

Life!

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026 SECTION B



STOCK PHOTO

As federal subsidies to Affordable Care Act marketplace participation expire, the number of people signing up is decreasing, leading insurers to lobby for premium increases.

ACA insurers want premium boost while enrollment sags nationally

By Rachel Spears

KFF HEALTH NEWS

For the second year in a row, many Affordable Care Act insurers are proposing double-digit premium increases, driven by rising medical costs as well as policy changes by Congress and the Trump administration.

In preliminary filings with state regulators, insurers are seeking a median rate increase of 14% for 2027, according to an analysis of filings in 16 states and the District of Columbia by the Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker.

If those rates are ultimately approved, it would be the second-highest increase since 2018.

That would be a “triple whammy” for consumers, said Cynthia Cox, a senior vice president and the director of the Program on the ACA at KFF, because they have already had to pay higher premiums in 2026 and saw the expiration of more generous tax credits to offset their premiums at the end of last year.

President Joe Biden sought to bolster the program known as Obamacare by enacting more generous tax subsidies, driving down out-of-pocket costs for consumers and increasing enrollment to more than 20 million Americans. But under President Donald Trump, Republicans have sought to scale back taxpayer support for ACA coverage, allowing the Biden-era enhanced subsidies to expire.

As of February, ACA enrollment had fallen by

Please see **ACA** | 2B

With school out, who will feed kids?

By Diana Lopez

NC HEALTH NEWS

Kelly Spivey has a reputation in Tarboro for being able to connect people with basic needs when they are struggling to fill their pantries and other parts of their homes.

She’s got a five-shelf locker outside her house that she has been stocking with food and toiletries for the past eight years, a project she calls Kelly’s Community Pantry. On her porch and around her property, she has clothes, books and other items that people have donated for her to pass along to others.

“I call myself a community connector,” Spivey told NC Health News in a recent interview, calling what she does “her passion work.”

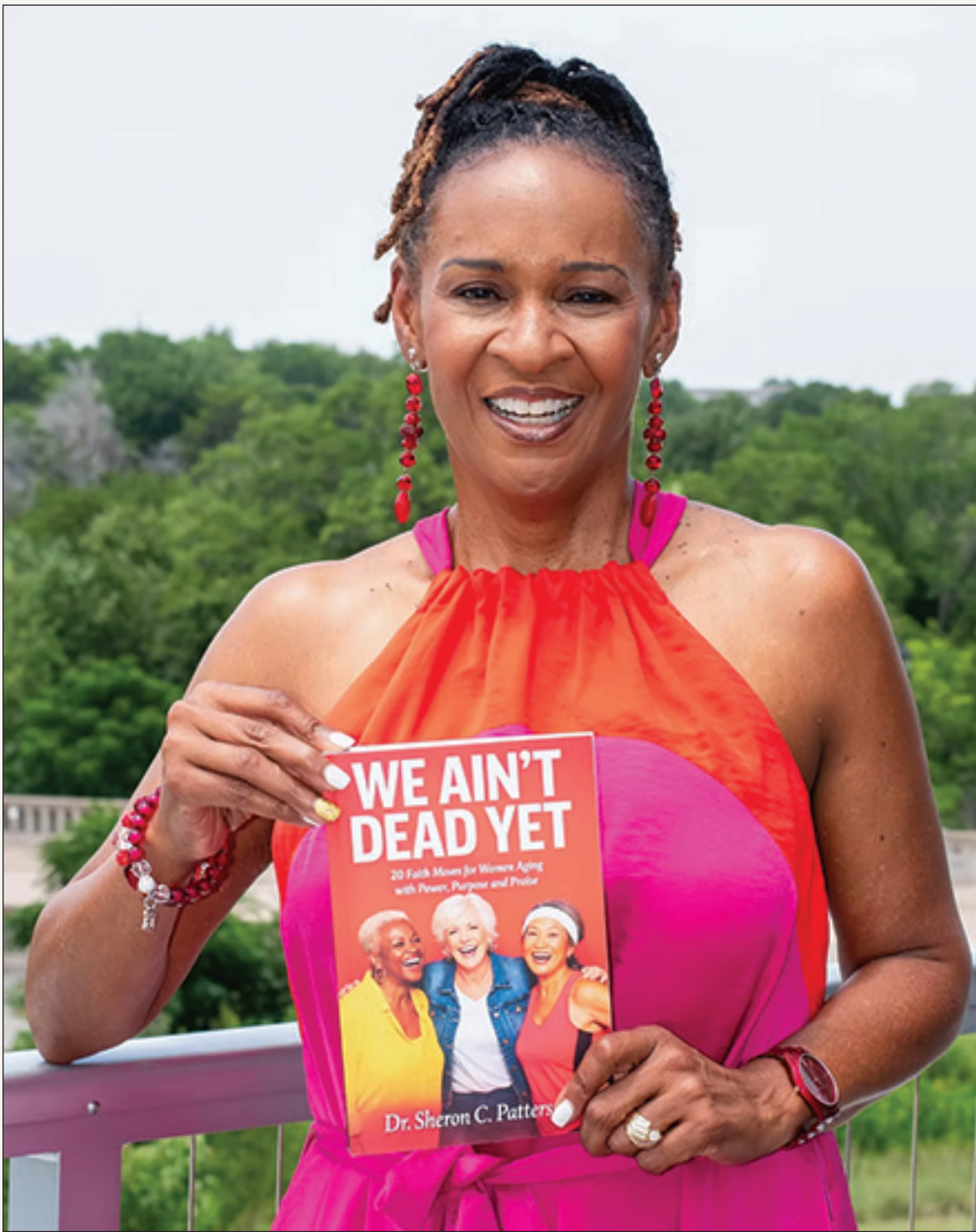
The mother of four also has a full-time job as a community health improvement coordinator at ECU Health Edgecombe Hospital in Tarboro, work that helps her make the many connections that come in handy as she helps feed people in need.

Summer can be especially challenging for children living in food insecurity. Edgecombe County has one of the highest rates for child food insecurity in the state — 36.2%, according to Feeding America 2023 data.

“People don’t realize that,” Spivey said. “If you don’t see it, you don’t see it. That’s why I’m glad the food pantry is here because they can just come here, they can get some toys, they can get a book, and they can grab some food.”

