to remove bad cholesterol from your arteries.

At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week is enough to lower both cholesterol and high blood pressure. Brisk walking, swimming, bicycling or even vigorous yard work can fit the bill. In addition, the American Heart Association recommends adding moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity - such as resistance training or weightlifting - at least two days each week.

Quit smoking

When a person with unhealthy cholesterol numbers also smokes or vapes, the risk of heart disease increases even more. Smoking also compounds other risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

By quitting, smokers can lower their triglycerides and increase their HDL cholesterol numbers. Quitting can also help reduce damage and improve how the arteries function.

Lose weight

Living with excess weight or obesity tends to raise the chances of increasing LDL (bad) cholesterol and lowering good cholesterol. Weight loss of even 5-10% may help improve some cholesterol numbers and other heart disease risk factors.

EPA, states consider regulating abortion pills as pollutants

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In 2025, lawmakers in at least seven states introduced bills to create environmental restrictions for the abortion drug mifepristone or order environmental studies. Bills introduced this year in Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming would have required testing community water systems for traces of mifepristone.

Bills in Maine, Montana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming would have required providers to give patients medical waste kits to collect and return the tissue following a medication abortion. Women commonly flush the tissue associated with medication abortion and miscarriages, which typically occur during the first trimester.

These bills, except Pennsylvania's, would have also mandated in-person dispensing of the medication and follow-ups, effectively banning telehealth abortion.

None of these proposals passed, but they are likely to be reintroduced in 2026 as abortion opponents continue to push for environmental regulation of abortion pills, including at the federal level.

In June, 25 congressional Republicans sent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a letter inquiring about potential avenues for regulating mifepristone, as the New York Times reported. And as Politico recently reported, Students For Life lobbied the agency to add mifepristone to its recently updated list of contaminants that utilities will have to track in drinking water. It's too late to include a new drug on the list, which is updated every five years.

But according to Politico, EPA staffers advised anti-abortion activists to use an upcoming public comment period to drum up requests that the agency include active metabolites in mifepristone. The EPA collects nationwide data on the chemicals on this list, which could be used to set future federal limits.

Fetal wrong death bills

In Florida, where abortion is banned at six weeks' gestation, lawmakers recently advanced HB 289 ahead of the 2026 session, which would allow parents to file wrongful death lawsuits for the loss of a developing fetus and to claim damages for mental pain and loss of support. Its companion bill, SB 164, filed for the third year in a row by Republican Sen. Erin Grall, faces an uphill battle in the Florida Senate, reported the Florida Phoenix, which noted that jurors could be asked to consider the salary the fetus could have earned over its life as part of damages to which parents could be entitled.

Groups opposing the legislation as far-reaching and likely to increase liability exposure for OB-GYNs who specialize in high-risk pregnancies include the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, the Florida Justice Reform Institute and the Doctors Company, the nation's largest physician-owned medical malpractice carrier.

One of the bill's leading champions, Andrew Shrivell, founder and executive director of Florida Voice for the Unborn, told state House Judiciary Committee members they should continue expanding "civil remedies afforded under Florida law to hold accountable those who continue to take the lives of unborn children illegally in our state."

Another bill, HB 663, would allow a family member to sue someone for providing or attempting to provide an abortion up to two years after the fact with up to \$100,000 in damages, even if the woman consented or if the abortion was performed in another state or country where the procedure is legal.

In a state lawsuit brought by two OB-GYNs from Indianapolis, an appeals court in December upheld the



Some states and the federal government are considering the regulation of abortion pills as a pollutant.

privacy of these records, known as terminated pregnancy reports.

In Washington state, Democratic lawmakers are still drafting legislation that would regulate license plate readers following reports that authorities in Texas searched thousands of cameras, as far as Washington and Illinois, to find a woman they believed had a self-administered medication abortion.

Calling for forced vasectomies for convicted rapists

State abortion restrictions typically hold health providers liable, but women have been jailed or prosecuted for their pregnancy outcomes. One Democratic lawmaker in Alabama, where abortion is banned throughout pregnancy except to save the pregnant person's life, has introduced legislation that comes with steep penalties for men convicted of rape or incest that resulted in pregnancy.

