

Bad money moves can ruin a relationship

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Singles on the dating scene can have great jobs, solid self-care routines, and good communication skills, but according to new research, it's their ability to handle money that determines if a relationship will last.

When it comes to dating and relationships, it turns out that financial literacy and money management matter more than most realize. A new survey found that 60% of Americans say poor financial habits are an absolute deal-breaker in a relationship. But here's what might surprise people: It's not about being broke or carrying student loans. It's about the choices someone makes.

Nearly half of Americans - 49% - say excessive gambling or risky money moves are the biggest financial warning signs in a partner. That tops hiding purchases and high credit card debt.

And there's a reason why: Most people understand that life happens. Inflation is real. Bills pile up. Emergencies blow through your savings. But someone who's spending money on sports betting apps instead of building an emergency fund, or taking out loans to cover gambling losses? That's not bad luck. That's bad judgment

Among Gen Z couples, 41% say money fights are seriously straining their relationships. With many breakups resulting from financial distrust and incompatibility.

"When one person is trying to save while the other is chasing quick wins, that tension shows up everywhere: date nights, future plans, how you talk about the life you're building together," said Deidra Willis, a Charlotte-based wealth management advisor with Northwestern Mutual.

According to the latest Northwestern Mutual Planning and Progress study, 32% of Gen Z adults are either betting on sports or considering prediction markets, compared to just 17% of all adults. That's a sign of desperation wrapped in an opportunity, and it's reshaping how young people think about money and risk.

Please see **BAD MONEY** | 38

Corporate card charge can cost your career

A \$600 emergency can put a \$90,000 salary at risk. That may sound ridiculous—until the \$600 gets charged to a corporate credit card.

Financial pressure changes decision-making. When rent is due, the car breaks down or personal credit is exhausted, an employer's credit card can start looking less like company property and more like a temporary bridge to payday.

I'll pay it back. No one will know. The company was going to pay for most of it anyway.

Those aren't financial strategies. They're rationalizations that can damage a career.

And while employees are feeling financial pressure, companies are feeling it too. Lay-offs, tighter budgets and cost-cutting bring greater scrutiny to expenses. In my years as an investigator, attorney and corporate compliance leader, I've seen seemingly small decisions create very large questions about judgment and trustworthiness.

You don't have to think of yourself as dishonest to make a decision that causes your employer to question whether you can be trusted with company money. The most dangerous charges aren't always the obvious ones. They often fall into three quieter categories: convenience, concealment and lifestyle subsidy.

Convenience: Charge now, pay later

The car needs an unexpected repair. A tuition deposit is due. Your personal card is maxed out, but

Please see **CORPORATE** | 38

« RIDES »

Audi adds muscle and comfort to its reimagined Q3 sport utility vehicle

By Winfred Cross
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's been a while since I've piloted an Audi anything.

Getting the fully revised Q3 SUV was not only a surprise but also a great pleasure. I'd nearly forgotten how fun an Audi can be.

The Q3 is Audi's smallest SUV. I believe this new version is more spacious than the outgoing model with more cargo area. There is enough room for five, but rear passengers may wish for a bit more leg room.

The new Q3 is much more muscular looking than the old model. The grille is large but not huge and my car had the optional blackout treatment with the classic five rings

done in darker hues. The LED headlights are long and lean and sit above faux air intake vents. The fenders are more noticeable, giving the truck a wide-body look. My test vehicle's blueish-green paint job was snazzy and made the muscly look even more pronounced.

I'm an instant fan of the new interior but there is a liberal use of plastic that may disturb some buyers. Soft-touch areas abound but I would have liked some wood to replace the piano black plastic in some areas. The metal detail is nice and there is some leather trim.

I'm not crazy about the gear selector. It's part of a complicated stalk system

around the chunky steering wheel. The learning curve was a bit longer for me, but it may not bother others. The stalks on the left control windshield wipers, cruise control and the digital dash. The dash can be configured to show different levels of information including infotainment readouts and more. The touch screen is integrated into a curved cockpit that wraps around the driver. The touch screen is responsive and has crisp graphics.

The seats are comfortable and swaddled in a parchment-colored leather. The driver's seat hits just the right spots. You can adjust your seating position to give you a commanding



AUDI

The 2026 Audi Q3 sport utility vehicle.

view of the road. The front passenger's seat is as comfortable with an even better view of the road. The rear seats are the most comfort-

able for two but three of average size could be as comfortable.

The Q3 is powered by a 2.0-liter four-cylinder en-

gine that makes 255 horsepower and 273 pounds-foot of torque. It sends

power to all four wheels via

Please see **AUDI** | 28



KATE WELLS | KFF HEALTH NEWS

Christina Starks-Clay is an early childhood special education paraprofessional and small-business owner who attended Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed's town hall in Lansing, Michigan, last month. Like many Americans, she likes the idea of "Medicare for All," even if she's unsure how it would work. It sounds like "something that works for everyone. All of us. People work too hard not to have the things that they need," she says.

‘Medicare for All’ message attracts desperate voters

Midterm elections brings campaign of competing ideas into focus

By Kate Wells

KFF HEALTH NEWS

LANSING, Mich. — Christina Starks-Clay doesn't know how "Medicare for All" would work exactly, but she's willing to bet it'd be better than what she has now.

Standing in line for U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed's town hall in the state's capital in September, she whipped out her phone to pull up a screenshot. It was of the \$1,000 cashier's check she'd picked up at the bank that day to pay down a chunk of her son's dental bills. An early childhood special education paraprofessional, she still owed \$389, even with good dental insurance. Her own cleaning a few weeks before cost \$600.

She tried to talk herself down at the bank, to focus on being grateful for what she could afford.

"I'm like, 'Tina, OK, you were in

a position for this moment to do this,'" she said. "A lot of people couldn't do what I had to do today. I couldn't do it. But I did it. So I need to hear, how are you going to make this better for everyone?"