Spivey calls the atmosphere relaxed. There are no

Please see **WITH** | 2B



SHERON PATTERSON

Sharon Patterson, a retired Methodist minister who grew up in Charlotte, is the author of “We Ain’t Dead Yet: 20 Faith Moves for Women Aging with Power, Purpose, and Praise.”

A message to seniors: Live long and prosper

Sharon Patterson advocates for healthy aging with self-help book

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Aging isn’t a death sentence.

Retired minister and Charlotte native Sharon Patterson champions healthy aging, especially for women in her new book “We Ain’t Dead Yet: 20 Faith Moves for Women Aging with Power, Purpose, and Praise.” Patterson, a West Charlotte High School graduate who lives in Dallas, Texas, will be in Charlotte Aug. 1 for a book signing from 2–4 p.m. at First Baptist West Church, 1801 Oaklawn Ave.

The book’s message is simple: stepping into retirement is a new chapter of opportunity and engagement, especially for women. As the U.S. population aging – according to the 2020 Census, 55.8 million people, or 18% of the population, were 65 and older – Patterson, 67, encourages people to talk openly about purpose and possibilities.

“I retired two years ago after 40 years as a as a Methodist pastor, and in my retirement, I looked around and I saw so many people aging all willy nilly out here with-

out a plan, just laying around waiting on death,” she said. “I discovered as a pastor, looking back in the Word of God, so much inspiration and instruction for us as we age. Eating, of course, exercising, but also mentally and physically. I want to let people know that fruitfulness does not have an expiration date, so we can’t sit back and just get in a rocking chair and die. We have to keep moving and keep being a part of society and the community and making a difference.”

Please see **A MESSAGE** | 2B

Deltas assemble for regional conference

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Members of Delta Sigma Theta will gather in Charlotte for the sorority’s 32nd South Atlantic regional conference.

The biennial gathering July 30-Aug. 2 will bring together sorority members from the Carolinas, Virginia, and Bermuda. The South Atlantic – one of Delta’s seven regions – is made up of 18,000 active members from 160 alumnae chapters and 42 campus chapters.

“I think the thing I’m most excited about is it’s in



DELTA SIGMA THETA CHARLOTTE ALUMNAE CHAPTER VIA FACEBOOK

Charlotte Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

my city,” regional director Pamela Murphy Lewis said. “I live in South Carolina,

but everything’s here in Charlotte. I work for Wells Fargo, I’ve been here for

quite some time, so to be able to host a conference

Please see **DELTA** | 3B

« RIDES »

Capable Ford Ranger puts driveability and comfort in a midsize pickup body

By Winfred Cross

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Ford Ranger reappeared a few years ago after the automaker killed it for whatever reason.

Ford brought it back bigger and more capable than it was when it left. The Ranger continues to woo buyers with a comfortable ride, spacious cabin and great towing capacity.

The Ranger isn’t Ford’s smallest truck anymore. That title now belongs to the Maverick. We can call the Ranger midsize. It only comes in a crew cab configuration but in four distinct trim levels. My test vehicle was the Lariat, just below the Raptor. You can get a few different engine choices, including a 2.7-liter turbo charged V6 engine. My test car was also equipped with four-wheel drive and could tow up to 7,500 pounds.

The Ranger is a handsome truck. It resembles the much larger F-150 but much easier to drive. It has 9.3 inches of ground

clearance and with a special package has skid plates and some other protection for off-roading. The 5-foot bed gives 43 cubic feet of storage.

The interior is a mix of modern simplicity bordering and unfulfilled potential. Some of the materials looking and feel inexpensive. There is much more that feels upscale such as soft touch surfaces and really comfortable seats. It’s fake leather but that’s becoming more common. The digital dash and vertical touch screen give off high-tech vibes. The touch screen especially feels easy to use and has up to date graphics. The Apple CarPlay app looks really sharp and clear.

The front seats are very comfortable for a truck. Each is power operated ad has the right amount of padding to make long trips tolerable. The rear seat bench is nearly as comfortable. There is also a generous amount of room for three adults.

I got the Ranger on a Friday evening and

Please see **FORD** | 2B



FORD MOTOR CO.

The 2026 Ford Ranger is a comfortable midsize pickup that takes care of passengers, too.

A message to seniors: Live long and prosper

Continued from page 1B

Patterson, the first Black woman ordained in the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, has carved out a second career as an advocate for relationships, wellness, and healthy aging. Since reaching retirement, she's using her own experience to empower people similarly situated or considering it. Those lessons are in "We Ain't Dead Yet," her ninth book.

"We think retirement means it's over for us, but it really means it's just beginning," said Patterson, who grew up in the McCrorey Heights neighborhood in west Charlotte. "I hadn't planned on this ministry. I thought I was going to retire and just put my feet up and watch TV all day. But I do work out and I do post. I'm very active on social media, and lots of women saw me in the gym working out and walking and hiking, and they were like, 'You're this age and you're doing all that. Show me how to do it,' so there's an interest in fitness as we age, and it's about giving people the opportunity. Here's the larger point I want to make - we are some of the first generation to have the luxury of a conversation on longevity."

In addition to practical advice in her book, Patterson believes America needs a different approach - and intergenerational conversation - about aging and social bias. Between longer lifespans and Baby Boomers - people born between 1946-64 - expanding the ranks of retirees, it's overdue.

"Our American society is built on youth and by and youthfulness and being young, and while it has its place ... we are turning the tide on that conversation and saying having age is power," she said. "Having age is wisdom. Having age is not as bad as we make it out to be.

"Our grandmothers, back when we were growing up, had gray hair, and they did kind of sit around. But today's grandmothers are with me in the gym, pumping iron, running 5Ks, running businesses. We are very vibrant and showing the world what we can do. And here's the larger issue: statistically, America is about to go into a time period where there'll be more people over 65 than ever, so our sheer numbers are going to demonstrate a vitality with the concept of aging."

Ford Ranger puts driveability and comfort in midsize pickup

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took it for a short drive. I was pleasantly surprised as to how smoothly this off-roader handled urban streets. The ride was cushy, not choppy. The cabin was very quiet and free of thumps and bumps from the suspension which I found to be delightful. I couldn't wait to put it on the highway.

