

# Life!

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026 SECTION B

## Spirit Airlines' end shows the need for passenger shield

By Christopher Elliott  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Tens of thousands of Spirit Airlines passengers showed up at the airport and discovered their tickets were worthless.

They could have scrambled for a last-minute fare on another airline, sometimes at three or four times the original price. They could have disputed the charge with a credit card company. But all too often, they just canceled their trip.

The worst may be ahead. JetBlue is reportedly in financial distress. Several ultralow-cost carriers — the no-frills airlines like Frontier, Allegiant and Avelo that built their model around bare-bones fares and piled-on fees — have lined up at the federal aid window.

There will be more Spirits, and probably soon. I know because my inbox tells me so. Hundreds of emails, all variations on the same theme: I bought a ticket on a low-cost airline, and I'm really worried.

There has to be a better way.

**What happened to Rule 240?**

If you flew before the government deregulated the airline industry in 1978, you might remember Rule 240. The Civil Aeronautics Board required airlines to put bumped or stranded passengers on the next available flight, including a competitor's, at no extra cost.

Then deregulation arrived, and Rule 240 quietly disappeared. Air travelers were at the mercy of an airline when a bankruptcy happened. Sometimes, that left them with a worthless ticket.

Congress brought a version of it back after 9/11. Section 145 of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act required carriers to honor a failed competitor's tickets "to the extent practicable." But it was also temporary, and it expired in 2005.

Now, there's no protection at a time when we need it most.

**A credit card chargeback isn't the answer**

The airline industry's standard response is to point at the Fair Credit Billing Act and to file a chargeback.

Not really. A refund — if you can get it — won't help you get to your destination. And walk-up fares, which are priced for business travelers on an expense account, are beyond the reach of most travelers.

Please see **SPIRIT** | 2B

## GLP-1s can shed pounds but tennis is fitness for lifetime

By Angus Mugford PhD  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Nearly 1 in 8 Americans have turned to GLP-1s to shed pounds.

For many, these drugs offer a powerful starting point to trimming their waistlines — but not a complete path to long-term health.

Lasting health isn't defined by the scale. Sustainable improvements come from building healthier lifestyles over time — especially regular physical activity — which no pill or injection can replace.

And not all exercise is equally effective. While any movement is better than none, when researchers have looked closely at which activities deliver the greatest health benefits over decades, the differences are striking.

One sport consistently rises to the top: tennis. People who play tennis gain 9.7 years in life expectancy, on average, compared with sedentary individuals — an effect so large it rivals some of the most consequential public-health gaps we know, including the gap between smokers and non-smokers. In the same study, no other exercise came close. Cycling, swimming, and jogging were associated with about three additional years of life expectancy.

What makes tennis remarkable isn't that it promotes good health. It's how it does. Tennis delivers an unusually high return on time and effort. An hour of tennis can burn 500-800 calories. But unlike a treadmill or a stationary bike, tennis rarely feels mo-

Please see **GLP-1s** | 2B

### « RIDES »

## Upscale and modern Mazda CX-50 incorporates superb power and firm ride

By Winfred Cross  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Mazda's lineup has a bit for everyone, so long as you are looking for an SUV.

It's one of the few Asian companies that don't still offer a variety of sedans. The company's SUV offering continues to please American markets and the CX-50 is one of the best.

The CX-50 is a little bigger than the best-selling CX-5 and a lot more rugged looking. It's also more suited for the outback should you need to do some off-roading. The black trim around the wheel well openings and bottom edge of the vehicle is sportier looking as well. The large, black grille is the corporate face of Mazda,

and it still looks good.

The CX-50's interior is like most Mazdas: upscale and modern. Mazda loves premium materials and the fit and finish nearly justifies the more premium price you pay. The interior is large enough to seat five comfortably. Leg room may be a bit lacking in the rear, but head and hip room are OK. The storage area is a little smaller than some of the competition but of course increases when the second row is folded.

My vehicle was the Premium Turbo Plus which has the most powerful engine. When used with premium gas the engine's output is 256 horsepower and 320 pounds-foot of

torque. Horsepower drops by 29 horses when regular gas is used. A six-speed transmission sends power to all four wheels as AWD is standard.

The engine and transmission combination works well in the CX-50. The vehicle accelerates quickly while the transmission shifts crisply. Kick down comes smoothly when you need to pass or just decide to put your foot in the vehicle. The CX-50 tracks straight when you are speeding down an open stretch of highway.

The ride is a little firm but pleasant. Most bumps and thumps don't make it into the well-isolated cabin. Not surprisingly, the Mazda handles twisty



MAZDA

The Mazda CX-50 has great handling and upscale interior design. roads easily and corners body roll. That's what Maz- The turbo engine can be without a large amount of das do. Please see **MAZDA** | 2B



SHUTTERSTOCK

More Black couples are adopting teletherapy to work out relationship friction points. Many couples who have gone through counseling report satisfaction similar to in-person sessions.

## More Black couples turn to online therapy

Virtual visits with a counselor offers more a relaxed setting

By Amy Kang

BLACK PRESS USA

Online couples therapy is giving many Black couples a better way to work on their relationships without having to reschedule their daily duties.

They no longer need to travel to a therapist's office for relationship counseling; they can simply schedule a session and join from home. This is easier, more relaxing, and less intimidating.

In 2024, the HHS Office of Minority Health found that Black adults were 36% less likely to receive mental health treatment than the general U.S. population. Barriers such as stigma around therapy, high costs, and a shortage of Black therapists are part of the reason.

