The Charlotte Post

Life!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026 SECTION B

Preeclampsia a pregnancy danger

By Fran Smith
CENTER FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM

The death of Tierra Walker in Texas is a glaring illustration of what happens when an abortion ban collides with one of the most dangerous complications of pregnancy: preeclampsia.

Much of the press coverage of Walker's death has focused, rightly, on harsh abortion restrictions that purport to sanctify the right to life of a fetus, even if it means denying that right to the pregnant person.

But this is also a story about a condition that affects 2% to 8% of pregnancies in this country — as many as 434,000 women annually, Black women disproportionately. It's a leading cause of preterm birth and maternal and fetal deaths, yet preeclampsia doesn't get nearly the attention it should.

Walker, a 37-year-old mother in San Antonio, died in December 2024 in the 20th week of pregnancy. She had repeatedly asked to end the pregnancy because it was making her really sick. She had seizures, a blood clot, wild blood pressure swings, and intense pain shooting from her head through her chest to the bottom of her left foot. These are hallmarks of preeclampsia.

A ProPublica investigation in 2025 brought national attention to her death and those of other pregnant women who had serious health problems and were unable to get abortions. Walker's story was back in the news in September, when her family filed a suit against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and others. It claims the state's abortion ban led to her death.

As that allegation is tested in court, journalists can investigate another question: What is happening to women who have preeclampsia or are at risk of developing it?

In the consumer-friendly language of popular health websites, preeclampsia is often described as high blood pressure with signs of organ damage. In fact, it's way more complex than that. Preeclampsia can cause vascular dysfunction, inflammation and placental impairments, which can interfere with fetal growth.

The risks are especially grave for Black women like Walker, who develop preeclampsia at a 60% higher rate than white women and are more likely to suffer worse outcomes, including kidney damage and

Please see **PREECLAMPSIA** | 2B

« RIDES »



FORD MOTOR COMPANY

The pre-production version of Ford's Bronco Filson is a luxurious example of the capable off-road sport utility vehicle.

Bronco Filson takes luxury on beaten path

Ford Motor Company adds high-end accessories to popular SUV

By Winfred Cross
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The reborn Ford Bronco has been a big hit for Ford Motor Company.

Buyers have gobbled up the Sport (based on the defunct Edge) and the full-size beast based on the F-150. You can buy a base version or now go up to a soon-to-be released luxury model inspired by outdoor gear maker Filson.

Pre-production versions of the Bronco Filson were recently displayed at Jesse Brown's Outdoors in Sharon Corners Shopping center. Ford is taking orders for delivery starting in January.

The Bronco Filson will be the luxury version of the off-road vehicle. Yeah, a bit of an oxymoron but think last generation Toyota Land Cruiser. The vehicle will be as capable as any Bronco but more of an everyday driver.

That could be a tall order. The Bronco is rough and tumble, rides kind of harsh and is really loud, especially on the highway. All Filson versions will come with automatically deploying running boards for easier access and egress, redesigned removable roof panels that fit tighter and have a sound deadening headliner, Sasquatch package with revised all-terrain tires, thicker glass and plush carpeting. All these changes will reduce noise by 20 percent from the 2021 Bronco.

The Bronco will be powered by a 3.0-liter, turbo charged V6 that's similar to the engine used in the Raptor version. The only available transmission is an automatic. The suspension will be similar to the Raptor's but fine-tuned for a better ride.

The interior is a huge upgrade. Leather on the heated and venti-

Please see **BRONCO** | 2B

Poet DS Will on getting outside the comfort zone

By Antonio Art
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

The writing's on the wall.

For spoken word dynamo DS Will, founder of North Carolina-based collective Press Play Poetry, it was a prompt to leave a lasting imprint in the form of his debut poetry collection, "Write on the Wall."

Will recently sat down to discuss the book release and how it can inspire others to make their mark.

ANTINO ART: "Write on the Wall" reads like a mural; it's larger than life. You cover everything from reclaiming memories for loved ones with Alzheimer's to deconstructing the demonization of Black men in pop culture. What does it mean for a performance-forward poet like yourself to put these pieces of yourself on the page for the first time?

DS WILL: It's an opportunity to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of my being and capture my perspectives on the page, as opposed to being experienced in the fleeting moments of a performance. The bulk of my book contains poems that weren't originally created for public consumption and span over 20 years of my life. However, I felt that now was the time to relinquish that part of myself and become comfortable with being vulnerable, allowing another side of me to be revealed for artistic growth and credibility.

AA: Your book feels like a call to take control of our own narratives. What did writing this book mean to you?

DS: In art, we all want our expressions to leave a lasting imprint. Whether art serves as an arena for venting, a platform to take a stand or an avenue to

Please see **DS WILL** | 2B

A game of humanity on death row

By Tess Alongi
UNC MEDIA HUB

Click. The detention doors locked behind them.

Inside Central Prison in Raleigh, everything felt different.

Checkpoint one. Metal detectors. The University of North Carolina men's basketball team exchanged glances. They had competed in hostile environments. They heard the screams of rowdy fans and bitter opponents. They felt the pressure of crowds, but they had never been searched for weapons pregame.

Checkpoint two. Full body pat-downs. As they walked further away from their freedom, it became real. These college kids, ages 19 to 22, were about to play a game against men serving time in a prison that was home to the most serious offenders in the state.

