



THOUGHT CATALOG

Avocado deliver fiber and healthy fats that supplement protein that reduce chronic disease and supports metabolic health.

Beyond protein: 2 important nutrients for your diet

BRANDPOINT

Everyone seems to be focused on protein these days.

The truth is that most people already get enough protein. But a recent report from the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee found that 95% of Americans fall short of consuming the recommended amounts of fiber to promote health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. At the same time, many also eat too much saturated fat versus unsaturated fat.

Why fiber and healthy fats matter

Dietary fiber and healthy fats are key players in supporting overall metabolic health.

"Fiber and healthy fats are a powerful duo," said registered dietitian and Avocados -Love One Today spokesperson Marina Chaparro. "Together, these nutrients help you feel full longer, make meals more satisfying and can help steady your blood sugar."

Scientists keep investigating the health benefits of avocado goodness. Avocados pull double duty by offering fiber and healthy fats in one nutrient-dense package, slowing digestion to help you feel fuller longer, which can offer weight management benefits, may help with type 2 diabetes management and play a role in blood sugar management.

Additionally, if you're using a GLP-1, healthy avocados can help small meals feel more filling and sat-

Please see **BEYOND** | 2B

Have knee pain? Research suggests surgery isn't best

By Elisabeth Rosenthal

KFF HEALTH NEWS

Thousands of Americans who undergo a common knee surgery might be making their problems worse rather than better.

Researchers who followed patients for 10 years after they received either the actual procedure, arthroscopic knee surgery to trim degenerative cartilage tears, or merely "sham surgery" — a skin incision — for knee pain, found that the surgery provided little or no benefit and was, in fact, associated with accelerated osteoarthritis and higher rates of reoperation. That generally meant a total knee replacement.

"I don't know how I would defend this procedure at all," said one of the study's authors, Teppo Järvinen, an orthopedist and the head of the Finnish Centre for Evidence-Based Orthopaedics. "What has been shown dramatically is that patients who have this procedure have more pain — they do worse. All the scores pointed in the same direction."

Järvinen said the Finnish study, published in April in the New England Journal of Medicine, was the first to show the surgery left many patients worse off. Though the study was small, the results were compelling, he said, because his team picked the patients "most likely to benefit."

The study does not apply to cartilage tears incurred from an acute pain-causing injury. It included subjects middle-aged or older who were experienc-

Please see **GOT** | 2B

« RIDES »

Toyota 4Runner has the power and rugged lines to attract and hold attention

By Winfred Cross

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Toyota finally revamped the 4Runner in 2025 to much success.

A new body with an updated interior has breathed new life into this stalwart SUV. There was no need to make any drastic changes for 2026. My TRD Sport model had the Heritage Blue paint job that I think is either new or what's called a running change. It drew lots of compliments from onlookers.

Most 4Runners get a turbocharged four-cylinder engine that make 278 horsepower and 317 pounds-feet of torque. That's what my car got. I prefer the burly I-Force

Max hybrid, but this engine has enough power to get the job done.

The 4Runner can hold five people but the three in back may wish for more legroom. Toyota decided to put a bit more space in the rear for stuff other than passenger space. You get more cargo space when you lower the rear seat if you don't want to carry anyone but your front passenger.

Lack of space is really the 4Runner's only downfall. The updated interior has a modern yet rugged feel. The cloth seats are grippy with heaters in the front. The TRD Sport is a step above the SR5, which comes with a lot of stan-

dard equipment. Frontal collision mitigation, adaptive cruise control, lane assistance, traffic jam assist and blindspot warning with rear cross traffic warning are all part of the safety package.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto standard as well as keyless entry and start, power lift gate window, roof rails, eight-speaker audio system and 8-inch infotainment touch screen.

By stepping up to the TRD Sport model, you get 20-inch wheels, heated side mirrors, digital instrument panel, wireless charging pad, single-zone automatic climate control and two household-style power outlets round out



TOYOTA

The 2026 Toyota 4Runner has few changes from the previous year's model other than more width and height.

the additional equipment. The 4Runner's looks are still rugged. Rough edges

have been rounded and smoothed over but its looks are more updated

than radically changed. The grille looks like the Please see **TOYOTA** | 2B



CORY WILKINS

Cory Wilkins, one of Charlotte's top cuisine advocates, has designed Ovedere, an app that connects communities to restaurateurs.

On the menu: This app connects foodies, cuisine

Cory Wilkins launches Overdere software to locate restaurants

By Ashleigh Fields

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Cory Wilkins is embracing his latest food venture with the Ovedere app, designed to connect communities to restaurateurs across the globe.

The platform, designed partially by Claude, an artificial intelligence assistant created by Anthropic, aids users on the hunt for new food spots by mapping out their distance from eateries bookmarked on the app. Users can create lists of their favorite food spots to share with friends or tabulate a queue of restaurants they're looking to try while out of town.

"The app name is a play on words, referencing how south-

erners say 'over there' because the app itself was a place-saving app," Wilkins said. "It came about because I do a lot of traveling and I like to eat at a bunch of different restaurants when I travel and there was just no good way to keep all of that organized for the restaurants and things to do and kind of map out an actual efficient way to visit all of these restaurants and things to do.

"Instead of continuing to use bookmarking on Google Maps and all of these different platforms, I decided to build it because I do have a background in software development."

Wilkins previously worked at several major companies includ-

Please see **ON THE MENU** | 2B



CORY WILKINS

Cory Wilkins on the genesis of Overdere's name: "The app name is a play on words, referencing how southerners say 'over there.'"

Bringing relief to NC maternity deserts

By Lucas Tomae

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS

A former state health director, a family physician and a coalition of health-care organizations are working to bring perinatal care closer to home for expectant and new mothers across the state.