As online therapy continues to grow in popularity, many couples have started wondering what the experience feels like. This quick

guide explains why online sessions are growing in popularity, how they work, and what couples can expect from them.

**Does online therapy really work?**

Yes. Couples can benefit from virtual therapy in many of the same ways they would from face-to-face sessions. The American Psychological Association reports that teletherapy produces outcomes similar to in-person therapy for many common concerns.

Couples therapy has also proven effective over time. Many couples who have gone through counseling report real improvements in their relationship, with benefits that can last for years. The setting does not matter as much as how willing both partners are to show up and work together.

Here are a few points that can lead to a successful online session:

- Being in a quiet, private space

where each partner feels comfortable opening up

- Having a stable internet connection and a well-charged device or a reliable power supply

- Giving honest answers even when the topic feels uncomfortable

Online couples counseling works best when both partners open up genuinely and are ready to listen.

**What keeps couples from seeking therapy?**

For many Black families, counseling has long felt out of reach due to several barriers. Some are practical, while others stem from historical experiences and concerns about trust. The most common barriers include:

- Cost, since therapy without insurance can strain a budget

- A shortage of Black therapists, which makes it harder for Black couples to feel understood

Please see **BLACK** | 2B

## Maternal health in NC faces challenges

By Lynn Bonner

NC NEWSLINE

The path leading to the track at a Durham middle school on Saturday was marked with signs bearing the names of Black women who died from pregnancy-related causes.

Walkers and runners participating in a fundraiser for MAAME, or a Durham nonprofit that offers doula care, walked past the signs, reminders of the tragedies that the organization is working to prevent.

MAAME stands for Mobilizing African American Mothers through Empowerment. It's also the Twi word for woman or mother.

Laura Gonzalez Dutor arrived at the fundraiser with her partner Uriah Shaw and their one-month-old daughter Ember to pick up baby supplies.

Gonzalez Dutor had doula care during her pregnancy, and said it helped reduce her anxiety.

"She gave me a sense of peace, in a way, because she was very knowledgeable about everything," Gonzalez Dutor said. "I knew that there was always going to be someone, in addition to my partner, that would be able to advocate for me and just help me make informed decisions."

Women in the United States die from pregnancy-related deaths at higher rates than any other wealthy country. Black women in the United States died from pregnancy-related causes at three times the rate of white women, according to CDC data from 2024.

In North Carolina, maternal deaths among Black women were nearly twice as high as for white women from 2018-2020, according to the North Carolina Maternal Mortality Review Committee. Nearly 80% of those deaths were considered preventable.



LYNN BONNER | NC NEWSLINE

Uriah Shaw and Laura Gonzalez Dutor of Durham attend the MAAME fundraiser with their one-month-old daughter Ember on April 26, 2026. Gonzalez Dutor said her doula helped ease her anxiety.

Doulas offer non-medical support before and during births. Some work with the families of newborns.

Research studies have found that doula care reduces the likelihood of Ce-

sarean sections. Low-income mothers who had doulas were four times less likely to have low-weight babies and two times less likely to experience birth

Please see **MATERNAL** | 3B

## Black couples turn to teletherapy for results

Continued from page 1B

Stigma, including the belief that counseling means a relationship has failed

Culture plays a big role in how couples talk about stress, faith, money, and family. Having a therapist who shares their background can make it easier for couples to raise topics that feel hard to discuss.

**How does it work?**

Online couples therapy works much the same way as traditional therapy. Couples meet a licensed therapist over a secure video call, usually on a weekly basis. The therapist guides the conversation and shares practical ways to improve communication, handle conflict, and strengthen the relationship.

What makes it stand out is the convenience. There is no need to drive or miss work, since little or no travel is involved. Couples can join a session over lunch or after putting their kids to bed.

Online sessions allow more people to experience the benefits of couples therapy. Today, online therapy services for families and couples give access to those who might struggle to attend face-to-face sessions due to:

- Long distances, especially for military couples or those living apart
- Unpredictable work schedules between partners
- A lack of physical therapists in certain areas

Privacy is a big advantage here. Some partners prefer to join the counseling session from different rooms, which can feel more comfortable and relaxing. This makes counseling feel less stressful and more like part of their daily routine.

**Frequently asked questions**

**How much does it cost?**

The cost can vary depending on the therapist, where you live, and whether

insurance covers part of the bill. Knowing the cost of your sessions upfront helps avoid financial surprises that may disrupt your progress down the road.

**Is it private and secure?**

Most professional services use secure, encrypted video systems, which can be considered safe for protecting privacy during online meetings. However, you need to make sure you are working with a licensed therapist. It is also a good idea to use a personal device and a secure internet connection rather than public Wi-Fi or shared networks.

**Can virtual counseling help if only one partner is willing?**

Virtual counseling can work even when only one partner is willing. Therapists often start by working with the partner who is ready, which can help the other partner gradually feel more comfortable about joining.

In many cases, couples begin online therapy with just one willing partner, and the other partner's interest tends to grow as the sessions continue.

**How do partners choose the right online therapist?**

When choosing a therapist, look for one who is licensed in couples counseling and uses proven approaches like Emotionally Focused Therapy or the Gottman Method. Many directories also let couples filter by specialty, language, and identity.