The year was 1979, a time before one-and-done players. Before Name Image and Likeness deals. Before Congress got involved in college athletics. When coaches had three or four years with their players. Time when they not only got to teach them the game of basketball but also the game of life.

And teaching the game of life was something Dean Smith did best. Smith coached the Tar Heels from 1961-1997 and while he led the team to two national championships and 879 wins, his legacy extends far beyond the hardwood.

Smith was a lifelong social activist. He recruited Charlie Scott, UNC's first African American scholarship basketball player. He protested the Vietnam War and in 1998 he stood before North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt to speak against the death penalty.

Smith used his position as a coach to expose his players to societal issues beyond the basketball court. Visiting Central Prison and interacting with men locked up for years was one of those opportunities.



ROSE HOBAN | NC HEALTH NEWS

Inmates at Central Prison in Raleigh scrimmage on the basketball court. This is the same court where legendary coach Dean Smith brought his UNC basketball teams from the 1970s through the 1990s.

Finding out about the trip

During the recruiting process, Smith emphasized that his expectations for his players went beyond wins and losses. He took them to churches, he took them to what were known as the dangerous parts of cities when they traveled for games; he once brought his team to the infamous Angola Prison in Louisiana.

But this trip was a little different.

The idea of a scrimmage against the inmates first came up in a coaches' meeting. Roy Williams, UNC's assistant coach at the time, said he was nervous about the idea at first,

Please see **A GAME** | 2B

Enjoy the many health benefits of apples in your diet

By Melinda Myers
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

October is National Apple Month and an excellent time to find more ways to incorporate this healthy food into your daily diet.

This superfood is low in calories, high in fiber, rich in nutrients, promotes heart and oral health and can aid in weight loss.

Have an apple or other healthy snack before your next trip to the grocery store. Researchers at Cornell University found that people who ate a healthy snack before grocery shopping purchased 25 to 28% more produce than those who ate a cookie or nothing at all before heading to the store.

You'll find a variety of apples from tart to sweet and firm to soft to choose from. Purchase favorites or try new-to-you varieties you can find at farmer's markets, orchards, and retailers this time of the year. Many offer samples and provide recipes and recommendations for the best snacking, baking, and processing varieties. Or buy a collection of apples and conduct your own taste test.

Whole fresh apples provide the greatest benefits. Combine them with peanut butter or cheese for a healthy protein snack. Add sweetness and crunch to salads with apple slices.

Extend your enjoyment with proper storage. Use bruised, cut, or damaged fruit as soon as possible and only store firm blemish-free apples.

Mature apples store best in temperatures between 32 and 39 degrees with 95% humidity. Providing ideal storage conditions is not always possible. Maximize their storage life by placing apples in perforated plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. The plastic bag helps increase the humidity around the fruit while allowing air to flow through the holes.

Purchase extra apples for preserving. Make them into sauce or apple pie filling for canning. Peel, chop, cook and dry into fruit leathers for snacking. Make and freeze apple pies for a quick and easy dessert you can simply bake and serve when needed.

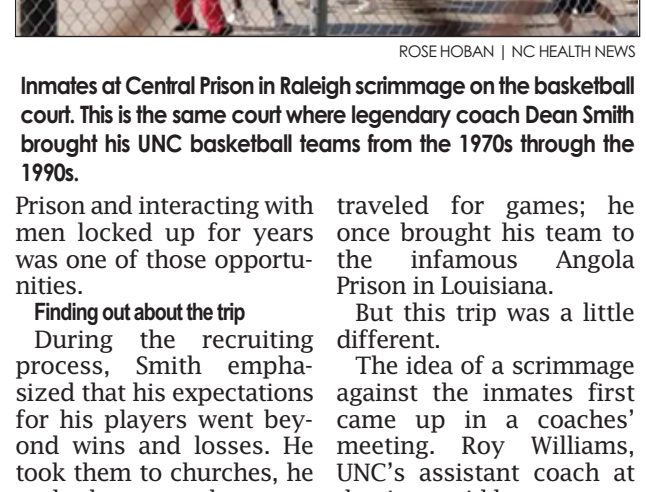
Set aside a few apples to have fun converting them into apple heads. This Native American tradition was picked up by the settlers and is now a part of American folk art. All you need are a couple apples, 1/2 cup lemon juice, 2 tablespoons salt, a bowl of water, a pencil, and a knife.

Mix salt and lemon juice in a bowl of water and set aside. Peel the apple and core if you want to place it on a stick or prefer a long droopy face. Draw the outline of the face then carve the features into the apple.

Soak the carved apple in the bowl of salty lemon water for about 10 minutes. Set on a cooling rack or hang the apples in a warm place to dry. Apples are ready when spongy or leathery to the touch.

Add a few details to the apple head by inserting beads for eyes and rice for teeth. Use it as a head for a doll or place it on a stick

Please see **ENJOY** | 3B



MELINDA MYERS

Apples are a delicious super food that are good fresh off the tree or in combination with proteins or other fruits and vegetables.

Bronco Filson takes luxury on beaten path

Continued from page 1B

lated mimics Filson's braided fabric. The seats are supposed to "wear better" as they age. The rear seats are heated, which, like the ventilated front seats, are firsts for Bronco. Saddle bags are on the doors and backs of the front seats. The snaps have been replaced with magnets. Filson gear bags are included in the cargo area. Yes, you will be able to remove the doors and roof panels like other Broncos.

