



RACHEL CRUMPLER | NC HEALTH NEWS

Eight fathers and one grandfather at Sampson Correctional Institution, a medium-security prison in Clinton, spent four hours with their 19 children and grandchildren during Parent Day on Aug. 8, 2026.

## For families parted by prison, a day of games, normalcy

By Rachel Crumpler

NC HEALTH NEWS

It would have been an ordinary Saturday for many families: playing board games, making crafts, taking silly pictures and eating lunch together. But for these families, it was a rare opportunity.

Eight fathers and one grandfather at Sampson Correctional Institution, a medium- and minimum-custody prison in Clinton, spent four hours with their 19 children and grandchildren during Parent Day, enjoying the kind of ordinary family time that can be difficult to come by when a family member is incarcerated.

For many there, it had been months — even years — since they had seen, touched and talked with each other in person. During that time, separated by miles and prison fences, the children had grown and milestones had passed. The event offered a chance to reconnect.

Ray Holmes, who went to prison in March 2024 and is expected to be released in December, said he spent the day soaking in the time with his four kids.

"When we're fathers, we are still out there with our families, but physically we are in prison," Holmes said. "No matter how far apart we are, I tell my kids all the time, 'My heart is one beat away from y'all.'"

Terrell Wiley, who is serving a life sentence, said

Please see **DAY** | 2B

## Ditch the gym for outdoor workouts

BRANDPOINT

If the same old gym routine has gotten old, or you've let your membership lapse, consider a fresh new way to stay active: Go outside.

Exercising outdoors can boost your physical and mental health, thanks to exposure to vitamin D via sunlight and reduced stress from spending time in nature. Another advantage is the wide variety of activities you can do to match your fitness level. You'll enjoy fresh air and sunshine, the beauty of nature, and getting to know your neighborhood and neighbors a little better.

Note: It's always a good idea to see your doctor before beginning any exercise program, especially if you haven't been active lately.

Late summer and autumn are perfect for being outdoors, so here are some ideas to get you started.

### The beauty of walking

Nothing beats walking for simplicity and effectiveness when it comes to supporting your well-being. Beyond a good, supportive pair of shoes, you don't need special equipment, and you can just walk out your door and around your neighborhood.

If you haven't been exercising lately, start slowly and don't walk faster or longer than is comfortable. Gradually increasing your pace and distance can boost your heart rate and improve your stamina. Maintain good posture while walking, with your head up and shoulders back.

Keep walking interesting by changing up your route or inviting friends. Explore local parks or walking paths for even more variety.

Please see **DITCH** | 2B

### « RIDES »

## Ford's Explorer expands its SUV comeback story with the burly, beefy Tremor

By Winfred Cross

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Ford Explorer popularized the SUV.

I'm not going to say it started the trend because someone is going to find something they considered the first SUV. I can say the Explorer was selling tons in the '90s — 431,488 in 1998. It sold even more in 2000.

But the Explorer got huge competition from the industry. It was always good but no longer special. By 2019 for was only selling 168,309 copies a year.

Things started looking a lot better in 2025. The Explorer sold 222,706 copies and seemed to be getting its mojo back.

For 2026, the Explorer

adds the Tremor to the lineup, sort of a Raptor-lite that's focused more on off-road driving.

That's obvious when you look at the Tremor. It's far more rugged looking with a blacked-out grille, black wheels, beefy 18-inch all-terrain tires and Tremor badging. It's handsome and looks to be built for the job.

All-terrain tires on 18-inch wheels gives the vehicle better traction. The torsion limited-slip rear differential helps distribute power when a rear wheel loses traction.

The Tremor has a specific suspension that's developed for off-road driving. The springs and sway bars

are different, and it has an

additional inch in ride height which gives it improved approach and departure angles.

The Four-wheel-drive system is also developed for the outback. Skid plates are present front and rear.

The turbo-charged Eco boost 3.0-liter V6 makes a whopping 400 horsepower with 415 pounds-feet of torque. You can get the same in the Explorer ST, but that version is built different. The ST is more of a street demon.

My test vehicle was white with bits of orange trim. The spoke openings with the air stems are orange as well as the Tremor badge.

The Tremor's interior is similar to the regular Ex-

3Please see **EXPLORER** | 3B



WORLD MISSION CHURCH

Members of Charlotte-based World Worship Church partnered with Iglesia Getsemani church in Belize on infrastructure upgrades to the sanctuary as well as home visits, vacation Bible school and sports program July 27-Aug. 1.

## Mission of service offers rewards at home, abroad

*Belize visit taught lessons to World Worship Church members*

By Cameron Williams

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Missionary work can start at home.

From July 27-Aug. 1, nine people from World Worship Church in Charlotte served people in the Central American country of Belize as a part of a mission trip. Missionaries Fred McGhee and Jameela Ewell took part in the six-day mission, which included partnering with a local church, Iglesia Getsemani, upgrading the sanctuary's infrastructure, as well as home visits and leading vacation Bible school and sports programs for neighborhood children.

"Missions to me means service," Ewell said. "It's a way that I can serve outside the four walls of the church. ... Missions means you go to serve, and in every aspect of

that, you serve with excellence. You lay aside all of your comfort; you leave behind all your issues and focus on serving. Every time I go on these trips the intent is to be able to bless them, but I end up getting blessed exponentially. ... It is really indescribable and is something I always tell people they have to experience for themselves."

