

Life!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2026 SECTION B

Is travel insurance useless in a crisis? Read the fine print

By Christopher Elliott
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Janice Lintz thought the travel insurance on her credit card covered her. But when she found herself stranded during civil unrest in Nepal, she discovered it didn't.

Lintz filed a claim for her disrupted itinerary, assuming the breakdown in safety and infrastructure would be a slam dunk. It wasn't. But her policy only covered security events if they're officially classified as terrorism.

Protests and civil unrest? Unfortunately, those are explicitly excluded.

"The distinction felt arbitrary," says Lintz, a disability advocate who lives in Washington, D.C. "The outcome was the same as a terror event—closed airspace, canceled flights, and no way to proceed. However, the label determined whether I had coverage."

It's a gap that's becoming a chasm in 2026. Travelers are increasingly caught in an era of pop-up instability, where a peaceful strike can turn into a riot. Some standard travel insurance policies remain stuck in the past, built around a narrow set of named perils that haven't necessarily kept pace with the modern world.

"Today's world is more volatile; shifting geopolitics, extreme weather, cyber threats, and civil unrest are common," says Frank Harrison, regional security director for the Americas at World Travel Protection. "As travelers seek risk-free journeys, more are turning to specialized insurance, especially for high-risk destinations."

The terrorism trap and other coverage gaps

The biggest misunderstanding in travel today is the belief that your trip is unsafe, you're covered by travel insurance. Most standard policies focus on named perils like a sudden illness or lost luggage rather than dynamic security events.

Indeed, when it comes to security, the fine print is a minefield. If you're not reading it, here's what you're likely missing:

- The terrorism threshold. Many policies, including those offered through credit card ownership, only trigger security benefits if an event is officially designated as "terrorism" by the U.S. government. If it's "civil commotion" or "unrest," you're often on your own.

- Advisory vs. action. A U.S. State Department

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Black fathers led their voices to help maternal health

By Myla S. Roundy
HOWARD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON - During the 55th Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, U.S. Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock moderated a panel on the importance of Black fatherhood in the context of maternal mortality rates.

In the session "Beyond the Statistics: A Conversation on Black Fathers Protecting Black Motherhood," Warnock brought together four panelists — Dr. Lynne Lightfoote, an OB-GYN; Lamman Rucker, an actor and activist; Charles Johnson, founder of 4Kira4Moms; and Omari Maynard, artist and founder of the ARIAH Foundation — all of whom have personal and work experiences directly related to maternal mortality.

The panel was a way to bring awareness and support to the Dads Matter Act that Warnock introduced to the Senate last June, and remains in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. It calls for a public campaign to increase awareness of the importance of including fathers in maternal-related healthcare.

"Black fathers can join the fight to protect Black mothers and end the maternal health crisis," Warnock said at the start of the session. "There's no reason for the United States of America...to have the

Please see **BLACK** | 28



SPENCER DAVIS | UNSPLASH

As summer gives way to fall, people will congregate in closed spaces, which increases exposure to viruses like COVID-19. Now is a good time to take steps to prevent infection through vaccination.

It's virus season: Here's how to protect yourself

New COVID-19 strands show similar symptoms to the past

By Cameron Williams
cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

Fall is here and that means virus season will ramp up.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that over August the trend for COVID-19 cases has decreased, however over the last few weeks according to the North Carolina Division of Public Health, there has been a slight uptick.

"I was just looking at the North Carolina Division of Public Health's website," said Dr. Jeremy Denenberg, a family medicine physician at Novant Health in Charlotte, "and they have really good tracking as far as kind of going back multiple years when we see increases in emergency room hospital visits, and some of those are just labeled as general respiratory viruses.

"But they also have a breakdown on COVID, RSV, and flu. ... In North Carolina it did look like there was a slight spike in activity the last month."

NCDPH tracks levels of COVID-19 through the number of reported cases as well as virus levels in wastewater.

"They take wastewater samples, and that has also shown a bit of an increase from the baseline in August and early September," Denenberg said. "That's a good way to estimate that COVID activity may be increasing, especially since not as many people are getting tested, or if they're testing, they're testing at home and just not going in to see a doctor.