There is leather on the dash and other materials feel more upscale (and durable) as well. A 12-speaker Bang & Olufsen audio system is available with a 10-speaker standard.

If this recipe sounds familiar, it should. Ford teamed with Eddie Bauer in the '90s to spruce up the hot-selling Explorer SUV and it worked well. There's no reason to think lightning will not strike again. Ford reached out to the company at the inception of the current Bronco. Ironically, Filson was in the midst of rebuilding its brand book and said, "if Filson was a car, we'd be a vintage Bronco."

Ford sent a Bronco door to Filson and they went to work. The first saddle bag designed is on tour with the pre-production vehicles. The Filson will be available in several colors which were on display as gas cans at the event. Iron Sands Copper Metallic is a cranberry-cooper looking color that will only be available on 2,400 First Edition versions. Other colors include Field Green Metallic, Avalanche Grey, Desert Sand, Marsh Grey and Shadow Black.

Pricing for the Filson Bronco has not been set but Ford is saying it hopes to start around $71,000. The Bronco is also available in base, Big Bend, Outer Banks, Badlands, Heritage, Stroppe and Raptor.

According to CarBuzz, Ford sold 146,007 Broncos in 2025, the most so far. The automaker has sold about 114,956 through the third quarter of 2026.

Preeclampsia disproportionately impacts pregnant Black women

Continued from page 1B

death. Walker previously had preeclampsia during a twin pregnancy in 2021; both fetuses died in utero at 25 weeks.

The condition typically begins after 20 weeks of pregnancy, though it can start earlier and escalate quickly. If it becomes severe, the standard recommendation is to end the pregnancy either by giving birth early or having an abortion.

The cause of preeclampsia is unknown, and there's no surefire treatment. Given the prevalence and danger of the condition, that's an indictment of our research priorities, which give short shrift to women's health.

Well-known risk factors include obesity, previous pregnancy complications, age (pregnancy in one's teens or after age 35), and hypertension. In July, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that one in 10 birthing mothers had gestational hypertension in 2024, a 73% increase since 2016. We shouldn't expect preeclampsia rates to decline anytime soon.

While these risk factors affect Black women disproportionately, a study published in April points to another driver of preeclampsia disparities: racism. The study of more than 5,000 Black women found that those reporting the highest levels of racism in their everyday encounters had 50% greater odds of developing preeclampsia than women reporting the lowest levels.

And Black women who said they experienced institutional racism — for example in employment or interactions with police — were also much more likely to develop the condition than those who reported no such experiences.

The study is not the first to show that systemic racism and the stress it causes are associated with pregnancy and birth complications. But while most research in this area compares Black women and white women, this study sheds light on the diversity of experiences among Black women themselves.

"When you only look at Black women versus white women, you tend to obscure the fact that Black women aren't monoliths," said Dr. S. Michelle Ogunwole, the study's lead author and an assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "Within this group of women there are a variety of experiences."

Preeclampsia can develop days or weeks after giving birth, and it significantly increases the risk of chronic hypertension and cardiovascular disease down the road. "People often think that once the baby is delivered, the risk of preeclampsia is gone," Ogunwole said. "That's a false narrative that we really have to correct."

All this means that preeclampsia should not be viewed solely as a pregnancy problem. It's a marker of a woman's lifelong health, one influenced profoundly by sweeping policy changes of the last few years and a rapidly shifting health care landscape that's making it harder for women to get the care and support they need.

For example, the best way to prevent the devastating effects of preeclampsia is to ensure that women enter pregnancy healthy and receive good prenatal and postpartum care, including diligent blood pressure monitoring. As the largest single payer of maternity care in the U.S., Medicaid is essential for protecting the well-being of pregnant women and their newborns. The program financed 41% of births nationally — 1.47 million — and 47% in rural areas in 2023. What will happen to the health of low-income women of reproductive age and to rates of serious birth complications as the country feels the full force of drastic Medicaid cuts under the Republican megabill?

What will happen as millions of people drop Affordable Care Act health plans after Republicans refused to extend enhanced subsidies and the costs of premiums have skyrocketed?

What will happen as pregnant people, along with millions of other Americans, lose SNAP benefits and can't afford ample healthy food?

Cuts in the safety net, of course, aren't happening in isolation. They intersect with the growing crisis in maternity care. One in three U.S. counties, primarily rural and low-income ones, lack a single obstetric provider or birthing facility. By 2035, 44 states are projected to have an inadequate supply of OB-GYNs.

These changes also intersect with abortion restrictions, including total bans in 13 states, following the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

The lawsuit filed by Tierra Walker's family should force the country to reckon honestly with the impact of harsh abortion laws when a pregnancy becomes dangerous. It should also spur us to do much more to understand, prevent and treat the condition that killed her and harms so many women.

DS Will on gets outside comfort zone

Continued from page 1B

assist others, there is an innate desire to break the shackles of mortality by leaving a lasting imprint: a piece of ourselves that not only exists but resonates beyond our temporary time in this physical realm.

AA: You've been writing and performing poetry for many years as one of the leading voices in the N.C. poetry scene. What got you into poetry and what motivates you to stay with it?

DS: The continued process of discovering and exploring the uncharted facets of not just my existence but the existence of others. Never being satisfied with the taste of low-hanging fruit, but instead branching out to places where you were told you would never reach.

