

Life!

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026 SECTION B

Medicaid work rules likely to hit middle-aged people hard

By Samantha Liss and Sam Whitehead
KFF HEALTH NEWS

Lori Kelley's deteriorating vision has made it hard for her to find steady work.

The 59-year-old, who lives in Harrisburg, North Carolina, closed her nonprofit circus arts school last year because she could no longer see well enough to complete paperwork. She then worked making dough at a pizza shop for a bit. Currently, she sorts recyclable materials, including cans and bottles, at a local concert venue. It is her main source of income? but the work isn't year-round.

"This place knows me, and this place loves me," Kelley said of her employer. "I don't have to explain to this place why I can't read."

Kelley, who lives in a camper, survives on less than \$10,000 a year. She says that's possible, in part, because of her Medicaid health coverage, which pays for arthritis and anxiety medications and has enabled doctor visits to manage high blood pressure.

But she worries about losing that coverage next year, when rules take effect requiring millions of people like Kelley to work, volunteer, attend school, or perform other qualifying activities for at least 80 hours a month.

"I'm scared right now," she said.

Before the coverage changes were signed into law, Republican lawmakers suggested that young, unemployed men were taking advantage of the government health insurance program that provides coverage to millions of low-income or disabled people. Medicaid is not intended for "29-year-old males sitting on their couches playing video games," House Speaker Mike Johnson told CNN.

But, in reality, adults ages 50 to 64, particularly women, are likely to be hit hard by the new rules, said Jennifer Tolbert, deputy director of the Program

Please see **NEW** | 2B

Raise your garden to new heights

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Elevated and raised bed gardens can expand your planting options and make planting and maintenance easier and more convenient.

You'll be able to plant, weed and harvest with minimal bending or even from the luxury of a chair or bench.

Elevated gardens are basically containers on legs. You can find plans to make your own or purchase one from your local garden center or garden supply retailer. Consider one on wheels or add your own for ease of moving. You'll be able to move your garden into the sun or shade as needed each day or out of the way when you entertain.

Set the garden in place first. Once filled with soil, it will be very heavy and difficult to move unless you have added wheels. Those who garden on a balcony should confirm the space will hold the weight of the elevated garden bed once it is filled with moist soil and mature plants.

Including raised beds in your gardens and on or near your patio is another way to increase planting space and easier access. Purchase a prefab raised bed or make your own from a long-lasting material such as interlocking block, fieldstone, plastic lumber or naturally long-lasting wood. Consider the available space, your gardening goals and one that provides a comfortable height for gardening. Select one with corners or edges suited for sitting or narrow sides to allow easy access from a garden bench.

Line the bottom of your raised bed with hardware cloth to reduce the risk of animals burrowing into your garden. Lay the hardware cloth over the ground and bend it up along the inside of the raised bed walls. Add a liner of landscape fabric to keep the soil

Please see **RAISE** | 2B

» RIDES »

Mazda CX-30 crossover is a premium ride with great response, fuel economy

By Winfred Cross

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

I used to think the Mazda3 hatchback and the CX-30 were the same vehicles.

At a casual glance it's easy to make that mistake. However, they are not.

The CX-30 classifies as a crossover or even a small SUV. It has a higher ground clearance than a Mazda3 and has thick black trim around the wheel well openings. It's also bigger.

Mazda's CX-30 is also a little more expensive than most of its competition. It feels like it should cost more.

The interior has premium finishings. Nothing makes you think of entry-

level in this ultra small crossover. It has soft-touch surfaces, elegant switches where available and soft leather. My test vehicle was a Premium Plus, which is loaded to the gills.

Mazda avoids the extra-large touch screen and offers a just big enough screen that operates with a rotary dial to the right of the gear selector. There are wood-looking accents that I think are real. If not, the fake stuff doesn't cheapen the look. The seats are sportier and covered in white or black leatherette.

The CX-30 can sprint to 60 miles per hour in 6.4 seconds, which makes it a few ticks faster. I've driven this car several times and

my opinion hasn't changed. It begs to be driven vigorously. There are no stretches of roads that will intimidate this little crossover. It's more akin to the Mazda3 sedan. Straightaways and curvy roads make it happy. Switch the transmission to sport and everything gets a bit livelier. If you select premium gas, 250 horses drive all wheels for exhilarating runs.

The engine is a 2.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder that makes 320 pounds-feet of torque. You must use premium fuel to achieve this performance. It's certainly worth it if you want all the exhilaration this car provides.



PAUL WILLIAMS III | THE CHARLOTTE POST

A return to routine screening after the Affordable Care Act became law in 2010 allowed doctors to detect colorectal and breast cancer in DonnaMarie Woodson. "If it weren't for the Affordable Care Act, I would have likely just died," she said.

ACA a detection lifeline against colorectal cancer

Without Obamacare provision, many would go without screening

By Cameron Williams

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DonnaMarie Woodson's life changed in 2015.

In July 2015, Woodson was diagnosed with stage three colorectal cancer and stage one breast cancer.

"I had been very healthy," she said. "I was doing all my screenings and things like that. And, in 2008, my husband was laid off from 3M and with that lost insurance and all that. So, he wanted to start his own business. We ended up moving to North Carolina and I figured since I was pretty healthy, I'd put off my screenings until we got some insurance, so I missed a couple of years."

When the Affordable Care Act became law in 2010, Woodson and her husband signed up. Her first screening revealed a shock she could have never been prepared

for.

