

Dems focus on health costs with ACA vote push

By Julie Appleby
KFF HEALTH NEWS

In a move that mixes pure politics with weedy congressional procedures, Senate Democrats are seeking to force a vote to overturn a Trump administration rule that they say will make it harder to enroll in Affordable Care Act health plans and sharply raise out-of-pocket costs for those who do stay covered.

The measure is unlikely to pass in the Republican-controlled Congress, but Democrats could use the vote against their opponents on the campaign trail.

When the ACA rule was released in May, the Trump administration touted it as a means to combat enrollment fraud, lower premiums for some people, and offer a wider range of insurance plans, including ones with no set network of doctors or hospitals.

But many Democrats warned the changes would hurt consumers already suffering from high health-care costs as well as higher prices for gas, groceries, and other household needs. Estimates from the administration found the regulation, called a notice of benefit and payment parameters, could cause up to 2 million people to lose ACA coverage.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and fellow Democratic Sens. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Ron Wyden of Oregon plan to introduce on Wednesday a Congressional Review Act resolution to block the rule.

Baldwin told KFF Health News in a statement that the rule is “misguided” and said she was “committed to doing everything she can” to stop Republicans from “kicking Americans off their health care.”

The directive from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is an annual exercise that sets standards for ACA coverage during the coming year. Some of the changes in the finalized 2027 rule are technical, but many would affect consumers directly.

They include tighter income verification requirements. The rule also stipulates more eligibility checks on people applying outside of the normal annual enrollment period for such reasons as marriage, divorce, or loss of job-based coverage.

ACA plans themselves would look different too. Insurers would be able to offer some plans with 30% higher out-of-pocket limits (the amount consumers may have to pay each year in cost sharing such as copayments and deductibles), with a new ceiling as high as \$15,600 for individual coverage or \$31,200

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Keep kids busy and engaged in summer

By Jaslynn Vorachith
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Now that school's out, here are some programs and activities for children.

Summer options include creative projects, educational activities, sports, and the outdoors. For free events and activities, check out the Mint Museum, 4-H summer workshops, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, and Discovery Place, which is free for ages 2 and under.

To lighten the load of parents and caregivers, summer camps can keep your child busy with specific interests and help them gain new skills. Arts +, Discovery Place, Wing Heaven, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, and the YMCA offer programs that offer a wider range from \$226-\$735.

Arts

Studio 345, 601 E 5th St., Suite 230

Cost: \$226-\$375

Dates: Through Aug. 3

Ages: K-12

Website: Artsplus.org

Children with an interest in creative arts can spend their break with Studio 345 camps. Classes include music, arts, and crafts. These programs have specific courses based on grade level. Register through the website for more details.

The Mint Museum, 550 S Tryon St.; 2730 Randolph Road

Website: mintmuseum.org

Enjoy art exhibitions located both in Uptown and

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« RIDES »

Subaru-Toyota collaboration yields sporty and efficient Uncharted electric

By Winfred Cross
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Subaru has become the most reliable brand in the U.S., with the help of Toyota, once the most reliable brand.

The help comes from joint ventures like this brand-new Uncharted EV, based heavily on Toyota's C-HR EV.

I haven't driven the current C-HR but if its anything like the Uncharted, I'll love it. The car is noble, quick and a lot of fun to drive.

The Uncharted is a five-passenger EV that can have a range of 308 miles off a charge if you go for the premium base model. As you move up in trims, tires

get larger, more equipment makes them heavier, and a second motor is added in the rear for more horsepower and all-wheel drive. My trim level was the GT with two motors which make a combined 338 horsepower and with larger 20-inch tires and AWD. This reduces the range to 273 miles per charge. While the 308 miles per charge is appealing, I don't know if I would give up the way the GT is equipped.

What do you get on the upper trim? Glad you asked. Twenty-inch alloy wheels, panoramic glass roof with power sunshade, ventilated front seats and heated rear outboard seats, two-tone paint as an option

and an 11-speaker Harmon Kardon premium audio system is standard above all the stuff on the two lower models. I should also note that Subaru's Symmetrical All wheel drive and dual function X-Mode are also included.

Like most EVs the Subaru engines aren't detectible on startup. You do get that almost musical sound as you back up but otherwise you are shrouded in silence. Even on the road the only thing you hear is wind and road noise but not much of that either,

What's most impressive is the vehicle's giddyup. The available 338 horses are instant. Plant your right foot and this thing takes



SUBARU

The 2026 Subaru Uncharted EV is based in part on Toyota's C-HR.

off with confidence. The all-wheel grip keeps the car locked in a straight as you whiz to 60 miles per hour in a little more than 4.0 sec-

onds.

With all that power comes excellent stability and handling. The vehicle has a raised four-wheel in-

dependent suspension that delivers a firm but comfortable ride while also giving the Uncharted adroit

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ADOBE STOCK

Lower-severity heat-related illnesses can be treated by moving to a cool location and replenishing electrolytes with cool water or other liquids.

Expert to NC: stay cool and avoid extreme heat

Limit exposure to high temperatures or find a place to chill

By Zamone Perez
NORTH CAROLINA NEWS SERVICE

As North Carolina braces for another summer of intense heat, a Duke University expert is urging residents to take steps to stay cool and watch for signs of heat-related illness.

Dr. Anjni Joiner, associate professor of emergency medicine at the university, said people without air conditioning should try to keep their homes as cool as possible by shutting blinds, running fans and even putting towels in the freezer to use later. If people are unable to cool themselves adequately at home, Joiner suggested they should find another place to escape the heat.

"If you're not able to cool yourself indoors, then you really need

to look to go somewhere else, whether it's a grocery store, movie theater," Joiner outlined. "Many communities have cooling centers. In Durham County, in particular, most of the libraries serve as cooling centers during the daytime hours."