McGhee said there is a mischaracterization of how missionaries should look and act. Anyone can do the work if they have a heart for service.

"We all have this ideal or this picture of what we think missionaries look like," he said, "and that comes from television and all sorts of other things that we think we a missionary is someone who goes into a foreign country and

they live for a certain amount of time and they do these things, right? And there are missionaries that are like that. But in our case, we are getting the opportunity and the honor of being able to go to these people's villages and their homes. ... A lot of times we get a lot more out of being there than they get from us being there."

Ewell and McGhee each launched their mission work in Charlotte. There's poverty in the United States, which means there is work to be done on the home front, and both agree it is a great place to start.

"Fred and I did a lot of work with the [homeless] here in Charlotte for many years," Ewell said. "We ran back-to-school drives where we gave out hundreds of full back-

Please see **MISSION** | 2B

## Plant a tree for environmental benefits

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Trees are the long-lasting framework of our landscape providing many benefits to our community, environment, landscapes and lives. They provide shade, help reduce energy costs and provide food and building materials. Trees also help manage storm water, reducing the risk of storm water runoff, soil erosion, local flooding and storm water entering the storm sewers.

Fall is a great time to plant trees. The soil is warm and the air is cool, making it easier for plants to adjust to their new location and the gardener doing the planting. Follow these important tree planting tips to ensure the health and longevity of these important additions to the landscape.

Always select trees that are suited to the growing conditions and will fit the mature space once mature.



MELINDA MYERS

Removal of the wire basket around a tree's root ball prior to planting.

This will ensure a healthier long-lived tree with less effort.

Once the planting site is chosen, call 811 at least three business days before planting. This free utility locating service will locate underground utilities to help reduce the risk of damage and personal injury caused by digging into

buried utilities.

Locate the root flare, the place where the roots curve away from the trunk, by gently pulling the soil back from the trunk. It is important to have the root flare at or slightly above the soil surface for the health and longevity of the tree.

Dig a broad shallow hole

at least two to three times wider than the root ball and only as deep as the distance between the root flare and bottom of the root ball. Digging a deeper hole can result in the soil settling and creating a water-collecting depression around your tree.

Roughen the sides of the

Please see **PLANT** | 2B



FORD MOTOR CO

The 2026 Ford Explorer has evolved to the Tremor badge for more off-road capability.

# Mission of service offers rewards at home, abroad

Continued from page 1B

packs to kids. We had times where we would pack bag lunches and take them downtown to serve the hungry. In addition to that, here at this church we serve at men's and women's shelters. This church has a 501c3 called A Giving Heart Project, and they are doing a lot of great work in Charlotte."

McGhee and Ewell have simple messages to anyone considering mission work but are hesitant.

"Sometimes I think our own misconceptions of missions is what holds us back," McGhee said. "Until you get there and become boots on the

ground and experience what you get back from it yourself, that is what drives you to do more. Whether that is in Center City or if it is in Belize, once you see the energy you are getting back and the blessing it will drive you even more."

Said Ewell: "I would say, if you're a believer in Christ, the word tells you to go and make disciples of the nations," Ewell said. "So, that for me is the foundation of everything that we do that is mission related. Everybody should be disciplined. Everybody should be doing some kind of service for others and that is really what missions are about."



SHUTTERSTOCK

Getting outdoors for exercise like walking or hiking goes a long way toward improving your health and mental outlook.

# Ditch the gym routine to take advantage of outdoor workout

Continued from page 1B

Want more challenge? Beyond picking up speed and extending your route, tackle some hills or stairs, pump your arms as you walk or wear a weighted vest.

Stay safe: Bring a water bottle for longer walks, dress comfortably and use sunscreen to protect your skin. Avoid listening to loud music or noise-blocking headphones that can keep you from hearing potential hazards. Keep a fully charged phone with you, and tell someone where you're going for extended treks.

**Take it up a notch: Hiking and running**

When you're ready for more, consider hiking or running, depending on your fitness level and preferences.

Hiking is all about exploring the natural environment, traversing trails through forests and other terrain including state or national parks. Hiking requires proper gear and safety measures like sturdier footwear, bringing plenty of water and snacks, and being prepared for everything from encounters with insects and wildlife to inclement weather.

Stay safe: Research the park or terrain you're visiting ahead of time, so you know what to bring. Follow park rules and stay on trails, make sure your phone is fully charged before leaving, and tell someone where you're going - and/or hike with a buddy.

Considering running? It's a good idea to see your doctor to ensure you can handle this strenuous activity. Proper footwear is vital for protecting your feet and joints, as is staying on flat, even surfaces. Gentle stretching before and after running can help prevent injury.

Stay safe: Start slowly, stay hydrated and pay attention to your body's signals. Walk as needed, and use rest days so your body can recover.

**Be a team player**

Miss playing sports you enjoyed as a

kid? Always wanted to play one? Being on a team is a fantastic way to get outside, stay active and socialize. Good places to find a softball, baseball or soccer team include parks and rec centers and community education programs. They often have classes and leagues for beginners and/or older adults.

You could try a popular outdoor game to play with a friend or two, like the current pickleball craze - or tennis, basketball, golf or ultimate Frisbee.

Stay safe: Wear protective gear and sunscreen to protect your skin and scalp. Comfortable shoes, protective eyewear and weather-appropriate clothing is also recommended. Warm up and stretch before games to help avoid injury. Stay hydrated and cool down slowly to recover from exertion.

