



One week into high school football season, and there's change at the top of Magnificent Seven rankings

THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

The Charlotte Post

WEEK OF AUGUST 28, 2025

VOLUME 51 NUMBER 51

WWW.THECHARLOTTEPOST.COM

\$1.50



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U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson will visit Greensboro and Charlotte as part of a national tour supporting her memoir "Lovely One."

Supreme Court justice visits NC as part of national tour

Forums with Ketanji Brown Jackson in Greensboro, Charlotte starting Sept. 3

By Herbert L. White

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U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson will be in North Carolina next week to share her story.

Jackson, the first Black woman to serve on the nation's top court, will speak in Greensboro and Charlotte - first, at North Carolina A&T State University on Sept. 3, followed by an appearance at Carolina Theater, 230 N. Tryon St. Sept. 4. The Charlotte forum, sponsored by

the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, starts at 7 p.m. Tickets for the Charlotte forum are sold out.

The A&T gathering, which is restricted to students, faculty and staff, will be held at Harrison Auditorium beginning at 6 p.m. Her Charlotte appearance coincides with an appearance by the center's namesake, Charlotte's first Black mayor and the first Black student to desegregate Clemson University.

Jackson, 54, is touring the country in support of her 2024 memoir "Lovely One," which tells her life story culminating in her 2022 confirmation to the court.

Jackson's memoir is a story of faith, and optimism that starts in her hometown of Miami and ends at the start of her tenure at the Supreme Court. She credits Black trailblazers who paved the way - Justice Thurgood Marshall, the

Please see TOP COURTS | 2A

Make your voice heard at Charlotte town hall series

By Herbert L. White

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A Charlotte nonprofit wants to know what Black Charlotteans want ahead of November's municipal elections.

For The Struggle is launching the Black Charlotteans Town Hall Series Sept. 3 at First Baptist Church West, 1801, Oaklawn Ave. The forum will start at 6:30 p.m. and registration is required at [bit.ly/CLTT11](http://CLTT11).

Meetings are also scheduled for Sept. 25 and Oct. 9 at sites to be announced. The town halls are a platform to shape a community-led agenda ahead of the election.

"Too often, our communities are studied but not heard. This isn't just another program—it's a movement to center the people closest to the pain in the process of influencing policy," Brandi Williams, director of the Eatmon Project, For The Struggle's grassroots engagement and empowerment initiative, said in a statement. "We've taken the surveys. Now it's time to build the agenda—together."

The town hall series is a collaboration with The Charlotte Observer, The Beloved Community Center,

Please see MAKE | 2A

Charlotte-based initiative refurbishes homes with health as the foundation

By Kylie Marsh

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Where you live has significant impact on your health.

Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte, a nonprofit that repairs homes at no cost, has launched Home Sick, an initiative which addresses health concerns related to housing conditions.

"Our program is really about people who just want to be able to stay in their community, in their home, and maintain that when it's increasingly out of reach financially, particularly with higher property taxes," said Beth Morrison-North, executive director of Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte.

People served by RTGC are often Black women above the age of 60, with an average income of \$30,000 a year. The average cost of a home repair is \$25,000.

One of their initiatives, Building a

Healthy Neighborhood, has made adjustments in areas with concentrations of homes needing more repairs, like Pottstown in Huntersville and Hidden Valley in Charlotte. In some cases, community leaders have reached out to Rebuilding Together for partnership.

These are areas that are being targeted by rapid investment in previously disinvested neighborhoods, creating the threat of code enforcement violations. Morrison said lots of people tend to be suspicious about costly repairs being done on their homes for no cost, especially when government is involved.

Older houses, particularly those built before 1978, may have a higher risk of having lead paint, asbestos, older HVAC systems that require pricey upgrades, which are threatening to the health of young children and pregnant people. The average repair cost is \$25,000.

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Top court's justice to visit Greensboro, Charlotte

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first African American confirmed to the Supreme Court as well as Judge Constance Baker Motley, the first Black woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court as an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund before her appointment to the federal bench.

Since joining the court, Jackson has been a consistent member of its liberal wing and a notable dissenter against the conservative supermajority as a critic of decisions that have unraveled long-established precedents on issues like civil rights and the inclusion of race in college admissions.

Jackson's sharp written opposition to conservative rulings have gained her a national reputation for aggressive and disciplined defiance of what she's described as an inconsistent approach to justice.

Jackson, who grew up in Miami, earned an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and graduated

Harvard Law School. She clerked for Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, worked as a federal public defender and a pair of private law firms. President Barack Obama nominated her to the U.S. Sentencing Commission in 2009 and federal district judge for the District of Columbia in 2013.

After eight years on that court, she was nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 2021 by President Joe Biden who nominated her the following year to the Supreme Court.

A&T, the nation's largest historically Black college has its own history in America's legal community, although it doesn't have a law school.

Among its graduates, Henry Frye (Class of 1953), was the first Black chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court; Elreta Alexander-Ralston (1937) was the first Black woman to practice law in the state and its first elected Black judge. Shirley Fulton (Class of 1977) was Mecklenburg County's first Black woman prosecutor.



REBUILDING TOGETHER OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte repairs homes at no cost, has launched Home Sick, an initiative to address health issues connected to housing conditions.

Initiative refurbishes homes in region with health as foundation

Continued from page 1A

pair for an HVAC system, Morrison-North said, is around \$10,000.

Morrison-North said about 40% of juvenile asthma cases are caused by the home they live in. One of the major repairs Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte does is replacing old carpeting which has trapped years of dust and pet dander with vinyl planks.

"Environmental triggers in the home for respiratory illness, like people smoking in the home; pest infestations are a major one, having good air quality control, having a good HVC system and changing your air filters often," Morrison-North said.

As homeowners age, mobility and accessibility needs can change, Morrison-North said. Additions like walk-in showers, safety bars, wheelchair ramps, and levers for door handles can make homes more accessible.

"Just think about wanting to bathe yourself independently," she said. "Many people can't do that without a costly home health aide, or a family member having to help them physically get in and out of the bathtub."