Common signs of heat-related illness include heavy sweating, intense thirst, dizziness, headaches and nausea. People experiencing a more serious medical emergency, such as heat stroke, often have confusion or slurred speech. In 2025, North Carolina saw a large increase in heat-related emergency room visits, with more than 5,700 over the summer, up from nearly 4,700 visits in 2024.

Joiner pointed out heat-related illnesses are not always diagnosed

as heat stroke or heat exhaustion. Sometimes, extreme heat can contribute to other medical problems.

"Maybe they were feeling really hot. They slipped, fell and passed out," Joiner observed. "Now, they have an injury as a result of dehydration because they weren't drinking enough throughout the day in hot weather. There are some other impacts of heat-related injuries that you don't necessarily think of."

Outdoor workers, older adults, infants, children, low-income residents and pregnant people are more likely to experience heat-related illness. People looking for a cooling center near them can call 211.

Grow, prepare and enjoy hot peppers

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Some like it hot and that includes the spicy heat of hot peppers added to entrees, beverages and desserts.

Others value hot peppers for their help with pain relief and other health benefits. For those who can't stand the heat, proper pepper selection, care and preparation can help turn down the heat as needed.

The spicy heat of hot peppers is measured in Scoville Heat Units named after Wilbur Scoville. The heat units were originally determined by a panel of individual tasters. Chili peppers were ground and added to a sugar-water solution.

The solution was continually diluted until the panelists found the solution no longer burned their mouth. Each pepper was assigned a number based on the amount of sugar-water solution needed to reach that point. Today, a more accurate, less subjective high-performance liquid chromatography method can be used for measuring the pungency of hot peppers.

Poblano and Siracha rate

between 1,000 to 2,500, jalapenos up to 8,000, cayenne and Tabasco can peak at 50,000, Thai peppers 50,000 to 100,000, and habaneros up to 350,000. Some of the hottest peppers include the Carolina Reaper at 2,300,000, Dragon's Breath at 2,500,000 and Pepper X at 3,180,000. For a bit of a surprise, try Shishito peppers where only one out of ten peppers are rated at 1,000 or higher SHU. The only way to tell which one is hot is by taking a bite. To enjoy the citrusy flavor of habanero peppers but not the heat, grow the All-America Selections winner Roulette.

Ornamental peppers are edible as well as pretty. Most will rate anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 SHU. Chilly Chili ornamental pepper produces an abundance of attractive yellow, orange and red upright fruit on 10- to 12-inch plants. As the name suggests, they have almost no heat.

Weather influences productivity and the heat in peppers. They grow and produce best when day temperatures are 70 to 80 degrees F and night tem-



ALL AMERICA SELECTIONS

Pot-a-peno is a compact, high-yielding jalapeno pepper variety bred for growing in containers and hanging baskets

peratures are 60 to 70 degrees. Cold, heat and drought are the most common cause of blossom drop, misshapen fruit and a poor harvest. When summer is filled with long, hot days, hot peppers tend to be even hotter.

Harvest most hot peppers when fully mature and red for the strongest flavor. Green chili and jalapeno peppers are harvested when green. And some, like jalapeno, habanero and Anaheim, are hot whether they are harvested

when green or red.

Label hot peppers when growing, harvesting and storing them. Many sweet and hot pepper varieties look similar and confusing the two could be unpleasant. Consider planting them in separate spaces in the garden to further avoid misidentification and keep a glass of milk handy in case you need to neutralize the sting.

If desired, the heat of peppers can be turned down when preparing fa-

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Discovery Place offers exhibits and hands-on experiences for the entire family.

Keep youngsters busy with these summer activities

Continued from page 1B

Randolph. Visit on Wednesdays at both locations for free admission. There are a few programs listed below where your kids can indulge in their creativity.

Lewis Family Gallery, 550 S Tryon St.
Cost: Adults \$15, Children 5-17 \$6, college students and seniors 65-plus \$10, Free for ages 4 and under

Dates/time: Wednesdays from 5-8 p.m. (Free), Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday from 1-5 p.m.

Lewis Family Gallery holds an open space, giving visitors access to art materials, interactive puzzles, and building as well as a playhouse for all ages.

Wild Wednesday, 2730 Randolph Road
Cost: Free

Dates: June 24 and July 22

Wild Wednesday at the Mint Museum Randolph includes a self-guided scavenger hunt and activities inspired by wildlife.

NexGen Mint, 550 S Tryon St, 2730 Randolph Road
Cost: Free

Ages: 14-18

NexGen Mint is looking for young adults to participate in the arts creative process through galleries and exhibitions, experimenting with art materials, and exploring themes at both locations. Apply through the Mint Museum's website as it is a first come first serve.

Science

Discovery Place, 301 N Tryon St.

General admission: Tickets online \$22.95 (ages 14-59); \$17.95 (ages 2-13); \$19.95 (60 and older), and free for ages 2 and under

Website: discoveryplace.org

For more hands-on fun, your family can interact and learn about science through Discovery Place's exhibitions. Many experiences and events includes brick masters studios, sensory friendly hours, and Natural World as well as daily live science shows, and labs.

Some dates to keep in mind for specific themes are the Building and Engineering running through August and Shark Week during July 26-Aug. 1.

• Summer day camps:

Costs: \$395-\$415

Ages: Pre K - 6th Grade

To plan your child's summer in different kinds of science programs, go to the website under "Visit" to "Summer Camps."

For more locations and discovery place museums, visit discoveryplacemuseums.org

Outdoors

NC Cooperative Extension, 2415 Lester St.

4-H summer workshops

Free

Dates: Through Aug. 10

Ages: All ages

Website: mecklenburg.ces.ncsu.edu

The workshops involve 4-H that focus on STEM, agriculture, healthy living, and civic engagement. Apply through the online form on the website.