With \$2.8 million from the Charlotte-based Leon Levine Foundation, the group seeks to bring prenatal and postpartum care to at least 10 rural counties that are located in maternity deserts. These areas lack or have limited access to obstetric services at hospitals or private practices.

Perinatal data from the nonprofit March of Dimes shows that 38 counties in North Carolina are considered maternity deserts or have low access to maternity care. More than half of those counties don't have a hospital with a labor and delivery unit, a birthing

center or obstetric providers at all.

The problem of maternity deserts has become worse as more hospitals, particularly those in rural areas, eliminate labor and delivery services to save money. Carolina Public Press reported on the issue and potential solutions in its 2025 investigative series, Deserting Women.

Physician Shannon Dowler, who is leading the effort to expand access to perinatal care, told CPP that the program aims to set up a shared maternity care model. This is an arrangement where pregnant women receive prenatal services from a local provider but deliver their baby and receive immediate postpartum care at a hospital.

"We want every woman to have access to a medical home for her pregnancy without having to travel an



MELISSA SUE GERRITS | CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS

UNC Health Caldwell in Lenoir, seen here on March 14, 2025. The hospital is one of several across the state that eliminated labor and delivery services since 2013.

hour or two hours to get that care," Dowler said.

While the grant money associated with the program won't open up any new hospital delivery units in maternity deserts, it will go to community health centers and local health departments that are interested in expanding their

services to include maternity care.

Many of the clinics that will receive this funding already have a medical provider on staff, such as a family physician, who is qualified to deliver prenatal care, Dowler said. It's simply a matter of giving

Please see **CHARLOTTE** | 2B

On the menu: An app connects foodies, cuisine

Continued from page 1B

ing OpenSpace and SignUpGenius but is now a full-time content creator. He said digital influencers were in mind when he was building out the app.

"I focus heavily on a lot of restaurants here in Charlotte," he said. "I get asked constantly what are my favorite places. Where should I go? Where should I go eat? Where should I go celebrate a birthday? This allows me to, instead of spending a lot of time responding to that question over and over, I can just send them my map.

"They can filter through it. They can find their own places. And it also helps too, just with overall branding. Because it's hard for people to easily find restaurants using social media, just because nobody wants to sit there and watch, you know, three hours of video just to find a spot to have their birthday dinner."

Wilkins runs several social media accounts raging from Tha Daily Special, which focuses on food and grocery deals to EATBLKCLT, an online group that hosts an annual week long food festival and digital directory that highlights and supports Black-owned restaurants, food trucks and culinary businesses.

Soon, the Ovedere app will feature a similar nod to the Queen City's Black-owned food venues.

"I'll have one here in Charlotte soon that is for just Black-owned restaurants and Black-owned businesses if people want to use that," he said.

The app also allows users to follow others as they spotlight restaurants for momentous occasions, family dinners or casual stroll through a new city.

"One of my favorite features is the day planner, which allows you to take things that you have on your list and actually map out a day or multiple days, which is great for traveling," Wilkins said. "You can literally add five or six restaurants to the day planner and it will then help you to navigate and map out what's the most efficient way to go to all these places. It'll literally put them on the list.

"It'll tell you the distance between them, whether it's better to walk or drive and it'll show you the route on

the map. ...

"With these maps, you can very easily share them out to your friends. You can make your map public or private and same with the day plans as well."

Ovedere is available free on both Apple and Google Play stores, thanks in part to AI.

"It sped up the time that it would have taken me to build this app and other apps that I'm working on exponentially," Wilkins said. "It would have taken me probably eight months to a year to do by myself.

"I was able to knock it out in a month and a half, two months and that's including design, framework, applying to get it into the App Store, Apple, all of that."

Wilkins acknowledged his background in software development has been "key" to a smooth rollout.

"If you don't have that background, it can be a little intimidating just with some of the terminology and just especially when it comes to security and security risk and things that it might not naturally just implement," he said.

Wilkins said despite technology's role in making the platform a reality, his overall goal is to encourage community.

"I want to cover everyone," he said. "If you want to go out, you'll be able to find restaurant deals and specials on Tha Daily Special site. If you want to cook, you'll be able to go and find the best grocery deals on the site. I'll be dropping also just Charlotte guides in a blog like style in addition to public shops that you should go to or like listicles and things like that.

"So, giving people a good overall resource just to go to and save money regardless of what they're doing, whether it's restaurants or cooking and just place to, you know, build community. Cause I do want to eventually do some events with the grub club and things like that and just bring people together."

Wilkins has already spun off several partnerships with shops in the area like Seemingly Overzealous and 77 & Belle, a Black-owned coffee shop.



UNSPASH

Research published in the New England Journal of Medicine found arthroscopic knee surgery left many patients with knee pain worse off than before the procedure.

Got knee pain? Research suggests surgery isn't best

Continued from page 1B

ing knee pain and whose MRIs showed cartilage tears.

Evidence has been accumulating steadily for over a decade that arthroscopic knee surgery to shave torn, degenerative cartilage does not help more than physical therapy. Arthroscopic rates in Finland have dropped 90%, Järvinen said. They have been falling in the U.S., too, but at a far slower rate.

One study of commercial claims in the U.S., which counted over 2 million meniscus surgeries from 2010 to 2020, found the number decreased by about 4% each year. Most procedures were performed on women and patients in their 50s.

In the traditional Medicare fee-for-service program, the number of procedures has declined steadily in recent years, from about 169,000 in 2014 to 91,000 in 2024, federal data shows. These figures do not include beneficiaries in Medicare Advantage, private insurance plans that cover more than half of Medicare enrollees.

Prior studies of scans have found that such tears are common in people over 50, the result of wear and tear and often not painful.