Many who waited in the hot sun that afternoon in a line stretching blocks through downtown Lansing shared similar anxieties. A man ahead of Starks-Clay talked about watching his brother rack up thousands of dollars in medical debt. A professor emeritus at nearby Michigan State University worried aloud about his grandkids' medical care, because his adult kids were struggling to meet a \$9,000 insurance deductible. Healthcare workers who'd turned up for the event described patients choosing between affording medication or food, or how they themselves had been financially devastated by a

medical crisis.

They all knew Michigan Democrat El-Sayed's rallying cry by heart, chanting it when the candidate took the stage: "Money out of politics! Money in your pocket! Medicare for All!"

Support for Medicare for All is at its highest in at least a decade, according to a new KFF poll. The survey found two-thirds of Americans now favor expanding the government health program that largely covers seniors (about half of whom are enrolled in private plans through Medicare Advantage).

But many people don't actually know how to define Medicare for All. Traditionally, the idea has been to establish a single health insurance program, run by the federal government, that would guarantee coverage for Americans

Please see **MEDICARE** | 28

Health plans task force fight Medicaid fraud

By Jaymie Baxley

NC HEALTH NEWS

North Carolina's four Medicaid contractors have joined forces on what they say is the state's first joint task force dedicated to rooting out cases of fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicaid program.

The North Carolina Association of Health Plans launched the task force in August to bring together the special investigative units and government relations staff from each of the state's four Medicaid managed care organizations, or MCOs. These private insurance plans — AmeriHealth Caritas, Healthy Blue, UnitedHealthcare and Carolina Complete Health — contract with the state to administer Medicaid services for millions of beneficiaries.

The purpose of the task force, organizers say, is simple: get all of the companies' fraud investigators talking to each other.



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

As federal funding and eligibility rules change for Medicaid, North Carolina's major Medicaid contractors are joining forces to launch a task force to root out fraud, waste and abuse.

"There was a desire, especially on the part of the special investigative unit leaders, to have a forum where they could share information among

themselves, and that was the birth of the idea," said Peter Daniel, executive director of the association.

The task force was formed amid heightened

federal and state scrutiny of Medicaid spending in North Carolina. State lawmakers, the Department of Health and Human Serv-

Please see **NC HEALTH** | 38

‘Medicare for All’ lands with desperate voters

Continued from page 1B

and minimize or even eliminate private insurance. How much people like the idea depends on what they’re told about it, pollsters have found.

Still, at a time when fewer than half of Americans say they can afford their healthcare, Medicare for All has become a progressive shorthand for radical, systemic change.

“Too many people don’t have health insurance, too many people who do have insurance can’t afford medical care, and many people are terrified about the costs of being sick,” said Jonathan Oberlander, a professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill who specializes in the politics of healthcare reform.

“And in an electorate that wants change, that is disenchanted with the status quo, Medicare for All is an important symbol,” he said.

That’s why Democrats running for Senate seats in the midterm elections in such states as Maine, Minnesota, and Florida tout their support for scrapping the current health insurance system in favor of broad Medicare coverage. But nowhere is the issue as central to a race as in Michigan, where Medicare for All has become synonymous with El-Sayed.

El-Sayed, who trained as a doctor and served as Detroit’s top public health official, has campaigned on Medicare for All since his unsuccessful bid for governor in 2018. To Starks-Clay, that means he has a plan and will “stick to it,” she said.

That’s appealing to voters right now, said Ashley Kirzinger, director of survey methodology at KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. “When we ask people what do they want to hear from candidates in regards to healthcare, it’s a plan to bring down healthcare costs.”

American Dream or pipe dream?

Medicare for All has been the shiny object of progressive politics in previous campaigns, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders’ 2016 presidential bid and the 2020 Democratic presidential primary. Its popularity rises and falls in cycles, Oberlander said. And today people are painfully aware their care is getting more expensive and harder to access.

In the first decade or so after the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the nation’s uninsured rate was cut nearly in half. Insurance companies could no longer deny people coverage based on preexisting conditions. Since then, to cover more people, 40 states plus Washington, D.C., have expanded Medicaid, the government health program for those with low incomes or disabilities.

Now it feels as if we’re moving backward, Oberlander said. “We are now, in the past two years, in an era where the Trump administration and congressional Republicans have reversed that progress.”

Michigan, a battleground state that President Donald Trump won in 2024, saw some of the steepest ACA plan enrollment drops after the GOP-controlled Congress allowed enhanced tax subsidies, which helped people afford their premiums, to expire at the end of last year. Insurance companies in Michigan hiked individual market-place rates by an average of 20%. And up to 355,000 Michiganders are expected to lose their Medicaid coverage in 2028 because of cuts included in Trump’s signature law, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, according to estimates from the Urban Institute, a left-leaning think tank.

At El-Sayed’s town hall in Lansing, Darleana Ash said patients at the medical diagnostics lab where she works are increasingly skipping tests because they can’t afford them. Others

drive hours from rural areas because their local labs have closed or are no longer in their insurance networks. She worries about the patients who must choose between their medications and groceries some months.

“If you got somebody that’s 75, 80 years old, guess what? They’re going to go without the medication, because they got to eat,” she said.

Packed in near the front of the crowded town hall was Cindy Lou Coolich, a boisterous retiree wearing a campaign T-shirt and cowboy hat. She spent years working for a company that helped uninsured people enroll in coverage, until she got sick herself. A bout of sepsis nearly killed her and left her disabled. Suddenly, she was the one enrolling in Medicaid and living on \$900 a month from Social Security.

She lost the 15-acre horse farm she’d owned, and then everything else, she said. “Except my car.” The saving grace, oddly, was the death of her ex-husband. Because they’d been married for more than 10 years, she could benefit from his Social Security benefits. “So now I’m doing quite well!” she laughed. But to her, it hardly seemed like the mark of a functioning healthcare system that someone had to die for things to get better.

A universal response

Democrats aren’t the only ones responding to voters’ healthcare discontent. Republican Mike Rogers, a former Michigan congressman and El-Sayed’s opponent, recently released a brief healthcare plan.

“I just can’t think of a more important issue to the people of Michigan than healthcare and costs, the rising costs,” he said. At a press conference announcing his health platform, he broadly attacked El-Sayed and Medicare for All.