"The data isn't always perfect, but it's at least showing that there's some uptick in the viral activity. And then if we have a simi-

lar year to last year, I expect that the months between late November and early springtime is when we see a spike in all respiratory viruses, including COVID."

There is an updated vaccine for the most recent strands of the virus, but with federal initiatives like the Bridge Access Program shut down, it could become problematic for uninsured adults to get the vaccine.

"I do know that typically the places that are going to be more likely to provide free vaccines if you don't have insurance would be the local health department or a federally qualified health center," Denenberg said.

Recent variants of COVID-19, much like the prior Omicron variant, cause symptoms that largely resemble a bad cold or flu. This in-

Please see **IT'S VIRUS** | 28

Recycling flawed, inefficient and worth it

By Conner Foote
UNC MEDIA HUB

DURHAM — Bryce Brooks has spent most of her professional life asking other people for their trash.

She's managed waste for Durham Central Park for more than a decade, and in that time founded two different organizations that aim to ease some of the stressors in the recycling process.

One of those, The ReCollective, was inaugurated in 2022 by Brooks and business partner Kevin Younge. At the time, Brooks had been focusing on managing waste for commercial businesses, but after connecting with Younge through North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality, the pair began to lay the groundwork for a service which would supplement the other side of waste management — traditional curbside recycling.

"With residences, you have to worry about residential compliance and having a system that is easy for everyone to do,"



UNC MEDIA HUB

Recycling is inefficient, but does eliminate trash from the environment.

Brooks said. "Having a system that makes sense to a lot of people is difficult to kind of conceive of because what we've been raised on, in curbside recycling, in traditional recycling services, is single stream."

Single-stream recycling means that all the different recyclable materials on a truck's route get mixed together before being div-

vied up at what they call a sortation center. But many recyclable materials cannot be properly handled through single-stream service. Each municipality has different rules about what can and can't be recycled, and often what they won't accept is still recyclable.

To ease what is often a confusing municipal service, The ReCollective's

vans set out each month to pick up much of this hard-to-recycle material from more than 400 households on routes spanning from Garner to Greensboro.

They return with canvas bags full of plastic film, styrofoam and crinkly packaging — practically everything that your municipal curbside service won't accept. Inside its Durham

Please see **RECYCLING** | 28

Score big on game day by kicking off with these winning tailgate recipes

FEATURE IMPACT

Football, family, friends and food are a winning combination during tailgating season, especially if your recipe game is locked in. Whether you're feeding a hungry crowd in the stadium parking lot or putting together a savory plate to enjoy while you chill on the sofa, these recipes bring plenty of flavor and keep the energy going until the final whistle.

A main course of Grilled Chicken Kebabs served alongside Steakhouse Hasselback Potatoes and Simple Salami Sliders will fuel you and your crew all the way from the pre-game festivities to the after party.

Visit culinary.net to find

more recipes to inspire your game plan.

Mouthwatering chicken kebabs

Tailgating and grilling go together like touchdowns and victory dances, and some of the best game-day recipes are the ones you can make well ahead of kickoff so you aren't rushing around to get ready.

These sweet-and-smoky Grilled Chicken Kebabs can be prepped and marinated up to eight hours in advance so all you need to do is pull them out of the fridge and get them to the grill.

With lean protein from the chicken plus vitamins and fiber from a generous amount of bright, colorful veggies, this recipe is a score for more than your taste buds.

Grilled chicken kebabs

Recipe adapted from Dinner at the Zoo
Prep time: 20 minutes
Marinating time: 1 hour
Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 4
Marinade:
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup balsamic vinegar or other vinegar
1/8 cup soy sauce
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon minced garlic salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
Kebabs:

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 orange bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces



SHUTTERSTOCK

Grilled chicken kebabs breaks up the mundane tailgate fare.

1 small zucchini, cut into 1-inch slices
1 small yellow squash, cut into 1-inch slices
1 red onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
4 wooden skewers
1 tablespoon chopped

parsley

To make marinade: In large bowl, whisk olive oil, vinegar, soy sauce, lemon juice, brown sugar and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

To make kebabs: In bowl,

toss chicken, bell peppers, zucchini, squash and red onion with marinade. Cover and refrigerate 1-8 hours.