"The first one I did was my colonoscopy," she said. "Before I could even leave the building, my doctor said to stay because he needed to speak to us. He told me and my husband that he was 99.9% sure that I had colon cancer. ... I didn't have any symptoms. That was totally unexpected. Then, going through all of the MRIs and things like that, they discovered it was a stage three colon cancer as well. Also, during those screenings, they found out I had breast cancer."

Woodson's doctors said the cancers were not connected in any way. One didn't cause the other. In just a handful of years, she had developed both cancers and Woodson said it goes to show the importance of screenings and keeping up with one's health.

After her diagnosis in 2015,

Woodson practically lived in a hospital between colon surgery and chemotherapy.

"I did chemo for about six months," Woodson said. "I was able to do this new form of radiation that was not external, rather internal. They insert a balloon into the cavity where the tumor had been. The balloon is attached to something like a little R2-D2 robot-type thing. It was the radiation machine. I went for two weeks. And, it was only a few minutes each time because it was directly into the cavity. ... The technology had changed so much and had become so advanced that I really benefited from that."

The experience has led Woodson to become an ACA proponent.

"If it weren't for the Affordable Care Act, I would have likely just died," she said. "Having no symp-

Please see **ACA** | 2B

Heart health trends among younger adults

FEATURE IMPACT

Heart disease is something many adults push to the back of their minds if they are not experiencing symptoms; a concern for "later" in life.

However, that mindset may be changing. New research suggests younger generations are thinking about their cardiovascular health earlier and with greater urgency.

They're right to be thinking about it, too. Data from the American Heart Association shows heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of Americans. In fact, someone dies from cardiovascular disease every 34 seconds in the United States.

Risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and kidney disease are on the rise, too. Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure (47%), and obesity (42%), and more than half (57%) have type 2 diabetes or prediabetes.

Despite growing concern about heart health, many



SHUTTERSTOCK

Young adults are thinking about cardiovascular health according to new research.

adults remain unclear about their personal risk. In fact, a majority of respondents (62%) in a survey conducted by Atomik Research on behalf of Doctor's Best said they don't know their current risk for heart disease. To provide context on these findings and highlight emerging heart health trends, Dr. Tania Elliott, a dual board-certified physician in internal

medicine, offers some insights.

Feeling fatigued

In the study, only 50% of respondents reported feeling energetic on a daily basis. Among those who reported feeling fatigued, 46% listed stress as their top perceived contributor, followed by insufficient sleep (38%), both of which are closely tied to cardiovascular health.

Troubling symptoms

Among Gen Z respondents, 25% reported having shortness of breath during activity or while lying down, compared to just 16% of Baby Boomers, which is commonly associated with compromised heart health.

Statins and youth

Statins, which help address cardiovascular risk

Please see **HEART** | 2B



MAZDA

The 2026 Mazda CX-30 crossover has premium finishings and exceptional quickness.

Even so, Mazda manages to squeeze 25 miles per gallon overall out of this

engine. The highway mileage figure is a very respectable 30 mpg.

The CX-30 handles like a dream but a comfortable ride makes it a pleasure to drive. Please see **MAZDA** | 2B

ACA a detection lifeline against colorectal cancer

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toms, and at the time without insurance, I would have never known to get checked. I can only imagine it would have continued to get worse. But, because of the Affordable Care Act, I was able to get screened and there is no question it saved my life."

Six months after diagnosis, Woodson was pronounced cancer free in January of 2016. Six years later, she had another unforgettable moment.

"On the 12th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act passing ... 'President [Barack] Obama FaceTimed me and I thought I was doing an interview or something,'" Woodson recalled. "So, I wasn't in my pajamas or anything, but he said, 'Hey DonnaMarie, this is Barack.' I was like, 'Oh my gosh this is not happening.' I was just so excited. But, he thanked me for all of my advocacy for the Affordable Care Act. It was just an amazing thing."

Woodson, 70, is still advocating for the ACA. It breaks her heart with pushback it has gotten from its incep-

tion. An estimated 4.8 to 5 million people are without health insurance in 2026 across the country due to the elimination of enhanced ACA subsidies, which has caused premiums to rise sharply according to KFF Health News and the Urban Institute.

"There is no reason for the current administration to have attacked the Affordable Care Act," Woodson said. "There has been a concerted effort to eliminate it ever since it got passed. ... The bottom line is that everyone deserves to have affordable, quality health care. That is just a human right."

"We don't have to agree on anything else," but we should all agree on the fact that every man, woman and child deserves to have a great quality of life. And, with these little piece by piece rollbacks, you are literally killing people. There is no way around it; there is no sugar coating it. And, for what? It doesn't work? It has been working since it started in 2010."

New Medicaid rules will likely hit middle-aged people hard

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on Medicaid and the Uninsured at KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. For Kelley and others, the work requirements will create barriers to keeping their coverage, Tolbert said. Many could lose Medicaid as a result, putting their physical and financial health at risk.

Starting next January, some 20 million low-income Americans in 42 states and Washington, D.C., will need to meet the activity requirements to gain or keep Medicaid health coverage.

Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming didn't expand their Medicaid programs to cover additional low-income adults under the Affordable Care Act, so they won't have to implement the work rules.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicts the work rules will result in at least 5 million fewer people with Medicaid coverage over the next decade. Work rules are the largest driver of coverage losses in the GOP budget law, which slashes nearly \$1 trillion to offset the costs of tax breaks that mainly benefit the rich and increase border security, critics say.