“[If] the government’s going to give you something, they have to take it away from someone else,” Rogers said.

Under Medicare for All, millions of Michiganders with private health insurance would lose that coverage, he said. Pointing to estimates that Medicare for All would cost some \$4 trillion per year, he said, “Guess what? People pay for that.” (A recent preprint study from Yale researchers found that the cost of implementing Medicare for All, estimated at \$4.2 trillion, would save about \$1 trillion in healthcare spending.) Rogers’ campaign declined an interview request from KFF Health News.

Concerns about increased taxation, disruption to the current system, and reduced access to services can make Medicare for All a political liability in a close election, Oberlander said. “It doesn’t matter if the fears that they’re spreading are actually accurate,” he said. “Politically, what matters is if they can scare people.”

But even if El-Sayed wins in November, the chances of Medicare for All replacing the current system “remain very remote in the short to medium term,” Oberlander said.

Given the staunch opposition from Republicans and many moderate Democrats, not to mention the lobbying power of the healthcare industry, massively overhauling the U.S. health system won’t suddenly be achievable because of a single Senate candidate.

Thomas “Jermaine” Carey knows this. A self-described activist, he attended a recent El-Sayed town hall in Detroit feeling “kind of sold out” by what he calls the “straight-ticket” Democratic Party. Medicare for All sounds good, he said. “Do I believe it?” He shrugged.

“It’s still America,” he said. “You still have super PACs, the lobbyists that control everything.”

« SPONSORED CONTENT »



SHUTTERSTOCK

Get to know your hometown by going on a holiday staycation that opens a fresh perspective without the stress of a long trip.

Four tips can help you plan a holiday staycation in Charlotte

JPMORGANCHASE

Holiday travel can be exciting, but winter weather, crowded airports and packed schedules can sometimes make the idea of staying at home much more appealing.

If you still want to get away without the hassle of an actual getaway, consider a holiday staycation.

By remaining close to home, you can experience Charlotte from a fresh perspective without the stress of a long trip. Whether you book a night at a local hotel, check out a new neighborhood or just finally get around to seeing that landmark attraction that’s been on your to-do list, you can make staying at home feel like a real getaway.

Jessica Pinyan, a vacation design manager with FROSCH by Chase Travel, shares 4 tips you can use to create an amazing holiday at home this season.

1. Treat your hometown like a destination

One common theme surrounding area attractions is that they’re more likely to be packed with tourists than locals. If that popular museum, tour or other institution is always “there,” it can be easy to avoid it and say you’ll get there eventually.

A staycation provides a great opportunity to approach those kinds of places in Charlotte like a tourist. Start by making a short list of places or experiences you’ve always wanted to try but never seem to prioritize. You might include a museum, holiday market, historic site, restaurant or neighborhood, or you might attend a holiday-related performance that’s an annual late fall or winter tradition in your area.

“I love a good staycation,” Pinyan said. “This year, my husband and I booked a hotel for a few nights around the Fourth of July with our two young boys. We made sure to get a room with a view of the fireworks, and it ended up being one of our favorite family memories of the year. We got all the fun of the celebration without the crowds, the heat, or getting caught in the rain. Plus, we had snacks, air conditioning, and a comfy bed nearby when the kids crashed.”

2. Spend the night away

A hotel stay can provide a change of scenery that makes you feel like you’re enjoying a getaway.

Consider a traditional hotel, bed and breakfast or rental property where you can walk to restaurants, shopping, entertainment or holiday activities. An upscale hotel can also be the centerpiece of your staycation, allowing you to enjoy fine dining, a fitness center, spa services or other on-site experiences.

If you want a quieter, more relaxed experience, find a hotel “off the beaten path,” but still close to home, to enjoy the rhythms and sounds of nature.

“Always get the hotel,” Pinyan said. “Take a break from your routine and responsibilities. If you are at home, there’s always something that ‘has to be done’.” Let someone else make the bed or don’t make it all! Sometimes a staycation gives you all the benefits of a getaway without the stress of traveling.”

3. Be flexible

If your schedule allows, plan your staycation for a weekday or less crowded period, like the days between Christmas and New Year’s Eve, rather than a peak weekend. Hotel rates in the middle of the week tend to be cheaper, and it might be easier to grab a restaurant reservation or performance tickets. Locations might

be less crowded as well during the week, making it easier to get around.

Book some experiences in advance to save money but stay open to spontaneous opportunities once you arrive. You might find some great last-minute deals.

4. Try something new

Even if you think you’ve seen everything your hometown has to offer, there’s always something new to explore or discover.

Check out a neighborhood you usually drive through and visit the local shops and other businesses. You can also try a new cuisine at a neighborhood restaurant or kitchen.

Sometimes what’s old can be new again during the holiday season, so if you want to go back to your favorite restaurants and other popular spots, do so with fresh eyes. Order from the eatery’s holiday menu or take a walk when lights, decorations and seasonal programming transform many communities.

“Treat yourself to the spa, to room service, to a shopping trip, doesn’t matter what it is, just treat yourself,” she says. “I always love to recommend booking a food tour. Sometimes this is the best way to visit new restaurants in your area. You might even learn something new about where you live.”

Other helpful tips

Although staying at home can eliminate major travel costs, expenses can still add up quickly. Make a staycation budget and then consider ways to help keep costs down.

If you have rewards points from credit cards or loyalty programs, put them toward your hotel to get a free or cheaper night’s stay. Local museums, cultural institutions and attractions often have resident discounts, reduced-price admission days or seasonal offers. Community calendars can provide information about free or low-cost events like holiday concerts, light displays, markets, park activities and other events. If a performance doesn’t normally sell out, wait until the day before or day of to buy tickets, as prices are often reduced and you can find great seats.

With a little creativity, you might find Charlotte offers everything you’d want in a holiday vacation. You can enjoy good food, new experiences and an escape from your daily routine, all right at home.

For more tips, visit <https://www.chase.com/travel/guide>

For informational/educational purposes only: Views and strategies described in this article or provided via links may not be appropriate for everyone and are not intended as specific advice/recommendation for any business. Information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but JPMorgan Chase & Co. or its affiliates and/or subsidiaries do not warrant its completeness or accuracy. The material is not intended to provide legal, tax, or financial advice or to indicate the availability or suitability of any JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. product or service.