Widening doorways, adding lighting, and bathroom modifications are also a part of their work.

"There's a lot of ways that somebody's environment is more challenging because of their own health and mobility, but there are sometimes when the home is actually making them sick," Morrison said.

Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte, a licensed general contractor with repair, renovation and painting certificat-

ion from the Environmental Protection Agency, is taking applications for projects in the Hampshire Hills and Eastwood Acres neighborhoods. The nonprofit partners with donors like Bank of America, Bed Bath & Beyond, Lowe's, LG, Foundation for the Carolinas, as well as Mecklenburg County and city of Charlotte.

Morrison-North says the city and the county have been "laser-focused" on working with Rebuilding Together to preserve the stock of older, more affordable homes. Beginning in September, the organization will launch basic home maintenance workshops for homeowners to know about things to look out for before they become more serious and expensive home improvement projects.

In the future, Rebuilding Together is looking into ways to improve rental properties without giving capital to "slumlords," Morrison-North said. The need for repairs coupled with higher costs may cause homeowners to lose housing that has been in their family for generations, robbing them of the opportunity to pass along wealth. In this way, Morrison-North said Rebuilding Together is also homelessness prevention.

"The most affordable home is the home somebody already lives in," she said. "So, if we can work to preserve existing affordable housing stock by making these investments so that they can live in their homes longer, it's lessening the burden on how many new units we need to build as community....

"We could repair maybe 10 to 15 homes for the price of building a new home, and that's for major repairs."

NC House override of Stein's permitless carry veto expected

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tection LLC (STOP) against the bill.

"More people will die in NC if the House overrides Gov. Stein's veto. The Senate already has," Ceartas, executive director of North Carolinians Against Gun Violence, said. "We cannot let this happen. Too much is at stake. Lives are on the line."

Jessica Burroughs with the group MomsRising said the pervasiveness of guns and gun violence is chipping away at the freedom to learn, play, and live in North Carolina communities without fear.

"Look at what the data tells us about states with weaker concealed carry weapon permitting laws. They have 10.8% higher firearm homicide rates than states with stronger laws," said Burroughs.

STOP was chosen as the press conference's location because it's a firearms training academy.

The facility offers classes ranging from concealed carry handguns to unarmed defense and personal protection in the home.

Tony DeRico, president and instructor at STOP, stressed the importance of

having proper training to handle weapons.

That includes knowing how to inspect a weapon to see if it's loaded and laws regarding carrying one. He also supported maintaining background checks on those who wish to purchase and possess weapons.

"Without those parameters, you are putting up a wide open fence that will allow much harm to be done," he said. "We don't need to have young people who aren't ready to have a firearm."



CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM

Charlotte Area Transit System officials hosted an open house with reporters to share details on the 1-cent sales tax referendum on November's municipal ballot.

Charlotte region's transit initiative by the numbers

Continued from page 1A

Twenty percent will be dedicated to bus improvements such as buying vehicles, adding drivers and amenities like shelters and bus stop benches.

Over the next 10 years, over 2,000 bus stops will get improvements.

The remainder will go to rail initiatives such as streetcars and light rail. The proposed Red Line would be a commuter rail from the transit center 25 miles to Iredell County. The future of the Silver Line could possibly extend into Union and Gaston counties.

The Gold Line will be extended to the Rosa Parks Community Transit Center and Eastland Community Transit Center.

The Blue Line could extend to Union County as well.

The ambitious plan seeks to increase buses to a 15-minute frequency within the next five years on the top 15 routes, which carry 60% of riders. For the gaps between those top routes, the county plans to launch micro-transit, which is an on-demand service that can be booked through the CATS app.

The transit authority reports 71% of CATS riders are Black, and 60% of commuters have no working vehicle. Eight in 10 riders use CATS as their primary mode of transit, and 69% of have an annual income of less than \$50,000.

Make your voice heard at Charlotte town hall series

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and Black Voters Matter.

More than 1,000 residents have responded to the Black Charlotteans Issues Survey of challenges and priorities and forum organizers aim to convert participants' dialogue and experiences into an agenda

that can be presented to elected officials, candidates and community leaders.

The town halls will include:

- Review of community survey data
- Breakout groups led by facilitators

- Free dinner
- On-site voter registration
- Civic resources

"This is about building a vision and power—not just voting," says Williams. "We want to know: what would a city with resources and services for us look like?"

NC residents finding out they are no longer in debt to hospitals

By Lynn Bonner

NC NEWSLINE

whose medical debts have been erased, along with total debt abolished, and will have a report in the next few months, she said.

"We are really proud of the program," Lerche said.

"We know how much it means to so many people in North Carolina."

That medical debt relief is part of the program former Gov. Roy Cooper and the former head of the state Department of Health and Human Services announced last year that increases hospitals' Medicaid payments in exchange for erasing debts amassed by people with lower incomes.

Debt relief letters will go out in phases and continue into next year, Julia Lerche, chief strategy officer and chief actuary for NC Medicaid said in an interview Friday.

The state Department of Health and Human Services is collecting information from hospitals on the numbers of people

provide discounts to patients who meet income guidelines.

Hospitals and Undue Medical Debt, a nonprofit that works to wipe out such debts, are looking at available income data to determine who is eligible to have their debts erased.

As part of the program, hospitals had to agree to measures that would help people from going into debt in the first place, agree not to sell to collectors the debts of people whose incomes are below 300% of the federal poverty level, or to report patients covered under the policy to credit reporting agencies.

North Carolina has federal approval to run the program through June 2026, Lerche said.

The program may eventually erase \$4 billion in medical debt.

Trump wants to stop mail-in voting

By April Ryan

BLACK PRESS USA

what he can't."

Said Brazile: "We've made significant progress and providing access to people to vote by mail or to vote early. Any efforts to curtail that accessibility will only set us back as a country."

Trump, who voted by mail twice in 2020 in Florida, consulted last week with Russian President Vladimir Putin about the issue of voting by mail.