Soak wooden skewers in cold water at least 30 mi-

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It’s virus season: Here’s how to protect yourself

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cludes throat irritation, upper respiratory issues like congestion or a runny nose, nausea and vomiting as well as diarrhea are reported as well.

“COVID is pretty much like a Venn diagram, and a lot of the symptoms overlap,” Denenberg said. “I don’t know if the XFG strain is showing any different symptoms, but I was reading that we haven’t seen yet that there’s any increase in severity or mortality. I would just say that this is another strain that, if someone has not been exposed to this strain, then they are still able to get COVID multiple times because of the virus’s mutation.”

How to stay safe

First and foremost, it’s recommended to get an updated vaccine. If insurance poses an issue, check with the Mecklenburg County Health Department to see what it offers.

Wash your hands often, especially during colder months when viruses tend to fester. If you are around people often, wearing a mask helps

prevent the spread of viral infection too.

“I think obviously staying away from people that may have any sort of respiratory symptoms, especially your you know older relatives or immunocompromised people,” Denenberg said. “But probably the biggest thing is eating a healthy diet, supporting your immune system in other ways. [There’s] some evidence that maybe supplementing zinc, maybe vitamin C, but hard to say whether those are truly proven.

“We definitely saw that there is an increased risk during COVID with people with metabolic disease, obesity, diabetes. All of these do play a role in how your immune system responds to respiratory viruses. We know that our immune system responds best when we’re kind of doing all these healthy lifestyle practices, getting enough sleep, eating a good diet, and limiting sugar. All of those things can be helpful to help our immune system.

Is travel insurance useless in a real crisis? Read the fine print

Continued from page 1B

Level 4 “Do Not Travel” advisory alone often doesn’t trigger coverage. You typically need a hard trigger, like a government-mandated evacuation order, before an insurer will help you.

• The “known event” exclusion. If you buy a policy after a protest or strike is already in the news, it’s a “known event.” The insurance company won’t cover any losses related to that because, in its eyes, you bought the policy knowing the house was already on fire.

“Insurance policies are built around specific, defined events because that’s the only way to price them fairly,” says Joe Cronin, president of International Citizens Insurance. “A hurricane has a clear start date and measurable impact. Political unrest exists on a spectrum. Policies need to draw the line somewhere.”

Why pandemic exclusions are still here

You’d think after the last few years, every policy would cover pandemics. It’s actually the opposite. Pandemic exclusions are more explicit than ever.

The reason is simple math. Insurance works when a few people have bad luck. It fails when everyone has bad luck at the same time.

“A global crisis like a pandemic causes everyone to claim at once, which would bankrupt the system,” says Terry Boynton, president of Yonder Travel Insurance. By excluding these massive events, companies can keep rates affordable for other emergencies. While some policies might cover you if you catch a virus, they won’t cover the broad disruption of a country shutting its borders or an airline canceling all its flights.

What’s the fix?

For the modern traveler, the real question is whether standard insurance is enough. If you’re heading to a region with known political volatility or fragile infrastructure, the answer is likely no.

There’s a growing gap between financial reimbursement (what insurance does) and physical safety support (what you actually need when the rioting starts).

The answer is a security membership that focuses on operational response—getting you out, coordinating extraction, and providing real-time threat monitoring. This isn’t insurance, but a supplement that closes the gap standard plans leave wide open.

A security membership can provide emergency assistance more quickly than traditional travel insurance. You don’t have to wait for a government order. You can call the moment you feel threatened.

“Security emergencies can arise unexpectedly, so having a plan and understanding who you can call for help is crucial,” says John Gobbels, chief operating officer of Medjet, a company that offers security memberships.

Demand for these memberships has surged lately. Dan Richards, CEO of The Global Rescue Companies, has seen requests for nonmedical security evacuations jump 31% in the last year.

Black fathers advocate for maternal health awareness

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kind of maternal mortality rate that we have.”

In the U.S., there are 17.9 deaths per 100,000 live births and for Black women, that number increases to 44.8 deaths — over double the rate for any other racial group, according to 2024 data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The discussion touched on multiple topics, including misconceptions and grief, but the lived experiences shared resonated most with the audience, going beyond the numbers.

Rita Venable came to the panel from Indiana as a 33-year member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women — an organization that advocates for health, education and economic empowerment.