**'Life is like a bicycle ...'**

"... To stay balanced, you must keep moving," or so the saying goes. Cycling is an effective, low-impact way to stay fit and enjoy being outside. If you don't own a bicycle, many cities offer low-cost bike rentals. Some bike shops have rentals or sell refurbished bicycles.

Explore biking trails in your area, and consider joining a local club or bike with a friend. Sites like Trailink.com can help you find trails for biking, hiking and running.

Stay safe: Get your bike checked out and tuned up if it hasn't been ridden for a while. Protect yourself by wearing a bike helmet, and refamiliarize yourself with rules of the road before heading out. You can find bicycle safety tips at NHTSA.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety.

These are just a few ways to exercise in the great outdoors. Feeling adventurous? Explore other options like swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking and more. There's a whole world of fun activities out there waiting for you.

surrounding soil, pulling the mulch away from the trunk of the tree to prevent rot and disease.

Wait a year to fertilize and several years before doing any major pruning. Just remove damaged and dead branches at the time of planting. Skip the stakes unless the trees are growing in a windy location or have a large canopy and small root system.

Enjoy the beauty of these new additions and the many benefits they provide.

*Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening.*

*She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program.*

*Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.*

# Day of normalcy despite prison

Continued from page 1B

the extended in-person visit was meaningful for his relationship with his daughter, who was just 4 years old when he was first incarcerated. Now, she's a teenager.

"The most important thing today is really seeing what I'd missed from her and catching up on it," Wiley said. "There's a lot of conversations that they want to have with us that we can't have over the phone. It was easier to have them sitting face to face."

The men and children, who ranged in age from 5 to 16, freely moved around the room, switching from activity to activity as they pleased. One father taught his son and godson how to play the board game Guess Who? for the first time. Another father and son settled into a long game of Jenga. Others painted wooden treasure boxes and picture frames.

Sampson Correctional Warden Robert Van Gorder has watched Parent Day make a positive impact on both the incarcerated men and children since the prison held its first such event in 2022. Coming out of the pandemic, when prison visitation shut down, he particularly saw how fragile relationships could become and how much in-person contact mattered.

At the first Parent Day, he said one young daughter looked at him and said, "I want to thank you, Mr. Warden, for letting me hug my daddy today."

From then on, Van Gorder said he became more attuned to how incarceration affects families. In partnership with Our Children's Place of Coastal Horizons, he facilitates holding a Parent Day twice a year and even grills hamburgers and hot dogs himself to serve for lunch.

As Van Gorder has worked in the state prison system for 35 years, he said one thing has remained constant: family.

"Family can make or break an offender," Van Gorder said. "I'm not talking just money, but the motivation of, 'You got to do better. Sign up for this. We love you.' If they don't have that family support, very rarely do they get out and be successful."

**Parental incarceration takes a toll**

The families at Sampson Correctional are part of a much larger group navigating the effects of incarceration.

More than 11,000 people — about one-third of the state's prison population — are parents of children younger than 18 years old, according to a February analysis by the N.C. Department of Adult Correction. At least 18,888 children across the state have a parent who is imprisoned, according to the same report. Even more children have a parent incarcerated in a county jail, a population not captured in these numbers.

Incarceration doesn't eliminate someone's role as a parent, said Melissa Radcliff, program director of Our Children's Place of Coastal Horizons, a statewide education and advocacy program focused on supporting children of incarcerated and returning parents.

"Kids with incarcerated parents still love their parents," Radcliff said. "For some people that's news. They assume that, well, we've locked up the bad people; they're gone away and kids are better off. The reality is, for most kids, it's not. It's the person they love who has been taken away through no fault of their own."

That's the case for Andrea Hargrove's 9-year-old grandson, whose father went to prison last year. Despite keeping in touch through daily phone calls, she said the physical separation and absence from regular activities has been difficult.

"Since he's been gone, it took a toll on my grandson because he's a daddy's little boy, he really is," Hargrove said. "He has it in his mind that you can just pay and get them out and I told him, 'Well, grandson, in this circumstance, you can't.'"

"He's not used to his dad being an over-the-phone dad."

Parental incarceration is one adverse childhood experience associated with long-term effects on children's health and well-being. Research generally shows that children with incarcerated parents face elevated risks of mental health challenges, food insecurity and housing instability, said Luke Muentner, a researcher at RTI International who has spent years studying parental incarceration, in part motivated by his own experiences.

"Some children struggle considerably and others demonstrate significant resilience," Muentner said. "A lot can depend on factors outside of the incarceration itself, like the child's age, what their prior relationship was like with their parents, whether they lived together, family finances and contact with parents."

Maintaining contact can be challenging. Muentner recently conducted a survey of about 3,500 people incarcerated in North Carolina prisons that is not yet published, asking about their parenting status and how they stay in touch. He said the biggest barriers respondents reported were the distance between the prison and where their children live, the cost of phone calls and scheduling constraints. A smaller portion cited a lack of willingness from either parent or child to maintain contact.

Strong parent-child relationships can buffer against negative impacts of parental incarceration, Radcliff said. Research also shows family support is a key factor that can drive more successful reentry experiences and visits can help reduce recidivism.

Charles Wooten, Sampson Correctional's reentry coordinator, said maintaining parent-child relationships and supporting family reunification is a key component prisons need to focus on. He said those relationships can also help in-

terrupt generational cycles of incarceration by giving parents an opportunity to show their children where their choices led them.