Reflecting on history, Brazile notes, "Most modern democracies give voters the tools to vote by mail or vote early. Or, in some cases, same-day vote of registration." Brazile also said Trump benefited from early voting in the 2024 election cycle in states like North Carolina.

"Before putting forward an executive order, he might want to talk to his state governors and secretaries of state, along with the [Republican National Committee]."

In a related note, Brazile will sponsor a resolution at the DNC meeting this week on preserving voting rights.



Trump



Holder

There's no reason to set the clock back, simply because Vladimir Putin gave him some political advice," said Donna Brazile, former head of the Democratic National Committee and former chair of the DNC's Voting Rights Institute.

President Donald Trump said in his meeting with the Ukrainian president on Monday that he would issue an executive order before the 2026 midterms to end mail-in election ballots. Subsequently, the president also acknowledged his Alaskan conversation with Putin, in which the Russian president told him, "Your election was rigged because you have mail-in voting."

However, for Democrats, the concern is not Trump's decree but how he rallies states to end mail-in balloting.

"He doesn't have the power to order any of this," said former Attorney General Eric Holder, chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee. "He hopes he can make state governments do

Trump tries to pretend slavery never happened

By Stacy M. Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

The Trump White House has declared war on history itself.

In an official article published Friday, Aug. 22, on the White House website, the administration blasted the Smithsonian Institution for telling the truth about slavery, systemic racism, and inequality in America. It was not just an attack on museums — it was an attack on memory, on facts, and the lives of generations of Black Americans who endured the country's greatest crimes.

The White House mocked exhibits at the National Museum of African American History and Culture for daring to explain that America privileges whiteness. It dismissed scholarship on the legacies of slavery in the Texas Revolution, ridiculed art that reckons with the Middle Passage, and condemned programs that document systemic exclusion in immigration and housing. It went further, painting the Smithsonian as "anti-American propaganda" for highlighting the ways colonization, racism, and oppression shaped the very foundations of the nation.

What the administration is doing is clear: it is trying to erase the trail of oppression that runs like a scar through U.S. history—from the whip on enslaved backs, to Jim Crow segregation, to the discriminatory policies that persist today.

From slavery to Jim Crow

Slavery was not just an economic system — it was a regime of terror. Families were ripped apart, women were violated, men were chained, and entire generations were forced into labor that built the wealth of this nation. When emancipation finally came, Reconstruction briefly promised equality. Black men held office, built schools, and claimed rights once denied. But white supremacy roared back with violence and legal restrictions.

Reconstruction collapsed, and Jim Crow rose in its place. For nearly a century, Jim Crow laws ensured Black Americans could not vote freely, attend equal schools, or live without fear of lynching. The White House's attempt to dismiss museums for teaching about this reality is nothing

less than an attempt to silence that history.

Redlining and the War on Drugs

When Jim Crow ended, systemic racism mutated. The federal government backed redlining policies that locked Black families out of home ownership, while white families accumulated wealth through suburban expansion. Gentrification decades later uprooted Black communities in cities, pushing families out of neighborhoods they had called home for generations. Then came the war on drugs. Entire communities were criminalized. Harsh sentencing laws and targeted policing filled prisons with Black and brown bodies, devastating families and stripping away economic and political power. The administration now attacking the Smithsonian is the same one that celebrates law-and-order policies that continue this cycle.

Civil rights under siege

The Civil Rights Movement forced America to confront its hypocrisy. Through marches, sit-ins, and court victories, Black Americans dismantled legal segregation. But every gain came with backlash.

Today, voter suppression laws, redistricting schemes, and so-called "voter integrity measures" are dressed-up attempts to return to the days when Black voices were excluded. The Smithsonian's exhibits on democracy document this truth. The White House calls it subversive.

Erasing history to protect power

The Trump White House's attack on the Smithsonian is not accidental. By branding the truth as "anti-American," the administration seeks to recast America as blameless.

The logic is simple: if slavery is just a footnote, if Jim Crow was just the past, if systemic racism never existed, then there is nothing to fix. There is no reason for reparations, no reason for equity, no reason to confront police violence, mass incarceration, or economic injustice.

The administration even ridiculed the National Museum of African Art's exhibit inspired by Drexciya, a myth of children born underwater from enslaved women who died in the Middle Passage. Instead of honoring the resilience behind that vision, the White House dismissed it as "fringe."



CALVIN ADKINS | CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS

Shaniquah Ford of Nash County looks over a sample ballot with her sons, KaSon Whitaker, 11, and Kalil Whitaker, 9, at the Braswell Library in Rocky Mount before going to vote on Nov. 7, 2018.

How civics education could make a comeback

By Sarah Michels

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS

When Southeast Middle School social studies teacher Eric Shock's eighth graders walked into class one day last semester, they noticed a piece of paper on the board.

It was a bill being considered by the North Carolina General Assembly that would ban cellphones in schools.

His students weren't happy.

"Of course, all the kids are like, 'No, we need to have cellphones,'" Shock recalled.

So, he gave them the email addresses of the representatives behind the proposed legislation. If students wanted to share their opposition to the ban, they could reach out directly. They'd get class credit for civic engagement, and just maybe, have their input considered by state leaders.

While the students' lobbying effort ultimately failed — Gov. Josh Stein signed the cellphone ban into law last month — Shock considered it an educational success. Now, his Rowan County eighth graders knew how their government worked, and how they could use their voice within it.

A few years ago in Vance County, Clarke Elementary School social studies teacher Nicole Clarke wanted to spice up what she saw as an unexciting curriculum.

So one day, she invited Henderson's mayor, city council and the school district superintendent to the school for Re-

source Day. Her third graders got the chance to talk to their local leaders, and the now-fifth graders still talk about the experience to this day, she said.

When North Carolina Association of Educators Vice President Bryan Proffitt taught social studies, he started one class by playing a breakup song. He then asked students to write about a time when they ended some kind of relationship, why they made that choice, how the person responded and what the consequences were.

Then, he pulled up the Declaration of Independence. After all, it's just a breakup letter, Proffitt said.