Democratic Rep. Juanita Givens' prefilled HB 46 would authorize abortion to preserve the health of the mother or if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. It would also require men convicted of rape or incest to pay for the abortion, and undergo either vasectomy or castration, as determined by the court. As the Alabama Reflector reported, the bill is unlikely to be considered, but for Givens it's really about starting a broader conversation of bodily autonomy.

"We have already set a double standard," Givens said. "Have you seen a bill crafted that tells a man what he cannot ... do with his body? You have not, outside of the standard laws that speaks to rape and incest, and we already know that that is definitely a crime."

Anticipated federal policy

In his first year back in office, President Donald Trump rescinded many of the Biden-era policies intended to expand abortion access, including the previous administration's interpretation that the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act covers abortions necessary to save a pregnant person's life even in a state that has banned abortion.

More major federal policy decisions around abortion are anticipated in 2026. The Food and Drug Administration agreed to review mifepristone's safety, but abortion opponents recently called for FDA Commissioner Martin Makary to be fired, accusing him of slow-walking the review until after the midterm elections in November.

Just a few months before that, in July, a controversial Medicaid policy effectively defunding Planned Parenthood clinics and other nonprofit clinics that provide abortions, is slated to expire. Whether Republicans will renew the funding restriction or let it lapse — allowing the nation's largest network of reproductive health clinics to continue serving Medicaid patients for services unrelated to abortion — remains to be seen.

Low maintenance plants for sun, shade

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tently moist for healthy and attractive impatiens. Spread a layer of leaves, evergreen needles or other organic mulch over the soil surface to help retain moisture and suppress weeds. Regular fertilization according to label directions will help you maximize the floral display.

Pinch back leggy impatiens plants as needed. Use a sharp bypass pruner or snips to reduce the plants by up to one half their height. Make the cut just above a set of leaves or node to encourage more compact growth and a better-looking plant in just a couple of weeks.

With the many color choices and their adaptability, you are sure to find the right impatiens for your containers and garden beds.

*Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program.*

*Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.*

Drinks to lower blood pressure

By Nicole Brown

BLACKDOCTOR.ORG

Heart failure is real, and it often begins with high blood pressure.

It's a silent killer for many in the African American community.

If you aren't experiencing high blood pressure, then you most likely know someone who is.

According to the American Heart Association, more than 40 percent of Blacks are living with high blood pressure. Blacks have the highest prevalence of the disease than any other race.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can be caused by a number of factors, including genetics, unhealthy lifestyle choices, and certain medical conditions such as:

- Diet: Eating a diet high in salt and fat, and low in fiber and produce
- Physical activity: Not getting enough regular physical activity
- Alcohol: Drinking too much
- Tobacco: Smoking
- Stress: Chronic stress, anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder

• Sleep: Not enough sleep

• Medical conditions: Diabetes, kidney disease, disorders of the adrenal gland, hyperparathyroidism, and pregnancy or preeclampsia.

Other factors like age, race or ethnicity, family history, and environment can also play a role.

There is a lower rate of taking blood pressure medications among Black people, partly due to lack of access to those medications and a distrust of the health care community based on historical discrimination.

Some medications also may be less effective in controlling high blood pressure in some Black people. They may need two or more medications to achieve their blood pressure goal.

Drinks to lower blood pressure

8. Black tea

Teas are the second most common drink, after water, for humans. Black tea differs from green tea in that the tea leaves have been fermented. Green tea uses fresh, dried leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant.

Black tea, like green tea, has been shown to reduce blood pressure. It's unclear why tea might lower blood pressure. But the active chemicals in tea might do one of the following:

- Relax muscles in the blood vessels
- Reduce hormones that raise blood pressure
- Increase nitric oxide (which opens blood vessels)

7. Beet juice

Researchers found the link between a stiffening heart and high blood pressure, which makes the heart muscle thicker. In a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, experts learned that half a liter of beet juice can do wonders for a young man's diet. It improved their exercise and performance each day.

Another study, in 2011, found that people ages 54 to 80 also improved their peripheral vascular disease with beet juice.

6. Kombucha

Odds are you've seen this "it" drink slowly infiltrating the outer edges of your grocery store. You may have even tried it in an attempt to appear "in the know."