"They weren't born in the correctional facility, so they came in with family, and then when they go out, they're going to go out with family too," Wooten said.

**Day of bonding**

Radcliff has organized Parent Days at prisons across the state since 2012, when the first event was held at Orange Correctional Center, a minimum-security prison in Hillsborough. Since the program's inception, the days have been carefully planned, including input from incarcerated people.

Radcliff brings a car full of board games, arts and crafts, and books to give families plenty of activities to do together. Throughout the day, conversations never lagged. There were frequent smiles, laughter and prolonged embraces.

"It's clear on both sides based on the conversations they're having and their body language, that this [visitation] is important for them," Radcliff said. "These relationships are important. Phone calls and other visits are great, but having this longer period of time together where they can sit and talk and keep their hands busy with crafts and games is important to them. From the kids' perspective, they can see their dads and their granddads in maybe a different light, having more time, seeing where they have things in common and where they can connect."

In contrast, usual in-person visitation at Sampson Correctional is limited to two hours of sitting at a table and talking, with only a brief hug or kiss allowed at the beginning and end of the visit. Parent Day is also different because caregivers do not attend with the children. That's to keep the focus completely on parent and child bonding, rather than caregivers catching up with adult conversations about paying bills and what's happening at work.

Parent Day on Aug. 8 was Sampson's largest to date. Radcliff attributes that to a change made by prison staff to remove the eligibility requirement that participants be within two years of release. The change opened participation to men with longer sentences — including life sentences — who are taking part in the prison's father accountability class, in recognition that supporting family relationships is just as important for them.

When the four hours came to a close — arriving sooner than any child or father wanted — Radcliff asked all the participants, "Did anyone have fun today?"

There was a resounding "yes," followed by everyone sharing their favorite part of the day — from painting to "whooping my dad in cards" to "the little bit of normalcy" to simply "everything."

Hargrove said her grandson and great-nephew, who is her son's godson, raved about their day when she picked them up from the prison. Before Parent Day, she said her grandson had last seen his father in person nine months earlier.

"They talked about it for hours, how they took pictures, how they painted, how they played games, how they were able to eat," Hargrove said. "He said, 'Grandma, they didn't tell me I couldn't hug my daddy this time.' He was so excited that he was able to hug his daddy and touch his daddy, to be able to actually engage with him the entire time."

"For him to get the warmth and love from his dad, he was overjoyed."

Hargrove said her son, who is projected to be released in 2028, had an equally meaningful experience.

"When he called me, he was like, 'Mom, that was the motivation I needed to keep me even more grounded,'" Hargrove said. "I can truly say it gave my son hope."

**Greater focus on family**

As North Carolina increasingly focuses on improving outcomes after release, Van Gorder said more prison leaders and staff recognize that supporting parent-child relationships is an important part of their work.

Beyond Parent Day, which Radcliff runs twice a year at five of North Carolina's 55 prisons (Randolph, Orange, Sampson, Southern and Sanford correctional institutions), she said other changes to better support families could include more child-friendly visitation spaces, greater attention to how far away incarcerated people are housed from their families and revised procedures for visitation.

Carteret Correctional Center Warden Embery Morton has made supporting family connections a priority at his facility. The prison recently completed changes to its visitation space to make it a more child-friendly environment, fostering more comfortable interaction and communication.

"Supporting healthy family relationships does not weaken security," Morton said, adding that violence has actually dropped at his facility. "In many ways, it strengthens our mission by supporting rehabilitation, stability, personal responsibility and hope."

Centering families and parenting programs in prisons is an emphasis of first lady Anna Stein, who has made rehabilitation and reentry one of her priority issues during her husband Gov. Josh Stein's time in office.

"If we're thinking about the people in our custody at the Department of Adult Correction as whole people, they are oftentimes parents," Anna Stein said. "If you're trying to address what is going to help motivate somebody to maybe turn their situation around, I can't think of anything more motivating than one's child."

# Explorer continues its comeback with Tremor

Continued from page 1B

plorer, but with black suede seats which are comfortable. The front seats are heated, ventilated and power operated. The second-row Captain's chairs are as comfortable as the front, but the passenger space could be better. The third row is livable for adults, but kids would be happier.

That's the Explorers biggest downfall - lack of space. Its competitors will give you more room in second and third rows. There is enough room, but more room would be a lot better.

The Explorer has a lot of standard equipment on the Tremor. It may be built for the outback, but you will travel in comfort. There-zone climate control, keyless ignition, heated steering wheel, front, side and rearview camera, dual illuminated vanity mirrors, adaptive Cruise Control and tilt and telescopic steering wheel are part of the base price. The high-end Bang & Olufsen stereo system is an option but one I would not do without.

I found the Tremor package to be easy to live with in urban settings. Those all-terrain tires and off-road

suspension were comfortable enough for highway driving. The 10-speed transmission worked effortlessly knowing when to shift up or down. Put your foot into the gas pedal and you get satisfied quickly. The Tremor has plenty of passing power and handles very well for an SUV.

During a big thunderstorm which threw tree limbs and debris into the streets the Tremor's all-terrain tires and AWD system came in handy, making me feel safe from suspension upsets from all the water and debris.

The tremor starts at \$48,965. My test car had \$14,200 in options. Add destination to that and the as-tested price is \$64,225.