AA: Tell me about your approach to performing your pieces at events and adapting them for publication in this project.

DS: Interestingly enough, only four poems actually originated as performance pieces and transitioning those works from stage to page was challenging. From restructuring stanzas to eliminating filler words, I had to recognize that the written word lacks the luxury of auditory tone, gestures, facial expressions or movement. Therefore, word choice, structure, and phrasing carried greater weight in conveying my intended meaning.

AA: Your book includes a piece called "The Monster," a satiric expose about being the Black man in a horror story. What role does cultural identity have in your work?

DS: My work aims to challenge the categorization of marginalized people while holding those in power accountable for their disenfranchisement.

My work has always served as both my weapon and my refuge, allowing me to confront not only societal ills but also my own personal struggles. Ultimately, the driving force is the desire to establish a cultural identity on my own terms, rather than within the rigid confines of someone else's fears, fueled by preconceived notions and stereotypes.

AA: What's next for DS Will?

DS: Press Play Poetz's first event in six years, titled Through Her Voice, taking place on Nov. 12 at Little Native Coffee Company here in Raleigh. It promises to be a riveting exhibition of the feminine voice, as four dynamic women bring their interpretations of selected poems from my book to life.

A game of basketball and humanity on death row

Continued from page 1B

and then Smith came in with the kicker: He told Williams he would be the referee.

"I said, 'OK coach, but I'm not calling any fouls on the prisoners,'" Williams said. 'I don't want anybody to give me a bad look or anything like that.' And he just laughed."

Williams may have joked, but beneath the humor, he was apprehensive.

"I just took a deep breath because it scared me a little bit," he said. "It really did. And I thought this was really great, but, you know, I was a little uneasy."

A couple of days later, the coaches pulled the team into a huddle at practice and delivered an unexpected announcement: Instead of their usual workout, the Tar Heels would be heading to Central Prison to scrimmage the inmates.

Jimmy Braddock, a UNC point guard who was a freshman at the time, said he returned straight to his dorm after hearing the news, where he talked it over with his teammates.

"We were all like, 'Oh my,'" he said. "I mean, we were terrified. These guys are on death row."

Still, within days, the Tar Heels gathered their Converse high-tops and boarded a bus bound for prison.

Inside Central Prison

For Williams, the process of getting into the prison was what made the trip real. For the players, the reality came in the clang of steel doors locking behind them, closing off the outside world.

"The noise was deafening walking in," Braddock said. "I mean, it was just horrible."

By the time they reached the gym, the bleak surroundings turned into an even more jarring realization: They weren't playing another college team; they were facing off against incarcerated men, and the inmates were ready to play.

When the game began, the starting players and inmates made their way onto the court, with Williams in the middle, ready to toss the jump ball.

"We're going to have a jump ball and [an inmate] said, 'Hey, can I see the ball?' I gave it to him and I said, 'Don't worry, big fella. I am not calling any fouls on you,'" Williams said. "He just laughed like crazy."

The joke broke some of the tension. It was no longer five college kids and five inmates on the court; it was 10 guys excited to scrimmage.

Braddock said the inmates were athletic and competitive. While they lacked players who matched the Tar Heels in size, they had quick guards who were ready to compete.

From the sideline, the crowd cheered enthusiastically, rooting for their team as they would at any basketball game. But these fans were incarcerated, forced to watch the game through metal fences.

"It was a similar environment to Duke," Braddock said. "As far as when we went out there, the gym was packed with inmates. And I mean, they're yelling and screaming and all this stuff."

The prisoners wanted to prove that they could play, especially against a team as elite as the Tar Heels. The 1979-80 team featured junior forward Al Wood, senior forward Mike O'Koren and the future Basketball Hall of Famer James Worthy.

"Some of them thought they were pretty good players, so they wanted to show James Worthy they had some moves too," Williams said. "Other ones were just big fans and just wanted to be there and be involved with James Worthy."

When the final buzzer sounded, the visit didn't end. And while today no one remembers the final score, maybe that's because the score was never really the point.

Beyond the basketball court

For Braddock, the experience was more than a basketball game. It was life-changing.