However, the benefits of kombucha (fermented tea) lie not in the "coolness factor", but in the probiotics. Countless studies have shown that regular consumption (more than eight weeks) of probiotics can help to reduce blood pressure and even help maintain healthy blood pressure.

5. Hibiscus tea

According to a 2019 study in the *Journal of Advanced Pharmaceutical Technology & Research*, Participants in the intervention group drank 2 cups of hibiscus tea every morning for one month, which resulted in a significant reduction in blood pressure compared to the control group who did not drink the tea (both groups were advised on blood pressure reduction lifestyle and dietary changes, as well).

Hibiscus tea is packed with anthocyanins and other antioxidants, which are natural ACE inhibitors. In a 2020 review in *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, researchers explain that anthocyanins (and other antioxidants) may help blood vessels resist damage that can cause them to narrow.

4. Low-fat Skim milk

As more studies come out about the need for us to drink less cow's milk and look for alternatives, this can be an exception. It's high in phosphorus, potassium and calcium—three nutrients associated with healthy blood pressure—and it's fortified with vitamin D, a vitamin that promotes healthy blood pressure. In a 2019 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers found that when males and females ate a high-dairy diet over six weeks that included five to six servings of reduced-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, participants reduced both their systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

This reduction was on average by about 4.5 and 3 points respectively compared to when they ate one or fewer servings of dairy a day for six weeks. These study authors believe that including plenty of dairy in your diet may be able to play a role in the prevention and treatment of hypertension.

3. Pomegranate juice

Not only is it tasty, but it's healthy for those with hypertension. Those ACE inhibitors can also be found in pomegranates. In one study, this juice reduced ACE – an enzyme that can raise blood pressure by 36%.

Also, if you're a man, pomegranate juice helps increase blood flow "down there" to have an even more fun in the bedroom.

2. Cranberry juice

This juice is good for more than just UTIs. Filled with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, cranberry juice can prevent any spikes in blood pressure. It can also dilate blood vessels, which increases blood flow. Be sure to get the unsweetened version of cranberry juice, as the added sugar is no good for your heart.

1. Water

It may sound cliché, but water is one of the healthiest ways to manage hypertension. With dehydration, blood vessels can constrict and the body goes into water-saving mode. Therefore, the body reduces the amount of water loss through sweat, urination, and breathing. Your heart works harder, and your blood pressure goes up.

Water will help prevent chronic dehydration and your blood vessels from tightening.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Walter White: NAACP's groundbreaking leader

By Fran Kaplan

AMERICA'S BLACK HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

In the story of America's fight for civil rights, certain names ring out: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Thurgood Marshall.

Yet, many figures who laid the essential groundwork for their work remain less known. Walter Francis White, who led the NAACP for a quarter-century, is one such forgotten hero.

A man of fair skin and blue eyes, White (1893-1955) chose to embrace his identity as an African American. He used his unique appearance to infiltrate the most dangerous corners of the segregated South. His career spanned from the aftermath of the Civil War into the modern civil rights movement.

White's personal identity, political savvy, and sheer courage challenged the foundations of racial injustice in America.

Investigating lynchings

When White arrived at the NAACP's headquarters, his unique background immediately proved valuable. For the next decade, he volunteered to regularly travel around the country to investigate lynchings and race riots.

He posed as a white man—sometimes a salesman, sometimes a reporter—and ventured into communities where racial violence had just occurred.

The risk was immense. If his true identity were discovered, he would likely be killed. Yet, White pressed on, interviewing mob participants and other white residents who were often shockingly candid about the violence they had witnessed or participated in.

The information he collected was vital. It provided the NAACP with firsthand evidence, which they used to generate pub-



NAACP

Walter White led the NAACP for 25 years during some of the most consequential civil rights advances in U.S. history.

lic awareness and lobby for federal anti-lynching legislation.

During these dangerous years, White investigated 41 lynchings and eight race riots. His investigative exploits were detailed in his 1929 book, "Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch," provided hard evidence and expert analysis of lynching in America.

A new direction for the NAACP

By 1931, White had risen through the ranks to become the executive secretary of the NAACP, the head of the organization.