Pros:

- New trim package
- Enhanced off-road capabilities
- Well-done interior
- Good power
- Great driving dynamics
- Lots of standard tech

Cons:

- Needs more room in second and third rows

## « BLACK BRILLIANCE »



PLAYERS ALLIANCE

Andrew "Rube" Foster transitioned from baseball pitcher to pioneering entrepreneur and advocate as founder of the Negro National League.

# Negro Leagues founder Rube Foster, father of Black baseball

By Matt Kelly

MLB.COM

Baseball was changed forever on Feb. 13, 1920, when a group of team owners came together in Kansas City and formed the Negro National League.

But those owners might never have come to the table and organized toward a common goal if not for the persistent efforts of Andrew "Rube" Foster.

Foster saw how an organized league could help Black teams and their stars break free of selfish booking agents and bring in the crowds they deserved - and his vision proved critical. Black MLB stars of the late 1940s and early 1950s like Jackie Robinson, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Ernie Banks and Hank Aaron would have had a tougher time attracting the attention of Major League scouts had it not been for the Negro Leagues, the wildly popular organization that traces its roots back to Foster - known to many as the "Father of Black Baseball."

But Foster was more than simply a league founder; he was also considered one of the best pitchers and managers of the early 20th Century. Here are some key points to know about Foster, who was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1981.

Foster was born in Calvert, Texas, on Sept. 17, 1879, and saw several of his siblings succumb to tuberculosis. Seeing the first-hand effects of the disease affected Foster, who later said, "if it hadn't been for playing ball and living outdoors, I don't suppose I'd [be] here today."

He began his baseball career with the Fort Worth Yellow Jackets in 1897, and then went on to play for the Chicago Union Giants and an integrated semi-pro team in Otsego, Mich. His success in Otsego drew attention from the Philadelphia Cuban X Giants, the club with which Foster really caught on.

Beginning in 1902, Foster won 44 games in a row on the pitcher's mound, and he led the X Giants to the Black baseball championship the following year as he earned four of his club's five wins in the title series.

Foster sought more than the status of an ace pitcher. He became player-manager of the Chicago Leland Giants in 1907 and led them to a 110-win season and the city league title. Three years later, Foster formed his own club - the Chicago American Giants - and wooed stars like Pop Lloyd, Pete Hill and Home Run Johnson that transformed the new team into a juggernaut. By some accounts, Foster's American Giants won 128 of their 134 games in 1910.

The following year, Foster partnered with Charles Comiskey's son-in-law, John Schorling, who agreed to let the American Giants play at Chicago's South Side Park. The Giants became the most famous and financially successful Black baseball club, consistently outdrawing both the all-white Cubs and White Sox at their new home. Foster gradually transitioned from the mound to full-time managing and front office duties, pitching his last game in 1917.

The American Giants dominated opponents for the rest of the decade, but Foster came to lament the lack of a unified Black baseball championship league. He also sought a way for Black team owners to control their own scheduling and gate receipts.

After several efforts to convince fellow owners to organize a league, Foster surprised them when he showed up at a February 1920 meeting already holding an official charter document for the "Negro National League." Foster and his fellow owners finally put pen to paper, forming a league that featured teams in Chicago, Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City and St. Louis. Under the slogan, "We Are the Ship, All Else the Sea" in a nod to its independence, the Negro National League was a near-instant success. Foster's American Giants club drew nearly 200,000 spectators during the '21 season.

The NNL continued to flourish in the early 1920s as Foster served as president and treasurer while also continuing to manage the Giants. He was known to aid teams in financial trouble by covering payroll out of his own pocket. Meanwhile, other clubs, like Foster's Giants and the Kansas City Monarchs, became more profitable than white teams and inspired offshoot leagues in the South and the East Coast.

Foster had a hand in many aspects of the NNL's early success, but the overwhelming nature of his duties eventually caught up to him. In 1926, Foster suffered a nervous breakdown and was confined to an asylum in Illinois for the remainder of his life. He passed away on Dec. 9, 1930, and nearly 3,000 people attended his funeral in Chicago.

The NNL experienced deep financial troubles after Foster's passing, further compounded by the Great Depression, but rose again as a second version of the league in the early 1930s. Together with the Negro American League, the NNL became the showcase for Black baseball talent, as well as a box-office force in U.S. cities.

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2026 PAGE 58



RICHARD STOTWELL | INVISION  
Janie Bradford, left, and George Clinton attend a ceremony honoring Clinton with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Jan. 19, 2024, in Los Angeles.

# Early Motown songwriter Janie Hobbs dies at age 87

By Corey Williams  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Early Motown songwriter Janie Bradford Hobbs, who helped pen hits including “Money (That’s What I Want)” and “Too Busy Thinking About My Baby,” has died following an extended illness at a Los Angeles hospital, her family said Saturday. She was 87.

Bradford Hobbs was born in Charleston, Missouri, and later moved to Detroit.

She was introduced in the late 1950s to Motown founder Berry Gordy by neighbor and singer Jackie Wilson. She joined Motown as a receptionist in 1958 and like many of the company’s employees took part in the creative process that helped make Motown a music industry powerhouse.

She and Gordy co-wrote “Money (That’s What I Want).” The song was recorded in 1959 by Barrett Strong and became an early hit. It was covered by The Beatles and also became one of that group’s hits.