• Overnight camp at Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H, 804 Cedar Lane, Reidsville

Website: bjpenn4h.org

The six-day camp features activities such as swimming, arts and crafts, archery, rock wall climbing, campfires, and more. Spots are limited and filling fast.

• Traditional camp:

Cost: \$685

Dates: July 5-10 (waitlisted), July 12-17, and July 19-24

Ages: 8-12

• Adventurer camp:

Cost: \$735

Dates: July 19-24 (waitlisted)

Ages: 12-14

Specialized for older campers, who'll stay in single-gender tents as well as learning how to build fires, do orienteering, do outdoor cooking, set up tents, and take part in zip-lining.

• Trekker camp:

Cost: \$735

Dates: July 19-24 (males waitlisted)

Ages: 12-14

Campers will learn how to prepare for their trip, rock climbing, how to set up their own tent, and making campfire meals. Tents are single gender only.

• LIT (Leader-In-Training):

Cost: \$345-\$445

Dates: July 5-10, July 19-24, July 26-31

Ages: 15-17

The LIT program is made to help selected campers build leadership skills. They're open spaces for six males and six females during each camp. Your teen will be involved in opportunities such as team-building and high ropes.

Wing Heaven Garden, 260 Ridgewood Ave.

Website: winghavengardens.org

Created by Elizabeth and Edwin O. Clarkson in 1927, Wing Haven has curated a sanctuary for birds as well as a diverse range of native plants in their garden. The SEED Wildlife & Children's Garden offers multiple programs throughout the summer as a way to enrich kids with their fascinating plants and animals.

Programs include day camps like Camp Wing Haven, Homeschool Explores for outdoor learning experience, and Story Time and More which includes seasonally themed stories as well as crafting.

• Camp Wing Haven:

Cost: \$345 for members \$395 for non-members (waitlisted)

Dates: June 22-26, July 6-10 and July 20-24, Aug. 3-7

Time: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Ages: At least 6 years

Campers learn about garden songbirds, worms, bugs, frogs, and plants as well as gardening, exploring, crafting, playing games, and singing songs.

• Homeschool Explores:

Cost: Non-members are \$15 per student \$20 for family maximum, No charge for chaperones while members will get \$5 off.

Dates: July 15, Aug. 12

Time: 10 - 11 a.m.

Ages: 4-16

• Story Time and More:

Cost: \$10 per family

Dates: July 14, Aug. 11

Time: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Ages: All ages

To register on the website, go to "Happenings" and select "Children & Family Events and Programs."

Other resources

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library holds events for all ages. They provide many free educational events such as arts, civic engagement, history, literature, writing, active reading, STEAM, etc.

For more information, you can see the vast selection of events and dates through the website, cmlibrary.bibliocommons.com.

YMCA

The YMCA has many of the activities listed above though they offer sports like basketball, dance, gymnastics, swimming in the summer, and martial arts year-round. For the listing and curated plan, go to ymcacatl.my.site.com.

Subaru Uncharted EV is sporty and efficient

Continued from page 1B

handling capabilities. Take a sharp curve a bit too fast and the Subaru digs in and handles the challenge without fear. While not a true sports car, the GT version is sporty and will induce a grin if you push. Top speed is probably limited around 112 mph.

Is there anything wrong with the Uncharted. Well, it can't charge as fast as some competitors, but you can go from 10% 80% charged in 28 minutes. If you are going to buy any EV, I suggest a home charging network. This is also available on the Tesla network, but you need the app to see with which supercharger its compatible.

The Uncharted is listed as a five-passenger vehicle but the three in back is going to need to be on the short size. There is not a lot of room in the back for people or their gear in the hatch. Also, I wish the 308-mile range could be squeezed out of the GT.

Still, I think I could live with the Uncharted GT. It's certainly a handsome vehicle, has enough range and is really quick. I'm not completely sold on any EV but I'm starting to see the appeal. The Uncharted isn't for folks who need a family sized EV but those who don't have size constraints this may be the ticket.

The Uncharted GT starts at \$43,795.

Pros

- New for 2026
- Handsome shape
- Two motor electric EV
- Powerful engines
- Good range
- Seats five
- Nimble handling
- Solid handling
- Quiet ride
- Well executed interior

Cons

- Tight rear seating
- Charging times could be quicker

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Abraham Galloway: wartime spy, Reconstruction lawmaker

N.C. AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

Abraham Galloway was an abolitionist and Civil War spy, and among the first Black elected officials, becoming a North Carolina state senator in 1868.

Galloway was born enslaved on Feb. 8, 1837, in Smithville. While enslaved, Galloway became a skilled brick mason and was forced to work along the seaport in Wilmington. In 1857, Galloway escaped slavery by stowing away on a boat and traveling the Underground Railroad to Canada. While in Canada, Galloway became heavily involved with the abolitionist movement. He travelled throughout North America and the Caribbean for recruitment efforts. In 1861, Galloway began working as a spy for the Union Army, taking missions in North Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

After being captured in an abandoned mission in Mississippi in 1862, Galloway

reappeared in New Bern where he shifted his focus from military intelligence to soldier recruitment among the African American and abolitionist communities.

Through various public engagements and funding drives, Galloway recruited 30 Black regiments to the Union Army. He also freed his mother from enslavement in Wilmington. With his influence and network, Galloway became a leading political figure and advocate in New Bern and Wilmington.

He led Black southern delegates to meet with President Abraham Lincoln to discuss citizenship and voting rights for Black Americans. Galloway was elected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1868 in Raleigh. Later that year, Galloway was nominated as a presidential elector and became North Carolina's first Black elector.