“We hear women’s stories, but a lot of the time we don’t hear the father’s side,” she said. “If the baby passes, then both of them are left to deal with the mortality of the child, not just the mother.”

During the panel, Lightfoote, an OB-GYN in Maryland, said medical providers focus on the mothers, who are their patients. However, that does not mean fathers should be excluded from the conversations, she said.

Black women, she said, often are accustomed to dismissing their symptoms. Input from fathers in medical discussions can be helpful. A mother may tell the doctor she has experienced no bodily changes, she said, but a father can point out that her feet are swollen when they weren’t hours before.

“Doctors should be comfortable hearing it from the father [also] and the father should be comfortable saying it,” Lightfoote said.



MYLA ROUNDY | HOWARD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

Three of Omari Maynard’s paintings of women who died due to maternal health-related complications, featured during the “Beyond the Statistics: A Conversation on Black Fathers Protecting Black Motherhood” panel at the 55th Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference on Sept. 17.

Janae Jackson, a nursing student at Morgan State University, said the panel was enlightening as she began to consider a man’s role in maternal health. She said she appreciated the discussion on how some people assume Black men aren’t at the bedside in the hospital because they are not around or are not alive, but sometimes they are simply at work.

“It was really inspirational...hearing them speak about thinking about other factors that happen in Black people’s lives that may prompt them to not be at the bedside of their wives,” Jackson said. “[Don’t] automatically think the negative; always think about the positive when it comes to maternal health.”

One father in the audience, Demmentrice Jefferson, said he came to the panel not with any expectations but because this conversation is “necessary” to have.

“There’s a difference in kids who have a father and those who don’t,” said Jefferson, the executive director of Think Big Youth Organization — a youth mentorship program in

Georgia.

Jefferson recalled how he would visit his daughter’s school to eat lunch with her and some of the other students would make comments about wanting their own fathers to come.

“I started eating with the whole class and became the class father,” he said.

A recurring theme throughout the panel discussion was finding purpose after grief. For Maynard, a panelist who lost his wife 13 days after giving birth to their second child, he said he found his purpose in painting women who died due to maternal health complications.

He gives the paintings to families as a way to keep their names alive and beyond the statistics, but still, more needs to be done, he said.

“We can talk about these stories all day long but if there’s not policy and legislation behind it, we can’t move the needle in the way that we need to,” Maynard said.

Myla S. Roundy is a senior reporter for HUNewsService.com and managing editor of The Hilltop at Howard University.

« OUT & ABOUT »

PHOTOS BY DANIEL COSTON | FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST



Dawn Daly-Mack and Sheree Anderson dressed up for the Great Gatsby Gala, benefiting the MS Society, held at the Hilton Uptown on Aug. 22.



Carolina Panthers legend Thomas Davis was the special guest at this year’s Panther Lunch, held at Le Meridien on Aug. 27.

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BIDS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation is requesting a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from firms to provide full professional planning, design, engineering, permitting, and construction administration services for parks and greenway projects to receive FY 27 CIP funding.

The complete Request for Qualifications including the project list can be obtained from Katie Thayer, Project Manager, Mecklenburg County Asset and Facility Management, 3205 Freedom Dr., Suite 6000, Charlotte NC 28208 by email at AFM.RFQ@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov. SOQ's must be submitted by 2:00 pm, October 22, 2026.

Upon request, this information will be made available in an alternate format for persons with disabilities. Please call 980-314-2428.

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LEGAL NOTICES

INLIVIAN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ACTION: Notice of public comment period and public hearing.

SUMMARY: INLIVIAN has released a draft of the Fiscal Year 2027 Moving to Work (MTW) Annual Plan.

Participation in the Federal MTW program allows INLIVIAN exemptions from existing public housing and voucher rules and provides funding flexibility associated with Federal housing dollars. The Fiscal Year 2027 MTW Annual Plan will communicate how the agency looks to utilize the benefits of the MTW program for fiscal year 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT: The public comment period will begin on October 1, 2026, and end on October 30, 2026. Written comments will be accepted via email at mtw@inlivian.com.

PUBLIC HEARING: The public hearing will be held virtually and via the phone on October 20, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. To join the public hearing or to sign up to speak on this matter, please contact the INLIVIAN Customer Service Call Center at 704-336-5183.