He inherited an organization that had already proven a powerful voice for civil rights, but White would usher in a new, much more assertive era of legal and political activism.

Under White's leadership, the NAACP sharpened its focus on legal challenges to segregation and disfranchisement. He set up the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, and hired a young, brilliant attorney named Thurgood Marshall to lead it. Together, they arranged a detailed legal campaign to chip away at

the legal foundations of Jim Crow.

This resulted in the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. The Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional. White would not live to see the full impact of school desegregation. However, his idea to use the courts to dismantle segregation became a crucial piece of civil rights strategy.

Fighting for a federal law

Another central part of White's mission was to make lynching a federal crime. For decades, he tirelessly lobbied Congress for an anti-lynching law.

He had to push back against the fierce resistance of Southern Democrats and others. He was ultimately unsuccessful in getting a federal law passed during his lifetime.

However, his work brought national attention to the horrific practice and kept the issue in the public eye. His efforts were a critical step toward the eventual passage of Federal civil rights legislation.

JOIN THE CHARLOTTE POST IN FEBRUARY FOR

Legends & Legacy

Join The Charlotte Post for a Black History Month celebration of Charlotteans who have impacted the community through their groundbreaking achievements, innovation and perseverance.

Legends & Legacy conversations are

6-7 p.m.

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FEBRUARY 3

Black Baseball in Charlotte
Negro Leagues to Triple County



FEBRUARY 10

Law Enforcement Pioneer
Rodney Monroe



FEBRUARY 17

Health Care Innovator
Yele Aluko M.D.

Register to attend in person or virtually:
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In other Words

The Charlotte Post

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COMMUNITY

Helping Families Meet Their Children's Basic Needs

(StatePoint) Greater income allows parents to better meet children's basic needs, and financial stability can reduce parental stress. Advocates say that child tax credits (CTCs) provide one avenue for states to increase family resources and are encouraged by progress being made by Washington, D.C. and states around the country.

Studies show that credits like child tax credits have big benefits for families and are linked to improvements in child and maternal health outcomes as well as reduced hunger and poverty. CTCs, which have bipartisan support, help families cover essentials like food, clothing, childcare and transportation. These initiatives -- in many cases made in response to the expiration of the expanded federal Child Tax Credit in 2021 -- aim to ease rising costs and improve economic security. Drawing lessons from the federal program, states are implementing practical solutions to help keep families afloat.

"Tax policy is a powerful tool to support and improve childhood outcomes, community well-being, and state economies," says Amber Wallin, executive director of the State Revenue Alliance. "In fact, refundable tax credits that are focused on families, like a child tax credit, are the most effective public policy for reducing childhood poverty. And by putting money in the pockets of families who will spend it quickly and locally, child-focused tax credits benefit businesses and the economy too."

Josh McCabe, director of social policy at the Niskanen Center, notes that CTCs are especially effective at boosting family income, and provide an alternative to traditional social assistance programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

"The nation's capital follows several states that created wholly new credits, however, other states have converted existing tax benefits into more modest credits at a lower cost, demonstrating that these programs can help families avoid poverty while remaining affordable to state budgets," says McCabe.

To learn more about policies that support babies, toddlers and their families, visit the National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers website at ncit.org.

States instituting or expanding their own CTCs are helping fill the gap for parents, allowing more infants, toddlers and families to thrive.