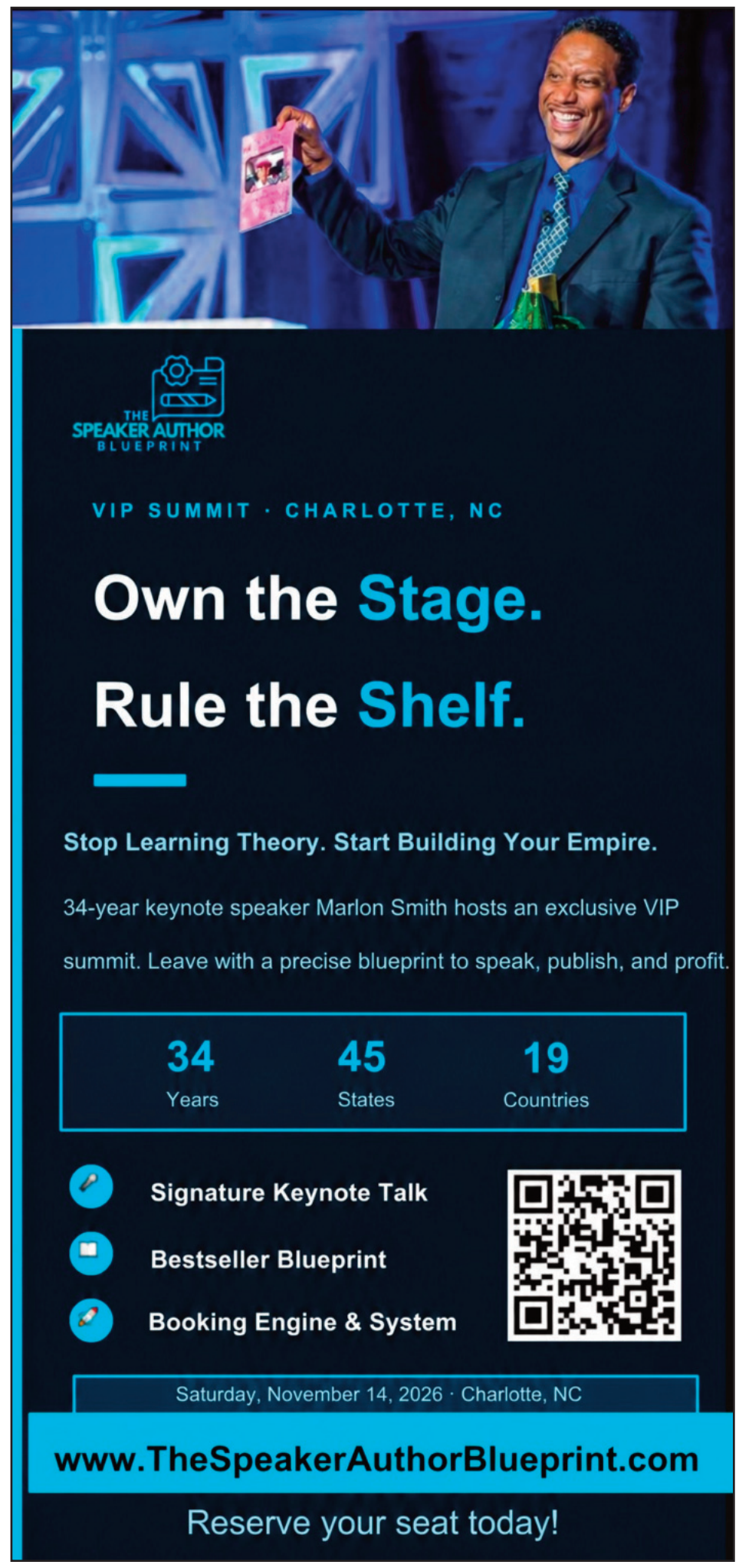
"It really was eye-opening," Braddock said. "It was a lot worse than I could have imagined as far as, you know, having that be your home forever."

The trip left him with a greater sense of compassion, and that feeling was not unique.

"It was a very positive experience, but a very eye-opening experience and a very solemn experience for me, because Roy Williams is going to walk out and have freedom and those guys are not going to be able to do that," Williams said. "It was educational for our players, but it was educational for me too."

He said he believes the eye-opening experience was exactly what Smith wanted.

"Coach Smith's goals were always, let's try to help other human beings," Williams said. "And I think that's the biggest thing, trying to make sure that for the next hour or however long we were there to make sure that they had some enjoyment."



Enjoy many health benefits of apples

Continued from page 1B

and add it to your Halloween decorations.

Take advantage of the apple season to find new ways to include apples in your diet. You'll enjoy a diversity of flavors and the many uses this healthful fruit provides.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

« RECIPES »



SHUTTERSTOCK

Beef Breakfast Burritos combine sauteed ground beef, peppers and onions with scrambled eggs and flavorful sauces, all wrapped inside a warm tortilla.

Beef breakfast burritos

FEATURE IMPACT

People often think of beef as a dinner staple, but it deserves a spot at the breakfast table, too.

Endlessly versatile and packed with protein, beef can turn everything from breakfast burritos to sandwiches into hearty, satisfying fuel for the day.

Breakfast is important even though mornings are busy, according to a study published in "Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine," which found children who eat breakfast tend to have higher math scores, fewer absences and better on-time

If you need something you can grab on the way out the door, Beef Breakfast Burritos combine sauteed ground beef, peppers and onions with scrambled eggs and flavorful sauces, all wrapped inside a warm tortilla.

Discover more recipes and join the 30-Day Breakfast Challenge at BeefLovingTexans.com/BreakfastChallenge.com.

Beef Breakfast Burritos

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4

Lime-Cilantro Cream:
1/2 cup reduced-fat dairy sour cream
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro

12 ounces ground beef (93% lean or leaner)
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 teaspoons ground ancho chili powder
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
4 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons water
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
nonstick cooking spray
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
1/3 cup reduced-fat shredded Mexican cheese blend or shredded cheddar cheese
4 medium spinach or plain flour tortillas (10-inch diameter), warmed
salsa (optional)

To make lime-cilantro cream: In small bowl, combine sour cream, lime juice and cilantro. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

To make burritos: Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add ground beef, bell pepper, onion, chili powder and cumin; cook 8-10 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees, breaking into small crumbles and stirring occasionally. Pour off drippings, as necessary. Remove beef mixture from skillet; keep warm.

In medium bowl, combine eggs, water and cilantro. Spray same skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Pour into skillet; cook over medium heat 2-3 minutes, or until scrambled, stirring occasionally. Season with salt, if desired. Stir in beef mixture and cheese; cook 1 minute or until heated through, stirring occasionally.