You should carefully consider your needs and objectives before making any decisions and consult the appropriate professional(s). Outlooks and past performance are not guarantees of future results. JPMorgan Chase & Co. and its affiliates are not responsible for, and do not provide or endorse third party products, services, or other content.

Deposit products provided by JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Member FDIC. Equal Opportunity Lender.

© 2026 JPMorgan Chase & Co.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Dizzy Gillespie: Bebop royalty

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie’s effect on jazz cannot be overstated: his trumpet playing influenced every player who came after him, his compositions have become part of the jazz canon, and his bands have included some of the most significant names in the business.

He was also, along with Charlie Parker, one of the major leaders of the bebop movement.

Gillespie’s father was an amateur bandleader who, although dead by the time Gillespie was 10, had given his son some of his earliest grounding in music. Gillespie began playing trumpet at 14 after briefly trying the trombone, and his first formal musical training came at the Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina.

Gillespie’s earliest pro-

fessional jobs were with the Frankie Fairfax band, where he reportedly picked up the nickname Dizzy because of his outlandish antics.

His earliest influence was Roy Eldridge, whom he later replaced in Teddy Hill’s band. From 1939-41, Gillespie was one of the principal soloists in Cab Calloway’s band, until he was dismissed for a notorious bandstand prank.

While with Calloway he met the Cuban trumpeter Mario Bauza, from whom he gained a great interest in Afro-Cuban rhythms. At this time he also befriended Charlie Parker, with whom he would begin to develop some of the ideas behind bebop while sitting in at Minton’s Playhouse in Harlem.

From 1941-43, Gillespie freelanced with a number of big bands, including

that of Earl “Fatha” Hines. Hines’ band contained several musicians Gillespie would interact with in the development of bebop, such as singer Billy Eckstine, who formed his own band featuring Gillespie on trumpet in 1944.

The year 1945 was crucial for both bebop and Gillespie. He recorded with Parker many of his small ensemble hits, such as “Salt Peanuts,” and formed his own bebop big band.

A number of future greats performed with Gillespie’s big band, including saxophonists Gene Ammons, Yusef Lateef, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Heath, James Moody, and John Coltrane. The rhythm section of John Lewis, Milt Jackson, Kenny Clarke, and Ray Brown became the original Modern Jazz Quartet.

Follow The Post on social media



@thecharpost



The Charlotte Post



thecharpost

Bad money moves can ruin a relationship

Continued from page 1B

Betting apps are everywhere now, and sports betting has been normalized as a quick way to build wealth when traditional paths like homeownership and retirement savings make financial security feel further away than ever. For a generation watching their parents and grandparents work decades toward milestones that still seemed out of reach, the appeal of quick wins is real.

"Money compatibility is becoming just as important as emotional chemistry," Edwards added. "Couples aren't just asking, 'Do we love each other anymore?' They're asking, 'Can I trust you enough to build a financial future with you?' And that's a valid question."

According to the study, financial red flags that kill relationships include:

- Excessive gambling or risky money behavior: 49%
 - Hiding or lying about purchases: 47%
 - High credit card debt: 41%
 - Constant impulse spending: 32%
 - Expecting a partner to pay for everything: 28%
- "It's important to start having these conversations about money early," said Edwards. "Before co-signing on a lease or discussing having children, talk about your money values. I know these aren't romantic questions, but they are critical to the future of your relationship."
- The Love, Money and Relationships Progress and Planning study: news.northwesternmutual.com/planning-and-progress-study-2026.

NC health plans create task force fight Medicaid fraud

Continued from page 1B

ices and the Office of the State Auditor have all raised concerns about potential improper billing and questionable Medicaid spending. Federal regulators have signaled that they want to "crush" fraud in the program.

"Fraud, waste and abuse has been in the news all over the country, and we've been seeing egregious examples of fraud, waste and abuse on the news most every night," Daniel said.

Some of those headline-making cases are homegrown.

In July, Gwendolyn Singleton, the owner of a substance abuse treatment center in Greensboro, pleaded guilty to health care fraud after she was accused of submitting more than \$1.7 million worth of illicit urine drug test claims to Medicaid. She faces up to 10 years in prison, the office of N.C. Attorney General Jeff Jackson said.

More recently, on Oct. 1, Jackson's office announced that White Oak Manor, a Burlington nursing home, had agreed to pay the state \$98,474 after the facility allegedly "hired an unqualified person as a nurse and then billed Medicaid for services she provided."

Contrary to popular memes, Medicaid fraud isn't a problem based on individual beneficiaries. Rather, it's providers who figure out how to game the system — often to the tune of millions, or even tens of millions, of dollars.

Breaking down silos

Daniel said the task force grew out of a meeting with State Auditor Dave Boliek. At Boliek's invitation, representatives of the health plans met with state officials and demonstrated some of the tools they use to identify unusual billing patterns through data analysis.

Each of the plans has its own special investigative unit, or SIU. Those units are generally responsible for investigating suspected cases of fraud.

"Insurance companies have a long history of having special investigative units, and each company has different approaches," Daniel said. "One company has a former detective with the Raleigh Police Department heading up their SIU unit, and others have [people with] military investigative backgrounds."

The issue, Daniel said, is that the MCOs are technically competitors and tend to "operate in silos."

"The SIU unit heads indicated that they would really appreciate being able to sit down with their colleagues at the other companies and share information and practices, and that was the genesis of this," he said.

With the new task force, if one Medicaid managed care company identifies unusual billing by a provider and refers the case to the state, investigators at the other plans may be able to examine that provider's activity in their own systems.

Each MCO often contracts with the same doctors, therapists and other providers as the others, meaning a billing pattern that appears unusual to one plan could be occurring elsewhere too. A pattern occurring with multiple companies can provide a potent clue.

The plans already alert the state to potential problems. Taylor Griffin, senior policy adviser for Medicaid at the association of health plans, said quarterly reports from the plans show hundreds of

referrals involving potential provider or organizational billing issues over the years.