That short drive proved to be the true nature of the Ranger. The setting didn't matter. The Ranger was a champ on the open highway, bumper-to-bumper traffic or puttering through school zones. Ford has found a way to deliver a comfortable ride from a work truck that also performs very well as a work truck. I'm taking Ford's word on the Ranger's other capabilities. I didn't have anything to tow or loads to haul.

I found the Ranger to be reasonably quick on the highway. Passing power was good and its handling was acceptable for a truck. It's turning radius was also not bad for a truck.

I took the Ranger on the interstate a couple of times and was impressed by the

overall driving experience. The transition shifted without a lot of drama, even under hard acceleration. Wind, road and engine noise was kept in check, even at 70 miles per hour.

The Ranger Lariat comes standard with a lot of equipment. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, dual zone climate control, four-wheel drive, upgrade vinyl seats, 10-speaker Bang & Olufsen audio system, heated steering wheel, 12-inch vertical infotainment touch screen, adaptive cruise control, 360-degree camera system and upgraded digital instrument cluster distinguish this Ranger from the XLT.

The Lariat Ranger starts at \$43,755.

Pros:

- Comfortable cabin
- Excellent road manners
- Room for five
- Strong engine
- Stout towing capacity
- Off-road capability
- Handsome styling

Cons:

- No optional configurations
- Costs more than competition

ACA insurers want premium boost while enrollment sags nationally

Continued from page 1B

about 3 million people compared with the same time last year. While Cox and other policy experts say that's because increased costs for the plans drove out people who feel they can get by without insurance, the Trump administration asserts that much of the enrollment growth under Biden was fraudulent.

The main factor driving proposed premium increases for 2027, as in most years, is the rising cost and use of medical care.

There's growing demand for costly specialty medications and for the weight loss drugs known as GLP-1s, the Peterson-KFF report notes.

But the report also said that about 4 percentage points' worth of the premium increases insurers proposed are due to lasting effects of the expiration of enhanced subsidies. Insurers expect that with young and healthy people leaving the program rather than paying higher premiums, their remaining customers will be older, sicker, and therefore costlier on average.

"It's likely that the people who dropped their coverage were also the healthier people, because sicker people were probably going to try to make it work however they could, to stretch their budget to keep their health insurance," said Cox, of KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.

In their rate filings, some insurers also said they had to raise premiums partly because of policy changes by the Trump administration that are expected to make it harder for some people to enroll.

Together with the expiration of the larger subsidies, the new rules "account for 12.7% of the requested rate change," the insurer UnitedHealthcare wrote in its rate filing with New York state, according to the Peterson-KFF report.

"It is not surprising insurance conglomerates that profited massively off of Biden-era fraud are complaining about efforts to clean up the program," White House spokesperson Kush Desai said in a

statement. He added that the administration "has made it clear that it will not follow its predecessors in giving out taxpayer funded subsidies to big insurance companies through the form of fraudulent and corrupt policies" and that it would "hold big insurance companies accountable."

Another driver of higher premiums cited by several insurers is that claims submitted on behalf of patients have tended to be for more intense - and costly - levels of care than in the past. Such increased severity may be because patients are actually sicker, or it may reflect that hospitals or doctors are using artificial intelligence to find billing codes that can maximize their payments, the report noted.

The use of AI to maximize bills is also a factor driving up the cost of health coverage offered by employers, according to the consulting firm PwC, which has forecasted that the cost of caring for people with job-based coverage will rise by 9% in 2027.

In the ACA, premium increases will primarily affect enrollees with incomes just above 400% of the federal poverty level, amounting to about \$62,600 this year for an individual. That's because they're no longer eligible for subsidies following the expiration of the enhanced tax credits.

People below that level get tax credits to help pay their monthly premium, based on how much they earn and the cost of a "benchmark" ACA plan where they live. As a result, as premiums rise, so do subsidies, shielding many consumers from rising prices but also raising costs for the federal government.

They may have to shop around when enrollment opens for 2027 coverage in October, however. Depending on their particular plan's premium, they may need to switch plans to keep premiums fixed, said Matthew Fiedler, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

KFF Health News senior correspondent Julie Appleby contributed to this report.



DIANA LOPEZ | NC HEALTH NEWS

Kelly Spivey, a Tarboro resident, founded Kelly's Community Pantry to help people in need.

With school out in NC, who will feed the kids?

Continued from page 1B

questionnaires, surveys or forms to be completed.

"It's literally no questions asked," Spivey said. "Just respect the space."

About 1.5 million K-12 public school children in North Carolina are on summer break. The escape from rigid schedules and homework is something that most kids dream about throughout the school year. However, for 1 in 5 North Carolina children and teenagers who have limited access to adequate, safe and nutritious food, summer vacation can be their hungriest time.

More than 850,000 North Carolina students rely on free or reduced-price school breakfast, lunch and after-school snack programs for nutritious meals throughout the year. However, the end of school starts a 10-week period when these students must find meals elsewhere.

According to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, 438,200 students younger than 18 are food insecure across the state, and more than 168,000 of those students reside in the bank's 34-county service area.

The Food Bank of the Albemarle, which serves northeastern North Carolina, reported that 1 in 4 children in its service area face food insecurity.

Local pantries help

Community programs like Spivey's try to make sure children - and the adults in their families - aren't going hungry.

The Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry in Edenton, about 70 miles from Spivey's Community Pantry, regularly distributes food on Mondays and Fridays and has a Commodity Supplemental Food Program for people 60 and older. From early June to mid-August, the pantry also offers the Children's Summer Nutrition Program for families with a child in the Edenton-Chowan Public Schools. On Wednesday evenings, any school-age child who lives in Chowan County is given a meal of either chicken, hot dogs or hamburgers and is sent home with about 20 food items for the weekend, according to Jo Brown, programs manager for the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry.

Brown said that during their summer nutrition programs, they serve a range of 65 to 90 families a week, and sometimes more.

"Last year, from June to August, we had 874 families and 1,775 children we paid food out to," she said.

The Edenton-Chowan pantry also has a mobile program that goes out on the second and third weekends of each month for people facing transportation barriers.