"Nothing supports the idea that a patient's pain comes from the meniscus," Järvinen said.

Robert Brophy, director of the Orthopaedic Clinical Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis, said that "evidence is growing for judicious use of this surgery in this population." But, he noted, "many patients do benefit."

All the same, he acknowledged that current practice among his peers is "all over the map." For example, data shows that surgery for meniscus tears in the Medicare population is far more common in the South than in the Northeast.

A massive study committee of orthopedic societies in Europe and the U.S. last June released a consensus statement noting that "degenerative meniscus lesions can be treated with comparable results with either non-operative (including physical therapy) or surgical approach." It recommended a trial of physical therapy before surgery but still endorsed the operation.

A concerted campaign by orthopedic specialty societies called the Save the Meniscus Society has been ongoing for years. The group advocates for protecting and maintaining long-term knee health through nonsurgical treatments, surgical repair, and other therapies.

One inherent issue in all medical specialties is that appropriate treatment is often in the eye of the physician beholder, meaning that specialists create the guidelines for when a treatment is in

order. And financial considerations may influence that decision, Järvinen said.

In the U.S., physician payments are decided by the Relative Value Scale Update Committee, or RUC, a committee of the American Medical Association composed largely of specialists. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and his advisers have reportedly looked into wresting control of that committee from the association, though it's not clear how that could be done, since the AMA owns the billing codes used to calculate patients' charges.

Arthroscopic knee surgery takes 30 to 60 minutes in the operating room, and the patients spend a few hours recovering in a surgery center or in a hospital outpatient department. Medicare allots on average \$2,159 to \$3,875 for the procedure, depending on where it is performed; patients pay 20% of the fee as coinsurance. There may be additional costs, for example, if more than one doctor is involved in the procedure.

Commercial insurers average well more than twice that, said Marcus Dorstel, a senior vice president at the data analytics firm Turquoise Health, adding that the amount providers charge for the procedure varies widely. Those charges do not include the fees of the surgeons and the anesthesiologist.

Treating chronic knee pain has a variegated history.

Fifty years ago, the treatment for cartilage tears, from acute injury or from wear and tear, was to remove the entire piece of cartilage. At that time, doctors did not consider it a shock absorber but a useless, vestigial piece of tissue like the appendix.

Today, the first-line therapy for a painful knee with degenerative tears is physical therapy and, for some people, weight loss. Then there is arthroscopic surgery, depending on the view of the surgeon about its utility.

There is also a menu of injections: Steroids have proved scientifically valuable in the short term. And injections of stem cells and plasma-rich protein are widely offered but are controversial — and not covered by most insurance — because studies have been at best inconclusive about their benefit.

And as orthopedists are backing away from shaving off meniscus tears, they are highlighting a newer procedure — sewing the torn cartilage back into a whole. But that is typically an option for patients under 50 with acute injuries and clean tears, and it is unclear exactly which patients might benefit.

When all else fails, there's a different surgery that's also a big moneymaker for hospitals and doctors: knee replacement.

Toyota 4Runner has power and rugged lines to attract attention

Continued from page 1B

current Toyota family. The fenders are wider as is the entire vehicle and the rear has a more tailored look.

The rugged theme continues inside with buttons and switchgear having a weightier feel and bulkier. Everything is more modern looking but not slick.

The vehicle is a bit wider and taller, but cabin space is only marginally larger. Front passengers have better room and a nearly panoramic view off the road.

I found the ride quality to be good for a truck with

20-inch wheels. I remained comfortable during in-town driving and sprints on the freeway. Those looking for an everyday driver that do some heavy lifting in a pinch should seriously consider this vehicle.

The 4Runner TRD Sport starts at \$48,550. I don't think my test car any extra packages or dealer add-ons. Combine the \$1,595 for delivery with the base price and the as-tested price came to \$50,145.

I'd like to see a V6 option in the 4Runner's future. Nissan is finding a resur-

gence in the U.S. by offering such an engine in its SUVs and trucks. Toyota may need to revisit that idea.

- Pros:**
- Great styling
 - Strong four-cylinder engine
 - Rugged, handsome looks
 - Modern interior
 - Moderate off-road capability
 - OK fuel economy
- Cons:**
- No V6 option
 - Cramped second row

Beyond protein: Two important nutrients for addition to your diet

Continued from page 1B

isying while meeting your nutrient needs.

In fact, according to a study of more than 27,000 adults, supported by the Avocado Nutrition Center and published in the journal "Internal Medicine Review," people who ate just over half of an avocado per day weighed 7.5 pounds less, had smaller waist sizes and tended to have healthier overall eating habits, including higher intakes of fiber and healthy fats, compared to people who didn't eat avocados.

While these findings are encouraging, they show an association, not cause and effect, and thus more research is needed to confirm these findings in other populations.

Avocados make it easy

Changing your eating habits to include more fiber and healthy fats can be easy. This summer, you can set and meet daily goals for eating more of these two key nutrients with one whole food - fresh avocado. And there are so many ways to enjoy avocado throughout the day - from

breakfast smoothies and chia puddings to satisfying snacks and dips, refreshing frozen treats and even baked goods. Creamy, delicious avocados can make it easy to hit your daily fiber and healthy fats goals.

"There are so many simple avocado recipes to add flavor, variety, nutrition and joy across the day," said Chaparro. "One new favorite for me is Avocado and Blueberry Chia Seed Pudding. One serving of this delicious pudding delivers healthy fats and contains half of the daily recommended amount of fiber. An easy, filling breakfast or snack!"

It's time to think beyond protein

Remember, protein is important, but the nutrition gap experts are prioritizing to fill is with fiber and healthy fats. One food that makes it easier to get both fiber and healthy fats in each bite is avocados. They're a delicious addition to breakfasts, snacks and everyday meals.