To access the draft plan in person, please visit the INLIVIAN Administrative Office located at 400 East Boulevard and all INLIVIAN/Blue Horizon managed properties (by request) beginning October 1, 2026.

To access the draft plan online, visit the INLIVIAN website at www.INLIVIAN.com under Moving to Work: <https://www.inlivian.com/movingtowork/>.

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

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Lionel Richie takes a tour break

By Maria Sherman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Lionel Richie is taking a break from touring as he recovers from a heart procedure, a representative for the singer confirmed in a statement to The Associated Press.

Richie underwent a common procedure for atrial fibrillation, or A-fib, and the “doctor said everything went perfectly,” it read. “Lionel is doing great but will take some time off and will be back on stage soon.”

A-fib is a quivering or irregular heartbeat that is a worrisome stage-setter for blood clots, stroke and heart failure. Some researchers believe more than 10 million Americans have it — most of them

older.

The 77-year-old singer also postponed two concerts earlier this year, in June, after falling ill. And in August, reports of Richie checking himself into a hospital after a performance in St. Louis made the rounds online.

Richie was scheduled to perform with Earth, Wind & Fire Sept. 26 in San Francisco, Sept. 30 in Chicago and Oct. 3 in Columbus, Ohio.

The Oscar and four-time Grammy Award-winning Richie launched his career with The Commodores before becoming a successful solo artist. In addition to his well-known hits like “Hello,” Richie co-wrote the iconic charity single “We Are the World” with Michael Jackson and has sold over 100 million records. He is also a judge on “American Idol.”

« ON THE MARQUEE »



DAVECHAPPELLE.COM

Dave Chappelle, the award-winning American comedian, actor, screenwriter, and producer, will bring his national tour to Spectrum Center on Oct. 21.

Comic sets and orchestra performances

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

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

Oct. 1
Mariachi El Bronx, 8 p.m., Carolina Theatre.

After a 10-year break, the eight-piece band is headlining a tour. Special guests Bedouin Soundclash and Max Diaz.

Tickets \$37-\$65 at ticketmaster.com and thecarolina.com.

Oct. 2-3

Tosco Music hosts its seventh annual *FabFest-Charlotte's Beatles Festival*, Knight Center (Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m.) and Parr Center, Central Piedmont Community College (Oct. 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.).

The festival brings together community to share creativity inspired by the spirit of the 1960s and Beatles music. FabFest includes a ticketed concert at Knight Center (tix.blumentharts.org), and free program on Oct. 3 with live music on two stages, a Beatles Art Contest and Cover Song Contest, both with cash prizes.

• *“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. The comic adds Charlotte to the Y'all Still Know What It Is! Tour. Select dates 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

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BRANDI TRUJILLO

Brandi Trujillo, who performs under the stage name Swift The Goddess, credits living in Charlotte with developing her talents as a spoken word and recording artist.

Charlotte-bred creativity flourishes on Vegas stage

Swift The Goddess transforms experiences into award-winning vocals

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Brandi Trujillo's Charlotte roots shaped her art.

Trujillo, stage name “Swift The Goddess,” brings Charlotte to Las Vegas through music, spoken word and mental health advocacy. She credits the Queen City, where she spent more than two decades, with inspiring her work through people, places and experiences.

Trujillo got her start in ceremonial-based healing through sound frequencies and mantras, gathering people to begin their journeys of liberation.

“I was literally in a space of holding space for other people sonically so they can meditate, they can feel these instruments, frequencies, vibrations and tuning balance their body and their energetic body,” she said.

Trujillo credits Charlotte's people and communities with shaping her work.

“So many people in so many places that have been very impactful in my life,” she said. “I'm grateful to hold their inputs, their legacies, their stories. I feel like I've been blessed to learn a lot about different

generations, different cultures, different ways of being in this lifetime through the people I've met.”

Trujillo relocated to Las Vegas earlier this year, where she continued to develop her creativity. She was nominated in two categories at the 2026 Las Vegas Black Music Awards – Spoken Word Poet of the Year Performance and Jazz Artist of the Year, which she won.

“It was spring and I was sitting out with a good friend of mine at the time and having real life discussions and later I had a whole download of information and that form just came from my spirit,” Trujillo said.