“Too Busy Thinking About My Baby” first was recorded by The Temptations and later became a hit for Marvin Gaye. Bradford Hobbs also wrote songs for Stevie Wonder, The Supremes, Martha & The Vandellas and others.

“Janie was there with me from the very beginning, before there was even a Motown, and she will always hold a very special place in my heart and in the Motown family,” Gordy said in a statement.

“Janie was one of a special group I have always thought of as the original Motown family — the unsung heroes who believed in the dream before anyone knew what Motown would become,” Gordy continued. “She was one of the people who helped make Motown what it became.”

Bradford Hobbs later became head of Writer Relations for Jobete, Motown’s publishing company. After leaving Motown, she founded the annual Heroes and Legends Awards. The event spanned about 30 years, honoring music icons and awarding scholarships, according to her family.

She is survived by her husband, Wardean Hobbs; daughter, Nicole Hobbs; son, Lance Finney; and two grandsons.

# ‘Coyote vs. Acme:’ That’s not all, folks

By Jake Coyle  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Before it was dubbed “the funeral screening,” it was just when Will Forte was going to see the movie.

“Coyote vs. Acme” was finished. Director Dave Green, inspired by “Who Framed Roger Rabbit?” had completed the editing on the Looney Tunes blend of cartoon and live action. The whole project, which takes an Ian Frazier “Shouts and Murmurs” column from The New Yorker as its source material, was an audacious comic gambit that seemed to be paying off.

Hopes were high. Audience test scores were good. But days before Forte, who stars as Wile E. Coyote’s attorney, could see “Coyote vs. Acme,” Warner Bros. canceled it. Not just the screening — the movie. The studio hadn’t delayed it or sent it to streaming. They were canning it altogether.

“I just thought: ‘Well, they’re canceling the movie. It’s gotta be bad,’” Forte recalls.

Forte and his wife, suspecting the movie must have turned out poorly, joined the cast and crew to say goodbye to the film no one else was going to see.

“That was when the real emotions started,” Forte says. “It was everything I wished the movie could have been and more. It was so special, which made it

Please see **COYOTE** | 68

## « ON THE MARQUEE »



DANIEL COSTON\

Maria Howell is the feature artist at “It Takes Two: A Jazz Celebration of the Great Duets,” Sept. 5 at Middle C Jazz. Ray Green is the feature vocalist.

# Maria Howell headlines Middle C jazz celebration

Also: Closing celebration of ‘Beyond Boundaries’ at the Gantt Center

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

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

**Through Aug. 30**  
Mixed Metaphors Productions’ “Dauntless: An Ode to 2916” at QC Family Tree’s Marian Wright Edelman House, 2916 Parkway Ave., explores joy as a force for good through a mix of theater, immersive art installations, and music.

Tickets are on a sliding scale starting at \$28 each at Humanitix.

Show times:  
Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.;  
Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.;  
Aug. 29, 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.; Aug. 30 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.

**Aug. 28**  
“Beyond Boundaries” closing celebration, 6:30 p.m., Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, 551 S. Tryon St.

Celebration of “Beyond Boundaries: Black Abstraction in the Elliot and Kimberly Perry Art Collection featuring a panel discussion with artists from the exhibition.

Free; \$22 with an exhibition catalog.

**Aug. 28**  
“I Got Life:” Music of Nina Simone featuring Carol Riddick and Gerald Veasley, 6 p.m. at Middle C Jazz.

Tickets: \$50.15 for Baby Grand members; \$61.15 general admission.

**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-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. 5**  
“It Takes Two: A Jazz Celebration of the Great Duets,” Middle C Jazz, 6 p.m.

Maria Howell is the feature artist with special guest vocalist Ray Green. Tickets are \$46.15 for Baby Grand members; general admission

\$56.15.  
**Sept. 11**  
Mozart’s Requiem: A 9/11 Memorial Concert, Knight Theater, 7:30 p.m.

On the 25th anniversary of 9/11, Charlotte Symphony, Opera Carolina, and Charlotte Master Chorale share a program of remembrance featuring Mozart’s Requiem and Ave verum corpus. Led by Opera Carolina Principal Conductor Stefano Vignati.

**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 newgenerationlive.com.

· Jazz Funk Soul, Middle C Jazz, 6 p.m.. The Grammy-Nominated group featuring Jeff Lorber, Everette Harp & Paul Jackson Jr. Tickets: \$70.15 for Baby Grand members, Please see **IMMERSIVE** | 68

# ‘The End of Oak Street’ is a gonzo good time

By Jake Coyle  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At the end of the block in David Robert Mitchell’s “The End of Oak Street,” is a cul-de-sac with a telephone pole in the middle and wires radiating out like the cables of a big top. It’s a fitting touch for a breakneck, carnivalesque movie made with throwback showmanship.

Summer movies, of course, are not known for lacking in circus-like mayhem. But much of the pastiche delight of the 1980s-set “The End of Oak Street,” a mid-August surprise, is how it absorbs an Amblin-style blockbuster spirit and conjures, without winking irony or belabored homage, a summer thrill ride seemingly designed for the drive-in.

Mitchell’s breakthrough was the nifty 2014 horror “It Follows,” which he followed up with an admirably ambitious but shaggily self-indulgent Los Angeles neo noir, “Under the Silver Lake.” But any indulgences in “The End of Oak Street,” about a 1980s suburban family whose neighborhood is transported through time, are for the audience. “The End of Oak Street” is a bonkers blast.