Feed Your Neighbor Community Food Pantry in Greenville doesn't have a bus, but it does provide gas cards for families who might have transportation challenges because of the recent price increases at the pump.

"Thankfully we're able to get gas cards through some of our rewards with our business account that if somebody is needing gas, we can supply that," said Whykeshia White, executive director of Feed Your Neighbor. "But the cost of gas and transportation-wise, it is hard on our pantry because we have to go to the food bank and we have to also purchase groceries weekly to make sure we have enough food for our neighbors."

Traditional programs

While local pantries are doing their best to feed their communities, other governmental and non-governmental programs try to help as well.

Greenville-based ECU Health announced on June 1 that its Summer Youth Meal Program is expanding, adding three new communities to its list this summer. The program, which used to only serve summer meals to children in Greenville, Bethel, Ahoskie and Tarboro, is extending its offerings to Edenton, Roanoke Rapids and Windsor.

Tanya Bullock, the administrative

assistant for ECU's Community Health team, said the program's ultimate goal is to expand to have a site in each of the nine counties that ECU Health Medical Center serves, so they have been working to gain enough support to fund the expansion.

They've partnered with Food Lion Feeds, the grocer's charity initiative to address food insecurity. That's given ECU Health the money to spread their meals across three more counties. The health care system also is partnering with Sodexo, a food services and facilities management group, and the ECU Health Foundation, a philanthropic arm for the nonprofit system that serves 29 counties in eastern North Carolina.

The SUN Bucks food assistance program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides qualifying families with a one-time payment of \$120 for each child to help them buy groceries during the summer months. The state Department of Health and Human Services administers the federal program.

Most children who have been approved for reduced or free school lunch should already be enrolled in the program, according to DHHS. The benefits card can be used in grocery stores, farmers markets and some online retailers.

Additionally, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction administers Summer Nutrition Programs, which provide on-site meals at some schools and community centers where children can eat with other kids and teens. The program also offers free SUN Meals To-Go in some rural areas that can be picked up or delivered.

Turbulent time

Many food assistance programs have seen a sharp rollback of federal funding and aid over the past year.

President Donald Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act almost a year ago, giving his OK to a federal budget that restructured the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The changes include new, stricter work requirements and cutting more than \$186 billion in federal funding over the next decade.

The federal changes shifted more financial and administrative responsibility to states; in North Carolina, social services are provided by the state's 100 counties, thus adding more pressure to county governments, many of which operate on tight budgets already.

On June 18, state Sens. Jay Chaudhuri (D-Raleigh) and Jim Burgin (R-Angier) wrote to U.S. Senate members asking them to delay implementation of the new cost-sharing requirements for SNAP signed into law last year by Trump.

Leaders from prominent hunger-relief organizations in North Carolina also signed onto the letter sent to the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. They asked for postponement of the new cost-sharing rules until 2030, citing concerns about penalties that could be imposed on North Carolina because of what they say was flawed quality control data that fails to accurately reflect error rates. That could lead to North Carolina having to cover an additional \$420 million per year for food assistance, in addition to the administrative costs the federal government is shifting to the states, according to the letter.

"North Carolina is doing the work," Chaudhuri said in a prepared statement. "We've already cut our payment error rate significantly. Penalizing the state now, based on unclear guidance and flawed data from a period of federal chaos, would undermine that progress and put food assistance at risk for more than a million North Carolinians."

Deltas gather in Charlotte for biennial convention

Continued from page 1B
on the home front is amazing.”

DST was founded in 1913 at Howard University and has developed programs addressing education, health, and international development through public service initiatives. Notable members include former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Georgia gubernatorial candidate and former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, actress Keshia Knight Pulliam and CNN journalist Abby Phillip.

The Charlotte Alumnae Chapter was chartered in 1942.

The Charlotte conference is the first since 2018 when the Charlotte Alumnae Chapter was the lone sponsor. This year’s gathering is a more expansive effort with chapters beyond Mecklenburg County participating, including alumnae from Concord, Gastonia, Rock Hill and Union County joining forces with collegiate chapters at Johnson C. Smith University, UNC Charlotte, Davidson College, Wingate University and Winthrop University.

“These smaller chapters would never have an opportunity to host something of this magnitude, thinking about where they’re located,” Lewis said. “Charlotte’s kind of the Mecca, but it doesn’t mean that Charlotte Alumnae have to do it all. We have sisters that are right here that jump right in, and it is a total collaborative effort.”

The conference, which Lewis said has more than 4,000 participants registered, will include workshops, public service projects and training sessions.

“We have 4,600 registered, but I’m expecting well over 5,500 people,” she said. “We will have what I like to call social delegates – those that are just going to come and hang out in the Queen City – but may not be coming directly for the conference. But they’ll be here to help support in another way.”

Among the highlights:

· July 29 – Public Service Impact Day: In advance of the official opening, Delta members will dedicate a day to service initiatives.

The service project will benefit Leah’s Hopes and Dreams and North Carolina Diaper Bank. The public is encouraged to participate.

· July 30 – Public meeting and welcome: The opening program includes sorority awards, community recognitions, and acknowledgments. The program, which is open to the public, will also highlight members of the nine historically Black Greek-letter fraternities and sororities for their leadership, scholarship, service, and community impact.

· July 31 – Step show and stroll competition: Always a crowd favorite, the step show and stroll features high-energy performances of teams performing intricate choreography.

Chapters throughout the South Atlantic Region compete for bragging rights and cash prizes. The ticketed event is open to the public.

· Aug. 1 – Social action luncheon: Jotaka Eaddy, CEO of Full Circle Strategies LLC, and founder of Win with Black Women, is featured. WWBW organized 44,000 participants virtually and raised \$1.6 million for former Vice President Kamala Harris’ presidential campaign in one evening.

· Aug. 2 – Ecumenical service: The speaker is the Rev. Howard John Wesley, senior pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

Byron Cage, an award-winning recording artist, is the musical guest.

Contributions from the services will go to three local beneficiaries: Barber-Scotia College, the first private school in the South to educate Black women, Greater Steps Scholars, which funds scholarships to students from Charlotte public housing and The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, which was co-founded by Delta member Bertha Maxwell Roddey, the sorority’s 20th national president and founding director of UNCC’s Department of African Studies.