**How often should couples attend online sessions?**

Most couples start with weekly sessions to build momentum and keep progress steady early on. As communication improves, some therapists shift to biweekly or monthly check-ins.

The right pace depends on your goals and challenges, so discuss a realistic plan with your therapist from the start.

## GLP-1s can shed pounds but tennis is fitness for a lifetime

Continued from page 1B

notonous. There's no screen to stare at and no reps to count. The focus is outward - to beating your friend or hitting that perfect serve.

Tennis also delivers something many workouts don't: integrated, whole-body fitness. Players sprint, stop, rotate, and recover in rapid succession, developing strength, coordination, and agility.

The cardiovascular benefits are equally distinctive. Tennis is built around short bursts of high-intensity effort followed by brief recovery periods - an interval pattern that's especially good for heart health. Research shows that just three hours of tennis per week is associated with a 56% reduction in cardiovascular disease mortality and a 47% reduction in all-cause mortality.

Tennis is also effective at improving strength and bone density. Because it's a weight-bearing sport involving quick pivots, tennis helps promote bone density in the spine, arms, and legs while strengthening the upper body and grip.

Just as telling as the health benefits is a simpler fact: people actually stick with tennis. The sport is social by nature.

It's easy to picture how it happens. A standing doubles game that survives busy seasons. Coworkers who meet weekly after leaving the office. Parents who hit while their kids take lessons on the court. These routines are genuinely fun. This combination of not just physical, but also mental health, may play a role in why tennis may have such a positive effect on life expectancy.

Accessibility plays a role too: there are roughly 270,000 tennis courts across the U.S., most of them free and open to the public.

Tennis has a way of pulling you in. Once you hit a flawless backhand or serve your first ace, the satisfaction is immediate - and so is the desire to come back. Not because it feels like exercise, but precisely because it doesn't.

Millions of Americans will use fad diets and weight loss drugs this year to kick-start their health journeys. But if they want to truly get healthier, they'll consider picking up a racquet.

Angus Mugford PhD is managing director of athlete performance and operations at the United States Tennis Association.



ISTOCK

Ancestry travel to Africa has growing appeal to Black travelers who seek deeper, more personal experiences according to Condé Nast Traveler.

## Ancestry travel to Africa rises

NEW YORK CARIB NEWS

Ancestry travel is emerging as one of the most meaningful travel trends of 2026, and for Black travelers, it carries a significance that extends far beyond leisure.

More than simply visiting a new destination, these journeys offer an opportunity to reconnect with family history, cultural identity, and ancestral roots.

According to Condé Nast Traveler, ancestry travel is among the leading travel trends for 2026, reflecting a growing desire among travelers to seek deeper, more personal experiences. Rather than focusing solely on luxury accommodations or sightseeing, many are choosing trips that help them understand where they come from and how their personal stories fit into a broader historical narrative.

For Black travelers, this form of travel often carries added emotional and historical weight. The legacies of slavery, forced migration, colonialism, and incomplete historical records have left many families with limited information about their origins.

As a result, travel becomes more than a vacation, it becomes a journey of discovery and reconnection.

Often, these trips begin with a DNA test, a family story, or a clue uncovered through genealogical research. But once travelers arrive at a destination tied to their ancestry, the experience frequently becomes transformative. It offers an opportunity to stand in places connected to their lineage and to engage directly with cultures and communities that help bring family history to life.

The growth of ancestry travel has been fueled in part by the increasing accessibility of genealogical tools. Platforms such as Ancestry allow users to trace family origins, identify DNA communities, and receive suggestions for "Ancestral Journeys" based on genetic connections.

For people of African descent, specialized organizations such as African Ancestry provide even greater specificity, helping individuals trace maternal or paternal lineages to present-day African countries and ethnic groups. This level of detail can transform a general desire to visit Africa into a purposeful journey cen-

tered on specific regions and communities.

That specificity also shapes the nature of the travel experience itself. Rather than booking a generic heritage tour, many travelers are designing itineraries that include archives, museums, memorial sites, local historians, and interactions with contemporary communities. In this way, ancestry travel becomes both an exploration of the past and a deeper engagement with the present.

Among the destinations leading this movement is Ghana. Through initiatives such as Year of Return and Beyond the Return, Ghana has intentionally positioned itself as a welcoming destination for members of the African diaspora seeking to reconnect with their roots.

These initiatives encourage visitors not only to tour important historical landmarks such as Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle but also to immerse themselves in Ghana's contemporary cultural and creative landscape. By doing so, the country offers a powerful model for how heritage tourism can foster lasting connections between Africa and its global diaspora.

Ancestry travel aligns with several broader travel trends shaping 2026. It reflects the demand for more personalized itineraries, deeper cultural context, and experiences that feel emotionally meaningful rather than transactional. These journeys often inspire travelers to spend more time in a destination and to engage more intentionally with local history and communities.

For Black travelers, the appeal is especially profound. An ancestry trip can be historical, educational, cultural, and deeply personal all at once. It provides something that conventional tourism often cannot: the opportunity to place oneself within a larger story that spans continents, generations, and centuries.

As genealogical tools become more accessible, destinations become better equipped to welcome diaspora travelers, and interest in meaningful travel continues to grow, ancestry travel is poised to play an increasingly important role in how Black travelers explore the world in 2026 and beyond.

## Spirit Airlines' end shows the need for passenger shield

Continued from page 1B

elers.

Your bank can't fix a systemic aviation failure any more than it can revive Spirit Airlines or any of its ailing competitors. But thoughtful government policy can.