"What I often hear from students is that civics is interesting when it connects to their lives," said Wake Forest University School of Medicine researcher Parissa Ballard. "Civics can feel far away, but it actually isn't. I've seen many talented civics teachers who find ways to connect students' interests and concerns to historical and modern politics."

Shock, Clarke and Proffitt may count themselves among those teachers. But the problem is, for many of North Carolina's students, civics class isn't interesting. It's not interactive, and it doesn't effectively motivate them to be informed, engaged citizens.

It doesn't have to be this way. With intentional policymaker investment, school support and teacher effort, civic edu-

Please see PATH | 4A

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The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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Published weekly by The Charlotte Post Publishing Company Inc., 5118 Princess Street, Charlotte, NC 28269 (USPS #965500). Subscription is \$65 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte, NC. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Charlotte Post, PO Box 30144, Charlotte, NC 28230

Where does our garbage go?

Where does our garbage go?

After you take it out of your house into your bin and roll it to the curb, the garbage truck comes to get it and rolls on out of your neighborhood. But then where does it go?

My grandchildren, each in their own ways, were obsessed with all things garbage when they were little. They were always on high alert for the sound of the garbage truck's arrival. We bought toy garbage trucks along with tiny rolling bins that amused them (and us!) for hours. Being a "garbage man" was the top career choice for one for a while.

They also had a book called "Where Does the Garbage Go?" The book read "When the last layer of soil is spread on top of a landfill, grass and trees are planted on top of it. The landfill becomes a park or a playground." There were drawings of a colorful playground, full of happy children. This cheery book, with wonderful intentions, showed a happy ending to a stinky pile of trash.

That book stuck with my granddaughter, and she recently wrote her college thesis on where, in fact, the garbage went for many years in Chapel Hill.

Spoiler alert: There is no happy playground on top of your local landfill if you live in Chapel Hill.

Some lucky communities that are next to a landfill might get a park in exchange. But in reality, being a landfill host community is much messier. Promises like parks are made to communities and are often broken. Certain communities, usually those already burdened by poverty and racism, bear the burden again and again.

Here's a little local history: For generations, the land near what are now Rogers and Eubanks roads in Chapel Hill was home to a historically Black community composed of farms and sawmills. The Rogers-Eubanks Neighborhood Association's website says, "It was beautiful land. The woods were untouched, the streams were full of fish, and there were all types of birds and wildlife."

But in the 1970s, Chapel Hill needed a new landfill, and the town chose land in the Rogers Road community. The town government offered the community benefits to soften the weight of the landfill's presence. At the time, it was unusual — almost unheard of — for communities to receive any sort of incentive for bearing the burden of environmental hazards.

In exchange for the landfill, the Rogers-Eubanks community would receive water and sewer hookups, taking them off well water and septic. It was a clear recognition that there was the potential of water pollution.

And there were other promises — of paving roads and installing sidewalks. After 20 years, the landfill would be closed, and a new site would be found. And indeed, on top of the landfill would be a park. At the heart of this agreement was Mayor Howard Lee, Chapel Hill's first Black mayor and the first Black mayor of a majority-white Southern city since Reconstruction.

Mayor Lee knew the burden of the landfill would impact the community. Knowing this, he made a deliberate effort to engage with residents.

Despite Mayor Lee's good intentions and engagement, the repercussions came fast and hard. Trucks rolled through daily, and smells filled the air and homes. The tap water ran brown, laced with unsafe bacteria. Pests roamed the streets scavenging trash. Community members became sick.

Residents protested, but to no avail. In the 1990s, the landfill was expanded further into the community.

Then, after more than four decades — 42 years of bearing the unseen and too often ignored costs — the community won a rare and hard-earned victory. The landfill was closed in 2013. The town funded a community center, which is a vital hub for the neighborhood.

But problems plague the community. Many homes are still not connected to the water and sewer lines. Some residents bathe in contaminated well water and purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking. The promise of sidewalks was not fulfilled by the town of Chapel Hill. And indeed, there is no park.

So where does our garbage go these days? Now our garbage travels an hour and a half to Sampson County. And just like Rogers Road, it sits next to a historically Black community, already burdened by hog and poultry farms. This community was told the landfill would not grow, but what started as a 20-acre landfill is now over 1,000. Different place, same story.

Across the South and the nation, familiar patterns repeat: land once home to communities long pushed aside is now used for landfills, industry, or other unwelcome uses — too often without residents' say.

We've got to come to terms with the fact that solutions are rarely simple. They're almost never wrapped up in bright colors or easy endings, like those cheerful garbage trucks and parks on top of landfills in my grandkids' book might suggest. The real work of solving problems isn't neat or easy. It's messy. It's complicated. And it demands more than good intentions.

HBCU gala honors past, future

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have created hopes and dreams for millions of its graduates.

These academic chambers of knowledge are proud beacons of light going through uncharted waters at times. Popularity of HBCUs is at an all-time high. Enrollments continue to trend upwards.

Publicity about their achievements continues to make national headlines. It has given our institutions the notoriety that they so richly deserve.

Programs and events affirm that HBCUs have a glorious and wonderful history. Their futures in shaping tomorrow's leaders are strong and resilient. Most of us know someone with an HBCU connection.

We talk about them with pride. All of us have stories about our back-in-the-day college experiences. Whether they were about a teacher or maybe a classmate, we remember them fondly.

On Aug. 16, The HBCU

By Thomas L. Knapp
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I'm not going to lie: I don't particularly like Cracker Barrel's new branding.

The popular restaurant chain recently replaced its iconic logo, featuring said barrel and the founder's "Uncle Herschel" sitting in a rocking chair, with a plainer version, a stylized "barrel on its side" shape with the chain's name on it. As one meme going around puts it, they removed the cracker AND the barrel. Meh.

But is the new logo "woke" as "conservative" "influencer" Robby Starbuck and others would have us believe? Does it reveal a corporate conspiracy to brainwash the public in, perish the thought, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" doctrine, by imposing brutalist signage on us or something of the sort?