It’s best going in not knowing anything about the movie’s twists, so tread carefully on the rest of this review. That’s not to say that an enormous amount of “The End of Oak Street” isn’t immediately familiar, starting with the central family.

The Platts live in what looks like a San Fernando Valley neighborhood full of split levels and tidy little streets. Denise (Anne Hathaway) and Greg (Ewan McGregor) have two kids and a dog named Starbuck. Audrey (Maisy Stella) is a teenager and Brian (Christian Convery) is her younger brother.

But from the moment we meet them, during a neighborhood fair, there are obvious cracks in their all-American life. Greg is working a side job deliver-



WARNER BROS. PICTURES

This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows a scene from “The End of Oak Street.”

ing pizzas while Denise is secretly typing up a maybe-aspirational novel about a woman dreaming of leaving her family. The kids have their own secrets, too. They suspect their parents are on the cusp of divorcing, and so, seemingly, do Greg and Denise.

Such a framework for sci-fi cataclysm is, naturally, Spielberg 101. But while “The End of Oak Street” is sure to test and restore their familial bonds, Mitchell, who also wrote the script, takes a route that leans more into horror, absurdism and outright silliness.

In any case, yes, there are dinosaurs. It’s both skillful and a lot of fun how Mitchell teases them out. The first signs are mysterious. A flash of light. A strange exotic flower in a neighbor’s backyard. A giant mount of feces in another’s.

But soon, the Platts find that their neighborhood is overrun with primordial beasts and surrounded by jungle: Oak Street is suddenly a suburban island in a prehistoric world.

It’s a perfectly “Twilight Zone” plot that inadvertently solves the problems that have plagued the “Jurassic Park” movies for 20 years. If those films have struggled to find an off-island setting, “The End of Oak Street” instead brings the dino isle straight into suburbia. Encounters with raptors and worse transpire across front porches and shag carpets.

You could chalk it all up to good, dumb fun. And it is mostly that, with set pieces built to make an audience groan in anticipation or cheer for the successful swing of a sledgehammer. But where “The End of Oak Street” succeeds where so many others fail is in the sincerity it has for its characters.

Ridiculous and over-the-top as the concept is, the Platts are firmly grounded. (Hathaway, especially, helps in this department.) The combination of an earnest family drama with CGI hijinks, plus increasingly nutty plotting, make “The End of Oak Street” a fairly

Please see **THE END** | 68



MIXED METAPHORS PRODUCTIONS

Mixed Metaphors Productions presents “Dauntless: An Ode to 2916” through Aug. 30 at QC Family Tree’s Marian Wright Edelman House, 2916 Parkway Ave.

# Immersive ‘Dauntless’ finishes run on Aug. 30

Continued from page 5B  
\$86.15 for general admission.

**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.

**Sept 25-26**  
“Bugs Bunny at the Symphony” brings Looney Tunes favorites to the big screen with original scores performed live by Charlotte Symphony. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 25 and 3 p.m. Sept. 26.

Conducted by George Daugherty, the program features animated classics including “What’s Opera, Doc?” and “The Rabbit of Seville,” with the orchestra performing in sync with the action on screen.

**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 [festivalinthepark.org](http://festivalinthepark.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](http://ticketmaster.com) and [thecarolina.com](http://thecarolina.com).

**Oct. 2-3**  
Back to the Future in Concert, Charlotte Symphony, Belk Theater.

The 1985 classic *Back to the Future* comes to the big screen with the Charlotte Symphony performing Alan Silvestri’s original score live alongside the film.

Audiences can follow Marty McFly and Doc Brown’s time-traveling adventure while hearing the score performed live by the Orchestra.

Oct. 2 program at 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 3 program at 3 p.m.

**Oct. 8**  
*Martin Lawrence*, Ovens Auditorium. Due to demand, the comic adds Charlotte to the Y’all Still Know What It Is! Tour. Select dates on the tour will feature special guest appearances from comics Nate Jackson, Karlous Miller and Desi Banks. Loni Love and Benji Brown are set to appear at every stop. Tickets available via Ticketmaster.

**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: [neighborhood-theater.com](http://neighborhood-theater.com).

**Oct. 16-17**  
*The Music of Tina Turner* by Charlotte Symphony, Knight Theater.

The Charlotte Symphony celebrates music of Tina Turner featuring songs that defined her career, including “Proud Mary,” “What’s Love Got to Do with It,” “Disco Inferno,” and “Son of a Preacher Man.” Oct. 16 concert at 7:30 p.m., Oct. 17 at 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 12**  
Best-selling author *Walter Mosley* is among the literary heavyweights highlighting Verse & Vino, Charlotte Mecklenburg Li-

brary Foundation’s top fundraiser.

The showcase at Charlotte Convention Center’s Crown Ballroom includes authors *Lucy Foley*, *R.F. Kuang* and *Isaac Fitzgerald*. Library advocates and book lovers will gather to raise a glass to the joy of reading, the library system’s impact and the larger community. Proceeds fund library foundation initiatives.

Tickets are available at [foundation.cmlibrary.org/verse-vino](http://foundation.cmlibrary.org/verse-vino).

**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. **T i c k e t s :** [blumenthalarts.org](http://blumenthalarts.org).

# ‘Coyote vs. Acme:’ After three years away, that’s not all, folks

Continued from page 5B

so frustrating and so devastating. The confusion was amped up, then frustration, then just searing anger.