**Can the Department of Transportation fix this?**

To its credit, the Department of Transportation issued Order 2026-5-1 within days of Spirit's shutdown. The order encourages other airlines to offer reduced rescue fares to displaced Spirit passengers. Some carriers stepped up, but others didn't.

Here's the catch: The DOT can only encourage. It can't compel. Its authority to mandate ticket honoring evaporated when Section 145 sunset. So, we're back to voluntary cooperation, a phrase that, in airline industry context, means "we'll do this if our revenue managers say it's OK."

Every time another carrier goes under, hundreds of thousands of Americans will discover what their tickets are actually worth, which is whatever the remaining airlines decide.

**Here's what consumer protection rule would look like I'd start simple.** Reinstate Section 145 with three updates.

- First, make it permanent. The cycle of airline failures isn't going away, and neither should the law that protects passengers from it.

- Define "to the extent practicable" with actual standards. A capped rescue fare—say, 150 percent of the original ticket price, with the difference recoverable from the failed carrier's bankruptcy estate. An honor period of at least 14 days. Available seats on competing routes on a space-available basis within 72 hours.

- Then give the DOT enforcement teeth: Civil penalties for carriers that refuse without good cause and a fast-track complaint process for stranded passengers.

Will the airline lobby fight this? Of course. The legal environment has rarely been more hostile to consumer protections in general, but particularly in aviation. Airlines for America just won a major court case vacating the DOT's junk-fee disclosure rule.

That puts this in the hands of Congress, which could solve this problem with legislation that protects American air travelers.

**Wait, can you force a private business to help?**

Actually, there's a precedent for this type of federal mandate.

U.S. airlines operate on public infras-

tructure that taxpayers build and maintain. The Federal Aviation Administration runs the air traffic control system that keeps air travel safe. Its budget for fiscal 2025 is roughly \$21 billion, paid for largely by the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and topped up by the general taxpayer fund.

Commercial airports in the U.S. are almost entirely owned and operated by state and local governments. The Airport Improvement Program steers billions more in federal grants to airports each year. The Essential Air Service program props up routes that wouldn't otherwise exist, paying carriers as much as \$650 per passenger to keep small communities connected.

Without taxpayers, there is no airline industry.

And the public has a long tradition of attaching strings when private companies use public resources. Railroads got the right to lay track across the country. In return, the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 made them common carriers, legally obligated to serve all customers on reasonable terms.

Telephone companies got rights of way to string wires across public land. The Communications Act of 1934 made them common carriers too. Even today's interstate oil and gas pipelines carry common-carrier obligations, ensuring producers can ship without being frozen out.

If you build your business on top of a public good, the public gets a say in how you run it.

After 9/11, airlines accepted \$5 billion in direct grants and \$10 billion in loan guarantees. After COVID-19, they took more than \$50 billion through the Payroll Support Program. In return, they agreed to maintain service, cap executive pay, and eventually drop change fees on most tickets. None of those concessions destroyed the industry. Most are still in place.

Asking airlines to honor a failed competitor's tickets at a capped price is the cost of running a business on the public's runway.

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## Maternal health in NC faces new challenges

Continued from page 1B

complications, according to one study.

Studies also show racism and implicit bias play a role in the higher rate of Black maternal deaths.

Efforts to improve those statistics are facing new challenges. Last year, the Trump administration canceled grants studying maternal health as it sought to end diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, Stateline reported.

Maya Jackson, executive director of MAAME, said her organization has felt the ripple effects. Soon after national grants were axed last year, \$10,000 in sponsorships that would have helped MAAME meet a \$15,000 fundraising goal were canceled, she said.

Some of the money MAAME raises goes to subsidize doula care for people who can't afford the full price. With less money, MAAME had to reduce local services, Jackson said.

MAAME also works in counties beyond the Triangle as part of a UNC study looking at ways to narrow the gap between Black and white maternal death rates.

MAAME received American Rescue Plan funds from Durham County a few years ago.

That money has helped the organization survive the lean times, Jackson said. "We're good for another year," she said. "But if there are more decreases in funding, it will get tough."

Private insurance does not typically cover doula care. Two of the state's four Medicaid managed care organizations offer doula care as an extra service, though one company limits the benefit to certain counties.

The state has been talking for years about offering doula care as a regular part of Medicaid maternity care coverage.

The Child Fatality Task Force has repeatedly recommended that Medicaid cover doula services. Gov. Roy Cooper proposed Medicaid reimbursement for doulas at the end of his second term, but the legislature did not fund it.

A division of the state Department

of Health and Human Services hosted a doula summit in 2022 with North Carolina doulas and practitioners from states where they are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. A report from the summit said "doulas overwhelmingly agreed that Medicaid reimbursement of doula services is essential because all pregnant patients deserve access to doula services, and doulas should be paid a living wage in order to make services accessible." But they identified low Medicaid reimbursement rates, administrative burdens, and a need for referrals as potential downsides.

Key legislators said last month they were interested and have asked for information on how other states have approached Medicaid reimbursements. Twenty-nine states provide doula services under Medicaid or are preparing to do so.

Two doulas at the fundraiser were in deep discussion about the pros and cons of Medicaid reimbursement.

Tatiana Smith is a community doula who travels between New Jersey, where Medicaid pays for doula care, and North Carolina.

New Jersey's reimbursement rates are low, Smith said, and include a flat fee for attending a birth, even though there's no telling how many hours someone's labor will last.