BLACK PRESS USA

Emeril Lagasse and his culinary team chart a new course aboard Carnival Cruise Line.

Carnival Cruise Line’s ‘The Next Course’ sets culinary sail

By Dwight Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

When I sailed aboard Carnival Venezia during its inaugural season in 2023, one of my fondest memories was the food.

That must also be true for other passengers, as they filled the restaurants morning, noon and night. I finally understood why there were always long lines at Guy’s Burger Joint, created by Food Network star Guy Fieri, when I bit into one of his juicy burgers.

The Bento Box, Green Tea Cupcake and Kirin Beer at the Bonsai Sushi restaurant were excellent. And my strip loin steak at the steakhouse Fahrenheit 555 was one of the best I had in years. The food spoke to me, and I answered yes.

So, who could top that kind of cuisine and why? That chef is New Orleans culinary icon Emeril Lagasse, famous for his Food Network career and for bringing Cajun-Creole cuisine to a national audience through his television series “Emeril Live.” The James Beard Foundation winner for Best Southeast Regional Chef is the chief culinary officer at Carnival Cruise Line.

Lagasse oversees fleetwide menu development, signature dining room options, and operates his standalone specialty restaurant, Emeril’s Bistro. His plans for cuisine on the seas are ambitious. So, when I attended a tasting of new menu items for four new restaurant choices scheduled for upcoming ships (Carnival Festival in 2027 and Carnival Tropicale in 2028) and updates to current menus, collectively known as “The Next Course,” I was curious to see how CCL could up its culinary game.

Start with the four new restaurants with their four new experiences. Emeril’s Coastal Seafood—Coastal-inspired cuisine from chef Emeril Lagasse. Flavors stretching from the Gulf Coast to New England, accented by Creole, influences set this dining experience apart. Begin with his signature Barbeque Shrimp with a Rosemary Biscuit.

Gulf shrimp are served in a rich cream sauce infused with barbeque stock and complemented by a soft, delectable biscuit. If you choose a Jumbo Lump Blue

Crab Cake for your main course, it’s served with comeback sauce, asparagus, cucumber, heirloom baby tomato, radish and a delicate quail egg.

Uku Lei Lei—Hawaiian specialties and Asian classics. The Hawaiian-inspired menu is so evocative you’ll want to take a trip to the Aloha State. Start with a Lychee Mai Tai cocktail, which features premium ingredients: Bacardi Superior Rum, Captain Morgan Rum, Finest Call Orgeat, freshly squeezed lime juice, Finest Call Triple Sec and Lychee Reál.

Follow that with Crab Rangoon with Pineapple Sweet Chili Sauce appetizers, which look like star-shaped tacos. Tender? The meat on the Mongolian Beef Short Rib entrée falls off the bone. This is the dish you’ll brag about when you get home: Braised beef short rib with a tangy ponzu sauce, garlic and a hint of chili to add a gentle kick.

Fetaccine—Mediterranean-inspired, Italian favorites with Greek specialties. It’s a taste of Southern European cuisine.

The menu blends flavors that evoke Greek islands such as Mykonos and Italian coastal cities such as Naples. The shrimp saganaki makes a great starter dish. You can debate whether the Chicken Parmesan or Greek lamb chops are the better choice for an entrée or just trust the Penne Alta Vodka pasta, with its bacon, mushrooms and tomato sauce. Settle on cannoli for dessert and order a shot of Limoncello liqueur, a favorite from Italy’s Amalfi Coast, to mellow out.

Le Bistro Musicale—Classic French cuisine—exclusively on Carnival Festival. It’s like sitting in a Parisian café. Begin your French-flair meal with French Onion Soup. Tap through the buttery puff-pastry crust and scoop up the rich broth and onions.

Move on to the Chicken Cordon Bleu for a classic treat that includes ham, Emmental cheese and fluffy mashed potatoes. Besides dining for dinner, try the croissants for breakfast or for lunch, get the Croque Madame, a French hot sandwich with layers of ham, cheese, and creamy béchamel, topped with a perfectly fried sunny-side-up egg. You can go French any part of the day.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

Reporters Wendell Smith (right) with (left) Sam Lacy and Dan Bankhead (center) boarding a flight to Santo Domingo for Brooklyn Dodgers training camp.

Crusading journalists changed sports, culture

By Herbert L. White
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Sam Lacy and Wendell Smith were pioneering journalists best remembered for their advocacy of desegregated professional baseball leagues.

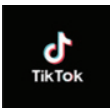
Lacy (1903-2003), one of the first Black members of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. His career in print journalism began in the 1920s, working as a sportswriter at the Washington Tribune, where he was both managing editor and sports editor from 1934-39, before moving to Chicago to become assistant national editor at the Chicago Defender from 1940-1943.

A Howard University graduate, Lacy returned to Baltimore to become a columnist and sports editor for the weekly Baltimore Afro-American, where he worked for more than half a century and authored the popular “A to Z” column.

Lacy’s column was at its peak in the 1930s and 1940s when his activism for desegregation of big-league baseball made the greatest journalistic impact.

Smith (1914-1972), who studied journalism at Virginia State College, began working at the Pittsburgh Courier upon graduation in 1937, first as a sportswriter then sports editor the following year. He is best remembered for his lobbying to desegregate Major League Baseball, which led to Jackie Robinson’s signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. He recommended Robinson to Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey and traveled and roomed with Robinson during the latter’s early Dodgers career. In his later years Smith worked at The Chicago American and WGN-TV in Chicago. He was posthumously inducted into the writer’s wing of The Baseball Hall of Fame in 1994.

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IN LOVING MEMORY

The Rev. Wendell Roncevalle Phillips

Retired Episcopal Priest | Diocese of Georgia
Died peacefully July 4, 2026 | Age 87

The Rev. Wendell Roncevalle Phillips, a retired Episcopal priest serving in the Diocese of Georgia, died peacefully at his home on July 4, 2026, at the age of 87.

During his long ministry, Father Phillips served St. George’s in Astoria, NY; Holy Trinity in Whitefish, Montana; St. Paul’s and St. Matthew’s in Salisbury, NC; St. Michael and All Angels in Charlotte, NC.; and most recently, at the age of 87, as a supply priest at St. Matthew’s in Savannah, GA.