The move to Las Vegas brought a creative shift for Trujillo, who said she appreciates the city's artistic and poetry community. She showcased her work at open mic nights and other venues while crediting her formative years for preparing her for opportunities that came with it.

“I'm grateful to be in Vegas right now with my consciousness, my awareness, and that early childhood development, because I don't have the distractions and things that most people have,” she said. “I look at Vegas as like a settlement of work that I came here to experience and



Former Charlotte resident Brandi Trujillo (center) earned Jazz Artist of the Year at the annual Las Vegas Black Music Awards.

relationships that I came here to cultivate, build with, and contribute to.”

Trujillo said she wants to tell stories that remind people of what love really looks like and make music that honors femininity and the human spirit. Her goal is to inspire and bring new narratives to the forefront.

“Usually when you want to see something that's not in reality, in abundance, that means you're supposed to move your feet towards it,” she said. “I've been really feeling that call and that push to become more of a visual storyteller as well,

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At 10 years old, Smithsonian's Black museum is undaunted amid pressure from Trump administration

By Matt Brown
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Deeply impactful exhibits, ticketed galas and educational events are expected ways to celebrate a world-class museum. But at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which marked the 10-year anniversary of its opening on Sept. 24, the singing of Stevie Wonder's “Happy Birthday” gave the event the flavor of a down-home family reunion. “Our anniversary is really founded through this theme of ‘Welcome Home. Our Legacy Continues,’” said Shanita Brackett, the museum's acting director. “It means we are planning our next 10, frankly 20 years of exhibitions right now.”

Beginning with a full museum activation on Sept. 24, the celebrations extended at the museum's National Mall home and The Wharf, located along the historic Washington Channel of the Potomac River. Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III, the museum's founding director who announced his plan to retire last month, headlined “Understanding America,” a discussion to commemorate the anniversary.

The festivities come as the Smithsonian museum, affectionately called the “Blacksonian” by its most committed visitors and patrons, has faced outright hostility from President Donald Trump's administration.

The president last year signed an executive order seeking to change a range of museums and landmarks supported by the federal government. The Interior Department has also removed dozens of displays from national monuments that highlighted the history of social activists, people of color, women and LGBTQ people, among others.

The order instructed federal officials to work with Congress to bar the Smithsonian from using federal funding for exhibits that allegedly “degrade shared American values, divide Americans based on race, or promote programs or



ALAN KARCHMER

The National Museum of African American History and Culture, which marked its first decade in September, has resisted Trump administration demands to change its mission.

ideologies inconsistent with federal law.”

But the Smithsonian's leadership, which responds to a board that includes lawmakers from both parties, private donors and Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, says they have continued their work without interference.

“We have not changed any exhibitions. We haven't changed our language. We know that what we do is steeped in scholarship,” Brackett said of the African American museum.

‘No changes’ to museum's mission amid targeting by Trump administration

The Smithsonian is supported by a mix of federal and private funding. The institution's significant funding and complex governance structure have made it difficult for the administration to directly influence its content, as officials have done with federal landmarks, which are maintained directly by the executive branch. That hasn't stopped an outpouring of concern

from supporters of the African American museum's mission in response to any curatorial changes the museum has made over the last two years.

Administration officials have also expressed frustration at the Smithsonian's resistance and have outlined new measures. Trump, a Republican, has ordered officials to place signs in front of some Smithsonian buildings warning visitors they may experience exhibits with an inaccurate portrait of American history.

Brackett said her museum is confident they can continue with the museum's original vision “to capture and share the unvarnished truth of African American history and culture.”

“We know that Black history is a part of American history, and it's our job to ensure that everyone who comes to this museum, who engages in our programming, who visits us online, understands exactly how all of this evolved, how the contributions of African Americans have advanced this country, and

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Charlotte-bred creativity flourishes in Las Vegas

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and tell love stories, and tell stories that honor how intuitive and beautiful and brilliant Indigenous people are all over the world. When we stand in our gifts, skills, and talents, we inspire other people to do it.”

Alongside storytelling, Trujillo was also recently crowned Miss Bharat Worldwide 2026 at the Live in Triumph pageant. During her yearlong reign, she'll focus on mental health awareness, suicide prevention and community service.