"We're talking about saving money at the expense of people's lives," said Jane Tavares, a gerontology researcher at the University of Massachusetts Boston. "The work requirement is just a tool to do that."

Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson Andrew Nixon said requiring "able-bodied adults" to work ensures Medicaid's "long-term sustainability" while safeguarding it for the vulnerable. Exempt are people with disabilities, caregivers, pregnant and postpartum individuals, veterans with total disabilities, and others facing medical or personal hardship, Nixon told KFF Health News.

Medicaid expansion has provided a lifeline for middle-aged adults who otherwise would lack insurance, according to Georgetown University researchers. Medicaid covers 1 in 5 Americans ages 50 to 64, giving them access to health coverage before they qualify for Medicare at age 65.

Among women on Medicaid, those ages 50 through 64 are more likely to face challenges keeping their coverage than their younger female peers and are likely to have a greater need for health care services, Tolbert said.

These middle-aged women are less likely to be working the required number of hours because many serve as family caregivers or have illnesses that limit their ability to work, Tolbert said.

Tavares and other researchers found that just 8% of the total Medicaid population is considered "able-bodied" and not

working. This group consists largely of women who are very poor and have left the workforce to become caretakers. Among this group, 1 in 4 are 50 or older.

"They are not healthy young adults just hanging out," the researchers stated.

Plus, making it harder for people to maintain Medicaid coverage "may actually undermine their ability to work" because their health problems go untreated, Tolbert said. Regardless, if this group loses coverage, their chronic health conditions will still need to be managed, she said.

Adults often start wrestling with health issues before they're eligible for Medicare.

If older adults don't have the means to pay to address health issues before age 65, they'll ultimately be sicker when they qualify for Medicare, costing the program more money, health policy researchers said.

Many adults in their 50s or early 60s are no longer working because they're full-time caregivers for children or older family members, said caregiver advocates, who refer to people in the group as "the sandwich generation."

The GOP budget law does allow some caregivers to be exempted from the Medicaid work rules, but the carve-outs are "very narrow," said Nicole Jorwic, chief program officer for the group Caring Across Generations.

She worries that people who should qualify for an exemption will fall through the cracks.

"You're going to see family caregivers getting sicker, continuing to forgo their own care, and then you're going to see more and more families in crisis situations," Jorwic said.

Paula Wallace, 63, of Chidester, Arkansas, said she worked most of her adult life and now spends her days helping her husband manage his advanced cirrhosis.

After years of being uninsured, she recently gained coverage through her state's Medicaid expansion, which means she'll have to comply with the new work requirements to keep it. But she's having a hard time seeing how that will be possible.

"With me being his only caregiver, I can't go out and work away from home," she said.

Wallace's husband receives Social Security Disability Insurance, she said, and the law says she should be exempt from the work rules as a full-time caregiver for someone with a disability.

But federal officials have yet to issue specific guidance on how to define that exemption. And experience from Arkansas and Georgia - the only states to have run Medicaid work programs - shows that many enrollees struggle to navigate complicated benefits systems.

"I'm very concerned," Wallace said.

Mazda CX-30 crossover is a premium ride with great response, fuel economy

Continued from page 1B

ride is not forsaken. You feel what's going on underneath without the drama. The vehicle is also quiet, even during spirited runs. Four passengers fit comfortably but you can carry five if needed. Front and back seats have plenty of padding and a nice angle. The styling is sleek, so headroom may be a bit compromised for taller passengers.

The CX-30 Turbo Premium Plus comes with a great deal of standard equipment: automatic high beams, adaptive cruise

control, drowsy driver monitor, navigation, Bose audio system, lane keeping assist, forward collision mitigation, roof rails, auto-dimming mirror, sunroof, power adjustable driver's seat, heated front seats, keyless entry, tinted rear windows, 18-inch wheels, blind spot monitor, and center armrest for rear passengers.

The Premium Plus starts at \$37,900. There are a few accessories available, so hitting \$40,000 is possible when you include destination.

The CX-30 Premium Plus

is a great choice if you need a small SUV that drives exceptionally well. You can carry five people but four will be the most comfortable on a long trip. It's a little pricey if you go for the top model but there are other trim models that may fit your budget.

Pros:

- Great engine
- Sleek styling
- High equipment level
- Adroit handling
- Comfortable interior
- Elegant interior
- Comfortable, quiet ride

Cons:

- Can be expensive

Heart health trends grow among younger adults

Continued from page 1B

factors such as high cholesterol, are among the most commonly prescribed drugs in America, with more than 92 million Americans currently taking them, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Although most survey respondents (76%) aren't currently taking a statin, 17% of adults ages 25-34 reported using statin therapy, which is an unexpectedly high proportion given their age and the group's low anticipated risk of cardiovascular disease.

Side effects of statins
Among those taking statins, which are considered a first-line treatment for treating high cholesterol and reducing heart disease risk, 54% reported experiencing side effects, particularly muscle pain (23%) and fatigue (31%). However, taking statins can also affect levels of Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), which supports cellular energy and cardiovascular function.

All about CoQ10

Cells use CoQ10 to produce energy and detoxify. Studies have shown people with heart failure who took CoQ10 had around a 50% reduction in mortality.

Despite this, awareness is low. Nearly two-thirds (66%) of respondents had never heard of CoQ10 and that number jumps to 76% of adults ages 25-34. Additionally, only a small percentage of respondents (8%) who were on a statin reported having their CoQ10 level tested.