Born in New Rochelle, New York, he faced challenging obstacles at the age of 9 when a coma and high fever from measles encephalitis left him with uncontrolled epileptic seizures and a long road back to normal life. He eventually overcame every obstacle, graduating with honors from Denison University, earning an MDiv from General Seminary and entering ordained ministry as an Episcopal priest in 1966.

Father Phillips was an inspired preacher, an accomplished organizer, and most of all a survivor, who had great compassion and mercy for those who were dealing with the struggles and challenges of life. He was a pastor and friend to many who had been dealt defeating blows, seeing the face of Jesus in the faces of the poor, orphaned and outcast. He was slow to anger, quick to forgive, lighthearted and unusually adept at spinning a good pun. He was never without a favorite book, pressed shirt, raincoat, or tuneful harmony for any occasion. In his final years he was beloved by those he comforted with music in nursing homes and enjoyed hosting neighbors for Christmas carols around the organ in his living room.

Wendell was a good and gentle man who loved his family dearly. Having given his life to Jesus at a Billy Graham crusade in the 1950s, and having run the race set before him, his eternal life has now begun. Well done good and faithful servant.

He is survived by his sons Jonathan Lindsay Phillips (Lauren), Savannah, GA; The Rev. Thomas Morgan Phillips (Julia), Melbourne, FL; four grandchildren Luke, Anna, Sonny, and Bobby; his loving wife of 54 years Linda, and his sister Andrée (Dan) Conklin of Milford, NY. He was preceded in death by a brother, Morgan Phillips, and his parents, Marguerite and the Rev. Canon Wendell W. Phillips, D.D.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

11:00 a.m., Saturday, August 1, 2026
Christ Church Episcopal
28 Bull Street, Savannah, GA 31401

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Datastack Technologies LLC has multiple openings in Charlotte, NC. Computer Programmer (\$92,830/yr): Wrt, Collab, Implmnt, Crrct, Dbug, Creat&Updte code libs. Softwre Engr (\$154,669/yr): Dvlp, Prvd, Tst, build, dsgn, deploy, mntn®ular interaction w/team. All pos req travel&reloc to var unanticipated client locations U.S.-wide w/exp. employer paid. Std. benefits offered. Mail resume&pos to Human Resource Specialist, Datastack Technologies LLC, 7300 Carmel Executive Park, Dr #320, Charlotte, NC 28226;chitra@dstechus.com. EOE

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond seeks Financial Economist (multiple positions) to develop/apply quantitative models for stress testing program. Participate in on-site review & formulation of supervisory policy & publish research project in peer-reviewed academic journals. Conduct applied economic research on emerging issues in bank supervision. \$165k-\$210k/yr. Apply @ https://www.richmondfed.org/about_us/careers. Job# R-0000032631. Job in Charlotte, NC. May travel up to 25% domestically.

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LEGAL NOTICES

INLIVIAN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ACTION: Notice of public comment period and public hearing.

SUMMARY: INLIVIAN has released a draft of the FY2026 Administrative Plan. The Administrative Plan outlines policies and procedures for the operation of the HCV Program in accordance with federal regulations. The proposed changes include updates to program policies to align with current HUD guidance, improve program operations, and enhance service delivery to participants and landlords.

PUBLIC COMMENT: The public comment period begins July 15, 2026, and ends August 14, 2026. Written comments will be accepted via email atshoover@inlivian.com.

PUBLIC HEARING: The public hearing will be held virtually and via the phone on August 4, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. To join the public hearing or to sign up to speak on this matter, please contact the INLIVIAN Customer Service Call Center at 704-336-5183.

To access the draft plan in person, please visit the INLIVIAN Administrative Office located at 400 East Boulevard and all INLIVIAN/Blue Horizon managed properties (by request) beginning July 15, 2026.

To access the draft plan online, visit the INLIVIAN website atwww.INLIVIAN.comunder Housing Choice Voucher: https://www.inlivian.com/housing-choice-voucher/.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS: INLIVIAN is committed to providing equal access to this event for all participants and residents with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation or sign language interpreter service, please contact our ADA/504/Language Department at 704-336-8413 to initiate a request. Please allow at least 3 business days to make the necessary arrangements. If you need a foreign language translator, please contact our ADA/504/Language Department at 704-336-8413. Please allow at least 5 business days to make the necessary arrangements.

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ANDRE DAVIS

The stage production "Man of the House" focuses on domestic abuse with a man as victim. The play takes the stage July 18 at Parr Center Theater at Central Piedmont Community College.

When he’s the victim of abuse

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Domestic abuse isn’t exclusive to one gender.

“Man of the House” is in its 12th year and will stop in Charlotte for a one night only performance July 18 at Central Piedmont Community College’s Parr Center Theater, 1201 Elizabeth Ave. Tickets are available online at simple-tix.com and range from \$47.50 to \$87.79.

The play takes a look into domestic violence with a man as victim of emotional and verbal abuse and challenges common perceptions of what domestic violence can look like. Playwright Andre Davis created the production because he felt abuse against men is often overlooked.

“The fact of the matter is, if you can get into someone’s mind and make them feel like they’re nothing, you don’t ever have to lift your hand at all,” he said. You’ve already done the job because they’re going to self-destruct because they believe now that they are nothing. What you believe, you move it, you manifest it.”

By bringing this story to the stage, the production has helped men see themselves in the narrative and encourages audiences to view domestic abuse from a different perspective.

“This is our 12th year running the show,” Davis said. “To actually hear

Please see **MAN** | 6B

« ON THE MARQUEE »

Grammy winners Usher, Chris Brown in Charlotte

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

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

July 16
“Art After Dark: Where the Cookout Meets Arts + Culture,” Harvey B. Gantt Center, 7-11 p.m.

Ages: 21 and older. Cost: \$15 per participant (plus fees).

Celebration of community, culture, and creativity. The Gantt’s after-hours series unites art lovers, runners, creatives, and the community for an unforgettable night inspired by the joy of a family reunion. Includes live DJs, line dancing, games, interactive art experiences, storytelling, custom screen printing along with the Gantt’s exhibitions.

July 17-18



LAURA CARBONE

Blues guitarist Selwyn Birch will perform a free concert at U.S. National Whitewater Center as part of the River Jam series.