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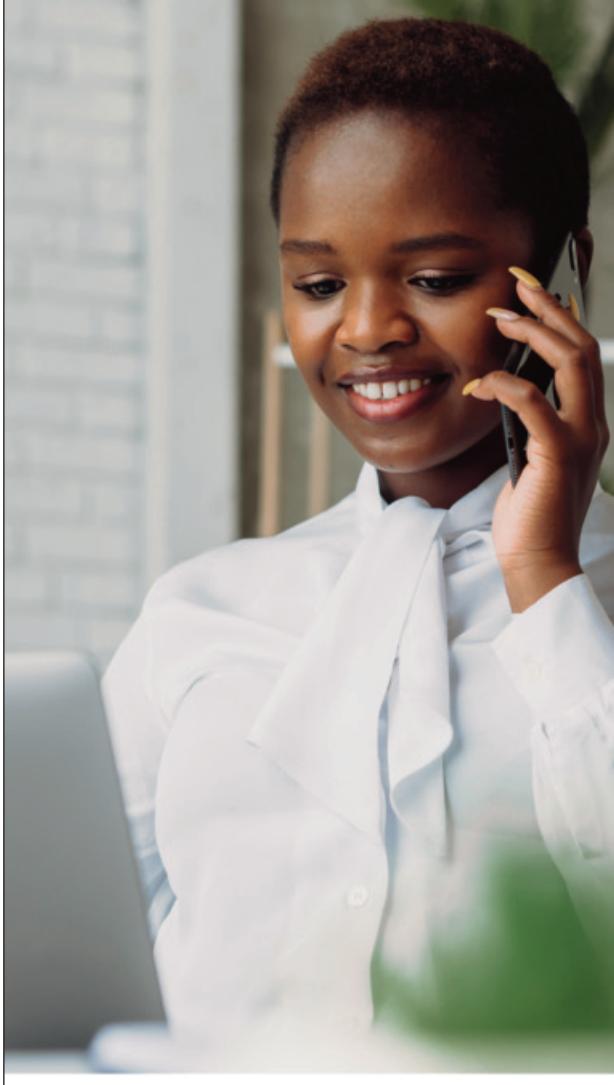
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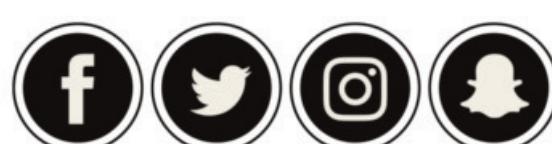
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« ON THE MARQUEE »

Light Factory photo exhibit on southern quick stops

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

A look at events from stage, screen and exhibits in Charlotte:

Jan. 16

The Light Factory Photo Arts Center presents "Thank You Please Come Again" at VAPA Center, 700 N. Tryon St. from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The exhibit by Kate Medley documents her road trips across the South photographing people and landmarks at the region's service stations, convenience stores and quick stops.

Jan. 17

The Philharmonik with Bobby Carter at Booth Playhouse, 8 p.m.

Black Notes Project Music Weekend kicks off with the ensemble, which fuses classical orchestration with hip-hop's energy and contemporary groove.

Christian Gates, known professionally as The Philharmonik, is an American vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, and music producer.

Carter, producer of NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts, will open with a live DJ set.

For tickets, go to: blumenthalarts.org/events/detail/the-philharmonik.

Jan. 23-24

Charlotte Symphony presents "The Music of Motown" at Belk Theater, 7:30 p.m., 130 N. Tryon St. The symphony plays iconic pop-soul hits by Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder and others. The program is part of the symphony's Sandra & Leon Levine Pops Series. Tickets available at tix.blumenthalarts.org.

Jan. 30

Independent Picture House (4237 Raleigh St.) shows "Do The Right Thing" at 7:30 p.m. as part of its Black History Month series.

On the hottest day of the year on a street in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, hatred and bigotry smolders until it explodes into violence. The 1989 movie earned Oscar nominations for Best Actor (Danny Aiello) and Best Original Screenplay (Spike Lee).

For tickets: independentpicturehouse.org.

Jan. 30-Feb. 1

Charlotte Symphony presents Prokofiev & Schumann at Knight Theater, 430 S. Tryon St.

Music director Kwamé Ryan opens the program with Ives's "The Unanswered Question," a meditation on existence. Prokofiev's bold and electrifying Piano Concerto No. 3, played by Ran Dank, follows. Schumann's Symphony No. 2 caps the program with a testament to resilience, soaring melodies and spirit.

Tickets at tix.blumenthalarts.org.

Feb. 5

Levine Museum of the New South presents "Southern Accents: A Sign of the Times" 6:30-8 p.m. at VAPA, 700 N. Tryon St.

The musical performance by the Charlotte ensemble A Sign of the Times blends art, history and celebration by tracing cultural and historical moments through song. Tickets: \$53.49 online at eventbrite.com and refreshments are included.