"There have been some alleged people in North Carolina ... where members were telling their care managers that this person was compelling them to allow them to fraudulently bill their Medicaid claims in exchange for certain things like housing and other remuneration," Griffin said.

Cases can also surface through data analysis. For example, a plan may identify a provider whose billing records show repeated claims for services that don't jive with electronic visit verification records, which are intended to document when and where certain services were delivered.

Other potential red flags include duplicate claims or claims for services that appear unlikely to have occurred.

"If a provider is constantly billing claims twice, maybe their computer system is messed up — or maybe they're trying to execute fraud," Griffin said. "You may try to work with a provider to determine what's actually going on."

The task force is not limited to any particular type of Medicaid service, Daniel said. Instead, investigators will look across the program for what the plans call anomalies — unusual patterns that warrant additional investigation.

Autism therapy under the microscope

One Medicaid-covered service has garnered particular scrutiny in recent months.

Applied behavior analysis, a therapy designed to help children with autism build communication and daily living skills through intensive one-on-one interventions, is one of the fastest growing areas of Medicaid spending in North Carolina — and across the country.

State and federal Medicaid spending on ABA in North Carolina exploded over a five-year period, surpassing \$505 million in 2025, up from just \$1.9 million in 2020. Costs are projected to exceed \$1 billion by 2027, according to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

That surge in spending "far outpaces increases in Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis" and cannot "be explained by increased access alone," according to NCDHHS.

The number of beneficiaries receiving ABA in North Carolina grew from 8,704 people in 2024 to 13,447 in 2025, an increase of about 54 percent. In just that year, Medicaid spending on the therapy swelled by 65 percent, with the program paying an average of nearly \$37,600 per patient.

"If you look at the growth in the expenditure for ABA therapy, it deserves to be flagged as a potential source of fraud," Jackson told the House Select Committee on Oversight and Reform earlier this year.

A bill signed into law by Gov. Josh Stein in April imposes restrictions on the therapy in an effort to rein in the spending and prevent improper billing. Among other things, it allows Medicaid managed care plans to take steps to close their networks to providers suspected of fraud under certain circumstances.

"We felt like we needed a central way to collaborate now that some of the laws have changed," Griffin said, adding that the autism treatment is one of the task force's "biggest areas of concern."

Secrecy by design

Audi Q3 has great looks and interior

Continued from page 1B

a seven-speed transmission. The horsepower rating seems a bit pedestrian but this Q3 has some giddy up. Zero to 60 isn't blazing but it's enough to make you happy. The transmission shifts crisply and doesn't get in the way of itself. Passing power is plentiful and keeping up with or surpassing the flow of traffic is, well, Audi-like.

The ride quality of the Q3 can be a bit choppy and the brakes can be hard to modulate at times, but I found the driving dynamics to be good. Handling is fine, even when the roads were wet. The ride was always quiet.

The Q3 has no trim levels. There are packages to glam up the truck so you can

pick and choose how you want the vehicle equipped. Base price was \$43,700 and with options and destination the as-tested price was \$51,700. Not overly pricey for what you get, and you get a nicely tricked-out package that's enjoyable to drive.

Pros:

- All-new design
- Much more muscular looking
- Quick acceleration
- Spacious cabin
- Improved storage
- Great handling
- Improved tech
- Responsive touch screen

Cons:

- Interior could use wood trim

Corporate card charge can cost your career

Continued from page 1B

the corporate card is available.

So, you use it — and repay every dollar.

No harm, right?

Not necessarily.

Many corporate card policies prohibit personal charges regardless of repayment. Paying the money back doesn't erase the decision to use company credit for personal purposes.

A temporary money problem can create a lasting question about your judgment.

Concealment: Keeping secrets on the company card

Sometimes money isn't the problem. Privacy is.

A purchase a spouse or partner might question gets routed through the corporate card because no one at home sees the statement. You plan to repay it, so it feels private rather than dishonest.

But you've made your employer an unknowing participant in your personal life.

When that surfaces, the question may become larger than the purchase:

What else are you willing to hide when disclosure is inconvenient?

Lifestyle subsidy: Leveling up on the company's dime

This is the group I most want to reach because these employees often don't think they're misusing anything.

The business trip is legitimate. The company is already paying. So, what's wrong with upgrading?

A premium seat beyond the company-approved fare.

A more expensive room.

A more glamorous hotel.

An extra night after the conference.

Ask one question:

What did your employer actually agree to pay for?

If the company authorized economy and you selected business class, the difference is yours unless an authorized exception was approved. If three hotel nights were required and the fourth was personal, that extra night is yours.

Leveling up your travel can stall leveling up your career.

Legitimate exceptions happen. Get them approved by someone with authority before spending—not explained after someone questions the charge.

'I didn't know' isn't much of a defense

You may not have read the corporate card policy. But if you accepted the card or acknowledged the policy, ignorance

offers little protection. Not knowing a policy you signed for is a choice.

And don't confuse workplace culture with company policy. Your co-worker may do it. Your manager may tolerate it. "Everybody does it" may even be true.

Culture is what people tolerate today. Policy is what an investigator reads tomorrow.

The consequence no one writes down

Not every questionable charge gets you fired. Sometimes there's no formal discipline at all.

That doesn't mean you got away with it.

Your manager now knows something about how you make decisions when you think no one is checking. That can affect who gets budget authority, the sensitive assignment or the promotion — and who gets viewed as expendable when cuts come.

A disciplinary warning may expire. Doubt about your judgment can outlive it.

Protect the paycheck

Before using a corporate card, know what your employer authorized. If you want something beyond that, determine whether the policy allows you to pay the difference yourself.

Don't rely on verbal exceptions. People leave and memories change. Even written approval can fail if the person giving it lacked authority.

Review itemized receipts, not just card statements.

If you've already made a questionable charge, don't create a second problem by hiding the first. Review the policy, disclose it promptly through the appropriate channel and follow your employer's reimbursement process.

A mistake becomes harder to defend when you recognize it, conceal it and wait to see whether anyone notices.