Doulas were frozen out of important decisions about Medicaid reimbursements there, she said.

"You want to work with Medicaid because you want more people to have access," Smith said. "But then, on the other hand, we need to be sitting at the table and helping make those decisions."

Medicaid officials don't understand the work, said Melanie Patrick, owner of Emerald Doulas, which operates in the Triangle.

"Medicaid deciding how we work, who's going to certify us, whether or not we're certified, and then deciding how much we're going to earn doesn't make sense, because they don't understand what we do," she said.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Doris Miller earned the Navy Cross for courage during the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941.

## Doris Miller, the valiant naval hero at Pearl Harbor

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Doris Miller, known as "Dorie" to shipmates and friends, was a Navy sailor recognized for bravery during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

He was the first African American recipient of the Navy Cross.

Miller grew up on his family's farm in Waco, Texas, and played football in high school before enlisting as a ship's mess attendant in the Navy in 1939. In 1940, Miller was transferred to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and reported for duty onboard USS West Virginia, where he became the ship's heavyweight boxing champion.

In July of that year, Miller had temporary duty aboard USS Nevada at Secondary Battery Gunnery School and returned to West Virginia on Aug. 3. Miller was below decks December 7, 1941, when the first Japanese torpedo struck West Virginia.

Miller loaded and fired an anti-aircraft machine gun — a weapon that, as an African American in a segregated military, he had not been trained to operate.

Miller had arisen at 6 a.m. and was collecting laundry when the alarm for general quarters sounded. He headed for his battle station, the anti-aircraft battery magazine amidship, only to discover that torpedo damage had wrecked it, so he went on deck.

Because of his physical prowess, he was assigned to carry wounded sailors to safety. Then an officer ordered him to the

bridge to aid the mortally wounded captain. Miller subsequently manned a 50 caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship.

"It wasn't hard," Miller recalled. "I just pulled the trigger and she worked fine. I had watched the others with these guns. I guess I fired her for about 15 minutes. I think I got one of those Jap planes. They were diving pretty close to us."

Miller stayed behind once the order to abandon ship was passed to help evacuate shipmates and save the lives of sailors in the burning water.

For his extraordinary courage, Miller was the first African American to be awarded the Navy Cross. Newspapers around the country cited his example as an argument for civil rights and equality.

Miller was commended by the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox on April 1, 1942, and on May 27, 1942, he received the Navy Cross, which Fleet Admiral (then Admiral) Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief, Pacific Fleet personally presented to Miller on board aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) for his extraordinary courage in battle.

Miller died in 1943 when a torpedo sank USS Liscome Bay off Butaritari Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. On June 30, 1973, the Navy commissioned USS Miller, a Knox class frigate, in his honor. An aircraft carrier, USS Doris Miller, is under construction and slated for launch in 2029.

## Mazda CX-50 incorporates power and firm ride manners

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a bit thirsty, depending on how much fun you want to have with the CX-50. If you can live without the spirited driving, the naturally aspirated 2.5-liter engine will give you better fuel economy. The best mileage can be had from the hybrid which will give you 39 miles per gallon overall.

There are a couple of things I wish Mazda would fix. The touch screen is only a partial touch screen when you use Apple CarPlay. That makes no sense to me. Also, make the 356 horses available with regular gas. Premium is sky high.

Overall, the CX-50 is well sorted out. It is a little more expensive than some vehicles but offers a level of fit and finish and refinement that makes you believe you pay for what you get.

The Turbo Premium Plus comes with a gear deal of standard equipment. Heated

front and rear seats, head up display, leather seats, power operated driver's seat with memory, 12-speaker Bose speaker system, surround view-monitor, front cross traffic alert, intersection collision mitigation, blind spot intervention and reverse automatic braking are all included.

The turbo premium plus starts at \$44,395.

Pros:

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- Willing engine
- Refined materials
- Excellent build quality
- Good level of tech
- Abundant standard equipment level
- Great handling
- Comfortable ride

Cons:

- Partial touch screen
- Thirsty engine

## Tooth knocked out? You have all of 30 minutes save it from permanent loss

By Tiffany Miller

FEATURE IMPACT

Most U.S. adults say they would do almost anything to avoid losing a natural tooth.

Most have also put off going to the dentist when they suspected something was wrong. And some may not be aware of the dental specialists whose entire focus is helping them do exactly that. A new national survey from the American Association of Endodontists, the organization representing those specialists, finds all three of those things together at the center of how U.S. adults actually approach their dental health.

That tension runs through the entire survey. When faced with a serious tooth infection, 61% would choose a treatment that saves the tooth over extraction. Seventy-eight percent say they would do almost anything to avoid losing a natural tooth.

The attachment runs deeper than appearances. It is about the tooth itself, the one that has been there your whole life, that feels irreplaceable in a way an implant or crown never quite does.

The gap is not in conviction. It is in knowing what to do.

Only 27% of U.S. adults correctly identify that a knocked-out tooth needs to be treated within 30 minutes to give it the best chance of being saved. The rest either guess wrong or have no idea how quickly the clock is running. And the specialists most equipped to help in that moment, dental professionals called endodontists whose entire focus is saving

natural teeth, are known to only 44% of U.S. adults.