"We have a real opportunity to help younger adults take a more proactive approach to heart health," Elliott said. "CoQ10 plays a critical role in cellular energy production and heart muscle function, and it can decline with age and statin use."

If you're among the 71% of survey respondents who expressed a willingness to learn more about improving your heart health, talk with your health care provider and visit Doctors-

Best.com to learn more.

Strategies to support heart health

While some risk factors for heart disease, like age and family history, are out of your control, you can make lifestyle changes to help lower your risk:

- Eat whole foods: A heart-healthy eating plan includes plenty of lean proteins as well as fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains and foods high in omega-3s, such as salmon, nuts and plant oils.

- Know your CoQ10 levels: If you're low, look for a high-quality, bioavailable formula, like Doctor's Best High Absorption CoQ10 with BioPerine, which supports energy production and muscle function.

- Get moving: The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week to help control weight and lower the risk for conditions that negatively impact the heart.



MELINDA MYERS

Raised garden beds improve access and mobility to growing plants.

Raise your garden to new heights with mobile beds

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in place when placing your raised bed on a patio.

A 3- or 4-foot width makes it easy to reach all parts of the garden for planting, weeding and harvesting. Raising your planting bed at least 8 to 12 inches improves drainage and provides an adequate space for most plants to root and grow.

If you want to minimize bending, go higher or add benches to increase your gardening comfort and ease.

Once your raised bed is complete or elevated garden is in place, fill it with quality planting mix. You can calculate the volume of soil that is needed yourself or use one of the many soil calculators available online.

Check the soil moisture regularly as the limited soil mass and increased exposure to wind, heat and sunlight make raised beds dry out more quickly than in-ground gardens.

Reduce the need for frequent watering by incorporating a certified organic and sustainable soil amendment, like Wild Valley Farms wool pellets (wildvalley-

farms.com). Research found adding these pellets made from 100% wool waste helps reduce watering by 25% and increases air space in the soil for better plant growth. You'll only need a one-pound bag of these wool pellets to cover about 30 square feet if you add the pellets as you plant or it is enough to amend 12 gallons of soil when mixing thoroughly in your mix, following label directions.

Further boost your gardening success by selecting the best plants suited to the growing conditions and your gardening goals. In no time, you'll be enjoying the flavor and beauty these gardens provide.

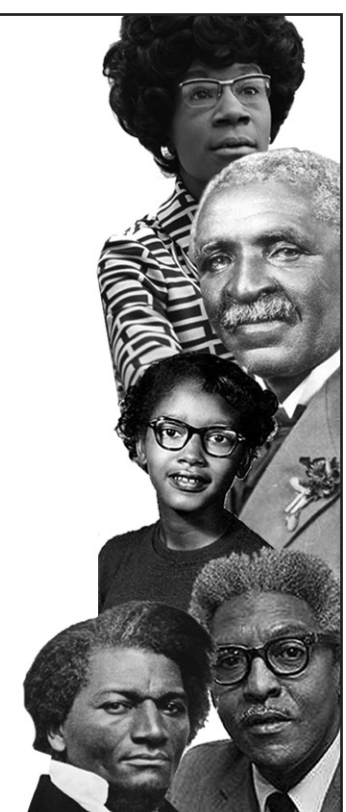
Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* streaming courses and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*.

Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by *Wild Valley Farms* for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

52 Weeks of Black Brilliance

Our history is at risk of being erased — but The Post ensures our voices endure.

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SHUTTERSTOCK

Good sleep habits can go a long way toward lowering the risk of poor health.

Proper sleep lessens the risk of health hazards

BLACKDOCTOR.ORG

The most serious problem with not getting enough sleep is that terrible, groggy feeling you have to suffer through in the morning, right?

Wrong. You may not realize this, but lack of sleep is much more dangerous than simply feeling more tired than usual. Increasingly, researchers tell us, it's clear that not getting enough sleep can become a serious health hazard.

Diseases sleep deprivation can increase your risks of:

1. Colon cancer
In a study of 1,240 people published in 2011, Case Western University researchers found that those who slept fewer than 6 hours a night were 47 percent more likely to have colorectal polyps, which can become cancerous, than people who clocked at least seven hours of sleep.

Here's a breakdown of how it happens:

I. Disruption of circadian rhythm (your body clock)
Your body runs on a 24-hour internal clock (circadian rhythm) that regulates:

- Cell repair
- DNA damage control
- Hormone release
- Immune surveillance

When you consistently don't get enough sleep — or sleep at irregular times — this clock becomes disrupted.

Why this matters:
• Cells may divide more rapidly or abnormally
• DNA repair processes become less efficient
• Tumor-suppressor genes may function less effectively

Research shows that long-term circadian disruption (like shift work or chronic insomnia) is associated with higher rates of colorectal and other cancers.

II. Reduced melatonin production

Sleep — especially in darkness — triggers production of melatonin, a powerful hormone with anti-cancer properties.

Melatonin helps:
• Reduce inflammation

- Slow tumor growth
- Protect DNA from oxidative damage
- Regulate estrogen and insulin pathways

When sleep is shortened or occurs with excessive light exposure (screens, night shifts), melatonin levels drop.

Lower melatonin has been linked in studies to increased colorectal tumor development.

III. Increased chronic inflammation

Sleep deprivation raises levels of inflammatory markers such as:

- C-reactive protein (CRP)
- Interleukin-6
- Tumor necrosis factor (TNF)

Chronic inflammation is a known driver of cancers, including colon cancer.