“Then it made even less sense,” he adds. “We all looked around, like, ‘What’s happening here?’”

The abrupt termination of “Coyote vs. Acme” sent shockwaves through Hollywood. Everyone in the movie business is accustomed to sudden, painful twists of fate. But the wholesale elimination of a finished film faster than you can say “Meep! Meep!” was something new.

David Zaslav, chief executive of Warner Bros., was intent on pivoting away from the straight-to-HBO Max projects of his predecessor. The expected marketing spend — roughly \$30-40 million — for releasing “Coyote vs. Acme” wasn’t worth it to the studio. It was better, the studio said, to take a tax write-off on the \$70 million production. Along with two other releases — “Batgirl” and “Scoob! Holiday Haunt” — “Coyote vs. Acme” was put in mothballs.

But nearly three years after that “funeral screening,” the movie is, like its ever-un daunted protagonist, back from the dead. After an outcry, Warner Bros. put “Coyote vs. Acme” up for sale. Ketchup Entertainment, an independent distributor that last year released the Looney Tunes movie “The Day the Earth Blew Up,” picked it up for about \$50 million. On Aug. 28, “Coyote vs. Acme” will finally see the light of day.

It’s been a dizzying turn of events for everyone involved. Eric Bauza, who voices Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny and others in the film, didn’t really believe it until he saw “Obsession” at his local cinema.

“Upon exiting the theater, there in a little marquee box was the poster for ‘Coyote vs. Acme,’” Bauza says. “It hit me: This is going to be seen by people.”

In a recent interview, Green was still in disbelief.

“I must be dreaming,” said Green. “It’s a total surprise I’m sitting here talking to you today.”

**Wile E. Coyote has his day in court**

The filmmakers and their new distributor have leaned into the project’s tortured history, promoting it as “the film ACME didn’t want you to see.” More than that, “Coyote vs. Acme” now has a newfound meta quality. The premise of the film is that Coyote, after suffering years of defective products, takes Acme to court. Like the drama surrounding the film, it’s an underdog victimized by a big corpora tion.

“I couldn’t help but look at the movie in a completely new way because there are meta crossovers between the story and what the movie had come to represent,” Green says. “It almost felt like we had written the movie after the news had broken.”

When “Coyote vs. Acme” was canceled, its fate became a rallying cry. Filmmakers like Christopher Miller, Phil Lord, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert championed it as too good to disappear. Even politicians, like Democratic Rep. Joaquin Castro of Texas, urged the Justice Department to investigate Warner Bros.’s decision.

Bauza, a veteran voice actor, pushed the hashtag #ReleaseCoyoteVsACME on social media. His most dramatic effort, though, was at the Annie Awards in 2024. There, he drew hearty applause for making that case from the podium — in the voice of Daffy Duck.

“He’s the go-to cartoon character above anyone else when it comes to begging and pleading,” Bauza says. “It seemed appropriate.”

So many people came out fighting for the film that Green never felt alone throughout the ordeal.

“I would open my phone one day and see someone dressed in a Wile E. Coyote costume outside of the studio protesting with a sign in the rain — these kinds of things you couldn’t believe,” says Green.

“The pipeline has changed”

At the same time, the entire episode suggested a dark new chapter in the movie business that has left many involved with “Coyote vs. Acme” shaky. This wasn’t a young filmmaker getting turned down on their first film. It was two years of work on one of Warner Bros.’ most iconic franchises — a movie even produced by DC Studios chief James Gunn.

“I don’t know what their judgment was,” says Bauza. “Did they even know or were they just looking at numbers? It’s tough looking in from the outside, thinking: ‘If that’s how the Looney Tunes are being treated, what about my story?’”

“The pipeline has changed,” he adds. “How we get to the finish line is different.”

“Coyote vs. Acme” was greenlit when studios were trying to find their way through the pandemic and theaters were struggling to stay afloat. But Green’s film now arrives at a much different point in time. Theatrical is thriving thanks in large part to the visions of filmmakers, from Christopher Nolan to Curry Barker.

# ‘The End of Oak Street’ is a gonzo good time with a darker, modern movie mood

Continued from page 5B

nonstop hoot.

Composer Michael Giacchino does his best John Williams impression to match. But Mitchell’s film also increasingly detours from the Spielberg playbook. Only Mitchell would take a moment for a freaked-out Audrey to sneak into the car to pop a cassette in and listen to Steve Winwood’s “Valerie.”

And while it would be pushing it to say there’s that much underneath “The End of Oak Street,” its characters are united in keeping certain things secret out of fear that their spouse or kids or parents can’t handle the truth. The swiftness that the dinosaurs invade their neighborhood could be symbolic of any ecological disaster, but the subsequent challenges

prove each member of the family can handle quite a bit more than expected — even when the parental assurance that everything’s going to be OK, like when a giant snake is slithering through their home, is laughably disputable.

It adds up to a gonzo good time that gives an old-school family adventure a darker, modern spin. Mitchell has quickly made suburbia his evident domain, where “it,” or something else, is sure to follow.

“The End of Oak Street,” a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for some strong violent content, bloody images, some strong language and suggestive material. Running time: 99 minutes. Three stars out of four.



DAVE TADA

Comedian D.L. Hughley will team up with journalist Don Lemon for the DL + DL “Anything Goes” tour Sept. 19 at Ovens Auditorium.

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