Feb. 13

Chaka Khan, Patti LaBelle, Gladys Knight, and Stephanie Mills are extending their "The Queens! 4 Legends 1 Stage" tour to Spectrum Center. The tour brings together four trailblazing R&B/pop giants for a celebration of legacy, sisterhood, and music.

Tickets: bptickets.com. Feb. 13-14

Charlotte Symphony presents Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, Belk Theater, 130 N. Tryon St.

As part of the CSO Spotlight Series, pianist and vocalist Gabriel Kahane joins the orchestra conducted by Kwamé Ryan to perform "Pattern of the Rail," a song cycle inspired by Kahane's cross-country train journey through the United States during the 2016 presidential election.

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 closes the program, tracing a journey from darkness to resolve, with sweeping melodies and dramatic power.

Program starts at 7:30 p.m. both days. Tickets \$40.39-\$145.68; available at tix.blumenthalarts.org.

March 7

The eighth annual Queen City Blues Festival is at Ovens Auditorium at 7 p.m. The Southern soul and modern blues scene blend old-school storytelling with contemporary R&B, with performances by King George, Pokey Bear, Lenny Williams, West Love, Tono Armani, Mike Clark Jr., E.J. Jones, Stephanie Luckett & the YP Band, and Henry Welch.

March 7

The eighth annual Queen City Blues Festival is at Ovens Auditorium at 7 p.m. The Southern soul and modern blues scene blend old-school storytelling with contemporary R&B, with performances by King George, Pokey Bear, Lenny Williams, West Love, Tono Armani, Mike Clark Jr., E.J. Jones, Stephanie Luckett & the YP Band, and Henry Welch.



LaBelle

LaBelle presents Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, Belk Theater, 130 N. Tryon St.



WARNER BROS.

"Sinners," starring Michael B. Jordan as twin brothers Smoke and Stack, is part of the Carolina Theatre's Black History Month celebration of Black storylines and artists in movies.

Monthlong celebration of Black creativity in cinema

From 'Shaft' to 'Sinners,' Carolina Theatre programming in February

By Herbert L. White

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The Carolina Theatre is taking a swing at Black cinema for Black History Month.

The venue is launching of the inaugural Black and Brilliant series, a collection of prominent movies and live music that focus on Black storylines, characters and artists. The lineup includes "Shaft," which won an Academy Award for Best Original Song (Isaac Hayes) on Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. and Oscar-nominated "Sinners" on Feb. 20.

Tickets are available online at thecarolina.com or in person at the Guest Services desk.

"Our celebration of Black History Month reflects one of our core, foundational beliefs: The arts are at their strongest when we uplift voices, histories and perspectives that have been systemically side-

lined," Carolina Theatre communications director Jared Misner said in a statement. "Honoring the brilliance of Black artists across the decades reaffirms our theater's commitment to being a space where everyone knows they're welcome. We're a theatre for all of Charlotte, and our programming will always demonstrate that."

The theater has a checkered relationship with Black people. From 1927-63, the venue barred their entry before requiring Black people to reserve seats in advance - in the balcony - something that wasn't required of their white peers. That policy was scrapped after a few weeks in favor for open admission.

"While we're very much the same historic theater that has had a home right here on Tryon Street for nearly a century, we're also a very different theatre in many ways," Misner said.

"And thank goodness for that."

Included in the series is a showing of the Oscar-winning "Dreamgirls," on Feb. 13, and NAACP Image Award winner "Love and Basketball" on Feb. 14.

Carolina Theatre will close the month with "Lift Every Voice and Sing," a performance by Opera Carolina on Feb. 28 that celebrates the legacy of Black artists and composers as well as the cultural significance of Black voices in classical music—from spirituals to operatic arias.

The screening schedule of movies, which start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

Feb. 6 - "Shaft" (1971)
Feb. 7 - "Do the Right Thing"
Feb. 13 - "Dreamgirls"
Feb. 14 - "Love And Basketball"
Feb. 15 - "The Princess and the Frog"
Feb. 20 - "Sinners"

Children's Theatre turns Cinderella into comedy

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Children's Theatre of Charlotte is turning "Cinderella" into comedy.

The troupe's performance of "Topsy-Turvy Cinderella" through Jan. 25 at Wells Fargo Playhouse at ImaginOn is presented in British panto—a festive, family-friendly theatre tradition that tells stories of fairy tales filled with slapstick, music, dance, jokes, and strong audience participation.