Inflammation can:
• Damage colon lining
• Promote abnormal cell growth

• Encourage polyp formation

2. Breast cancer

Researchers at Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine in Sendai, Japan, studied data from nearly 24,000 women ages 40 to 79, and learned that those who slept fewer than 6 hours a night had a 62 percent higher risk for breast cancer, while those who slept more than 9 hours a night had a 28 percent lower risk.

3. Cardiovascular disease
In a 2010 study published in the journal Sleep, researchers at the West Virginia University School of Medicine reviewed data from 30,397 people who had participated in the 2005 National Health Interview Study.

They discovered that those sleeping fewer than seven hours a night were at increased risk of heart disease. In particular, women under 60 who sleep five hours or fewer a night have twice the risk for developing heart disease.

According to a study in the journal Diabetes in 2011, University of Chicago and Northwestern University researchers found that when people with type 2 diabetes slept poorly at night, they had a

9% higher fasting glucose level, a 30% higher fasting insulin level, and a 43% higher insulin resistance level.

Diabetics with insomnia fared even worse — their fasting glucose levels were 23% higher, their fasting insulin levels were 48% higher, and their insulin resistance levels were 82% higher than diabetics who didn't have insomnia.

4. Urinary problems

In findings presented at the May 2011 meeting of the American Urological Association, researchers at the New England Research Institute in Watertown, Massachusetts, reviewed data from 4,145 middle-aged men and women and here's what they discovered:

Five years of sleeping restlessly or too little (fewer than five hours a night) can increase by 80% to 90% a woman's risk of needing to wake at night to urinate (nocturia) or of becoming incontinent. A whopping 42 percent of the women classified themselves as restless sleepers, compared with 34 percent of the men. The researchers theorize that sleeping poorly causes inflammation, which in turn can lead to urinary problems.

5. Death
A 10-year study of some 16,000 people by researchers at the University of Copenhagen connected the dots between a lack of sleep and an increased risk of mortality.

It turns out that the men who reported sleeping badly, especially those under 45, had twice the risk for death than men who reported sleeping well. And men who had three or more sleep disturbances a night had a suicide risk five times higher than men whose sleep was undisturbed. Though sleep disturbances didn't affect women's mortality, both women and men who reported sleep disturbances were more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »



CHICAGO DEFENDER

John H. Sengstacke was publisher of several Black newspapers and founder of the National Newspaper Association.

John Sengstacke: Black America's news publisher

By Herbert L. White
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John H. Sengstacke (1912-1997) was a pioneering media executive and pioneer who expanded the reach and reputation of Black newspapers over the mid- to late 20th century. Sengstacke, who was born in Savannah, Georgia, was singled out by his uncle, Robert S. Abbott, publisher of The Chicago Defender, and trained as his successor. Abbott financed Sengstacke's education at Hampton Institute, where he graduated in 1934. Abbott also subsidized his nephew's studies at the Mergenthaler Linotype School, The Chicago School of Printing, Northwestern University, and Ohio State University. In 1934, Sengstacke became vice president and

general manager of The Robert S. Abbott Publishing Company, and served as president, following Abbott's death in 1940. That year, Sengstacke founded the National Negro Publishers Association, a trade organization for Black publishers and their journalism, and served as president for seven terms. The organization has over 200 members today. He started the Chicago Daily Defender in 1956 and published the Michigan Courier in Detroit, the Tri-City Defender in Memphis, Tennessee, and bought the Pittsburgh Courier in 1966, reopening it the next year as the New Pittsburgh Courier.

Sengstacke's contributions extended beyond publishing. He was involved in community serv-

ice work in Illinois and received several presidential appointments during the administrations of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson. Sengstacke worked with Roosevelt to admit Black reporters to presidential press conferences and lobbied for job opportunities for Black Americans in the United States Postal Service.

One of Sengstacke's major political goals was desegregation of the armed forces, which Truman accomplished via executive order in 1948. Truman appointed Sengstacke to a commission in 1948 to integrate Black women into the military.

Sengstacke was editor and publisher of the Daily Defender until his death on May 28, 1997, at age 84.

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Women's History Month Event

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Dr. Monique Couvson
Author, Documentarian, President & CEO of G4GC

Dr. Jimmeka Anderson
Founder & Executive Director Black Girls Film Camp

Date: March 28, 2026
Time: 6pm
Location: Charlotte Post Event Center
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Ticketed Event. Secure Tickets on Eventbrite
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BIDS

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The City of Hendersonville has the following out for bid: RFP # 267055001 for Small Diameter Water Main Installation. Visit the following link for full details: <https://www.hendersonvillenc.gov/rfp-q-bid/rfp-267055001-small-diameter-water-installation>