Please see **BLUES** | 6B



MIKAYLA BINTER

Visual artist Mikayla Binter, community manager at Charlotte Is Creative, contends arts give communities of identity and making it accessible makes it possible to see what is possible in terms of creativity.

Arts community building connection and opportunity

Charlotte leans into community model, but access can be a challenge

By Jaslynn Vorachith

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

A city’s identity is the people who reside in it.

In Charlotte, one of the ways it’s defined is through the arts. Whether it be public murals, cinematography, or collectiveness, local artists and organizations are working to create spaces that foster connection and expression.

There’s heart and passion among Charlotte artists and it flourishes through the synergistic relationship between artists and organizations, which provides them with access to resources and opportunities.

“Charlotte’s arts and culture community is growing, diverse, and increasingly community-driven,” said Arts & Science Council vice president of advancement Robert Touchstone.

“ASC’s primary role is being a connector and a funder. Our job is to bring together artists, residents, nonprofits, businesses, philanthropy, and government to strengthen the cultural life of our community.”

Since 2017, ASC’s annual invest-

ment in artists has grown from \$100,000 to over \$1 million in 2025. Touchstone said ASC’s approach has evolved to prioritize inclusivity and neighborhood engagement.

“By listening to residents and spending more time in neighborhoods, we’ve discovered and supported a wider range of artists, traditions, and cultural expressions that reflect the full diversity of Charlotte-Mecklenburg,” he said.

Makayla Binter is community engagement manager at Charlotte Is Creative and a visual artist who does murals, digital illustration, and cus-

Please see **CHARLOTTE** | 6B



Touchstone

Comedy puts a reimagined bite on Dracula

By Nikya Hightower

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Vampire comedy is at Booth Playhouse.

Blumenthal Arts brings “Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors,” an off-Broadway, gender bending comedy that reimagines Bram Stoker’s classic Dracula story, to Charlotte. The production will run through Aug. 9 at Booth Playhouse, 130 N. Tryon St. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased online at Blumenthal Arts.

Christopher Stevens, who plays Dracula, describes this production as playful, sexy and zany. As other adaptations have focused on the more serious lore of Dracula, this adaptation takes the comedic approach, putting a new spin on the classic gothic horror story.

While comedy is at the center of the production, audiences can also find a connection to the story and characters. The story will follow Dracula navigating love, looking for a new home, and of course, encountering a vampire hunter, in what director Gordon Greenberg, mentioned as being a story about scarcity.

“There’s some heart to it,” Stevens said. “There’s some elements that are relatable. What do we do when we think we have everything and we don’t feel fulfilled? How do we go about finding the solution to that?”

Susana Gordon, who plays Lucy, said the adaptation does a good job at stay-



BLUMENTHAL ARTS

The comedic send-up of Bram Stoker’s classic “Dracula” is an off-Broadway stage play at Booth Playhouse through Aug. 9.

ing true to the classic story.

“As silly as it is, there’s something special about finding connection with other people in your life and giving them an opportunity to change,” she said. “Being able to acknowledge that everybody has different layers to themselves and embracing those layers and embracing the flaws in all of us is

something that the show really drives home.”

The cast brings the comedy to life with five actors playing more than 12 characters along with quick costume changes and physical comedy.

“The five of us always joke that the sixth actor is the audience,” Gordon

Please see **REIMAGINED** | 6B

Charlotte community builds arts connection

Continued from page 5B

tomization. She contends art gives communities a sense of identity and making it easily accessible allows people to see what is available in terms of creative expression “where Charlotte’s soul is.”

“For most cities to have visible public art, obviously it’s free to look at, that’s incredible,” said Binter, a 2020 Davidson College graduate in biology and studio art who earned a master’s in urban design at UNC Charlotte in 2022. “Charlotte’s one of the lucky cities that it doesn’t necessarily matter if it’s about the murals. It’s a whole bunch of other mediums that come together to showcase how cool our city is.”

Binter cites arts accessibility as vital for a community’s well-being including mental and physical health.

“Your brain is able to slow down and process things, and it also provides additional context and ability to communicate maybe how you’re feeling,” she said. “It allows for people to process traumas, and so I think it’s like really important for us to have that access.”

Jayden Hollins, a third-year communication arts student at Johnson C Smith University, freelances as a videographer and photographer. In his work with My Brothers Keeper, a non-profit that transforms rising artists, he’s applying skills such as facilitating and programming.

Hollins’ style of work is to showcase the beauty in flaws, also specializing in the use of color such as stark contrasts and grading to tell a story.

“What I do deals with people of color internationally, and in my photography, you see a really bold and intentional use of color,” he said. “I hope that my art encourages somebody to look at the world, at themselves, their community a little bit differently, to think critically about those things. That’s the goal.”

There’s a notable adversity that Hollins has found about getting support and funding especially from philanthropic organizations.

“I’ve noticed some really inspiring beacons of hope in the arts community in Charlotte,” he said. “Sometimes we just wish that our financial support would match that moral support. You generally never see a serious support from institutions for arts initiatives...because artists is deemed as not necessary.”

Compared to bigger U.S. cities like New York, and countries like Japan, France, and the Netherlands, Charlotte’s emerging art scene is moving forward although still conservative in some respects. The culture is also collaborative and fresh.

“I realize that Charlotte sometimes likes to play it safe,” she said, “and I think that’s like a Southern Belt thing. ... Charlotte is a very young city comparatively. That means with every new event, every new mural, every new project, every new public art

piece, it is actively creating history, and I find that really cool. That’s really unheard of in a lot of other cities around the world, so I think it’s easy to jump into Charlotte and make an impact fast, and I think that’s really unique.”

On the other end of the spectrum, people engage in the arts by curating events.

Ivana Ruff is vice president and event planner for Gyal Gala, where she does community outreach for the business, which is a platform for artists to present their creativity.

“I feel like that is one of the ways that we do have the community show up,” she said, “We hosted an art gallery once, and we had a lot of local talent ... artists come out and they were able to do a showcase in their own select rooms.”

The purpose of Gyal Gala is to bring forth “niche content or aesthetics” with events as an outlet for people to express interests that may seem rare or uncommon.