In 1868, Galloway was elected to the State Senate and was posed to serve a second term, before passing on September 1, 1870, at age 33.



Galloway



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ADOBE STOCK

Your home is an investment. Create generational wealth.

Q&A with local home lending manager Roy Kelly

JPMORGAN CHASE

For most Americans, owning a home has long been considered a cornerstone to building and preserving generational wealth.

A home purchase often symbolizes more than just securing a place to live – homeownership can help anchor families, support long-term financial stability and fuel local economic growth.

If you currently own a home or if homeownership is one of your financial goals, it's important to understand how your home can be a foundational pillar in helping you build and maintain generational wealth. A home can be an asset that appreciates over time as you build equity which can serve as a financial resource for you and your family for decades to come.

Roy Kelly, who leads a team of Chase Home Lending Advisors in North Carolina, shares more about the connection between homeownership and building generational wealth, and how you can make sure your home becomes, or remains, your most important financial asset.

Q: How does a home create generational wealth?

A: There are several perks to homeownership, many of which contribute to building wealth. Owning your home may be cheaper than renting in the long term if you have a mortgage with competitive rates; however, it's important to keep in mind other home expenses, like insurance and taxes, when considering costs. Plus, since you own the home, that means you can build and tap into your equity for future expenses or profit when your home is sold.

Another way to think of homeownership as it relates to your financial picture is that it can influence your overall net worth. When you make monthly payments, you're slowly owning more of your home, and it can become an asset. On the other hand, if you rent, your monthly housing costs are just an expense for a place to live, and you don't own any of it when you leave. Put simply, owning a home may help you grow your money over time.

Q: Explain home equity and how building equity works.

A: The technical definition of home equity is the difference between the fair market value of your home and how much you still owe on your mortgage. Essentially, think of it as the part of your home's value that you truly own. It's made up of the amount you've already paid off, plus any increase in your home's value. So, if you're home's value goes up, so does your equity and vice versa. Equity grows as you pay down your mortgage and, as I mentioned earlier, the market value of your home increases.

Q: How can this be beneficial financially?

A: There are a few ways. You can borrow against your home equity by

taking out a loan, using your property as collateral to secure the loan. There are a variety of ways you can do this such as through a home equity loan, home equity line of credit (HELOC) or a cash-out refinance. You may use these funds to cover other expenses, like high-interest credit card debt, make home improvements, invest in another home or in an emergency. Home equity loans also tend to have more favorable terms than credit cards or other personal loans, potentially saving you money in the long run.

Q: What if you sell your home?

A: The more equity you have, the more you can profit from selling your home if you do so in the future. For example, if you've paid off your entire mortgage before you sell, you may get to keep all potential profits. If you haven't paid off your mortgage, any profits will pay off what you owe and you'll keep the remaining funds– the more home equity you have, the greater your profit could be.

Q: What other benefits come from owning your home?

A: Homeownership offers the potential opportunity for tax deductions. The interest you pay on your mortgage, insurance premiums, property taxes and even improvements to your energy efficiency may provide an opportunity for tax deductions. You can consult with your tax advisor if you're looking to understand how buying a home may impact your taxes.

There's no place like home

Homeownership has long been a powerful tool for building generational wealth in communities across the U.S. and can help you secure a solid financial future for yourself and your family. Your home is more than just the place where you rest your head—it can be your greatest financial asset.

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Dems focus on ACA vote

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for a family plan.

The Democrats' effort to overturn the rule is the definition of a long shot; it would need a majority of votes in both the House and the Senate. But simply forcing a floor vote is likely to be seen as a win by the minority party.

"What Democrats are trying to do is get Republicans to vote on policies that would be unpopular if they rose to the level of public consciousness," said Adrianna McIntyre, an assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Democrats want to showcase that they want to change these policies, even if don't have the votes to accomplish it."

Congress has authority under the review act — enacted as part of a larger law in 1996 — to overturn rules issued by federal agencies. While more than 40 such disapproval resolutions have passed, hundreds have been introduced, often mainly to draw attention to an issue.

It is one of the few levers a minority party has to force action on the floor of the Senate.

That's because if only 30 senators sign a discharge petition to send the measure to the floor, the Democrats get a vote, without needing to go through a Republican-controlled committee or hold a hearing. A companion resolution is expected to be introduced in the House on June 17.

And there's no doubt that Democrats will try to use any floor vote on health costs as a litmus test for Republicans in the November elections.

"Time and again Democrats have used Republican efforts to undermine the ACA to their political advantage in campaigns,

and this year will be no different," said Larry Levitt, executive vice president for health policy at KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.

Polls show that the GOP could be vulnerable if Democrats can convince voters their party would do better on health costs, which are a top concern among voters.

A recent Pew poll, for example, found that 73% of adults see healthcare costs as a very big problem for the country, leading both inflation and the federal budget deficit. KFF's tracking polls have found healthcare costs to be a top concern, even among Make America Healthy Again supporters allied with President Donald Trump.

At least half of people who identify as MAHA voters say those health costs will have a "major impact" on their decision to vote and which party they support.

Medical costs in general typically rise faster than inflation, driven by increased hospital and doctor bills and use of drugs, devices, and other healthcare. That leads to higher costs for employers that offer health plans to their workers and for taxpayer-supported programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, as well as higher premiums for insurance plans sold under the ACA. The consultancy PwC projects the cost to treat patients this year will rise by 9%, the highest in nearly two decades.

Higher premiums and lower subsidies also hit many ACA enrollees this year, with about 1.2 million fewer sign-ups than for 2025 as of January.

Costs "are a good Democratic talking point," said Joseph Antos, a former government health official who is now a senior fellow emeritus at the right-leaning American Enterprise Institute. "Trump was going to solve inflation, and instead, what do we have?"