Spoon beef mixture evenly in row across center of each tortilla, leaving 1-inch border on right and left sides. Fold right and left sides of tortilla over filling. Fold bottom edge up over filling and roll up; cut diagonally in half. Serve with lime-cilantro cream and salsa, if desired.

Cooking tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed ground beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.

Substitution: 1 cup egg substitute may be used in place of beaten eggs and water.

Beef and Veggie Quiche
Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans
Cook time: 59 minutes
Servings: 8

Nonstick cooking spray
1 refrigerated pie crust (1/2 of 14.1-ounce package)
1/2 pound ground beef (80% lean or leaner)
1 tablespoon beef sausage seasoning mix
1 cup fresh baby spinach
1/4 cup cut fresh asparagus
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped bell pepper
6 eggs
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat 9-inch pie plate with nonstick cooking spray. Unfold pie crust on flat surface, pressing out fold lines with fingers. Place crust in pie plate, crimping edge as desired; set aside.

Heat large skillet over medium heat until hot. Add ground beef and seasoning mix; cook 4-5 minutes, breaking into small crumbles, stirring occasionally. Pour off drippings, as necessary.

Add spinach, asparagus, onion and bell pepper to skillet; cook 3-5 minutes, or until softened. Cool slightly.

In large mixing bowl, whisk eggs and cream. Gently stir in beef mixture. Pour into prepared pie crust; sprinkle with cheese. Bake 40-45 minutes, or until egg mixture is set and just beginning to brown. Cool 5-10 minutes; cut into wedges.

Beef and Spinach Breakfast Sandwich
Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 4

4 eggs or 1 cup egg substitute
1/2 cup chopped fresh baby spinach
1/2 cup diced tomatoes
nonstick cooking spray
salt (optional)
pepper (optional)
4 slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese
12 ounces leftover cooked beef (such as steak, prime rib roast, pot roast or deli roast beef), thinly sliced
4 whole-wheat round, thin sandwich breads, split and toasted

In medium bowl, combine eggs, spinach and tomatoes. Spray large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat until hot. Add egg mixture; cook 2-4 minutes, or until eggs are almost set, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, if desired.

Divide egg mixture into four separate portions in pan. Evenly top with cheese and beef. Remove from heat and cover. Let stand 1-2 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Place one egg portion on each bread bottom. Close sandwiches with bread tops; serve immediately.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Bass Reeves: The Lone Ranger's inspiration

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND

Bass Reeves, the inspiration for the Lone Ranger of movie and TV fame, was perhaps the most famous real-life lawman of the American West.

Born a slave in 1838 in Crawford County, Arkansas, Reeves worked alongside his parents and was a water boy until he became old enough to work as a field hand. When his owner, William Reeves, moved his farming operations, including his slaves, to Grayson County, Texas around 1846.

Bass Reeves was known for his tall stature, good manners, and sense of humor, and it was in Texas that these characteristics caught the attention of his master's son, George. George Reeves eventually chose Bass to become his bodyguard and valet, and the two became loyal companions.

When Texas sided with the Confederacy, George Reeves joined the Confederate Army and Bass went with him.

It was during the Civil War that Bass and George Reeves parted ways—and many speculate the reasons for their parting. Some legends say that the two got into a heated dispute over a card game, others say that Bass overheard talk of "freeing slaves" and ran away.

Reeves ended up in what was then called "Indian Territory," in present-day Oklahoma. He took refuge with members of the Seminole, Cherokee, and Creek nations, learning their languages, customs, and tracking skills which served him well during his law enforcement career.

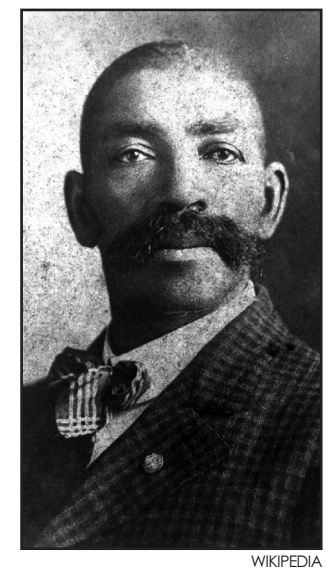
In 1863, Reeves was freed from slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation. He left Indian Territory and bought land near Van Buren, Arkansas, to farm and ranch. He also occasionally worked as a scout and guide for U.S. deputy marshals entering Indian Territory on business of the Van Buren Federal Court.

Reeves officially began his law enforcement career in 1875 after the Federal Western District Court was moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas. He was hired as a deputy by Judge Isaac C. Parker, who had been tasked by President Ulysses S. Grant to "clean up Indian Territory."

Reeves was one of the 200 deputies hired in 1875, and he was the only one on record that stayed until Oklahoma achieved statehood in 1907.

In his 32-year tenure as a marshal, Reeves was known for his ruthlessness and ability to catch outlaws other deputies couldn't. He was reportedly involved in several shootouts yet was never injured and once state he killed 14 men in self-defense, and at the time of his death a newspaper reported the number was actually 20.

By 1901 it was reported that he had arrested 3,000 people in Indian Territory — including his own son, who was convicted in the murder of his wife. Reeves achieved all this despite being illiterate, so he would memorize the warrants and writs he served.