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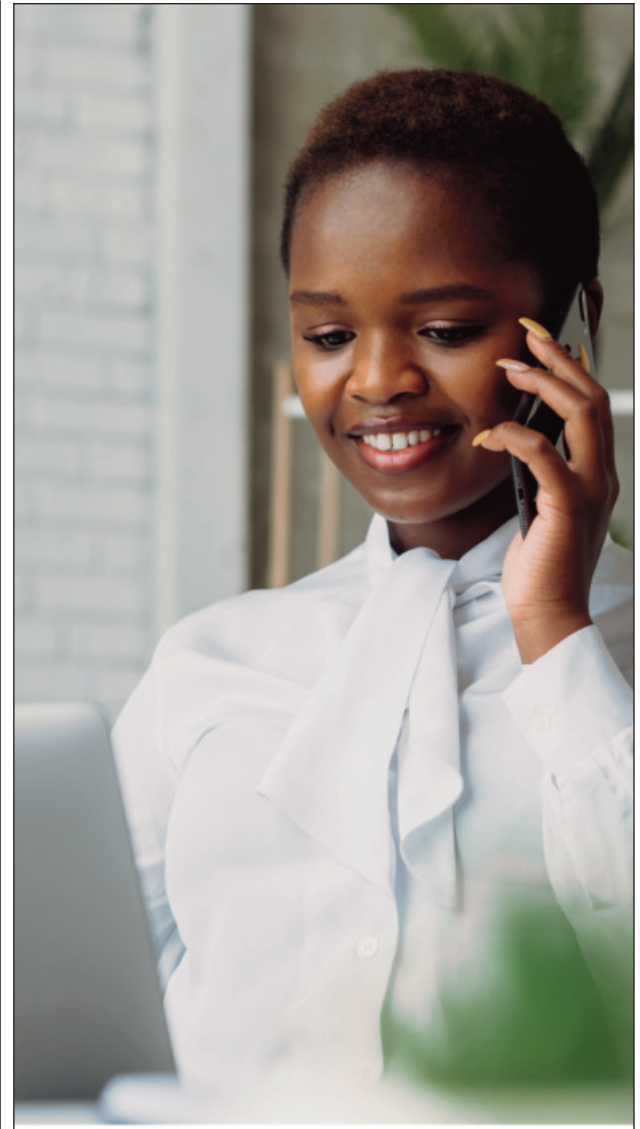
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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026 PAGE 5B

« ON THE MARQUEE »



CAROLINA THEATRE

Historian Ibram X. Kendi will present March 28 at Carolina Theatre.

Ibram X. Kendi at Carolina Theatre

By Herbert L. White
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

The latest events from stage, screen and exhibits in Charlotte:

March 26
Selwyn Birchwood ("Electric Swamp Funkin' Blues") at Middle C Jazz, 300 S Brevard St. Tickets: middlec jazz.com.

March 27-29
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra presents Dvořák's "New World." Music director Kwamé Ryan leads the Orchestra in Dvořák's tribute to his Czech homeland and the musical influences he found in America. Soprano Janai Brugger adds vocals for works exploring themes of home, nostalgia, and longing, including "The Trees on the Mountain" from Floyd's Susannah and Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915. Program starts at 7:30 p.m. on March 27 and March 28 and 3 p.m. on March 29. Tickets: tix.bluemthalarths.org.

March 28
"Chain of Ideas: An Afternoon with Dr. Ibram X. Kendi," Carolina Theatre, 2 p.m.

Kendi, a historian and leading antiracist scholar, is a professor of history and founding director of the Howard University Institute for Advanced Study, an interdisciplinary research enterprise examining global racism. Tickets are \$68-\$82 and available at Ticketmaster.

April 3
Keyboardist Nicolas Cole ("Blue Magic") takes the stage at Middle C Jazz, 300 S Brevard St. Tickets: middlec jazz.com.

April 7
Contemporary soul trio Moonchild plays Knight Theater at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Waves Tour.

The Los Angeles-based threesome of Amber Navran, Andris Mattson and Max Bryk combines neo-soul, jazz and elec-
Please see **SOUL** | 6B

'King Hedley II' takes stage at Arts Factory

By Herbert L. White
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

BNS Productions is tapping into August Wilson for its latest production.

The Charlotte theater company's performance of "King Hedley II," one Wilson's most powerful plays is March 27-April 5 at the Arts Factory at West End Studios. Tickets are available at bnsproductions.com.

Set in Pittsburgh's Hill District in 1985, "King Hedley II" is the story of a man trying to rebuild his life after incarceration. The lead character, played by Jonathan Caldwell, quickly finds out reclaiming his dignity and stability in a society that looks down on convicts isn't easy. He's forced to confront his past as well as the complications of love, family, and survival.

"This show is personal to me because it mirrors the world I come from - the struggle, the resilience, and the unanswered questions about what it means to build something in a system designed to break you," said director Rory Sheriff, BNS Productions' founder. "I chose to direct it because August Wilson didn't just write a play - he wrote a truth that still lives in our communities, and I feel a responsibility to bring that truth to the stage with honesty, urgency, and purpose."

In addition to Caldwell, "King Hedley II's" cast includes Tim Bradley, Drew Monroe, Toi Aquila RJ, Myneesa King, and Tone-X.



EAGLE AFRICA FILM PRODUCTION

'Devil in a Sundress' director and writer Tunde Sobowale and cast make the Charlotte media rounds ahead of the independent film's March 21 debut at UNC Charlotte.

Image isn't everything for indie 'Devil in a Sundress'

Movie's theme revolves around pursuit of real love and commonality

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Love can get dangerous. Eagle Africa Film Production premiered "Devil in a Sundress" March 21 at UNC Charlotte.

The independent production directed and written by Tunde Sobowale explores what happens when trust turns into danger. The title reflects a situation that looks attractive on the surface but carries conflict and possible danger.

"A lot of people fall victim because they just see the surface," Sobowale said. The film is designed to exploit human emotion, difficult choices, and the contrast between what people see and what is actually true," Sobowale said.

Inspired by how greed can damage a community, Sobowale said it was important to tell a story depicting

deception and emotional complicity shows the need for kindness.

"People are just so far away from love, because if you have love in your heart, you will not be greedy to an extent," he said. "We see it in our leadership, in our family, in the church. It's just eating up everyone."