Almost exactly three years ago, Starbuck was one voice in the off-pitch chorus screeching "WOKE" when Cracker Barrel added a new item — the Impossible Sausage, a non-meat take on the classic breakfast food — to its menu.

Yes, really.

They lost their minds be-

In a word, no. The rebranding may be a poor marketing decision, but it's exactly what it looks like: An ailing company trying to turn things around.

COVID-19 hit most restaurants pretty hard, but Cracker Barrel caters to an older, presumably more cautious, customer base that was already shrinking. Last year, CEO Julie Masino noted that 16% of customers hadn't returned since the pandemic hit.

Getting targeted by moral panic scammers like Starbucks doesn't help, of course, and this isn't the first time.

Almost exactly three years ago, Starbuck was one voice in the off-pitch chorus screeching "WOKE" when Cracker Barrel added a new item — the Impossible Sausage, a non-meat take on the classic breakfast food — to its menu.

Yes, really.

They lost their minds be-

Living Legends Scholarship Gala 2025 was held at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. It was a celebration that honored alumni from North Carolina's 11 HBCUs. Three alumni were selected from each school.

A companion goal was to provide scholarships to students attending those institutions. They were all academically talented students with lofty ambitions and stellar credentials.

The atmosphere was filled with joy and thanksgiving. Those in attendance came in with a shared purpose of recognizing the importance of the Tar Heel state's HBCUs. A video greeting by Gov. Josh Stein underscored the value of HBCUs within the higher education system in the state.

Whenever longstanding and successful programs have occurred, there are always visionaries behind them. Their will and wisdom serve as building blocks.

William Hairston, the driving force behind the HBCU Living Legends initiative, is a noted entrepreneur and civic leader in Winston-Salem. He and a group of volunteers wanted to showcase and

The guest speaker was Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry L. McFadden. He is the first African American to hold this post. His message was impactful as he

celebrated the legacy of HBCUs by honoring selected alumni as living legends.

Their organization's statement further says, "Some Living Legends are nationally known, and others are phenomenal people who are authentic achievers at the local and state levels in industries, professional genres and importantly, community service."

Mr. Hairston said, "Our committee identifies HBCU alums who have excelled at high levels. All these men and women are truly servant leaders."

Scholarship dollars are also an important part of this organization's founding. As a result, high achieving students receive monies that will help them in their educational journey.

The creators and volunteers of the HBCU Living Legends Scholarship Gala are to be commended and congratulated for understanding the importance of education in the African American community.

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I only eat at Cracker Barrel every couple of years. Part of that is "out of sight, out of mind."

When I think about Cracker Barrel, I think good things about Cracker Barrel. And Robby Starbuck's antics have me thinking about Cracker Barrel. Suddenly, I'm craving Grandpa's Country Fried Breakfast, and perhaps some classic candy bars to take home from their "country store." Maybe I'll see you there!

Thomas L. Knapp is director and senior news analyst at the William Lloyd Garrison Center for Libertarian Advocacy Journalism. He lives and works in north central Florida.

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Cracker Barrel vs. crack-brained, Round 2

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Path forward for civics education comeback

Continued from page 3A

cation can be a powerful tool for building the next generation of active citizens.

Other states' answer sheets

To learn civics, you have to do it.

That's the theory behind action civics, an approach to civics class that has students identify a community issue they care about while teachers guide them toward the information and public officials they need to devise and implement a public policy solution, Ballard said.



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Hough High quarterback Ethan Royal (1) accounted for both Huskies scores in their 14-10 win against Rock Hill South Pointe in the Keep Pounding Classic. Hough is No. 2 in The Post's Magnificent Seven rankings.

Hough states case for top dog

Huskies' 14-10 win against Rock Hill South Pointe makes an opening day statement for expectations

By Cameron Williams

cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

Mecklenburg County's finest was on display in front of over 12,000 fans at Bank of America Stadium.

In the third installment of the Keep Pounding Classic, Hough High edged Rock Hill South Pointe 14-10 and Greensboro Grimsley held off West Charlotte 28-27 in overtime.

Hough vs. South Pointe

In what can only be described as a defensive onslaught, Hough — ranked second in The Post's Magnificent Seven — scored a late touchdown to edge South Carolina power South Pointe.

"I think this win is great," Huskies coach DeShawn Baker said. "The last four or so years we have lost our first game to a South Carolina powerhouse, and coming in here and knocking them off, and having a good friend as coach [Bobby Collins at South Pointe], that is bragging rights for myself and for the kids. I think the momentum we can get from a win like this is big for the program."

Afterward, Baker declared Hough "kings of the Queen City."

"Yeah, we go back and forth with West Charlotte, but you know they did win a state championship, but we are

the kings of the Queen City, the lake or whatever they want to call it," he said. "They have to go through us to get there."

Hough quarterback Ethan Royal, who was responsible for both Huskies touchdowns to earn the player of the game award, felt his team made a statement.

"This is most definitely a statement," he said. "It shows that we can overcome [adversity]. Like coach said, we lost to South Carolina teams for like three years in a row and all were fairly close games, but this is just a big statement."

Collins said losing was difficult, but it can be beneficial early in the season.

"This was good for us," he said. "One team has to win and one team has to lose. So, we've just got to fix our problems and be able to score some more points in order to win. You can't win a state championship in the state of South Carolina and only score 10 points."

Baker said Hough, which trailed 10-7 late, did better than in years past when facing adversity. It's a promising development moving forward.

"We talked about adversity with our

Please see ONE WEEK | 6A

Changing places: Huskies supplant Lions as No. 1

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

There's change at the top after one week of football for the Magnificent Seven.

Hough High supplants West Charlotte at No. 1 in the rankings after the Huskies took down Rock Hill South Pointe in the Keep Pounding Classic. Hough, which opened the season second in the rankings, swapped positions with West Charlotte, which lost to

Greensboro Grimsley 28-27 in overtime in the KPC's nightcap.

This week's slate of games could result in another change at the top with Hough and No. 4 Independence squaring off in Mint Hill. West Charlotte, the only ranked team with a loss, has another regional clash, this time against Monroe.