“It’s all about bringing...niche groups of things to the forefront for people to be able to express themselves, to be able to have that space available,” she said. “We always aim for that and try to curate that space specifically for those groups of people.”

... “There’s just a lot of people that I’ve gotten the opportunity to know that motivates me to want to do better because they’re just doing such great things and they have so many talents. There’s a lot of hidden gems regarding people in Charlotte.”

Gyal Gala has partnered with Charlotte Shout, which holds annual events to celebrate the city’s art culture and community. Two members created art for Shout’s 2024 Easter Egg event.

“They did a wonderful job making that art piece, and it was on display uptown,” she said. “As long as you reach out, apply for different things that the city has to offer. There’s so many opportunities, and they’re always looking for new faces. You just need to have the talent.”

Said Touchstone: “Arts and culture are incredibly impactful because they help create a sense of belonging. They bring people together, help communities tell their stories, and allow residents to see themselves reflected in the places where they live.”

“You can’t build a thriving, global city without also investing in the experiences that make people want to live, work, and raise a family there.”

Binter advises emerging artists who want to start a career do so here.

“It’s exactly what you make of it,” she said. “Show up, do the work, and like you will be rewarded, but again, if you’re not willing to do that as an emerging artist, it could look really pretty on the outside to an artist who you’d view as successful, but it’s because they had to do the work too.”

“Charlotte is boring if you stop exploring, so if you come to Charlotte with an open mind and a willingness to explore, you’re gonna find exactly what you’re looking for.”

lence education programs at colleges and universities.

“The response from the students has been great,” Davis said. “It was just eye opening for us as the cast sitting there. That’s when the project was well beyond me just putting on a stage play.”

Davis hopes the play can raise awareness for audiences to recognize the signs of emotional abuse if they or someone they know experiences it.

“The play is still going stronger and getting more legs underneath it,” he said. “It’s just a blessing and a testament to me that as long as I’m continuing to do what God has ordained me to do, it’s going to flourish.”

Blues guitarist Selwyn Birch at free Whitewater Center concert

Continued from page 5B

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.

Tickets available at: raymondandbrown.com.

July 18
Family First: Symbols of Us is Back, Harvey B. Gantt Center, 12-2 p.m. Ages: 7 and older.

Cost: \$10 per participant (plus fees).

An afternoon to celebrate creativity, culture, and family connection through an interactive workshop led by teaching artist Dawnunique. Create a custom, family-inspired emblem rooted in storytelling, heritage, and shared values, then bring your designs to life through screen printing.

July 25
Fetty Wap at 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.

Aug. 13

Selwyn Birch, U.S. National Whitewater Center, 5000 Whitewater Center Pkwy. Showtime is 7 p.m. Free admission as part of River Jam.

The blues guitarist, vocalist and cinematic songwriter Selwyn Birchwood will give a free performance as part of the River Jam concert series. Birch is performing in support of the release of his fifth Alligator Records album, *Electric Swamp Funkin’ Blues*. For information: whitewater.org/events-races/river-jam.

Sept. 18
New Generation Tour, Bo-jangles Coliseum. Multi-platinum artist Young Thug makes his first headlining run since 2019. Special guest Nav. The tour will also showcase the label’s newest signees, Tezzus, Diamond*, 1300saint, Iyrus, Yume, Biggs, and Unky. Tickets available at newgenerationlive.com.

Sept. 19
Emmy award-winning journalist *Don Lemon* and comedian and radio host *D.L. Hughley* extend their DL + DL ‘Anything Goes’ tour to Ovens Auditorium at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$55 to \$197 and are available at Ticketmaster.

Together, the pair delivers a comedy-meets-politics live experience where no topic is off limits.

Oct. 10
Daley, Neighborhood Theatre at 8 p.m. The British singer, songwriter and creative artist has worked with Stevie Wonder, Damon Albarn, Marsha Ambrosius, Robert Glasper, Jill Scott, Pharrell Williams and Jessie J. He’s worked his way to Billboard chart success in the U.S. and critical acclaim from the Grammys, BET and Soul Train Awards.

Tickets: neighborhoodtheater.com.

Nov. 14
Boney James, Knight Theater, 7:30 p.m. The contemporary jazz artist is live in Charlotte for one night only. The concert includes an intimate show of with classic favorites and live music magic. Tickets: blumenthalarts.org.

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‘Man of the House’ flips script with a man as abuse victim

Continued from page 5B

men come up to me at the end of the show to say that this was their story, that they were doing everything that they could, but it just seemed like it was going unnoticed.” Davis said.

Davis said traditional expectations of masculinity can make it difficult for some people to recognize men as abuse victims.

“They just didn’t see how that would even be possible because men, you’re taught to be a man, to be strong, to be the head,” Davis said. “It just didn’t seem fathomable for a lot of females.”

Over the years, “Man of the House” has also been used as part of domestic vio-

lence education programs at colleges and universities.

“The response from the students has been great,” Davis said. “It was just eye opening for us as the cast sitting there. That’s when the project was well beyond me just putting on a stage play.”

Davis hopes the play can raise awareness for audiences to recognize the signs of emotional abuse if they or someone they know experiences it.

“The play is still going stronger and getting more legs underneath it,” he said. “It’s just a blessing and a testament to me that as long as I’m continuing to do what God has ordained me to do, it’s going to flourish.”

Reimagined comedy puts the bite on ‘Dracula’ saga

Continued from page 5B

said. “It really is different every single night. A lot of times when we feel their energy and feel their reaction, it can really just change that show specifically for the better. It’s so fun to be a part of.”

Stevens hopes Charlotte audiences take the opportunity to experience live theater together. “It can be so easy to stay at home and turn the TV on or throw on Netflix and have that be the regular swing of things on a day-to-day basis,” he said. “But for you to be able to come out and gather in a room full of people, full of strangers and share an experience to-

gether, to laugh together, to cry together, to think about things in a new way together. I hope that the folks here in Charlotte can come with an open mind and enjoy that communal shared experience.”

Gordon wants audiences to enjoy having a good laugh and connect with the production.

“Ninety minutes where you can be invested in crazy kooky characters and seeing us work so hard to make this happen, because it’s something very special,” she said. “I hope that they’re able to feel a pull on their heartstrings of the fact that connection is so important, especially now.”

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