To discover more ways to incorporate avocados in your diet with easy recipes, head to LoveOneToday.com/avocados.

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UNSPLASH

Learning CPR can go a long way toward preparing people to respond to a cardiac emergency anywhere. According to the American Heart Association, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in the United States annually.

Save a life this summer: Step up safety practices

FEATURE IMPACT

The busy summer season can take you almost anywhere – baseball fields, backyard cookouts, long workdays or road trips across the country.

Regardless of where you are, summer is a reminder that emergencies like cardiac arrest can happen anywhere.

More than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States each year, and 90% of people will not survive, according to the American Heart Association, a non-profit organization devoted to changing the future for a world of healthier lives for all. Sudden cardiac arrest can happen anytime, anywhere. People often hesitate to step in. In fact, nearly 2 out of 3 adults believe CPR can only be performed by medical professionals. This mistaken belief can cost lives and contributes to the low survival rate.

Ordinary people have extraordinary power. You don't need to wear scrubs or have a medical background to save a life – you just need the courage to act.

Take the safety of those around you into your own hands this summer with this checklist.

Plan ahead

Summer is often a time for welcome disruptions, including vacations, camps, sports and parties. Before traveling or attending events, check if your destination has a cardiac emergency response plan, which establishes specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in any setting, from schools and community organizations to workplaces and sports facilities.

Learn CPR

Cardiac arrest can happen anywhere: at home, at work, in schools, at a soccer game or on vacation. When it happens, the first chance for survival often rests with the people nearby.

Anyone can be the difference before professional help arrives. The power to save a life is in your hands. CPR is a human responsibility, not just a medical skill. When friends, family or even strangers step in during cardiac emergencies, survival rates can double or even triple.

Hands-Only CPR for adults consists of two easy steps:

- Call 9-1-1 or shout for someone else to call.

- Push hard and fast in the center of the chest to the beat of a familiar song that's 100-120 beats per minute, such as "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees.

Share resources with family and community

Once you've learned simple, two-step Hands-Only CPR, share resources with your community to help expand the American Heart Association's Nation of Lifesavers. Raising awareness with family, neighbors and colleagues can help people feel confident in the face of an emergency.

Families can watch short instructional videos that demonstrate the life-saving steps for adults as well as techniques for infants and children.

Travelers can also get trained in about five minutes with a Hands-Only CPR Kiosk, located in many airports and public spaces across the country.

To find more information about learning CPR, visit [Heart.org/Nation](https://www.heart.org/Nation).

Summer safety tips

In addition to learning CPR and sharing valuable resources with your family and community, consider these ways to keep yourself and loved ones safe throughout the summer months.

- Stay hydrated: High temperatures can quickly lead to dehydration and

heat-related illness. Drink water regularly throughout the day, especially during outdoor activities, and pack extra water when away from home.

- Protect your skin: Hats, sunglasses and lightweight clothing can protect skin from sun exposure, but it's important to use broad-spectrum sunscreen and reapply every 2 hours.

- Swim with a buddy: Hopping in a pool, lake or ocean is a hallmark of summer but can be dangerous without precautions. Never swim alone and ensure children are always supervised by an adult near water.

- Identify the locations of safety equipment: When attending camps, heading to a sporting event or enjoying the pool or beach, identify where lifeguards, AEDs and emergency exits are located. Knowing where to find help can save valuable time when every second counts.

- Practice grill safety: Some of your most memorable summer moments may happen during a backyard barbecue or cookout, and it's important to keep those gatherings safe. Use grills away from homes, decks and dry grass. Never leave them unattended while cooking, and be sure kids and pets stay at a safe distance from hot surfaces.

Saving a life within a year of learning CPR

On a chilly Tuesday, dawn was breaking as Matthew Lynch reached his highway exit, but traffic was backed up at a particular intersection. He waited through three cycles before finally getting close enough to see the holdup: a stalled SUV.

While most cars buzzed by, Lynch moved slowly and peered into the vehicle. He saw people inside and parked his sedan, flipped on the hazard lights and ran to the stalled SUV. As he knocked on the driver's window, there was no response. The doors were locked. Two people – a male driver and female passenger – were unresponsive.

Lynch ran back to his own car and called 9-1-1 before managing to open the driver's side door. He discovered the driver was not breathing normally, signaling to Lynch he'd need to start CPR – which he'd learned 10 months earlier during a training session he'd helped organize for a work-sponsored men's group.

Knowing he had to do something, Lynch started pushing hard and fast in the center of the man's chest. Within a minute, the man gasped for breath.

Just as Lynch leaned over to see if he could help the female passenger, first responders arrived and Lynch backed away, knowing there was nothing more he could do.

"It was just a lot to take in," said Lynch, a member of the American Heart Association's 2026 Nation of Lifesavers Class, a small group of volunteers, dedicated to raising awareness of CPR by sharing their own personal stories of survival or rescue. "Mostly I felt an incredible sense of gratitude that I could help someone."

A strong admirer of the Good Samaritan parable, Lynch is always on the lookout for the opportunity to help others. He learned a lot about himself in that moment and about the importance of learning CPR, along with the confidence that comes from knowing you could be a lifesaver.

"I quickly realized the certification was way less important than the actual CPR training," he said. "Your ability to help in any capacity is better than doing nothing. If I hadn't done that training, I probably would not have helped."

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »



WIKIPEDIA

Ron Brown was the first Black American to chair a major U.S. political party when he led the Democratic National Committee from 1989-93 and later was appointed commerce secretary.