This week's Magnificent Seven, with each team's overall record and previous week's rank in parentheses.

1. Hough (1-0, second). The Huskies flexed their defensive muscle in a 14-10 win against Rock Hill South Pointe in the Keep Pounding Classic to get off to a good start. Another challenge looms with a trip to Independence, where the Patriots believe they should be in the conversation as Mecklenburg County's top squad.

2. West Charlotte (0-1, first). A failed two-point conversion in overtime cost the Lions against Greensboro Grimsley

in the most thrilling game in Keep Pounding Classic History. Still, not much of a slide going into their road game at Monroe.

3. Mallard Creek (1-0, third). The Mavericks' 36-21 win against Rolesville was quite impressive — maybe the best among M7 squads. Next up: off to Virginia to play powerhouse Warwick.

4. Independence (1-0, fourth). The Patriots make up half of what's bound to

Please see CHANGING | 6A

Golden Bulls turn up physicality in postseason pursuit

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Football physicality is valued at Johnson C. Smith.

The Golden Bulls are leaning on toughness as they open their season Aug. 30 against Morehouse at the Essence HBCU Classic at Harvard, especially at the line of scrimmage. "Our philosophy ... is the team that's most physical wins," coach Maurice Flowers said. "And this team right here, there's a lot of physical play that goes on in the box. We're a physical team."

JCSU has been one of Division II's top defenses over the last couple of seasons in key metrics like points allowed and yards conceded. Despite losing their top three tacklers — all-CIAA picks — in linebackers Jack Smith and Benari Black as well as cornerback Shamar Baker from last year's 8-2 squad, the Golden Bulls have reloaded. It starts up front,

Please see JC SMITH | 6A



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Johnson C. Smith safety T.J. Taybron is a four-year starter for a Golden Bulls defense that is shifting philosophy to more man-to-man coverage in 2025.

Wheeling, dealing and good feelings

I'll admit Charlotte FC's decision to sell Patrick Agyemang's services was a mistake.

Still might be, but they're not suffering as a result. Now that the MLS summer transfer window is closed, the Crown is looking like a winner, which makes it easier to get over the Agyemang sale.

Agyemang's an American soccer success story. Lightly recruited coming out of high school, he didn't play for a powerhouse collegiate program. As a 2023 MLS SuperDraft pick, Agyemang was a project who worked his way up to the senior club and earned a roster spot with the U.S. national team.

In the process, he emerged as a fan favorite and was selected for the MLS All-Star team. Good dude with a great story of betting on himself to succeed.

Still, when Charlotte sold his rights to Derby County, a second division English Championship club for \$8 million, my question was who's going to replace his productivity. The answer, as it turns out, is



HERBERT L. WHITE

Gainbridge Super League's second season of soccer kicks off

By Steve Goldberg

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The second season of the Gainbridge Super League took flight last week with four fixtures.

The campaign began with Brooklyn FC hosting inaugural champion Tampa Bay Sun FC. A new addition to the league, which now has nine teams, is Sporting Jax, which debuted against DC Power in Jacksonville, Florida. Fort Lauderdale United FC against Lexington SC and Dallas Trinity vs. Spokane Zephyr FC left 2025 Players' Shield winning Carolina Ascent as the odd team out on opening day. The Ascent will open at Fort Lauderdale on Aug. 30.

and the first home match is Sept. 6 against Tampa Bay.

Launched as USL Super League last year, the second top-tier women's professional league sanctioned by U.S. Soccer opened with a sell-out crowd of 10,533 at Charlotte's American Legion Memorial Stadium, where the Ascent downed DC Power 1-0 as Vicky Bruce scored the first goal in league history.

The Ascent went on a record tear of 11 games unbeaten but then lost three straight to close out the first half of the season 5-3-6. They went 8-3-3 in the second half to claim the best regular season record at 13-6-9. They lost to Fort Lauderdale in the semifinal.

The Ascent are one of the more stable clubs in a league that will have five new coaches on the seven original teams. Philip Poole is back as Carolina's head coach and general manager.

After signing a multi-year deal with the Ascent, 15-year-old Stella Spitzer is the league's youngest player to sign a professional contract. Spitzer joined the Ascent in 2024 on an academy contract and made her debut in October.

Twenty players transferred from one GSL club to another for the new season, including the 2024-25 Player of the Year Emina Ekić,

Please see SUPER | 6A

Please see WHEELING | 6A

One week into season, and Hough's top dog

Continued from page 5A

guys," Baker said, "and last year, especially early in the season, the first thing that happened when adversity struck was the kids' heads would drop. These guys were constantly in the game, even when we got stagnant on offense. That was good to see."

West Charlotte vs. Grimsley

In the primetime game, West Charlotte mounted a comeback, but a false start penalty on a two-point conversion in overtime cost the Lions.

"I thought we were the better football team, not the cleaner football team tonight," West Charlotte coach Sam Greiner said. "I think that we have some grit, and I think [Grimsley] is happy that we aren't in their classification. We are happy they aren't in our classification. [Grimsley] is a heck of a football team."

West Charlotte committed three turnovers, including two when the Lions were in position to score.

After tying the game with 1:35 in regulation, the Whirlies scored on fourth and 1 in overtime. West Charlotte quarterback Jamouri Nichols scored on a 10-yard run. Greiner called for a two-point try.

"I was 100% going for two," he said. "I wish we didn't get another penalty. I was going to let [Nichols] do whatever he thought was right in that spot. He is a dog. I've been trying to tell everybody

that he is the best quarterback in the city. He showed that tonight. He went toe-to-toe with [Tennessee commit Faizon Brandon of Grimsley] and, [Brandon] is special. He is a great player, but [Nichols] is 5-10 with a seven-foot-tall heart."

Nichols went 16-for-20 passing for 170 yards and rushed 11 times for 70 yards and three touchdowns.

After being stymied on their first drive, Grimsley settled in and found a rhythm on offense — primarily thanks to Brandon.