Grow, prepare and enjoy the health benefits of hot peppers

Continued from page 1B

vorite recipes. Most of the capsaicin that gives hot peppers their heat is in the white membrane that houses the seeds, so removing this along with the seeds will provide the flavor with less heat.

Wear rubber gloves and avoid touching your face and eyes when working with hot peppers as they can burn. Wash your hands, utensils and cutting boards when finished.

Adding hot peppers to your meals will also provide many health benefits. Use them fresh and can, freeze or dry the sur-

plus to enjoy later or share with family and friends.

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. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

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GEORGIA NAKIMA

Charlotte artist Georgie Nakima's murals can be found across Charlotte, like this one at Independence Park.

Painting hope: Georgie Nakima leaves her mark

By Ashleigh Fields
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Georgie Nakima has been silently leaving her mark across the Charlotte.,



Nakima

Her paint brush strokes in Charlotte's historic West End have brought to life murals that pay homage to Black history with a futuristic twist. Nakima has painted more than 40 murals in throughout the city, but a trail of her technical artwork lines the outer portion of Uptown to Beatties Ford Road.

Some of her work depicting Black beauty is featured at the Harvey B. Gantt Center, on the gym floor at the McCrorey YMCA, parking deck at Camp North End and on the side of the Sugaree Place affordable apartments near the Hidden Valley neighborhood.

"I think it's really important that we create images that counteract kind of the negative stereotypes that you see on the media that keep us divided and keep us feeling lesser than," Nakima said. "I think it's important to have a representation of people of color that gives us dignity and hope and respect and create images for the future and for the youth. Things that feel futuristic and hopeful just because there's so much negativity out there."

Nakima's murals are also featured at The Fillmore, East Town Market and Independence Park.

Nakima grew up in Charlotte but is originally from New Bern in eastern North Carolina. Upon moving here, she studied briefly at Northwest School of the Arts, where she took her talents to new heights with formal classroom training.

However, it wasn't until years after she graduated Winston-Salem State University with a degree in biology that she challenged herself with life-sized paintings on buildings.

After three years as a research and lab assistant, Nakima jumped into the professional art by exploring opportunities to unleash her talent. She said understanding data visualization helped her bring sketches to life in

large spaces.

"I just decided to take a leap of faith and focus full time on building my portfolio," she said. "And it was a really amazing time where things really opened up as far as public art."

"I started getting requests to do murals, which is something I never really imagined myself to do. It's something that I think being in a growing city like Charlotte and the trend of having a colorful city, it definitely helped put me in a position where I just ended up just kind of learning more and more and more about public art and public practice and community engaged art."

Nakima said she painted her first mural for free in NoDa on a community garden shed. Her next project was at Neighborhood Theatre followed by another at Solstice Tavern, which is now closed.

"They started being bigger and just kind of encouraging me to test my boundaries and see what else [was out there], how I needed to push myself, what I needed to learn how to do," Nakima said. "I was mostly doing studio art before then. So I didn't necessarily have the techniques to paint big. It's something I had to learn along the way," she added.

However, her skills have grown and led to commission projects in Boston, Denver and New Bern ranging from sculptures to murals and everything in between.

Nakima said she is looking to continue building Charlotte's "creative ecosystem" through additional collaborations on local projects with an emphasis on human study.

"I think it's really important that the people have uplifting images that represent who we are as dynamic people," Nakima said. "I think I just like to create things that are inspirational to the human spirit and that is uplifting and that's colorful. I really take a deep interest into color therapy and color theory and just how colors have an effect on the mind's eye that can really influence our mood and just the way that we think and that we feel."

"So being a public artist, I just like creating things that make people feel good."



ADOBE STOCK

Italian sausage and California grape skewers.

Easy apps, meals and sides made with fresh grapes

FEATURE IMPACT

Once temperatures climb, summer entertaining tends to look a little different.

Heavy comfort foods give way to lighter fare, tables move outdoors and hosts are on the hunt for dishes that feel effortless without sacrificing flavor. It's a season for skewers, salads and small bites that are easily shared on a patio among friends and loved ones.

Fresh ingredients, simple preparation and naturally hydrating foods can be the staples of your next summer soiree, especially when your goal is to spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the table with guests. Crisp, juicy, colorful Grapes from California are a natural fit as their sweetness can brighten savory dishes while balancing salty, smoky flavors off the grill.

With little preparation, grapes are a perfect snack while waiting for the main course; no peeling, slicing or complicated prep required. A quick rinse is all it takes to serve fresh grapes as an easy addition to snack trays or last-minute appetizers.

Tasty fuels healthy and healthy makes happy, which is why grapes, a natural source of antioxidants and other polyphenols and a good source of vitamin K, make for a delicious accompaniment to usual summer fare. Serve them on their own for a hydrating snack thanks to their high water content, or take advantage of their combination of flavor, convenience and nutrition as a key ingredient that elevates summer recipes.

For example, Italian Sausage and California Grape Skewers can be the main attraction at barbecues and weekend gatherings, offering elegant presentation without spending hours in the kitchen.

Paired with a California Grape Fennel and Citrus Salad, it's a light, easy meal that can both impress and refresh.

While guests wait for the main course, California Grape, Walnut and Endive Bites combine a sweet crunch with savory blue cheese. Top with a drizzle of honey – or hot honey for a bit of heat – to complement lively conversation and the familiar relaxation of summer gatherings.

To discover more ways to both elevate and simplify gatherings throughout the season, visit GrapesFromCalifornia.com.

Italian Sausage and California Grape Skewers
Servings: 6

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon dried Italian herb seasoning

4 precooked chicken Italian sausages
6 skewers (10 inches)
30 green, black and red Grapes from California
24 squares (1 inch each) red onion
snipped fresh basil (optional)

In small bowl, combine olive oil, balsamic vinegar and Italian herb seasoning; set aside. Cut each sausage into six slices. Thread on skewers, alternating with grapes and onion.