In playwright Christopher Parks' production, the audience will be invited to cheer for the princess-to-be and boo her wicked relatives. Among the laugh-out-loud scenes: "If Cinderella had been a dairy maid, perhaps her name would have been Mozzarella!"

Parks, whose interactive storytelling is familiar to CTC audiences, and "Topsy-Turvy Cinderella" is his third show of the season, following "Journey to Oz" and "The Invisible Boy."

"The express purpose of Topsy-Turvy Cinderella is for us all to have a laugh, as they say in merry old England!" Parks said. "You're going to sing with us. You're going to dance with us. You're going to watch us do outrageous, crazy things."

Parks compares the show to Monty Python, Mr. Bean, and "Mrs. Doubtfire" for children.

"If you're looking for something serious," he said, "you've come to the wrong place."



CHILDREN'S THEATRE OF CHARLOTTE

Children's Theatre of Charlotte presents "Topsy-Turvy Cinderella" through Jan. 25 at Wells Fargo Playhouse at ImaginOn.

"Topsy-Turvy Cinderella" is part of CTC's Resident Touring Company, which travels the Southeast performing for young audiences. Each season, four performers are selected to tour two shows, and this year's company includes Anna Goldstein, Daylen Jones, Adrienne Nixon, and Lohmar Wolf in "Topsy-Turvy Cinderella" alongside the touring

production "New Kid."

The Resident Touring Company this season alone has performed for 21,000 students.

Tickets are available at ctcharlotte.org. An American Sign Language-interpreted performance on Jan. 17 at 3 p.m. and a sensory-friendly performance on Jan. 18 at 4 p.m. Group discounts are available.

« MOVIE REVIEW »

Self-discovery in midst of chaos powers 'Is This Thing On?'

By Dwight Brown

BLACK PRESS USA

Is This Thing On?

3 stars

"Um... I think I'm getting a divorce."

Most future ex-husbands would confide that to friends, family or a therapist. But this lost-in-his-feelings middle-aged man tells an audience of comedy club patrons.

Actor turned filmmaker Bradley Cooper heads this com/rom/dra. His last ventures, "A Star is Born" and "Maestro," were extremely ambitious projects. Productions the novice director helmed like he was a veteran auteur. That's the past, this is the present. His dazzling artistry is packed away. This film's narrative, characters and plights don't call for grandiose style and melodramatic flourishes. Instead, with cameras on the shoulders of cinematographer Matthew Libatique ("Maestro"), Cooper steps back from the lavish filmmaking, employs a simpler style and enters a tortured soul's

intimate voyage of self-discovery. As this distraught man stumbles into the kingdom of comedy, for refuge and direction, a lens follows him everywhere. Like an incessant fly or a spy drone.

Those who watch this 124 minutes of perfectly manicured angst (editor Charlie Green, "Maestro") may have plausibility issues. But tell that to John Bishop, a former pharmaceutical rep in Manchester, England. Back in 2000, he was weathering a separation from his wife when he walked into the Frog & Bucket comedy club one night. Many years later he's selling out arenas in England as a standup comedian.

That's a very unique and intriguing story. Bishop's experience makes this fictionalized story less farfetched.

The marital relationship between Alex Novak (Arnett) and his wife Tess (Laura Dern) is going through a rough spot. They made it through the seven-year itch, have two young sons, but something's not right. His career as a finance

executive ain't working for him anymore. As a stay-at-home mom who was a former Olympics-caliber volleyball player, she's having second thoughts, too.

This protagonist stands at the door of change or on the edge of a cliff, depending on your perspective. As he does, the script masterfully builds two storylines. 1. Alex's voyage of self-discovery through the world of stand-up-comedy. Where a stage is his confessional alter and fellow comics extended family. 2. Alex and Tess deciding if they will mend or end their relationship. Many couples, troubled or not, can empathize with their back and forth.

Just one of the two narratives would suffice. Combined, both plotlines more than adequately fill the screen with growth, setbacks, decision and indecision. Dating, one-night stands and reconciliations. Enough romance, comedy and drama to keep adult audiences amused and beguiled.

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