WIKIPEDIA

Bass Reeves arrested more than 3,000 people in the Oklahoma territory over 32 years as a U.S. marshal.

The Indian Territory was notoriously the most dangerous for federal law enforcement officers in the Old West—records show that 120 were killed before Oklahoma achieved statehood.

Reeves retired from federal service upon Oklahoma's statehood in 1907 at the age of 67, but his law enforcement career was not yet over. He went on to serve as a city policeman in Muskogee, Oklahoma, for two years prior to his death in 1910.

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BIDS

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed, hand-delivered proposals will be received until 2:00 pm EST, on Tuesday, November 24, 2026, in the office of Mecklenburg County Asset & Facility Management Department, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 6000, Charlotte, NC 28208, for the LUESA Building Deep Energy Retrofit Project, at which time and place Bids will be opened and read aloud.

Single-prime, lump sum bids will be taken for the construction project as indicated in the bidding documents. The project is located at the Russell S. Rozzelle Building at 2145 Suttle Ave., Charlotte, NC 28208 and a mandatory pre-bid meeting shall be held there on November 9, 2026, at 10am.

Prime General Contractors wishing to submit a bid must provide a MANDATORY written Letter-of-Interest to the County's authorized Design Consultant at least 48 hours in advance of the bid opening in order to be placed on the official Bidders List for automatic distribution of potential addenda and offered consideration by the County as a responsive bidder.

Bid, performance, and payment & material bonds are required. NC law and applicable regulations of various licensing boards apply.

For Drawings with Specifications, please contact: Julie Jackson and Cameron Sunkel, Gensler, 101 South Tryon St. Suite 2100, Charlotte, NC 28280, Phone: (704) 377-2725, julie_jackson@gensler.com, Cameron_sunkel@gensler.com.

Mecklenburg County reserves the right to waive technicalities and to reject any or all bids. This information will be made available in an alternative format for persons with disabilities by calling (704) 377-2725.

ADVERTISEMENT TO BID –
7th & College Street Parking Deck –
Charlotte, NC

Gilbane Building Company, Construction Manager for the 7th & College Street Parking Deck for Mecklenburg County, is soliciting BIDS from Prequalified subcontractors interested in bidding the following scopes of work.

01A Site Services	09D Paint
01D Site Security	09E Flooring
01E Final Cleaning	10A Specialties
02A Demolition	10B Signage
02B Deep Foundations	11A Parking Control
02C Subsurface Investigation	Equipment
03A Concrete	14A Elevators
04A Masonry	21A Fire Protection
05A Structural Steel	22A Plumbing
07A Roofing	23A Mechanical
07B Waterproofing	26A Electrical
07D Metal Panels	27A Communications
07E Vapor Mitigation	28A Security and Access
08A Doors, Frames & Hardware	Control
08B Glazing	31A Sitework
08C Overhead Coiling Doors	32A Landscaping
09A Drywall	32B Fences & Gates

The project includes demolition of an existing structure and construction of a 263 space urban parking deck with elevators, egress stairwells, emergency generators, fire pump, and approximately 7,000 SF of retail shell space along 7th Street. Streetscape improvements to 7th Street are also included. Construction duration is anticipated to be approximately 12 months, subject to change based on Construction Drawings release.

- Project Location: 119 East 7th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202
- Owner: Mecklenburg County
- Architect: Little Diversified Architectural Consulting, Inc.
- Civil Designer: LandDesign
- Structural Engineer: Stewart MEP/FP
- Engineer: Barrett, Woodyard, & Associates
- Electrical Engineer: Caldwell Electrical Collaborative
- Low Voltage: Thorburn Associates
- Parking Consultant: Walker Consultants

Prequalification Requirements
Non-Prequalified companies that are interested in being part of this project as a 2nd tier subcontractor, a list of the 1st tier Prequalified Subcontractor can be provided upon request. Please reach out to Jared Adkins – Jadkins@Gilbaneco.com

Timeline
•Public Prequal Period: Closed
•Invitations to Bid Issued: October 22, 2026
•RFI's Due: November 3, 2026
•Bids Due: November 19, 2026 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time
  o Bids must be signed, sealed, and submitted in person for public opening.

Bid Delivery & Opening Location:
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont Inc.
5301 Wilkinson Blvd., NEO Room 1217 Charlotte NC 28208

•For questions, contact Jared Adkins at Jadkins@Gilbaneco.com.
Website: https://7andcollegeparking.gilbaneco.com

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
The City of Hendersonville is requesting proposals via RFP # 271565001 for Urban Forestry Consulting Services. Visit the following link for full details: https://www.hendersonvillenc.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/rfp/rfp-271565001-for-forestry-consultancy-services.pdf

EMPLOYMENT

(Charlotte, NC) ANDRITZ Hydro Corp. seeks a Commissioning Engineer to plan, coordinate, and execute commissioning activities for hydroelectric turbine-generator units and associated auxiliary systems. Require Bachelor degree in Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering or related engineering field & 4 years of experience in commissioning, start-up, or testing of industrial electro-mechanical systems. 40% domestic travel to client sites. Submit resumes to Suzanne.Fulton@andritz.com. Reference job title in subject line.