Preheat grill to medium-low heat. Place oiled piece of foil on grill and top with skewers. Grill 5 minutes, or until grapes are softened and sausage and vegetables are lightly browned, turning and basting with balsamic vinegar mixture occasionally.

Transfer to platter and garnish with snipped fresh basil, if desired.

Note: If using bamboo skewers, soak at least 1 hour in water to avoid burning.

« OUT & ABOUT »



DANIEL COSTON | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Gen. Darren McDew was the keynote speaker at this year's Veterans Bridge Home Salute to Service gala, held at the Revelry on May 16.

The Charlotte Post

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SAMANTHA COLE

The cast of “Beehive: The ‘60s Musical” June 25-July 12 at City Stage in Greenville, S.C., is an homage to pioneering women vocal groups and solo acts that took popular music to new levels during the decade.

Theater showcase at NC A&T

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

The latest events, productions and exhibits in Charlotte and beyond:

Through July 9

The rebranded *Uptown Live* series, Thursdays 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 lineup:

- June 25: Bourbon Sons and Outrun the Weekend
- July 2: Sol Fusion
- July 9: Spiked featuring DJ Elixir

June 25-July 12

Centre Stage production of “Beehive: The ‘60s Musical,” 501 River St., Greenville, S.C. Tickets are on sale at centrestage.org or by calling the box office at (864) 233-6733. Reservations are encouraged. Tickets range from \$33-\$38.

Showtimes are Thursday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m.

The show is a musical tip of the cap to top acts from Aretha Franklin to Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Petula Clark and The Supremes who pumped out timeless classics like “Respect,” “Be My Baby,” and “Downtown.”

June 27

Jazz and Breakfast with Vanessa Bell Calloway, Middle C Jazz, 300 South Brevard St., 9-11 a.m. Reserved seating is \$50 and general seating \$30. Tickets are available via Eventbrite and breakfast is included as part of Black Girls Film Camp Premiere Weekend.

Calloway, an actress, director and producer, is a BGFC board member with more than 150 television and film credits, including “Coming to America” and “What’s Love Goto to Do With It?”

June 28-29

Common Thread Theatre Collective presents “Group Massage Therapy” by David Schoenfeld at North Carolina A&T State University’s Dudley Building, 202 University Circle, on June 28 at 7:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. June 29.

All performances are pay-what-you-can. Tickets can be reserved at etix.com or call (704) 894-2912

Common Thread Theatre Collective is a stage collaborative founded by faculty at Davidson College and A&T.

July 4

“*An American Celebration*,” a day for family fun, food and music 12-2 p.m. at Gaston County Museum of Art & History, 131 W. Main St., on the court square in Dallas, N.C.

The event is free and open to the public as the lead-in to Gaston County’s 4th of July parade at 2 p.m. The celebration will include arts and crafts for children, a foam party play area, hot dogs and free ice cream, Karma cakes sale, cooling down spray station, music by DJ Alfredo, and the Great American Apple Pie Bake-Off.

For information, visit www.gaston-countymuseum.org.

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 accomplishments 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.



Fetty Wap

Please see GRAMMY | 6B



PARI DUKOVIC

Kannapolis native George Clinton is the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame’s Eddie Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of contributions to music as founder of the funk bands Parliament and Funkadelic.

Dr. Funkenstein earns home state recognition

George Clinton merits NC Music Hall of Fame achievement award

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

Dr. Funkenstein will get another day in the sun at the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame.

George Clinton, a native of Kannapolis and pioneer of funk music as founder of Parliament-Funkadelic, will receive the Eddie Ray Lifetime Achievement Award at the hall’s Oct. 15 induction ceremony in Mooresville. Clinton, a 2009 inductee to the hall, has influenced music genres for more than a half century.

With a catalog that includes hits like “Atomic Dog,” “Flashlight,” “Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker),” “(Not Just) Knee Deep” and “One Nation Under A Groove,” his work with Parliament-Funkadelic introduced new approaches to production, performance, and concept albums, that influenced generations of performers in funk, hip-hop, R&B, pop and rock.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is named for the music industry pioneer Eddie Ray, who, like Clinton, is a 2009 hall of fame inductee. The prize honors individuals whose careers have had long-term impact on American music.

The induction ceremony will held at the Charles Mack Citizen Center. Tickets start at \$80 and available at NorthCarolinaMusicHallofFame.org and include the welcome reception, appearances and live performances by the inductees.

In addition to Clinton, the hall is inducting four individuals and a group to the Class of 2026. They are:

MC Sha-Rock (Wilmington)

MC Sha-Rock (birth name Sharon Green), a founding member of the Bronx, New York-based group Funky 4+1, is a hip-hop pioneer. Her lyrical and performance standards during culture’s early years built a platform for succeeding generations of rap’s front women.

Sha-Rock was the first woman rapper to appear with a hip-hip group on national television when Funky 4 + 1 performed on “Saturday Night Live” on Feb. 14, 1981. The group’s hits include the singles “Rappin’ and Rocking the House” and “That’s the Joint.”

Gregory “Sugar Bear” Elliott (Red Springs)

Elliott is a pioneer of Go-Go music as a founding member of Washington, D.C.-based Experience Unlimited. E.U. recorded three Billboard-charting singles, including “Da Butt,” which reached No. 1 on the Black Singles chart in 1988. That song – fronted by Elliott’s vocals – earned the group a Grammy nomination as well as a Soul Train Award for Best New Artist and ranked No. 61 on VH1’s 100 Greatest One Hit Wonders of the ‘80s.