Sobowale's goal is to look past appearances and communicate to audiences the need to better understand who a person is. Andy Roberts, the movie's production manager and a cast member, said audiences will find a connection to the story through commonality.

"There's a lot of deceit in this film, and there's a lot of real true love," he said. "When you look at the audience, at least from my vantage point, I hope that they go home and they can think about it and connect to these characters because they're

realistic issues. This is nothing that's made up," Roberts said.

"Devil in a Sundress" is a story of both compelling beauty and hidden truths as lead actor Solomon Amaning's character goes on a journey that shifts from love to concern as he learns not everyone has pure intentions.

"It was more of just a learning experience of recognizing what your intuition is telling you and choosing to follow that and making sure that you keep your own heart pure," Amaning said.

Said Sobowale: "This film is meant to make people think about choice, character, red flags and consequences. I know that it will give the audience something to feel, something to learn and something to remember."

« MOVIE REVIEW »

History and occupation lessons in 'Palestine '36'

By Dwight Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

Palestine '36
3.5 stars

It's a history lesson wrapped in a period drama.

An intimate look at British colonialism and land appropriation in Palestine, 1936. The beginnings of a conflict that continues 90 years later.

British-controlled Palestine, later Israel in 1948, had a rich, diverse history before colonization. For 400 years, until 1917, it was a multicultural part of the Ottoman Empire. Arab Muslims and Arab Christians were the predominant population, Jewish communities the minority.

British forces captured Jerusalem in 1917, and the region in 1918. The League of Nations assigned Britain the job of administration and managing the territory via an official "mandate" in 1920. Historians cite strategic interests, including maintaining influence over routes near the Suez Canal, as a key motivation.

In addition, the "Balfour Declaration" of 1917 supported establishing "a national home for Jewish people," amid rising persecution in Europe and the growth of a Zionist movement. The British policies, along with Jewish immigration and land transfers displaced segments of the Arab population, particularly farmers.

That's the CliffsNotes version of events. A truncated history. After viewing this enlightening film, many moviegoers will want to expand their knowledge of a complex past that connects to present day unrest. Writer/director Annemarie Jacir ("Salt of This Sea") masterfully blends a brilliant mix of colorized archival footage and live footage shot in Palestine and Jordan.

Her engaging script features compelling characters facing great odds, profound dialogue, thrilling action scenes and searing drama. If there is a flaw in her smart creation, it's that there are too many main characters.

Yusuf (Karim Daoud Anaya), an Arab teenager, has ties to two different worlds. His family and friends live in the modest farming village Al Basma, outside Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he drives and assists Amir (Dhafer L'Abidine), a wealthy Palestinian newspaper



WATERMELON PICTURES

Karim Daoud Anaya in a scene from "Palestine '36."

publisher/editor, and his wife Khuloud (Yasmine Al Massri), who writes political articles under a pseudonym. All is in a state of change.

The British, headed by High Commissioner Wauchope (Jeremy Irons), are granting Jewish settlers deeded land already settled on by Arabs for centuries. British officers, like Captain Wingate (Robert Aramayo), harass, displace, imprison and sometimes kill those who resist losing their land and civil rights.

Yusuf is concerned about his family's safety. Amir and Khuloud assume their connections with British emissaries like Thomas (Billy Howle) will buffer them and stop the land grabs. Meanwhile, farmers and laborers organize and fight back against British imperialism.

A longshoreman named Khalid (Saleh Bakri) is not afraid to lead an insurrection. A resistance movement builds. Yusuf gets caught between his two worlds. At some point he can no longer be passive.

A stronger script might focus on a single protagonist. Since Yusuf anchors opening sequences, it's more traditional for the footage to principally follow his character arc. Instead, Jacir decides to shadow others too. This approach could confuse audiences and

splinter attention.

Subplots include Kareem (Ward Helou), a Christian young boy, and his father (Jalal Altawil), a priest. A village widow Rabab (Yafa Bakri) and her young daughter, Afra (Wardi Eilabouni) struggle to hold on to their cultural identity. Rabab, "Your land is where your people are buried." While Amir and Khuloud grapple with issues tied to their affluence. These stories act separately and intertwine in ways art-house audiences will appreciate more than mainstream viewers. That said, each actor's portrayal is created in emotional, psychological ways that strike a chord that audiences will feel.

Skillfully, Jacir brings the viewers back to the '30s. It's the seamless mixture (editor Tania Reddin) of old and new footage. The blending of faded and vivid colors across eye-catching scenes—cotton fields, resistance fighters on horseback, military caravans and palatial mansions. Production designer Nael Kanj reimagines the homes, both simple and ornate. Clothes (costume designer Hamada Atallah) aptly distinguish villagers, aristocracy and soldiers and reinforce their identities. Cinematographers Hélène Louvart, Sarah Blum and Tim Fleming

Please see **HISTORY** | 6B

Soul trio Moonchild at McKnight Theater

Continued from page 5B

tronic music into a genre-fluid sound.

Tickets start at \$52.77 and available at blumenthalarts.org/events/detail/moonchild-waves-tour April 11

Two-time Grammy nominee Maysa ("Milestones") returns to Charlotte for a show at Middle C Jazz, 300 S Brevard St. Tickets: middlec jazz.com.

Through April 26
"In Pursuit of Home" at Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, Levine Center for the Arts, 551 South Tryon St.