“I want to use this platform this year to demonstrate a holistic lens and approach to demonstrate what empathy

and care looks like and move our feet and our awareness from the models that we know don't work,” she said.

Trujillo is continuing the work of Miss Bharat title while growing BRYCELY, her company focused on cultural experiences and connection. Her goal is to create experiences that bring people together.

“When it comes down to it, whatever inspired me and moved me, whatever I am being blessed to experience, I want to share because I think it will make a meaningful impact or tell a great story, remind people of how powerful they are in choosing their art forms,” she said.

Music of Tina Turner performed by Charlotte Symphony Oct. 16

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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: neighborhoodtheater.com.

Oct. 16-17
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.

Oct. 21
Dave Chappelle, the award-winning comedian, actor, screenwriter, will bring his national tour of arena shows to Spectrum Center. Tickets at livenation.com.

Nov. 12
Best-selling author *Walter Mosley* is among the literary heavyweights high-

Museum refuses to change amid pressure from President Trump

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that's really what people walk away with,” she said.

“There are no changes to exhibits other than rotating objects that need conservation,” she added.

Some visitors had expressed fears that exhibits, such as the casket of Emmett Till and a Greensboro lunch counter housed at the neighboring American History Museum, may have been altered to appease the administration's concerns. Brackett was clear: “Nothing has changed.”

A decade of honoring Black history after more than a century of advocacy

The idea of a landmark recognizing the contributions of African Americans on the National Mall goes back more than a century.

In 1915, Black Civil War veterans called on lawmakers to establish a landmark honoring their contributions to the war effort, often fighting for their own liberty. The idea advanced in fits and starts over the 20th century until eventually calls to commemorate the legacy of the Civil Rights movement captured the interest of lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The Museum of African American History and Culture was first approved by Congress in 2003 and opened its doors on Sept. 24, 2016. At its opening ceremony, then-President Barack Obama urged African Americans to see their story as an integral thread in the broader American story.

“It is a glorious story, the one that's told here. It is complicated, and it is messy, and it is full of contradictions, as all great stories are,” Obama said. “The very fact of this day does not prove that America is perfect, but it does validate the ideas of our founding: that this country — born of change, of revolution, of we the people — that this country can get better.”

Since its opening a decade ago, the museum has welcomed close to 14 million visitors from 200 countries and has hosted more than 26,000 school groups, according to the Smithsonian. Across 10 floors — five above ground celebrating

art and cultural achievements and five below ground exploring deep histories — visitors have learned of the complex history of African Americans in the U.S., a story that is by turns harrowing and triumphant, and how it fits into the broader narrative of American history.

Visitors ‘yearn’ to take in Black museum's offerings

A day before the Sept. 24 anniversary, Shallary Duncan of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, visited the museum for the first time.

“Quite honestly, with all of the changes in our country, it made me yearn to be here. I don't want to see any changes that would mitigate the reality of this experience,” said Duncan, a psychologist and self-described “history buff.”

“We know that African Americans have been in this country for as long as the country has been here, so it's important for us that we are a part of a voice that says this is real, our history is real and we don't want it to change,” she added.

More than a dozen students from a consortium of historically Black colleges and universities also visited the museum on Wednesday, eager to learn from its exhibits. Some of the students said they had visited the museum repeatedly since they were children.

For Jaina Dotson, the trip was a special experience. Growing up in Maryland, she'd visited the museum once as a child and was “eager to see how my perspective has changed.”

Now a student at Tuskegee University studying architecture, the visit was also a chance to put her coursework into practice. Dotson said she had researched the museum's design for her latest architectural project.

“Looking at the outside facade, the corona, and the intention of the design behind that, as well as the layout of the museum itself, was an integral part of my research,” Dotson said. “The layout of the museum, its architecture, is really important for the experience. So, it'll be fun to actually experience that as a patron.”

Black-helmed films shine at Toronto film festival

BLACK PRESS USA

TIFF screened 293 films over 10 days in downtown Toronto, where the streets were packed with festivalgoers. Black features, documentaries, and shorts were integral to its international lineup. Here are a few standouts—and a crowd-pleaser.

Darlene Love: I Know Where I've Been (3 stars)
Winner: 2026 People's Choice Documentary Award.