"It was tough sledding all night," Whirlies coach Darryl Brown said. "We had a really big play from Hudson [Cooper] there on the screen play that Faizon hit him on. He is able to do that because [Brandon] is so accurate with the ball. [Cooper] didn't have to break stride or anything. We were able to hit a few run plays here and there, but overall, it was really tough to sustain anything."

Greiner said West Charlotte's focus will be cleaning up penalties but overall he felt the Lions team was poised, which will bode well in November.

"I am never going to take away from the passion our kids play with," he said. "It makes us really special. We started cramping, it is early in the season, but guess what? At the end of the season, that won't be a factor."

Changing places at No. 1

Continued from page 5A

be the week's best mano-a-mano scrap against top-ranked Hough. Mint Hill will be jumping Friday with No. 1 on the line.

5. Charlotte Catholic (1-0, fifth). The Cougars, as usual, took care of business against neighborhood rival South Mecklenburg. Perhaps Charlotte Christian will pose more of a challenge.

6. Palisades (1-0, sixth). You can play

only what's in front of you, and the Pumas did that in blasting Berry Academy 35-2. Next up is a road trip to Olympic.

7. Butler (1-0, seventh). Welcome back from retirement, Brian Hales. The Bulldogs coach made a triumphant return to the sidelines with a 32-14 win against Olympic, but now it's time to travel with Corvian Community next on the menu.

JC Smith turns up aggression, physicality in pursuit of wins

Continued from page 5A

where the goal is to improve a pass rush that managed just 17.5 sacks in 2024.

All-CIAA defensive end Lamone Hill Jr. returns, as does South Mecklenburg graduate Jalen Alexander. They also added

Quentin Williams, a Mallard Creek High grad who played collegiately at Miami and Marshall.

"We've rotated six and six — six D-tackles, six D-ends — and we'll do the same with this group right here," Flowers said. "We're a little bit bigger, a little bit more athletic in our defensive line."

At linebacker, Quavaris Crouch, a Hardin High graduate, returns to the position where he was second-team All-Big 10 at Michigan State to pair with Vincent Hill, an All-SIAC pick at Tuskegee in 2023. Crouch replaces Black at the weakside position; Hill moves into the middle.

With the transition up front, JCSU is shifting its philosophy in pass coverage. Ty Hinds returns at corner awhile transfers Rontay Dunbar, an All-CIAA pick at Lincoln (Pa.) and Cam Williams, an All-SIAC at Miles (Ala.) join the rotation. At safety, Tynan Tucker and four-year starter T.J. Taybron return.

Wheeling, dealing for success

Continued from page 5A

committee. Start with Idan Toklomati, Agyemang's successor. His header last week against Real Salt Lake for Charlotte's lone goal in a 1-0 result continued his strong play over the last couple of months.

Pep Biel has been the Crown's most consistent attacker and should've been an All-Star. Wilfried Zahra, the biggest offseason acquisition, has shown a willingness to contribute as a passer as well as scorer.

The Crown spent the summer wheeling and dealing, and so far, it's paying dividends. They transferred Adilson Malanda to Middlesbrough FC of the English Championship for a

reported at \$8 million in a deal that will take effect when Charlotte's season finishes.

In the interim, Charlotte retains one of MLS's top defenders and a major reason when the Crown's back line is showing serious form after early season struggles.

Charlotte's won six in a row because of the combination of defensive integrity, which is supporting goalkeepers Kristjan Kahlina's renewed strength. Still, the Crown went out and hired Drake Callendar, who started 91 games over the last four seasons with Inter Miami.

George Marks, Kahlina's backup, was the odd man out, and considering Callen-

dar's résumé, which includes helping the Herons to the last year's Supporter's Shield and the 2023 Leagues Cup title, Kahlina might be on notice, too.

With six matches left in the regular season, Charlotte's positioned for the playoffs, something that felt shaky a couple months ago. Wheeling and dealing helped, and for anyone lamenting what's lost, consider what's been gained: a legitimate contender with an opportunity to grab home pitch advantage in the MLS postseason.

At least for now.

Herbert L. White is editor in chief at The Post.

« CAROLINA ASCENT »

Super League kicks off

Continued from page 5A
who departed Spokane Zephyr FC to join Lexington SC in her home state.

Carolina's Taylor Porter is one of four players to have competed every minute (2,520) in the regular season last year, along with Allison Pantuso (Lexington), Amber Wisner (Dallas), and Sarah Clark (Spokane).

As with last season, each team will play 28 games. Playing on the European schedule from late summer through spring, the Super League does include a winter break

from Jan. 1-Feb. 7, about three weeks shorter than last year's break, which extended from Dec. 14 to Feb. 15.

The record attendance from Carolina's opening game might stand for some time without special circumstances since only two teams have stadiums larger than the Ascent. DC Power play at 20,000-seat Audi Field, the home of MLS side DC United and NWSL's Washington Spirit, while Dallas competes in the Cotton Bowl, which can hold over 90,000.

Charlotte FC making changes to improve playoff readiness

By Steve Goldberg

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

It was a busy week for Charlotte FC's roster by Wednesday.

The club made it official Aug. 20 that Adilson Malanda has been transferred to Middlesbrough F.C. for an undisclosed fee, which has been reported at \$8 million plus add-ons, according to the Yorkshire Post and BBC. He has signed a five-and-a-half-year contract with the club known as Boro.

On the club website, Malanda said, "I feel really good to be here and I've had a good welcome. It's a historic club, and to be part of it is really exciting. There were a lot of talks, and I'm happy we could make it happen. I'm looking forward to seeing what we can do in the future."

But before that, there is the present. Malanda won't join the northern England club until January as he will remain in Charlotte on loan through the MLS season, including any playoff run.

Middlesbrough are looking to gain promotion to the Premier League for the first time since 2016-17. The English Championship Division team is second after two matches and finished 10th last season.

"There were multiple top clubs that sent us strong offers for Adi," said general manager Zoran Krneta, "but in the end, this option allowed for us to keep him through the end of the season as we push for the top four. His career path shows that Charlotte FC is the right place for young players to come and develop into sought after players from clubs all around the world."