Ron Brown blazed trails in US politics and commerce

BRITANNICA

Ron Brown (1941-1996) was an American politician, the first African American to be chairman (1989-93) of a major U.S. political party and the first to be appointed secretary of commerce (1993-96).

Brown's father managed the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, which was frequented by celebrities, politicians, and the black social elite. His parents were successful and well-educated, and he was sent to exclusive primary and preparatory schools in New York City before enrolling at Middlebury College in Vermont. Brown was a member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps; after graduating, he spent four years abroad at various army postings before returning to the United States.

He worked for the National Urban League as a caseworker and attended St. John's University School of Law at night, earning a J.D. in 1970.

Brown moved to Washington, D.C., to work for the Urban League and became active in the Democratic Party. In 1979 he joined the presidential campaign of Senator Edward Kennedy. Though the cam-

paign was unsuccessful, Brown proved adept at political work and in 1982 became deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Brown had been made the first Black partner in the influential and politically connected law firm of Patton, Boggs & Blow, where he represented many high-profile clients, including Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, and learned the business of corporate lobbying.

While serving as chief strategist for the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson in 1988, Brown took on the job of managing the Democratic National Convention. He then won the position of chairman of the DNC, downplaying racial overtones and demonstrating his considerable fundraising and strategic skills. After the election of President Bill Clinton in 1992, Brown was named secretary of commerce, successfully promoting U.S. business interests worldwide.

On April 3, 1996, the plane carrying Brown and a delegation of U.S. business leaders crashed in Croatia, killing all aboard.

the charlotte post
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POST BEST GALA

2026

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AUCTIONS

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BIDS

NOTICE TO BIDDERS / ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Cabarrus County Schools (CCS) is accepting sealed bids for Ultra Low Sulfur #2 Undyed Diesel Fuel under Invitation for Bids No. TD 2026-1.

The specifications will be available beginning Wednesday, August 5, 2026, on the Cabarrus County Schools website under Departments, Transportation, Bids & Purchasing Opportunities, or may be picked up at the Cabarrus County Schools Transportation Department, 111 Union Cemetery Road SW, Concord, NC 28027.

If further information is needed, please contact Matthew Hurlocker, Director of Transportation, at matthew.hurlocker@cabarrus.k12.nc.us.

Bid Opening Location, Date and Time:

Sealed bids will be received until 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026, at the Cabarrus County Schools Transportation Department, 111 Union Cemetery Road SW, Concord, NC 28027, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Electronic bid submissions will also be accepted in accordance with the bid specifications. No bids will be accepted after 3:00 p.m on this day.

Cabarrus County Schools is requesting bids for approximately 550,000 gallons of Ultra Low Sulfur #2 Undyed Diesel Fuel. The bid specifications include two purchasing options and complete terms and conditions, contract requirements, and submission instructions. Failure to follow instructions will result in unqualified bids at the owners discretion and will not be accepted.

Cabarrus County Schools reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive informalities in the bidding process.

EMPLOYMENT

Amazon.com Services LLC seeks candidates for the following (multiple positions available) in Charlotte, NC. Apply at: <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/>, referencing job ID AMZ27599.1: Pathways Operations Mgr - MBA (Job ID: AMZ27599.1). Responsible for all budgetary, people development, and operations objectives for a Fulfillment Center. Manage and lead a team of Area Managers. Partial telecommuting permitted; employees will be required to report to office multiple days per week. Salary Range: \$145787 - \$162000.

Lead Data Engineer (Circle K Stores Inc., Charlotte, NC) Spearhead the design, development, & implementation of data solutions to empower the organization to derive actionable insights from intricate datasets. Domestic travel required up to 10% to attend stakeholder meetings, technical workshops & cross-functional planning sessions at other Circle K locations. For complete job description, list of requirements, and to apply, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/yzmn58y>.

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Business Solution Architect (Dole Fresh Fruit Company; Charlotte, NC): Function as a liaison to Business and IT partners in order to gain a broad understanding of industry trends and innovations, and their impact on technology. Apply online at https://workforcenow.adp.com/mascsr/default/mdf/recruitment/recruitment.html?cid=56439c56-b8a7-41d5-93e5-5a2c5a0fc666&cclid=9201948363715_2&lang=en_US&jobId=613752 or send resume to jacklyn.williams@dole.com. Ref: 1024.

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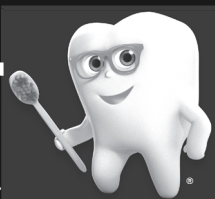
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LEGAL BIDS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
GUILFORD COUNTY
District Court - 25CV021312-400

Jacquelyn and Bryan Kelly Stevenson v. Diamond Rice, Daeron Washington, and John Doe Take notice that a pleading seeking custody against JOHN DOE has been filed in the above entitled action. If you believe you fathered a child with a Diamond Rice on or about 4/6/22, please contact Attorney Miya Bryant at 336-793-8458.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than August 31, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

Miya A. Bryant
301 N. Main Street, Ste 2405
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THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026 PAGE 5B

Itching to create? Scratch here

By Jaslynn Vorachith
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

There are many ways to get involved in the arts in Charlotte.

They're everywhere and accessible, with gallery visits, participating in events, or showcase your talents with local organizations. Whether you're a consumer or a creative, art is for everyone.

VAPA Art Center
731 N. College St.
Monday–Thursday 9 a.m.–10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 9 a.m.–11 p.m.; Sunday 12–9 p.m.
Email: vapacenter@gmail.com
Website: vapacenter.com

Sign up to schedule tours and attend events such as open studios, night markets, and performances.

• Night Markets: Saturdays from 6–10 p.m. They give visitors a chance to participate guided tours, scavenger hunt, explore artists' studios and what VAPA Center has to offer.