“One of the greatest voices in the history of rock 'n' roll.” That's what Bette Midler proclaimed when she inducted Darlene Love into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Director Barry Avrich (“Oscar Peterson: Black + White”) makes that case. At its core is the effervescent, reflective Love, born Darlene Wright in 1941. She thoughtfully retraces her rise to stardom and becoming a legendary backup vocalist who was hailed in the Oscar-winning doc 20 Feet from Stardom.

Love recalls singing at L.A.'s St. Paul Baptist Church as a kid and then forming The Blossoms. The teen singing group backed Sam Cooke, Elvis Presley and Cher before becoming the house girl group on TV's “Shindig.” Remember The Crystals' hit “He's a Rebel”? That's Love. Phill Spector, the Svengali producer and convicted murderer, denied her credit, making Love the protagonist and him the dastardly antagonist.

Archival footage, performances at the famed Power Station studio, and recollections of miscarriages, births, husbands, kidnappings, cruise-ship gigs and eventual success create sustained drama.

Ken Ng's lighting and cinematography make the octogenarian's skin glow like it did when she was 17. Dave Kennedy's editing skillfully blends songs, performances, low points and triumphs. It's easy to take Love at her word, especially when Dionne Warwick, David Letterman and Bruce Springsteen become her witnesses—and backup. Though the format is standard for music-biography documentaries, Avrich lets Love's emotional journey unfold naturally. Audiences will enjoy watching her get her flowers. Belting out “Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)” reminds everyone she can still sing anyone under the table.

Misty Green (2.5 stars)
She never met an opportunity she couldn't mess up. That's how actress Misty Green (Rosalind Eleazar, “Slow Horses”) leads her life and career. It's no surprise when things get so bad that she's close to eviction from her Los Angeles apartment. Her only remedy is finding an acting job and making money, a challenging task so many in the crowded enter-

tainment industry face daily.

The premise and protagonist are surprising, given that comic and screenwriter-turned-first-time director Chris Rock is behind the film. Misty's life is clouded by booze and drugs—a punishing combination of self-destruction.

Rock gives himself a co-leading role as a film director whose past with Misty is complicated and whose future with her uncertain. The script adds a volatile brother (Daniel Kaluuya), a chatty white best friend who loves Black men (Anna Kendrick) and an on-again, off-again FWB played by Adam Driver, whose porn-star mustache signals his smarminess.

The opening is the film's strongest sequence: cinematographer Kira Kelly's camera hangs over an irate rich woman's shoulder as she questions who's holed up in her dead husband's ritzy condo. Quirky and well directed, the ingenious beginning portends stellar direction to come. But it doesn't. Marcus Miller's jazzy urban score grounds the movie. Too many storylines, characters and philosophical rants from Rock's character leave the screenplay jumbled and unfocused. The direction feels unpolished. Unsettled.

Still, Eleazar's manipulative, scrappy take on this hard-luck thespian displays a versatility and dexterity worthy of acclaim. This is an opportunity Misty would mess up. But Eleazar might ride this chance for fame all the way to Oscar land. Thanks to Chris Rock.

Once Upon a Time in Harlem (4 stars)
Read the room. Intellectuals, artists, politicians, librarians and others gather in 1972 in an NYC brownstone owned by Duke Ellington to discuss politics, history, and culture—the past, present and future.

Race and the issues facing the African American community get an intense examination that's filtered through the prism of the 1920s Harlem Renaissance. At that gathering, filmmaker William Greaves captured the profound conversations. After his death in 2014, son David, producer Liani Greaves and editors Anne de Mare and Lynn True helped fulfill his dream. A reckoning.

Harlem's who's who share anecdotes and memories in a perceptive, head-spinning roundtable. Greaves' original 16mm camerawork is so inviting, audiences feel like welcome guests. They'll likely feel honored to be in the company of showman Eubie Blake, artist Romare Bearden, Ida Mae Cullen and photographer James Van Der Zee. Revelations flow for an ethereal 100 minutes.

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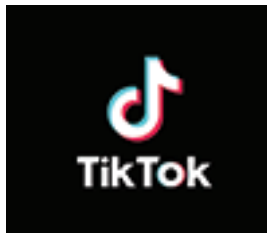
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