Financial stress is real. So are emergencies. But a corporate credit card is not emergency savings, a short-term loan or an extension of your personal credit.

A \$600 problem should never jeopardize a \$90,000 paycheck. The corporate card is a signal of trust. Spend it that way.

Colinda Howard, JD, is founder and principal of ComplyBrid Consulting LLC. Her experience spans law, federal and workplace investigations, and Fortune 500 compliance leadership. Connect with her at ComplyBridConsulting.com or on LinkedIn.





**NCDOT TO HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO REA ROAD AND
PROVIDENCE ROAD SOUTH IN UNION COUNTY**

STIP Project Nos. U-3467A, U-3467B, U-5769A and U-5769B



U-3467



U-5769

Union County- The N.C. Department of Transportation is holding an informational public meeting about plans to extend Rea Road east from Providence Road to Weddington Road (U-3467A) and widen Weddington Road from the future Rea Road intersection to east of Waxhaw Indian Trail Road (U-3467B).

Additionally, information will be shared about the proposed improvements to Providence Road South from Rea Road extension to Bonds Grove Church Road (U-5769A), continuing from Bonds Grove Church Road to Waxhaw Parkway (U-5769B). These projects support ongoing transportation improvements intended to reduce congestion, improve safety, and accommodate anticipated growth in the area.

The purpose of the meeting is to reintroduce the project to the public and for the project team to provide information about the proposed design.

The meeting will be held **Thursday, Oct. 22** at **Weddington United Methodist Church-Helms Hall**, located at **13901 Providence Road** in **Weddington**. The public is invited to attend any time between **5:00 - 7:00 p.m.** as no formal presentation will be made. NCDOT representatives will be available to answer questions and receive comments.

Members of the public may also submit comments for U-3467 by phone at **984-205-6615**, project code **7100**, email rea-road-extension@publicinput.com, or mail to the project manager at the address shown below. Comments for U-5769 can be submitted by phone at **984-205-6615**, project code **3254**, email nc-16-providence@publicinput.com, or mail to the project manager at the address shown below.

By Mail:	U-3467: Jon Gaillard NCDOT PMU Project Manager 1598 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1598	U-5769: Donald C. Griffith NCDOT Division 10-Project Manager 716 W Main St Albermarle, NC 28001
----------	---	--

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for members of the public with a disability who wish to participate in this meeting. Anyone requiring special services or accommodations should contact Aleksandra Djurkovic, Environmental Analysis Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1598, 919-707-6024 or andjurkovic@ncdot.gov as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

Persons who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior to the meeting by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas que no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan antes de la reunión llamando al 1-800-481-6494.

BIDS

BIDS

EMPLOYMENT

LEGAL NOTICES

HOME IMPROVEMENT

The Charlotte Post
The Voice of the Black Community

LEGAL NOTICES

MISCELLANEOUS

THE CHARLOTTE POST
PUBLISHING COMPANY

CELEBRATING 141 YEARS OF
EXCELLENT JOURNALISM &
PRINT MEDIA SERVICES.





THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026 PAGE 5B

« ON THE MARQUEE »

Symphony rocks with Tina Turner

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

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

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

The Charlotte Symphony celebrates music of Tina Turner featuring songs that defined her career, including “Proud Mary,” “What’s Love Got to Do with It,” “Disco Inferno,” and “Son of a Preacher Man.” Vocalists: LaKisha Jones, Nova Payton and Armando Imagines. 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. 1
A Night of Artistic Renewal celebrates its fifth anniversary with *Hope, Healing & Triumph* at Booth Playhouse at Blumenthal Arts, 3:30 p.m. Theater lobby opens at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at : blumenthalarts.org/events/detail/a-night-of-artistic-renewal-hope-healing-triumph

Produced and hosted by performance poet, author, and arts advocate Dionne Hunter, the multidisciplinary production includes music, dance, performance poetry, visual art, song, and storytelling.

The performance poetry company includes Boris “Bluz” Rogers; Ed Mabrey; and Junious “Jay” Ward.

Musical artists include Adayla Turner, Enacense, Mason “Quill” Parker, saxophonist Bryan Patterson Jr., and violinist Marcus R. Pyle. Ballroom dancers Robert Fitzgerald and Takella Fox will perform alongside Charlotte Ballet

Please see **A ROOM** | 6B



COURTESY

Comedian Dave Chappelle comes to Spectrum Center Oct. 21.

A&T alum matriculates ‘A Different World’ reboot

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

North Carolina A&T State University alumnus Joshua Suiter is a Hillman College Falcon, too.

Suiter, a 2022 A&T graduate and a former Mister A&T, stars in the Netflix reboot of “A Different World.” The sitcom, which debuted at No. 1 on the streaming platform in the U.S., has been renewed for a second season. It builds on the cultural impact of the original NBC series (1987-93), which helped shape a cultural boom connected to Black college life.

Following a new generation of students at the fictional Hillman College, the sequel explores college life while examining the legacy of students who came before them. Suiter portrays Andre, a classmate of Deborah Wayne (Maleah Joi Moon), daughter of original characters Whitley (Jasmine Guy) and Dwayne (Kadeem Hardison).

“Seeing all the love for Andre really hit home,” Suiter said. “He’s one of my favorite characters thus far, and we created him from scratch, so to know that the hard work is being received and folks want more encourages me to keep going.”

Suiter discovered acting and musical theater at 7, and eventually matriculated at A&T, where he earned a degree in professional theater. Suiter was a standout in the performing arts on campus, where one of his more notable performances was in “Ain’t Misbehavin’” in 2019 where he first met Guy. In addition to acting, Suiter worked as a the-

Please see **NC A&T** | 6B



BLUMENTHAL ARTS

“Clue: Murder on the Menu” is an interactive dining mystery at Blume Studios through Dec. 6.

‘Clue’ and dinner for an immersive murder mystery

Whodunit based on the board game at Blume Studios through Dec. 6

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Clue goes from classic board game to immersive murder mystery.