• VAPA Live: Go on stage and showcase your talent. Reserved for the third Wednesday of every month, with an audience up to 300 people and 70% of ticket sales go to the performers while the rest support VAPA Center programs. Reach out through their email if you're interested.

Sign up for courses such as digital photography for beginners and intermediate, building a portfolio, fine art print, and one-on-one sessions. For information: lightfactory.org/courses.

Arts & Science Council
220 North Tryon St.
website: artsandscience.org

The non-profit supports artists with funding and communities has multiple ways creatives can get involved.

• Culture Blocks for creatives:

A curated program of art, science, and history experiences for underserved communities. If you're interested, application is open and programming starts between Jan. 1–June 30. The deadline is Aug. 17 at 12 p.m.

• Cultural leadership training: Application opens April 30, 2027
Cost: \$2,000

If you're interested in educating and becoming a community leader, the program provides coaching for businesses, non-profits, and organizations. Go to artsandscience.org/cultural-leadership-training/

Upcycleartclt
3046A Eastway Drive
Website: upcycleartclt.org

Sustainable ways to be creative are through a small store selling art supplies made affordable. If you have

Please see **ITCHING** | 6B

Hart thrives, connects for ‘72 Hours’

By Jake Coyle
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

As a movie about getting older and still having to cater to younger demographics, the Kevin Hart comedy “72 Hours” has a meta synergy to it.

Hart plays a successful New York ad executive named Joe whose campaign ideas have turned dated. His bosses no longer think he can connect with Gen Z. To reacquaint himself with youth culture, Joe joins a bachelor party in Miami despite the most tenuous of connections: He was accidentally copied into a group text thread with four 20-somethings.

“72 Hours,” streaming on Netflix, is — as much as Joe’s vodka commercials — a highly engineered product. There isn’t a scene in it that won’t remind you of some other comedy, particularly “The Hangover.” But “72 Hours,” directed by Tim Story (“Ride Along,” “Barbershop”) and produced by Will Packer, at least knows this. The movie is itself a joke about Hart, now 47, trying to relate to a younger, more politically correct generation.

That makes “72 Hours” a better match of material for Hart than some of his (many) other Netflix releases. Most of the comic energy of the movie comes from Hart interacting with his younger co-stars, all but one of whom are “Saturday Night Live” cast members: Marcelo Hernández, Ben Marshall and Kam Patterson. The fourth is Mason (Mason Gooding), the one getting married.

Hart tends to thrive with opposites around him, like Dwayne Johnson or Conan O’Brien — a spiritual father to the gawky, red-haired Marshall. And the combination of Hart plus the fresh-

Please see **KEVIN** | 6B

« ON THE MARQUEE »



PJMORTON.COM

Six-time Grammy-winning singer P.J. Morton plays the Carolina Theatre Aug. 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Grammy Award winner PJ Morton at Carolina Theatre

Summer shows include Selwyn Birch at US National Whitewater Center

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

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

Aug. 6
“Kill Bill,” Carolina Theatre, 7 p.m. Part of the Lost Years Series. Tickets at thecarolina.com.

Aug. 7-8
The Lotus Project presents “Rent,” 9212 Bryant Farms Road.

Aug. 7 show at 7 p.m.; Aug. 8 show at 2 p.m. Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the musical that won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

“Rent” became a groundbreaking cultural phenomenon. Set in the East Village of New York City during the HIV/AIDS crisis, “Rent” is about falling in love, finding voice and living for today. Contains mature themes and language. Recommended for 13 years and older.



VAPA CENTER

Grammy-winning recording artist and Charlotte native Anthony Hamilton is one of the headliners at the Lowcountry Jazz Festival Sept. 4–6 in Charleston, South Carolina.

Information at thelotusprojectnc.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.

Aug. 15-16
Pride at the Carolina, Carolina Theater. Tickets: thecarolina.com

• Aug. 15 – A Conversation with author and actress Gina Gershon, moderated by Davita Galloway, 7 p.m. A screening of the 1996 film “Bound” follows.

• Aug. 16 – *Pride Parade Watch Party*, 12 p.m. Features sounds by Fannie Mae. Includes vendor market by Mimosa Way featuring Black- and LGBTQ-owned business.

• Aug. 16 – Screening of the 1995 film “Showgirls.”

Aug. 21
Ruha Benjamin: Technology, Savior or Slayer, 7 p.m., The Pearl, 915 Pearl Park Way.

Harvey B. Gantt Center presents the MacArthur Fellow and scholar leading a conversation on artificial intelligence, creativity, race, and the future of society. Cost: \$10 (plus fees); free for Harper-Roddey Society members; free for students with valid ID (registration required).

Aug. 29
“Trouble so Hard – Song & Stories of Slavery, Freedom & Civil Rights,” 7 p.m., Galilee Ministries, 3601 Central Ave.

Live performance is free but registration is necessary at trouble-so-hard.org. Please see **ANTHONY** | 6B

Spider-Man entry weaves action-packed web

By Dwight Brown

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Spider-Man: Brand New Day
3.5 stars

“You don’t remember me, but we used to know each other.”

And so, cryptically and gingerly Peter Parker, aka Spider-Man, tries to reintroduce himself to his loved ones. It’s an extremely sensitive assignment. Not as dangerous as fighting crime all day, but as harrowing to a young man trying to find his bearings as he remains a superhero to most and a lost soul to himself.

Since 2002, there have been eight live-action feature films, with three actors (Tobey McGuire, Andrew Garfield and Tom Holland) and an assortment of directors. Fans of the franchise will debate — often while wearing Spider-Man merch — which version is the best.

And now that conversation will get new heat as many will insist this latest version is the jewel in the crown.

Without adding fuel to that fire, those who view this one, if they take a step back and reflect, will likely agree if this isn’t the best, it’s one of the best.