E.U.’s international performances, along with Go-Go stalwarts like 2016 inductee Chuck Brown, spread Go-Go culture beyond its regional roots

in the D.C. region to global recognition.

Billy Strayhorn (Hillsborough)

Strayhorn, a jazz composer and arranger, was best known for three decades of collaboration with Duke Ellington.

His compositions include genre standards “Take the ‘A’ Train” and “Lush Life,” which are recognized in the Grammy Hall of Fame and the Library of Congress for historical and cultural significance.

Arrogance (Chapel Hill)

The Chapel Hill-based rock band co-founded by Robert Kirkland and producer and musician Don Dixon was formed at UNC-Chapel Hill and is cited as an early tentpole of independent music through their self-released debut album Give Us a Break. The group influenced later national indie acts and are regarded as North Carolina’s original indie rock trailblazers.

Barry Poss (Durham)

Poss, the founder of Sugar Hill Records, was essential to development of modern bluegrass and Americana music.

With Poss leading the label, Sugar Hill (not to be confused with the New Jersey-based hip-hop label) released recordings by Doc Watson, Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss, Dolly Parton, Jerry Douglas, Doyle Lawson, Nickel Creek, Sam Bush, and The Osborne Brothers.



Sha-Rock



Sugar Bear

Alicia Keys’ brilliance shows in documentary

By Dwight Brown

BLACK PRESS USA

Alicia Keys: Girl from Hell’s Kitchen
2.5 stars

“I’m just a kid from Hell’s Kitchen.”

But many New Yorkers think of her as the city’s daughter. And now viewers of this dual-track documentary will know how that neighborhood influenced her and how she helped make it famous.

Two intertwining storylines bind this bio/doc that’s seasoned with Alicia Keys’ vibrant music. Her NYC background mingles with the making, staging, developing and opening of her Broadway musical “Hell’s Kitchen.” When one avenue gets a bit tiresome, the other half often perks up the footage and vice versa.

Often but not always. So those who love Keys and her music or are curious how to develop a musical for Broadway may remain entertained and intrigued. Others might not.

Emmy-nominated executive producer, director, and multimedia artist One9 (née Michael Baluyut Silverman), a former street artist and muralist, is a Brooklynite steeped in hip hop culture. His filmography includes docs (“Nas: Time is Illmatic,” 2014) and series (“Hip Hop: The Songs That Shook America,” 2019) and Prime Video docuseries (“Allen Iverson,” 2025). Knowing his background is essential to understanding the pros, cons and specifics of this Keys homage. This isn’t a traditional point-and-shoot doc. This feels like taking a subway ride while images of 1990s Times Square flash past on the tunnel walls. Its unique style leans toward viewers who came of age in the 1990s.

The heart of Keys’ upbringing is the Manhattan Plaza, a building between



TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

Alicia Keys in a scene from “Alicia Keys: Girl from Hell’s Kitchen.”

9th and 10th avenues and 42nd Street and 43rd Street in NYC. It opened in 1977 in a gritty neighborhood filled with sex stores, hookers, drug addicts and Broadway theaters. These video clips have an edge to them and will be quite a shock to some viewers and tourists who had no idea that the Disneyfied Times Square they experience today was a pit yesterday. In those days, the development couldn’t find tenants and became subsidized housing for artists.

One of the most interesting parts of the doc is finding out who Keys’ neighbors were and who worked there. The list is impressive from Philip Seymour Hoffman to Giancarlo Esposito and Larry David to Samuel L. Jackson, who

once worked there as a doorman. A basement cabaret room, “Ellington,” is where Keys as a kid would play piano and dream of being an artist/musician. This was her nest. Her laboratory. Exploring Keys’ center of gravity helps audiences understand how she developed her contagious optimism, inclusive view of life and yearning to perform her own music.

The footage and its vivid array of photos, videos and interviews chronicle Keys’ life from childhood to adulthood. The film recounts her single mom’s challenges raising a kid in NYC. It follows her music lessons, first songs, early recording contracts, and eventual partnership with Clive Davis

Please see ALICIA | 6B



SAMANTHA COLE

Chris Brown and Usher headline a joint concert stop July 17-18 at Bank of America Stadium.

Grammy nominee Fetty Wap at the Fillmore

Continued from page 58
Tickets available at: raymondand-browntour.com.
July 25
Fetty Wap, The Fillmore. The double-Diamond-selling and Grammy nominated hip hop artist ("Trap Queen," "679," "My Way") brings the Nostalgia Tour to Charlotte. Tickets: livenation.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. Tickets are \$82-\$135 and available at thecarolina.com.

Alicia Keys' brilliance shows in documentary

Continued from page 58
and Arista Records. Davis proclaims: "Not since Whitney had I seen a young talent..." Her feelings about the music world, family, friends and influences are duly noted. It's all spiced up as she adds in her experiences with hip hop, partying at New York nightclubs and developing a style that's won her multiple Grammy Awards.
The competing storyline to her bio follows Keys' long-gestating Broadway musical Hell's Kitchen. Writing, developing, auditioning, hiring rehearsing and staging. Starting at the Public Theater, moving to the Great White Way. It's a how-to guide on turning a seed of an idea into a Tony-nominated and Tony-winning musical. The casualness of Keys' DIY mentality underlines her genius and ambition.
However, some of this portion can be tedious and One9's direction doesn't find a way to make it more exciting. The footage is more suited for a behind-the-scenes trailer than a film.
The core of this story is a very spiritual human being who expresses herself in the most sensitive ways. You see it in how she treats all the people she encounters. The touching ways she helps the novice lead actress in the musical, Maleah Joi Moon, understand her role and gain the confidence to play the woman who's her mentor, Alicia Keys at age 17. Touching as it is, it goes on for too long.
If editors Chris Iversen and Joseph Volpe had found ways to clip the film down from 96 minutes to 90 or less, it would run tighter. If they'd requested longer scenes and not so many short unsettling ones, audiences might be happier.
Cinematographers Michael Koshkin and Snyder Derival's work is perceptive but never astounding, either in its lighting or visual composition. What's on view looks like low-budget filmmaking. Guerrilla, grassroots, home-video-like. Never really visually attractive. Just bits and pieces for the eyes. Something feels off, from a technical standpoint. Like an ambitious, eclectic approach to doc filmmaking was better on script than it was on screen.
What's on view makes you wonder how much more interesting this film might have been if it concentrated solely on Keys, her life, music and performances. While effectively capturing Keys' street-wise nature, this documentary never achieves the same polish and artistry she displays.
Visit film critic Dwight Brown at Dwight-BrownInk.com.