Clue: Murder on the Menu” is at Blume Studios, 904 Post St. through Dec. 6. The immersive dining experience brings the game to life through food, cocktails and mystery. Tickets start at \$115.65 and are available at blumenthalarts.org.

This performance takes audiences into Tudor Mansion, beginning with a cocktail hour featuring hors d'oeuvres and drinks where guests can interact with the characters.

“The Clue board game has nine very famous rooms, but we move into an unknown room, which is the banquet hall, which is a larger dining room for a proper three-course meal,” said writer and director Kevin Hammonds. “But unfortunately, at the top of the meal, our host is murdered.

The evening will include a three-course meal curated by Chef Craig Barbour of Roots Catering. The menu will feature beetroot and filet hors d'oeuvres, seared chicken with sweet corn risotto and a dark chocolate tart, all with seasonal touches throughout.

“We love Charlotte and we love Blumenthal Arts,” Hammonds said of the company, which premiered

“The Magician’s Table” last year. “With ‘The Magician’s Table,’ we started this new relationship, this very trusting, open, working-together relationship where we wanted to do something again.

Clue’s familiar characters come with the challenge of meeting fans’ expectations while making the characters feel relevant to today and staying true to the original game.

“Trying to balance all those expectations has been the most challenging part,” Hammonds said. “But also, I find when you have challenges, you succeed when you see those challenges as opportunities. That’s been the tricky part, but also the fun part.” Audience involvement is a major part of the experience, as they help determine the murderer and influence how the mystery unfolds every night.

“That keeps the show fresh for anyone who attends more than once and the interaction between audience and story is what Hammonds sees as the appeal of immersive entertainment.

Since COVID kept us kind of locked in for so long, once we came out of COVID, I think people have this new kind of desire to kind of have more agency in their entertainment and to take part in it more than just being passive observers,” he said. “I think that’s why people love immersive.

“With ‘The Magician’s Table’ and ‘Clue’ and all the other immersive projects that we do, our main focus is how to keep the audience’s agency as focused as possible.”



The Clue board game has nine very famous rooms, but we move into an unknown room, which is the banquet hall, which is a larger dining room for a proper three-course meal.



“Clue: Murder on the Menu” writer and director KEVIN HAMMONDS

Grind, hustle of Tinseltown floats ‘Misty Green

By Dwight Brown

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

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. So, it’s no surprise she’s close to being evicted from her Los Angeles apartment. The writing is on the wall when her sugar daddy’s wife gives her an ultimatum: “I’ll give you a week to get your stuff together!”

Now Misty needs an acting job—and money—fast. She’s one of countless unemployed or underemployed actors hustling for work in Hollywood, so it won’t be easy.

The premise and protagonist are surprising. Being broke and having few options in Tinseltown is as normal as L.A. sunshine. What’s distinctive is seeing this specific struggle through the eyes of a Black American woman whose despair, self-image and self-medication are inseparable. Even odder is that comedian, screenwriter and director Chris Rock created the project. He’s the mastermind.

Come along for the ride, but realize that in Rock’s vision, getting to the end isn’t the real point. The daily grind and hustle are. Showing the insecurity of life post-stardom—its advantages and relentless disadvantages—is the game. As the former Emmy Award-winning TV actress pushes her agent (Topher Grace) to get work that he finds increasingly difficult to procure, you feel the pressure.

She’s trying hard and fumbling all the way. Booze and drugs block her path. The self-sabotage is bad for her, but dazzling for an audience.

Rock gives himself a co-leading role as Jordan, a film director whose history with Misty is complicated, “Last time I cast you, you punched this bitch in the face!” His future with her could be dicey, too. The script adds a needy, volatile brother Jay (Daniel Kaluuya): “I’m



TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Chris Rock and Rosalind Eleazar in “Misty Green.”

on my meds and will get a job.” It also gives Misty a chatty white best friend, Naomi (Anna Kendrick), who loves Black men and serves as her plus-one. To complicate Misty’s love life, there’s her on-again, off-again FWB pal Zach (Adam Driver), whose porn-star mustache signals his smarminess.

The opening is the film’s strongest sequence. As cinematographer Kira Kelly’s camera hovers over an irate rich woman’s shoulder, while she questions who’s holed up in her dead husband’s ritzy condo, viewers are thrown headfirst into chaos. Quirky and well directed, the ingenious beginning promises inventive filmmaking to come. But that doesn’t materialize—not consistently, anyway. There’s no discernible style, nothing particularly new. Subsequent scenes lack the verve of the first one. Also, the film isn’t hardcore realism in the Cassavetes tradition, nor is it consistently humorous or showy in its depiction of Hollywood. Hard to peg a technique or strategy. That said, what’s on view is competent. The staging, movement and performances are solid.

The screenplay, with too many storylines, characters and philosophical rants from Rock’s character, feels jumbled. One fewer audition, erotic scene or drug-and-alcohol debauchery

sequence might have helped. These distractions weaken a journey that might otherwise entertain audiences who like watching Misty’s life unfold like a train wreck. She obliges as you learn that the passion between Jordan and Misty is tangible, almost fated. He tries to put their fractured relationship back together. She rips it apart. They have a thing going.

Jay, Misty’s needy and erratic brother, seems superfluous. A police dragnet involving a Black male suspect in the killing of a white student feels equally extraneous. The familial subplot and the film’s foray into social and racial issues seem less effective than its central character study. That’s its strength; veering away from Misty is its downfall. When she’s on screen, the movie holds your attention. She should remain the focus.

Marcus Miller’s jazzy score gives the movie a cool, urban vibe while Kira Kelly’s cinematography contrasts Hollywood glamour with gritty streets. Michelle Patterson’s production design effectively shifts from a palatial boudoir to crowded nightclubs. Adam Dicterow’s editing keeps the 103-minute film on pace, though his task might have been easier if inessential characters and storylines weren’t crowding

Please see **TINSELTOWN** | 6B



Joshua Suiter, a 2022 North Carolina A&T State University graduate and former Mister A&T, portrays Andre on Netflix's "A Different World" reboot.