Cost widens the gap. Sixty percent of U.S. adults admit to having put off going to the dentist when they suspected something was wrong. The anatomy of that delay is familiar: a symptom that does not seem urgent enough, a bill that feels easier to avoid than face, an appointment that keeps getting pushed to next month. Of those who waited, 51% say it made things worse.

And then there is the fear. Root canals have a reputation that the data does not support. Asked what they believe, 28% of U.S. adults say a root canal is usually more painful than the toothache that sent them to the dentist in the first place. They have it backward. A root canal is designed to relieve that pain, not add to it, according to the American Association of Endodontists.

But the perception lingers, shaped in part by a fragmented information environment where 35% of U.S. adults say they have encountered conflicting or confusing information online about procedures such as root canals.

U.S. adults feel strongly about their natural teeth, probably more than they would have predicted before being asked. They delay the care that protects them, do not know what to do when time is short, and are not always getting their information from sources that serve them well.

For a tooth that can often be saved in 30 minutes, that combination has consequences.



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« ON THE MARQUEE »



CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra presents "Black Panther in Concert" June 5-6 at Belk Theatre 130 N Tryon St.

## Uptown Live series kicks off

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

The latest events, productions and exhibits in Charlotte and beyond:  
Through July 9

Thursdays are for unwinding in Uptown.

The rebranded Uptown Live series kicks off at Truist Center Plaza from 5-9 p.m. with a DJ, live band, and food and drink for sale. The after party will continue at neighboring Fifth Street District, the largest concentration of locally owned bars and restaurants in Charlotte.

The lineup:

- May 28: Southside Station
- June 4: Mo' Money
- June 11: Heads Up Penny
- June 18: TBA
- June 25: Bourbon Sons and Outrun the Weekend
- July 2: Sol Fusion
- July 9: Spiked featuring DJ Elixir

May 29-30  
Sixth Annual One Word Poetry Festival, Rock Hill, S.C.

The lineup includes poetry and spoke word showcases.

May 29:

Vibes & Verses Open Mic, Gettys Center Parking Lot, 201 E. Main St., Rock Hill. Poetry, live music and food trucks.

May 30:

- One Word Poetry Slam, Gettys Center, 201 E. Main St. Poetry battle with \$1,500 in cash prizes. Admittance is \$15, \$25 to compete.
- Poetry workshops, Center for the Arts, 121 E. Main St. Free workshops with presenters de'angelo dia (10-11 a.m.) and Angelina Brooks from 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Register at oneword-poetryfestival.com.
- Poetry mixer and showcase, 2 p.m., York County Library, 138 E. Black St. Free showcase featuring poet laureate Carlo Dawson and youth poet laureate Kh'Mani Gilliam.

June 5-6  
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra presents "Black Panther in Concert," Belk Theater, 130 N Tryon St. T'Challa becomes king and battles Killmonger in the 2018 Marvel film that introduced the cinematic world to Wakanda. Ryan Coogler's feature-length film goes on the big screen as conductor Anthony Parnther and Charlotte Symphony performs Ludwig Göransson's Oscar and Grammy-winning score live on stage. Tickets range from \$39.15 to \$172.93 at [tix.blumenthalarts.org/online/map-Select.asp](http://tix.blumenthalarts.org/online/map-Select.asp).

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 at [livenation.com](http://livenation.com).

June 18  
"Trouble So Hard - Song & Stories of Slavery, Freedom, & Civil Rights," a live performance at Tyvola Senior Citizen Center, 2225 Tyvola Road. Performances are free, but registration is required at [troublesohard.com/reserve](http://troublesohard.com/reserve).

June 19  
Juneteenth Art Fest, 4-8 p.m., Shoppes at University Place 8931 JM Keynes Drive. Second annual Juneteenth Art Fest celebrates the vibrant culture and history of Juneteenth with art, music, and community. The family-friendly event is free and features local artists, live music, dance performances, and a marketplace showcasing small, minority-owned businesses.

July 17-18  
Usher and Chris Brown, Bank of America Stadium. Grammy winners Chris Brown and Usher have a pair of Charlotte dates on their North American stadium tour. The tour follows record-breaking accom-

Please see USHER | 6B



MANUEL HARLAN

The cast of "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child," one of the productions scheduled for Blumenthal Arts' 2026-27 season. Also included are "Phantom of the Opera" and "The Wiz."

## New, returning productions power Blumenthal season

From 'Dirty Dancing' to 'The Wiz,' broad offerings in 2026-27 campaign

By Nikya Hightower

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Blumenthal Arts is centering community in its new season.

The company will feature new productions and returning favorites like "Beauty and the Beast" reimaged; the Charlotte premiere of "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" and the 40th anniversary production of "The Phantom of the Opera."

Blumenthal Arts CEO Tom Gabbard described the lineup as refreshed with new offerings of beloved titles where there is something for everyone, ranging from traditional to more innovative shows.

"What gives us the best chance to connect with the community and make people feel like they are welcome, and that there's going to be at least one or two shows over the course of the season that are must-

sees for them personally," he said.

The lineup includes productions of "Dirty Dancing," "Oh, Mary!" and "Buena Vista Social Club." Gabbard said the season was built to include a mix of familiar titles and newer productions to reach a wide range of audiences. The season will also include four Broadway Extras, including "A Beautiful Noise," "The Wiz," "Heathers" and "Jersey Boys."

Seven-show season packages range from \$330.90 to \$1,014.06. Season ticket holders will receive benefits including date changes, same seats every season, and early access.