OUT AND ABOUT



DANIEL COSTON

Deneige Brown of WSOC-TV hosted the St. Jude's Celebrity Chef dinner at the Revelry on May 9.

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QUANTRELL COLBERT | PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Marlon Wayans in a scene from “Scary Movie 6,” the latest spoof on modern horror flicks franchise featuring members of the Wayans family.

‘Scary Movie 6’ brings back the Wayans and Core Four for rapid-fire spoof

By Mark Kennedy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The knife-wielding serial killer known as Ghostface unwisely tries to stab Teyana Taylor in the opening scene of “Scary Movie” and it goes rather poorly.

The dagger the psycho plunges into the famously fit actor’s abdomen bounces off, horribly bent.

“I’m Teyana Taylor,” she announces. “My abs have abs.”

Ghostface accepts the loss but then taunts the actor for having lost the best supporting Oscar this year. She accepts that but then smacks him across the face with what she did win — a Golden Globe. Thunk!

It’s a sequence that perfectly captures the Wayans family sense of humor: Cartoonish, topical, gross, profane, absurd and sometimes — just sometimes — hysterical.

What seems like a dozen of Wayans have reunited for the latest chapter in the parody horror franchise “Scary Movie,” a pastiche of loosely tied skits that riff off current and past horror movies as well as topical events like ICE raids and the Drake and Kendrick Lamar beef. It’s a dizzying, breathless chapter, as you might expect with pent-up targets stocked up since the last outing was in 2013.

The script is by Marlon Wayans, Shawn Wayans, Keenen Ivory Wayans, Craig Wayans and Rick Alvarez, with direction by Michael Tiddes. More Wayans lurk in the credits.

Like any movie with that many writers of different ages, you can almost assign the jokes — a “The Jeffersons” reference mixes with one for ChatGPT. The guys actually return to scream “Wazzup!,” which is over a quarter of a century old.

If you wanted a tight plot, this is not the movie for you. Basically, Ghostface from the “Scream” franchise is hunting the “Scary Movie” original Core Four — Marlon Wayans’ Shorty, Shawn Wayans’ Ray, Anna Faris’ Cindy and Regina Hall’s Brenda. There are a ton of uncredited guest stars and returning ones, some who have been long

dead. Don’t ask.

The Core Four are adults now — one has a daughter named Tuesday (get it “Wednesday” fans?) — and they’re all a bit of a mess. Cindy is hitting the bottle (not of conditioner, if you know what I mean) while Shorty is still a stoner who plays video games but now he’s super rich thanks to crypto. One of Cindy’s kids chugs pills from a prescription bottle labeled “Mommy issues.”

“We’ve got to save the franchise,” they agree.

There are jokes about Kanye West, how promiscuous people are these days called “sex-positive,” COVID-19, Ted Bundy, “Saltburn,” Candace Owens, DEI hires, “Silence of the Lambs” and OnlyFans. Scatological humor abounds, as well as a deep vein of good, old fashioned homophobic yucks.

One actor is told to stop trying to win an Oscar: “It’s a horror movie. Ask Demi Moore.”

The writers goof on “Terrier 3,” giving a nod to the iconic mall Santa scene in which Art the Clown now hands out very gross presents, as well as “Sinners” — in which Shawn Wayans reprises his barely closeted gay character — and “Weapons,” where the children running across lawns with their arms out are doing so because they ate Halloween candy spiked with drugs.

But especially toward the end, the filmmakers tread water with their references to “M3GAN,” “Get Out,” “Candyman” and “The Substance” — simply showing us a set-up from those films without doing anything to really skewer them. Just putting M3GAN in the subway isn’t that funny. Better is a amusement park themed on “Final Destination” — with rides that constantly crash and the slogan “Where everybody dies.”

There’s a lazy, bizarre sequence that takes on “KPop Demon Hunters” with a jolt of animation and the song “Golden” — the original lyrics “We’re gonna, gonna be golden” become “We about to be

tokin” — that ends up with one character in bed with three demon hunters.

There are moments when the franchise folds in on itself, as when Cheri Oteri returns as Gail Hailstorm, parodying Courteney Cox’s “Scream” character Gale Weathers, and Chris Elliott reprises his creepy haunted mansion caretaker with a tiny, deformed hand from the second film entry.

Can you parody your own previous parody? While we’re at it, why is “Scream” so lazily and heavily leaned on in 2026? Why are there so many sex toys? And how much did Angry Orchard hard cider pay for its product placement?

It’s best not to ask such deep questions. “I know who goes to a Wayans brother movie,” says Taylor before she assaults Ghostface. She’s right: It’s us, willing to slog through tons of gross-out misfires for that one, great killer bit.

“Scary Movie,” a Paramount Pictures release that hits theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for “crude sexual content, graphic nudity, strong violence and drug content and language throughout.” Running time: 95 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.



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Presenters:



Mel Toran
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