Artist Mario Moore's exhibit encourages viewers to reflect on how the meaning of home is changing in

modern America and the inequalities intertwined with its pursuit.

The exhibition explores the desire for homeownership in the United States, particularly among people in their 20s and 30s, and the barriers that make achieving it more challenging.

For more information: ganttcenter.org/exhibitions/in-pursuit-of-home.

May 2
R&B icons October London and Lalah Hathaway take over Owens Auditorium, 2900 E Independence Blvd. for a concert event celebrating love, soul and timeless music. Showtime is 8 p.m. Tickets at Ticketmaster.com.
May 5

The Robert Cray Band, 7:30 p.m. Carolina Theatre, 230 N. Tryon St.

The blues-rock standout first picked up a guitar after seeing The Beatles on TV then, having witnessed Jimi Hendrix perform in Seattle, determined his destiny would follow a similar path. Cray's developed into one of American music's top music artists over the last half century.

Tickets range from \$55-\$174 and available at ticketmaster.com.

June 6
Grammy-nominated R&B singer Ari Lennox brings her North American tour to Skyla Credit Union Amphitheatre. The show is in support of her third studio album *Vacancy*. Tickets available at livenation.com.

« OUT AND ABOUT »

DANIEL COSTON



Malcomb Coley was honored at this year's Mayor's Masked Ball, held at the Charlotte Convention Center on March 21. The event, chaired by Jermeliah and Larry Martin, raised over \$1.4 million for the United Negro College Fund.

History and occupation lessons in 'Palestine '36'

Continued from page 5B

capture the film's intimacy and brutality with equal verve. Ben Frost composes heart-wrenching music with restrained low-tone viola and cello instruments that accentuate in the most foreshadowing ways. Nothing about the footage feels modern. More like "Beau Geste" (1939), though opposite in themes.

Parallels to today's issues and similar interpretations of social/political oppression mark this film's high standards: Arabs have to carry ID papers in their own homeland and are being interrogated by soldiers, which echoes current U.S. immigration security methods. Rich Palestinians cozying up to the enemy and thinking they're immune, mimics films like Victor de Sica's 1970 classic "The Garden of the Finzi-Continis," where social privilege was not a bulwark. Watching Jewish settlers encroach on Arab lands was also exposed in the Oscar-winning

Documentary Feature "No Other Land."

This sweeping epic is filled with enough material for a Netflix mini-series. Yet the storytelling has been judiciously and artfully condensed. Jacir, an astute filmmaker, knows the assignment: Recollect the history, chronicle the peril of Arab communities being displaced. Depict the migration of Jewish people in need of a homeland. Explore the causes and consequences of the times. Her interpretation of events, mixed in with fictionalized characters and command of her craft is high caliber filmmaking. Close to that of Bernardo Bertolucci's "The Conformist" or Roman Polanski's "The Pianist."

What Jacir teaches viewers about the evils of tyranny and brave resistance channels from the '30s through to today. "Palestine '36" is an allegory of epic proportions that resonates.

Visit film critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.



Charlotte Ballet's annual Dancing With the Stars of Charlotte gala raised more than \$1.8 million for local nonprofits.

Charlotte Ballet gala raises record \$1.8M for nonprofits

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte Ballet raised a record high in donations at its Dancing with the Stars of Charlotte fundraising gala.

The event, which started in 2013 to support local nonprofits, raised \$1.8 million this year, bringing its total to more than \$13 million. The showcase features six community leaders paired with professional dancers from across Charlotte, where they spend weeks preparing to take the stage. Teams perform and raise money with donations counting as votes toward their charity choice.

Donations are still being accepted at charlottevalley.org. The annual Dancing With The Stars of Charlotte competition is April 24 at Carolina Theatre.

"Charlotte cares about itself and cares about its people, and it was great to see that in action and be a part of it," participant Joseph Hetzer said.

Participant Molly Shaw added: "The community as a whole rewards passion and organizations and individuals who are willing to really fight and stand up for something."

Competitors said part of the impact is the willingness to put themselves before the public. For many, stepping on stage without prior dance experience shows the

community the importance of stepping out of comfort zones for a cause.

"I kind of viewed this as a time where I was putting myself out there physically and mentally that I would cast that aside and say, 'hey, I'm putting myself out there,'" participant Alston Mann said. "It's really important that you put yourself out there to support us in what we're doing."

Mann said before the gala, he was not familiar with Charlotte's arts scene, but the experience gave him an opportunity to see into a world completely different from his own. Events like DWTS increase visibility and support.

"It was so unique to have my eyes opened to a scene that, frankly, I'm just not that plugged into and get to see the inside of it and get to see the people that are working so hard to bring these cultural elements to Charlotte," Mann said.

Samantha Riester, a Charlotte Ballet dancer, said the company has always been generous.

"They are always willing to fundraise and support and not just our own charity, but everybody else's charity that was raising money as well," she said. "They do such a great job of reaching out into the community and trying to get us to raise as much money as possible for these great causes."

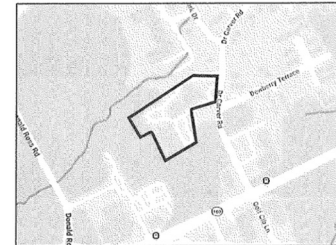
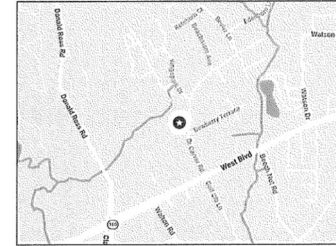
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