Community is a core focus at the Blumenthal. Audiences can engage throughout the season through conversations and connections with Community Cues, which are free events inspired by productions, allowing the community to further be

involved while offering behind the scenes access.

Gabbard said that Blumenthal has been defined by the impact they leave on the community and each season is about finding new ways to connect. "We fortunately have a really wide range of tastes here. We try to accommodate that through things that go from very traditional to wonderfully outrageous and new," he said.

Blumenthal Arts 2026-27 season:

- "Dirty Dancing," Nov. 3-8
- "A Beautiful Noise," Nov. 27-29 2027
- "Beauty and the Beast," Sept. 7-12
- "Harry Potter," Aug. 10-15
- "Phantom of the Opera," July 7-18
- "Oh Mary," March 16-28
- "Buena Vista," June 15-20
- "The Wiz," May 7-9
- "Heathers," June 29-July 4
- "Jersey Boys," July 30-Aug. 1

What gives us the best chance to connect with the community and make people feel like they are welcome, and that there's going to be at least one or two shows over the course of the season that are must-sees for them personally.

Blumenthal Arts CEO TOM GABBARD

## 'It Takes Two' rapper Rob Base dies at 59

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Rob Base, a rapper and one half of the Harlem hip-hop duo Rob Base & DJ E-Z Rock, has died after a battle with cancer. He was 59.



Rob Base

Base, whose real name was Robert Ginyard, was best known for the 1988 chart-topper "It Takes Two," a blend of hip-hop and house music that helped bring both genres into the mainstream.

"Rob's music, energy, and legacy

helped shape a generation and brought joy to millions around the world," read a statement on his Instagram announcing his death. "Beyond the stage, he was a loving father, family man, friend, and creative force whose impact will never be forgotten."

His creative counterpart Rodney "Skip" Bryce, who went by the stage name DJ E-Z Rock, died in 2014 at age 46 of complications from diabetes.

The two met as fifth grade students in Harlem and said they were inspired to make music by the success of another Harlem-based group, Crash Crew. They

signed in 1987 with Profile Records, one of the earliest hip-hop labels.

The following year, "It Takes Two" landed in the Billboard Hot 100 and reached No. 3 on Billboard's Hot Dance/Club Songs chart. The song has since been sampled by other artists including Snoop Dogg and The Black Eyed Peas and has appeared in several films. It has been certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America.

The duo's next single, "Get on the Dance Floor," saw similar success on the club songs chart.

## 'I Love Boosters' is a wild, surrealist social satire

By Lindsey Bahr

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boots Riley holds nothing back in his audacious, surrealist social satire "I Love Boosters."

The film is a go-for-broke expression of wild imagination and social consciousness that's impossible not to admire for its wacky, bold vision, with teleporting, high fashion snobbery and pyramid schemes.

Here is a movie where we get Keke Palmer, Naomi Ackie and Taylour Paige leading a vigilante shoplifting operation, Demi Moore as a toxic girl boss, Don Cheadle as a sleazy lifestyle evangelist, Will Poulter as a fussy store manager and LaKeith Stanfield as a discount brand model with a strange accent and a hypnotizing stare. It sounds like fun, right?

Like a raucous, madcap ride through the inequities of the fashion business from the executive suite, down to the retail store where the goods are sold and the Chinese factories where they're made? And on a certain level it is all of that, but one thing it is not is very funny. "I Love Boosters" can be amusing and clever, but the laugh-out-loud comedy just isn't quite there. And it doesn't help that the film goes more off the rails as it progresses to a climax that is less rousing than mind-numbing.

The thing is, "I Love Boosters" does



NEON

This image released by Neon shows from left, Naomi Ackie, Taylour Paige, Poppy Liu and Kiki Palmer in a scene from "I Love Boosters."

start on a strong, albeit minor key as we're introduced to the Velvet Gang, Corvette (Palmer), Sade (Ackie) and Mariah (Paige) and their booster operation, stealing overpriced designer wares from high end stores and selling them for a steep discount on the street. There's a kind of a Robin Hood sensibility to it all. Mariah calls it "Triple F," or "Fashion Forward Philanthropy." She

knows how to spell philanthropy, she deadpans; This is branding.

But despite the colorful surroundings, there's a pervasive hopelessness in this off-kilter world that looks a lot like our own. Corvette, particularly, feels outside of it all, as a woman who dreams of being a designer herself but is currently squatting in a closed fast

Please see I LOVE | 6B

## 'I Love Boosters' a wild, surrealist social satire

Continued from page 5B

food chicken shop and being haunted by a boulder of debt (like, literally).

It doesn't help that the founder she idolizes, Moore's Christie Smith, has become obsessed with stopping the boosters.

To Christie, a genius megalomaniac, they're the big problem with her business and not the fact that her store employees are being paid a pittance and her factory employees even less. The people who work at the factories are also getting sick from sandblasting the denim. And yes, these are all real things.

Eiza González's vaping Violeta becomes the face of the store employees forced to use their own paychecks to buy their uniforms. Poppy Liu's Jianhu, who teleports herself from China to the Bay Area, is that for the factory workers. This oddball group of five women band together to get revenge against Christie. Again, this all sounds like it should be a fun time, but

the film is too busy jumping around and throwing ideas and concepts at the screen (teleporting somehow the least distracting of them) for us to spend much time just hanging out with these vibrant personalities.