NC A&T alumnus matriculates into 'A Different World' reboot

Continued from page 5B
ater technician and developed skills in entertainment marketing and business. "I came in as a creative, but what A&T did between Alpha Phi Alpha, the classes, talking business with professors and serving as Mister A&T sharpened me on the business side," he said. "It sharpened my networking skills while showing me how to be authentic to who I am." Suiter, who appeared in the Hulu series "All's Fair," considers "A Different World"

a full-circle moment as a Black college alumnus playing a role in the reboot. "When you talk about an HBCU experience, I'm putting mine up there with the best of them," he said. "I have so many experiences to pull from with the run of this show, with the character Andre. Hillman even has a heartbeat of its own, so it's been fun exploring what that feels like as a student there, while still carrying that Aggie Pride in my heart."

'A Room of Her Own' celebrates women

Continued from page 5B
dancers Raven Barkley and Maurice Mouzon Jr. "A Room of Her Own," Queen City Art Gallery, 4237 Raleigh St, Suite 5. A month-long celebration of women, creativity, healing, storytelling, and the power of making space. The exhibition opening is 1, 3-7 p.m. Curated by Carolyn Faulkner and Ida Mae Irby, "A Room of Her Own" brings together artists and community members for an immersive exhibition and series of participatory arts experiences designed to inspire connection, reflection, creativity, and conversation. Event dates and times: Mixed Media & Found Things with Ellen Frances Johnson, Nov. 4, 5-7 p.m. Stitching Therapy: The Science of Crochet for Health and Wellbeing with guest facilitator Dr. Portia M. York, Nov. 5, 6-8 p.m. Positive affirmation totes with Carolyn Faulkner, Nov. 7, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Beginning violin experience and workshop (youth) with Susan Shoemaker, Nov. 7, 4-6 p.m.

Earring painting workshop with Carolyn Faulkner, Nov. 11, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Paper quilting collage with Ida Mae Irby, Nov. 11, 5-7 p.m. Snack & Relaxing: Earring painting workshop with Carolyn Faulkner, Nov. 28, 12-2 p.m. Closing reception and artists' talk with guest speaker Barbara Saul (Reiki & Enhance Your Creativity) Nov. 29, 2-5 p.m. On the Net: queencityart.org Nov. 12 Best-selling author Walter Mosley is among the literary heavyweights highlighting Verse & Vino, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation's top fundraiser. The showcase at Charlotte Convention Center's Crown Ballroom includes authors Lucy Foley, R.F. Kuang and Isaac Fitzgerald. Library advocates and book lovers will gather to raise a glass to the joy of reading, the library system's impact and the larger community. Proceeds fund library foundation initiatives. Tickets are available at foundation.cmlibrary.org/verse-vino. Nov. 14 Boney James, Knight Theater, 7:30 p.m. The contemporary jazz artist is live in Charlotte for one night only. The concert includes an intimate show of with classic favorites and live music magic. Tickets: blumentharts.org. Dec. 19 Jodeci closes its 35-city U.S. tour celebrating the 35th anniversary of the R&B group's No. 1 debut album, Forever My Lady at Ovens Auditorium. The group, which got its start in Charlotte in the late 1980s, has sold over 20 million albums sold, five No. 1 singles, three No. 1 albums, and including Soul Train Awards and Billboard Music awards. Tickets: \$74.90-\$431.30 at ticketmaster.com.

Tinseltown hustle floats 'Misty Green'

Continued from page 5B
the footage. Eleazar's manipulative, scrappy take on this hard-luck thespian displays a dexterity worthy of acclaim: "I wake up when I want to wake up...sleep when I want to...get high when I want to... and f___ when I want to..." Eleazar embodies that rebellious spirit convincingly. Rock seems comfortable as Jordan, lending his coolness to the footage. It's on loan. Kendrick brings comic flair to Naomi. Driver is understated in a pivotal part. Kaluuya adds dramatic weight to his portrayal of the stressed brother. The entire cast benefits from Rock's expressive and quick-witted dialogue. This film is an opportunity Misty would mess up. But Eleazar might ride this has-been actress's plight all the way to Oscar contention. Credit Chris Rock for creating a memorable character and entrusting Eleazar to bring her to life. Visit film critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

THE CHARLOTTE POST
&
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE
Publishing Company
Serving Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill & Cary, NC

Charlotte Connected

Stay Connected With The Charlotte Post

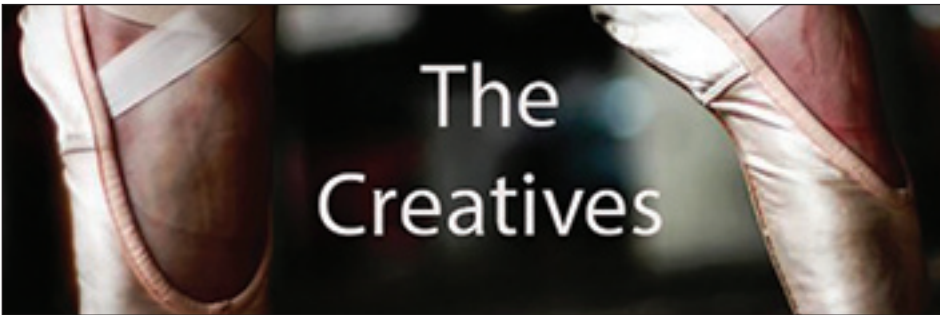
New to Charlotte? Or have you called the Queen City home for years? There's always something new to discover.

Sign up for **The Lead**, our **FREE** weekly newsletter, and keep up with local news, community events, business, education, and the people making a difference around Charlotte.

Scan to Sign Up

FREE Weekly Newsletter

Questions? Contact 704.376.0498



HAVING ISSUES VOTING IN NC?

CALL OR TEXT

888-OUR-VOTE

(888-687-8683)

NORTH CAROLINA'S TRUSTED VOTER ASSISTANCE HOTLINE.

ADDITIONAL NON-PARTISAN VOTER INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT [NCVOTER.ORG](https://ncvoter.org).

Provided by **DEMOCRACY NC** Not affiliated with any party or candidate.

Connect with The Post on social media

@thecharpost

@thecharlottepost

thecharpost