Director Destin Daniel Cretton (“Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings”) had quite the challenge when he took on this project. He dared to go where filmmakers like Sam Raimi, Marc Webb and most recently John Watts went by pulling Spider-Man’s strings. He’s the right man for the job.

Confident, energetic, consistent, sensitive when he needs to be and bodacious at the right moments.

Essentially, this production is seamless. Not at the level of Christopher Nolan’s “Dark Knight,” but within striking distance. In Nolan’s work, audiences felt swept up and dunked down every time Batman soared and descended. That’s what’s so spectacular about this entry: you feel like you are riding with Spider-Man.

Every time he fires strands of his spe-



JAY MAIDMENT | MARVEL STUDIOS

Liza Colon-Zayas and Tom Holland in “Spider-Man: Brand New Day.”

cialized, high-tensile polymer, latches onto a building and swings through the city, you’re right there with him. In so many superhero movies (“Supergirl,” for example), it’s painfully obvious that the actor is lying down with a green screen in the background, a fan is blowing hair and a cape and that’s supposed to feign flying. Here, you can’t see how the soup was made.

Cinematographer Brett Pawlak’s (“A Jazzman’s Blues”) camera goes with the flow. You swing like a pendulum and breeze through the air with the greatest of ease. He deftly conceals any computer-generated effects.

You’re left wondering, “How’d they do this?” When the film depicts dorm rooms, warehouses, police stations or skylines, Charles Wood’s (“Project Hail Mary”) production design is either dazzling or ultra-natural.

Glances at the costumes (Sanja Milkovic Hays, “Spider-Man: No Way Home”) or the powerfully exciting choreography of the action scenes yield the same observation.

Whether it’s samurai floating through the air, Scorpion swinging his deadly tail or Spidey being blown through windshields and struck by trucks, the movement is expertly displayed.

Michael Giacchino’s (“Up”) score swirls at the right time or demurs perfectly when Parker laments his lost love. And the editing (Nat Sanders, Gina Sansom, Harry Yoon) is rock solid too.

That said, what kind of story do screenwriters Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers have in mind after their collaborative effort on “Spider-Man: No Way Home?” Picking up where the previous pic departed, the superhero (Tom

Please see **SPIDER-MAN** | 6B

Anthony Hamilton at Lowcountry jazz fest

Continued from page 5B
sohard.com/reserve.

Sept. 4-6
Lowcountry Jazz Festival, Gaillard Center, Charleston, S.C.
Performers include Anthony Hamilton, Lakecia Benjamin, Keiko Matsui, Rick Braun and Jonathan Butler.
Tickets: gaillardcenter.org.; information: lowcountryjazzfest.com.

Sept. 18
New Generation Tour at Bojangles 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 newgeneration-live.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 Owens 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.

Sept. 25-27
Festival in the Park Fine Arts & Crafts Festival and Traditional Arts & Crafts Festival, Freedom Park.

Since 1964, the juried arts festival has brought popular music, arts and crafts and family entertainment to visitors from around the South. Artist applications are online at festivalin-the-park.org.

Oct. 1
Mariachi El Bronx, 8 p.m., Carolina Theatre.
After a 10-year break, the eight-piece band is headlining a tour. Special guests Bedouin Soundclash and Max Diaz.
Tickets \$37-\$65 at ticketmaster.com and thecarolina.com.

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.

Kevin Hart revels as old guy on a mission in comic ‘72 Hours

Continued from page 5B

faced “SNL” new guard is a winning one. Hart has always had the good sense, despite his stature in comedy, to make himself the butt of jokes. And “72 Hours” is a lot of the bachelor party guys making fun of the old man who’s suddenly paying their way through Miami.

“72 Hours,” with four credited writers, is ridiculously plotted. As if the basic premise wasn’t enough, the movie tosses in a plot with a local drug dealer (the talented Michael Mando, of “Better Call Saul”) who thinks Joe is a rival. Whenever Joe sniffs some cocaine, he turns into a Cuban drug lord persona named Ricardo Montana — basically an impersonation of Al Pacino in “Scarface.”

If that sounds like a potentially dubious parody to you, “72 Hours” is kind of about that. Joe’s trouble in New York stems partly from a Fanta ad he wrote that plays with a pronoun pun. In one scene, Joe mimes an Asian stereotype and is quickly mocked for it.

The movie is a just-sly-enough commentary on Hart’s own comic tastes clashing with more contemporary sensibilities.

That knowingness doesn’t necessarily save “72 Hours” from the kind of fill-in-the-blanks hijinks of broad comedies

you’d expect: a yacht party, a jellyfish bite, a run-in with whale genitalia. But the “SNL” guys acquit themselves well. Hernández had a brief appearance in “Happy Gilmore 2,” but this is his first leading role in a movie.

For the charismatic “SNL” breakout, it’s a smooth transition. Marshall is even better, playing a weepy man just out of a breakup who threatens to turn the weekend into “Eat Pray Love.”

But the greatest sin of “72 Hours” is its utter waste of Teyana Taylor. She plays Joe’s girlfriend in New York, and she spends much of the movie far away, waiting for her boyfriend to commit to their relationship. In any circumstance, this would be a poor use of Taylor’s potency, but it’s especially lamentable coming on the heels of “One Battle After Another.”

The R-rated bro comedy, once a staple of the summer, has all but disappeared from theaters. Though it’s reborn on Netflix in “72 Hours,” some things never change.

“72 Hours,” a Netflix release streaming Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for pervasive language, sexual material, drug use and graphic nudity. Running time: 105 minutes. Two stars out of four.