On Monday, new signing Archie Goodwin was introduced to local media. Tuesday brought news of goalkeeper Drake Callendar joining from Inter Miami and the release of defender Souleyman Doumbia as well as goalkeeper George Marks.

The departure of Malanda has been rumor mill fodder since his arrival, as the 23-year-old French centerback has proven himself one of the best defenders in MLS with persistent gossip of clubs wanting to lure him home. His smile and accessible demeanor have further cemented his place as a fan favorite.

Malanda was contracted to Charlotte through 2026. Other clubs rumored to have had interest in him include Benfica, PSV Eindhoven, Club Brugge, and Norwich City.

Malanda started all 95 MLS regular season and four playoff games he's participated in. In 108 games across all competitions, he's logged 9,610 minutes with two goals and a pair of assists.

Last season, Malanda set career-highs in appearances (32) and minutes (2,880) anchoring one of the stingiest backlines in MLS, which kept the second highest total of clean sheets with 13, allowing the sec-

ond lowest number of goals (37).

Callendar in, Marks out

One that really hurts is the waiver of George Marks, who has been with Charlotte since it hit the pitch. Marks was drafted in the third round of the 2022 SuperDraft out of Clemson, where he helped the Tigers to the 2021 NCAA College Cup title.

The Raleigh native made his professional debut in the U.S. Open Cup against Greenville Triumph SC. He later made his MLS debut against CF Montréal.

Marks played 10 matches overall for the senior team, including starting seven regular season games in 2023, when Kristjan Kahlina was out after back surgery, and one in 2022, as well as two U.S. Open Cup games in 2022.

Is it a surprise? No. When the addition of Drake Callendar was announced on Tuesday, the first team bullpen of shot-stoppers grew to six. Marks, 25, has been the third keeper, behind the experienced starter Kahlina, 33, and backup David Birmingham, 35. In the wings have been Chitira Odunze, 22, and 19-year-old Nick Holliday, who has been playing with Crown Legacy.

Callendar is two years older than Marks but has made 91 starts over the past four seasons with Inter Miami, including Inter Miami's record-breaking run to the 2024 MLS Supporter's Shield and the Leagues Cup title in 2023.

Callendar's play earned him a U.S. National Team call-up last January. During the U.S. camp, he suffered a sports hernia which was operated on in May. He was training with the Herons in July but lost his starting job by that point.

Doumbia doomed by injuries

For Doumbia, who was brought in to fill the void on the left side of defense with the left-footed player that Dean Smith wanted there, it was simply a matter of durability. The Ivorian was limited to 11 appearances and eight starts in 23 games, suffering three injuries since his debut March 12 against San Jose in Charlotte's fifth game of the season.

"Souleyman played a key part in our successes when he was on the field this year," Krneta said, "but unfortunately, injuries kept him off the field and didn't allow him to reach his full potential with us in Charlotte."

Had his hamstrings not subverted him, Doumbia, on a one-year loan from Belgian side Standard Liège, was a valued asset. He assisted on Idan Toklomati's second goal of the season that gave the Crown a 1-0 lead in the 34th minute at Kansas City. While it wasn't the only reason, after he was subbed out in the 88th minute, Charlotte gave up two goals in added time to lose the game.

HBCU sports show sets high standard for others to follow

One of the best things about having your own column is touting the accomplishments of good friends.

Donal Ware celebrated the 20th anniversary of his sports talk show, "FROM THE PRESS BOX TO PRESS ROW," on Aug. 20. A birthday bash was held at North Hills Main District. Donal hosted the show live, followed by presentations and special guests and an after-show meet and greet.

"We are so excited and proud of the growth and the accomplishments that have happened over these 20 years," he said. "...We started out simply wanting to bring more awareness about HBCU sports to the masses. We are still doing that and have also implemented some ideas along the way that are now part of the HBCU sports fabric."

I remember the launch like it was yesterday. Donal, a Morgan State alumnus, started the show from a Baltimore radio station that also was carried in Atlanta, Alabama, Raleigh and Greensboro.

The Triangle is a tough, and still predominantly white and male, sports talk market. Personally, I say if you listen to one, you've heard them all; they pretty much say the same things.

There was no sports talk show in the Triangle dedicated to HBCU sports 20 years ago. I admittedly had my doubts that Donal would succeed. Not because he wasn't talented or driven enough, but because of the exclusive, old boys network that permeates the area.

But Donal's passion for HBCU sports fed a thirsty market that had been overlooked, while his ability to lure in guests outside of HBCU sports attracted fans with little to

no knowledge of HBCUs. Serena Williams, Simone Biles, Kevin Durant, Snoop Dogg, Michael B. Jordan and Kevin Hart are just some of the celebrities interviewed over the years.

Today, the show airs in 12 of the top 50 radio markets, plus the Bahamas and British Virgin Islands.

"BOXTOROW being in a situation to be able to name guys All-American, I know how they looked forward to being All-Americans," former Grambling State and NFL star quarterback Doug Williams wrote. "Congratulations for continuing to support our HBCUs."

Donal's interview skills have a knack of getting people to open up.

In 1989, rapper D.O.C.'s (Straight Outta Compton) vocal cords were almost destroyed in a car accident, ending his rap career at the time. For almost six years, D.O.C. spoke with a raspy, scratchy voice.

Then, as a special guest on BOXTOROW in 2015, the rapper spoke publicly for the first time with his "natural voice" back. The interview went viral.

But probably the biggest and - at the time - most shocking interview was NBA star John Wall in 2022. Wall, a superstar at Word of God Academy in Raleigh, lost his mother and grandmother while suffering through a myriad of injuries in a three-year span. He admitted publicly for the first time that he had considered suicide.

The episode went viral and aired on every major network, including CNN, ESPN, First Take, The Washington Post, etc. It also sparked one of the first nationwide conversations about professional athletes and mental health.

Here's to 20 more prosperous years, Donal.

Bonita Best is sports editor at The Triangle Tribune in Durham.