It is a crime that this is only Riley's second produced movie. Though it might not reach the crackling heights of his debut, "Sorry to Bother You," his imagination is still on fire. Unlike so much of what's out there, "I Love Boosters" has both style and substance, which is worth something even if it doesn't land perfectly (or capably inspire any kind of revolution). In a marketplace full of content and franchises, here is a filmmaker with something to say and an interesting way to say it.

"I Love Boosters," a Neon release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association. Running time: 115 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

## Don't sleep on 'Is God Is,' a cinematic primal scream

By Lindsey Bahr

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aleshea Harris wrote "Is God Is" with the assumption that it would never be performed as a play, let alone turned into a movie.

It was simply a story she needed to get onto the page: A tale of rage and revenge, an ancient Greek tragedy melded with Spaghetti Western tropes centered on contemporary Black women, twins, on an epic, violent journey to find the father who wronged them. She even rewatched Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill" while she was writing.

"I've endured so many narratives in which Black women, they're just sort of downtrodden victims, you know? They endure, they gain their strength and we love them because look at what all she can take. I think that's horrific," Harris told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "This was my antidote to that. This was my medicine to myself for that."

That's the thing about art that boldly flies in the face of taboo and stereotypes; Sometimes, it turns out, it's on to something that audiences have been craving too. The Obie-winning stage play, which debuted off-Broadway in 2018, hit a nerve with audiences and critics, garnering comparisons to Tarantino and Martin McDonagh. Soon, talks of a feature film were underway. Harris never thought she'd be the one to direct it, having barely even been on a set before, but producer Janicza Bravo and their mutual friend, playwright Jeremy O. Harris, had other ideas: It was her story after all, she should be the one to tell it.

"It really was like the belief of those folks and that invitation," Harris said. "It was like a switch being flipped. Of course, of course I'm in."

The film, which is now playing in theaters, has garnered similarly effusive praise from critics and audiences. It stars Kara Young and Mallori Johnson as badly scarred twins who, after fending for themselves their whole lives, hear word from the mother (Vivica A. Fox) they thought was dead. Now dying, she has a mission for them: Track down and kill their father (Sterling K. Brown), who set her on fire many years ago, burning and permanently disfiguring all of them.

**A cast of "newcomers" and unexpected turns**

Harris knew she wanted quote-unquote newcomers as her twins, Racine the Rough One (Young) and Anaia the Quiet One (Johnson). While Young and Johnson weren't plucked from obscurity, Young being a Tony-winning Broadway star and Johnson having led the short-lived sci-fi series "Kindred," they're also not big screen mainstays.

"They've been in the game, but I really delight in putting people on," Harris said. "I delight in knowing that someone is very gifted and that they just need that opportunity to show what they can do for more flowers to follow."

And they were both passionate about the opportunity. Young, who used a rare night offstage to see the play in 2018, said, "getting into the world of 'Is God Is' feels like an ancestral calling in some wild, beautiful, almost like indescribable way."

Harris also surrounded them with some better-known names, including Brown, Fox and Janelle Monáe, playing the new wife.

"I knew (Monáe) could embody both this sort of beautiful, conventionally beautiful, bougie, like newest wife archetype, and also the sort of nastier side of this woman," Harris said. "She's oppressed but also an oppressor."

As for the father, Harris wanted to catch audiences off guard, casting a handsome and charismatic actor like Brown in the role.

"In the script, it says that when we finally see this man's face, he's giving Obama, right? He's giving unassuming, the man in the suburbs. He's got his khakis on. He got his deck shoes on. We don't get what we expect at first," Harris said. "It's true to life that sometimes people who do these terrible things, they're complex. They are charming ... I wanted to open up a little more complexity there."

**The Tarantino of it all**

The name Tarantino comes up a lot when people are writing about "Is God Is," which Harris understands: "Kill Bill" is in its DNA after all. But so are many other references, including, first and foremost, Greek tragedies.

"I don't want to be like a poor man's Tarantino, you know? I am doing my own thing, and I hope that people recognize that," she said. "It seems like they are."

She loved the task of figuring out the film's visual style, creating a world that is "three clicks to the left of center" and thinking about Westerns, fairy tales and a Southern gothic aesthetic and watching films like "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," "Moonlight," "Lady Snowblood" and even "Amélie" as preparation.

"I just sort of went on a feast, a buffet of like what did other people do that I loved," Harris said.

The goal, she said, was to "land on a world that feels like realism, but like ratcheted up."

**The taboo of Black female rage**

Harris wanted to write a story about Black female rage precisely because it's taboo, because it's been done so wrong in so many ways, whether it's leaning into a flattening stereotype or insidious respectability politics.

"Being a Black woman, I feel and have felt the pressure to sort of ignore that rage or swallow it," she said. "There's a cultural mythology around Black women that is so effed up and so dehumanizing ... I needed to give myself this in which Black women were free to feel that rage."

## Usher and Chris Brown in Charlotte July 17-18

Continued from page 5B

plishments for both artists.

At the end of 2024, the North American leg of Usher: Past, Present, Future sold over 1.1 million tickets. In October, Brown's Breezy Bowl XX World Tour was his highest-grossing and the highest-grossing tour ever by a solo Black American male, earning nearly \$300 million and drawing 2 million fans in North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom.

Tickets are online at raymondand-browntour.com.

Aug. 12

P.J. Morton, Carolina Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

New Orleans-based Morton is a soul singer, songwriter, performer and producer who has earned six Grammy awards and 22 nominations while selling out venues around the world.

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