‘Spider-Man: Brand New Day’ weaves an action-packed web

Continued from page 5B

Holland) is still forlorn. He had to erase the memories of his buddy Ned Leeds (Jacob Batalon) and his sweetheart MJ (Zendaya) to protect them from an evil they couldn’t comprehend.

To take his mind off his troubles, Spider-Man works obsessively with Detective Jean DeWolff (Liza Colón-Zayas) to thwart crime in a city that is under constant attack. As is the superhero himself, who’s become adept at dodging projectiles. The criminal Mac Gargan, aka Scorpion (Michael Mando), has it in for him.

He has an antagonistic and sometimes pals-like relationship with Frank Castle, aka Punisher (Jon Bernthal). Spider-Man: “The hell, Frank? You just hit me with a van.” Frank: “Quit your whimpering.”

If audiences think their man isn’t in enough peril, just you wait. An evil he struggles to define emerges. It goes from place to place, taking over, changing things and heaping danger. It’s insidious, mercurial, possessive and haunting.

Thanks to the clear, discernible writing, the plotline, though laden with characters, is easy to follow. It piques interest, is always adventurous and its twists, turns, betrayals and revelations mount in a credible timeline. Add in friendships that feel real. Then spice it up with an endearing melancholy and this Spidey tale becomes one of the best yet.

If there is a flaw, it’s the interjection of Avengers like the Hulk in scenes where they aren’t needed. An MCU connection may be an imperative to the filmmakers, but maybe not so much to the audience. They could watch this movie without any prior knowledge and still have a good time. Ultimately, Cretton, the producers and the tech team have created a sandbox

that gives the cast room to play.

Holland has grown perfectly into the role, taking Peter Parker from an awkward boy to a thoughtful young man. He exhibits so much sadness in this film, and it all feels palpable. As does the character’s courage, weak moments, good intentions and determination.

His efforts are complemented by Zendaya’s intelligent, natural portrayal of MJ, the classic modern young woman. Their chemistry is so strong that audiences can feel it in the far reaches of their hearts. Perhaps their most tender moment is when Holland puts words in Peter Parker’s mouth that could melt steel: “You mean everything to me. I’ve been trying to live my life without you—but I love you.” Those words could sell millions of Hallmark cards.

Praise to Batalon, Mark Ruffalo, Colón-Zayas, Tramell Tillman, Olivia Booth-Ford and the rest of the cast members. Bernthal (Achilles in “The Odyssey”) once again steals his scenes, this time with a wicked, bullheaded charisma. So does Florence Pugh, in a Yelena Belova cameo where she makes Spider-Man feel, well, naked.

She purrs: “You’re not completely anonymous anymore. I’ve seen your belly button.” But in the end, the biggest scene stealer may be the city of New York. The Big Apple’s presence is so strong it’s as if it’s inviting the audience to come and play.

Action-adventure and franchise fans will remember this Spider-Man forever. He’ll never have to reintroduce himself again to film fans. It’s a brand-new day indeed.

Visit film critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.



VAPA Center hosts the VAPA Live program where performers take the stage on the third Wednesday of the month to show off their talents.

Itching to create? Scratch with these local programs

Continued from page 5B

material that you’d like to donate, give it a second life here. They also hold events and workshops as well as allowing artists to sell their work.

Charlotte Shout!
An annual event celebrating the city’s art filled with 200 more activities and attractions. The 2027 showcase is April 2-18. You can apply to their Poster Competition, Icons, Easter Eggs on Parade, and Interactive Art. Join the Aug. 12 webinar from 1:30-3 p.m. Visit: charlotteshout.com/participate/

Queen City Art
4237 Raleigh St
Open Friday at 1-4 p.m., Saturday at 1-7 p.m., and Sundays at 1-5 p.m.
Website: queencityart.org
The gallery is filled with local resident artists as well as workshops and opportunities to connect with other creatives.

- Word on the Street exhibit opening, Aug. 8, 5-8 p.m.
- Free
- You can present the art of written words. Whether it be handwritten, poetry, maps, or lyrics, share your piece here.

Mint Museum
Open on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m, Wednesday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m and free from 5 to 9 p.m. Sunday 1-5 p.m.

- Visit North Carolina’s first art museum offering exhibitions, events, and opportunities such as programs and internships. Admission is free for patrons 18 years and younger.
- Pop Up Artists Market: Sept. 27, 12-5 p.m.
- Free
- At Mint Museum Randolph Local and regional artists are gathering at the market to sell their handcrafted works. With free entry and food trucks on site, this can be a nice way to spend the weekend. You

may volunteer at guildofcharlotteartists.online through the Artists Market 2026 tab.

- Mint on the Dot talks:
On Saturdays 1:30-2:30 p.m., there’s a 10-minute art talk included with admission.
- Yoga on the Lawn
For a meditative morning, join the Mints on the lawn. Free for members and \$10 for non-members, register through the Dancing Lotus Yoga site dancinglotusnc.com

McColl Center
721 North Tryon St.
mccollcenter.org
Internationally acclaimed artist residency and contemporary art space where you can get involved in art events and artist talks.

- Draw McColl Weekly Figure Drawing Session:
Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m.
Cost: \$15 per session
Every session is three hours and features a professional nude model. Easels and drawing boards are provided while participants should bring their own paper, clips, and art supplies. Media that emit noxious fumes will not be allowed. Teens over 16 years will need permission with a guardian if attending.
- Comment Thread - constructive critique for visual artists:
Aug. 11
Free
A platform to discuss constructive feedback on six artists’ work. Artists will be given 15 minutes to present their piece and guests will give feedback.
- Artists-in-Residence Talk + Tour: Aug. 13, 6-9 p.m.
Free
Visitors can visit artists-in-residence in their studios as well as a mingle event with an open bar.

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