International Supply Chain Manager (Dole Fresh Fruit Company; Charlotte, NC): Manage existing North America (NA) Product Distribution team to execute and implement strategic company initiatives for costs, quality, and inventory management. Position supervises one (1) Product Distribution Analyst. Apply online at https://workforcenow.adp.com/mascsr/default/mdf/recruitment/recruitment.html?cid=56439c56-b8a7-41d5-93e5-5a2c5a0fc666&ccId=9201948363715_2&lang=en_US&jobId=617075 or send resume to jacklyn.williams@dole.com. Ref: 1036.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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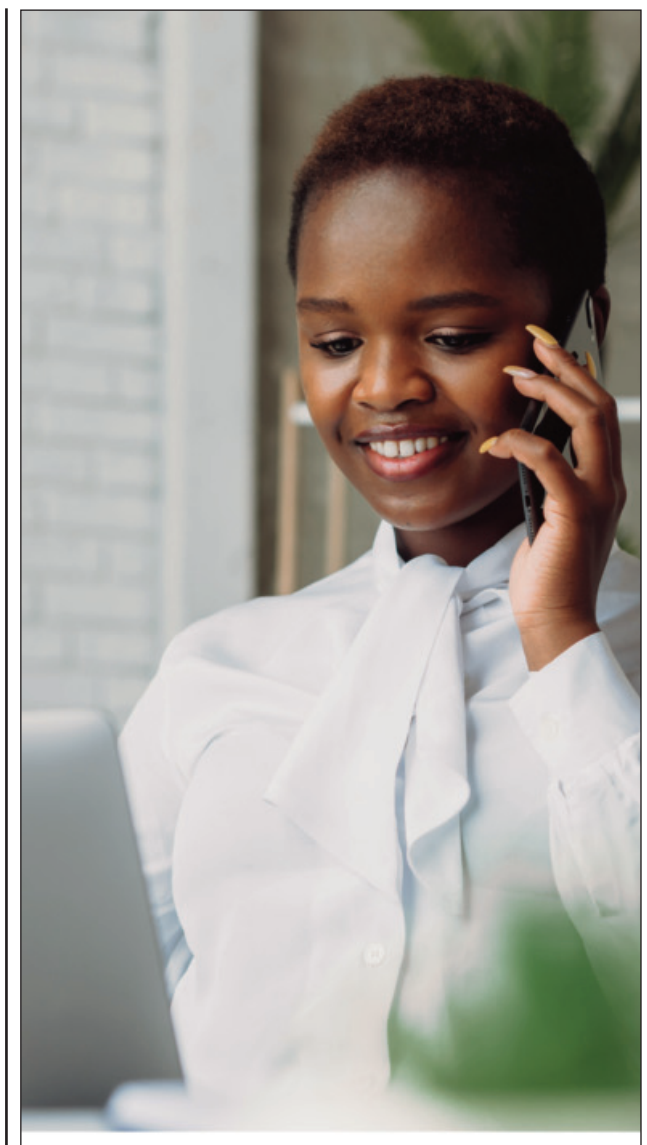
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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026 PAGE 5B



THE MOMENTARY

John Legend dials back the vocals on some songs and adopts a more conversational delivery on his new album "Muse."

John Legend on Pharrell's musical push with 'Muse'

By Jonathan Landrum
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Jay-Z once told John Legend, "You're our voice."

But Pharrell Williams had another idea for Legend's signature baritone: Sometimes, let it do more talking than singing.

On his new album, "Muse," Legend dials back his powerhouse vocals on certain songs, adopting a more conversational delivery at Williams' urging. It's a departure for the EGOT winner, whose piano-driven ballads like "All of Me" and "Ordinary People" have helped define his career for more than two decades.

The 16-track project, out Friday, marks Legend's first full album with Williams after more than 20 years of friendship. Recorded mostly at Williams' studio inside Louis Vuitton's Paris headquarters, it grew out of Legend's appearance on Clipse's "The Birds Don't Sing," which inspired Williams to build an album around his voice.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Legend discussed Williams' creative influence, Jay-Z's memorable compliment and composing his first original stage score for "Imitation of Life," an off-Broadway musical opening at The Shed in New York in December.

Remarks have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: You've achieved EGOT status and more than two decades of success. What do you still feel you have to prove?

LEGEND: I really want every project to be my best project. Every album to be my best album. That means continuing to push myself, continuing to challenge myself and not resting on all the work I've done before.

That also means trying new things. Working with Pharrell on an entire album was something new for me. I'm writing for Broadway now. Just finding new creative avenues to continue to throw some more challenges into the mix and seeing what it inspires in my creativity.

AP: Has the success of your piano ballads and songs like "All of Me" ever made you feel creatively boxed in?

LEGEND: No, not at all. Honestly, I feel like my success has made me feel empowered. It's made me feel confident and trusting my voice, trusting my instincts. It's allowed me to have relationships with record labels and other business partners where they trust my judgment and don't over-micromanage me. … I think it allows me to operate from not being in a place of fear, but a place of confidence and willingness to try new things.

AP: What did Pharrell challenge you to do differently on "Muse"?

LEGEND: One of the things that he encouraged me to do on specific songs was to talk-sing in a way where it was like I was more speaking and having a conversation.

Like in "Fireflies," some of the delivery of the verses of the song is more like I'm orating, like I'm speaking, rather than like I'm singing a melody. That was his idea, and I think it really works. … That's why you work with new people, because they may bring new ideas to the table that you hadn't tried before.

AP: Why did it take more than 20 years for you and Pharrell to make an entire album together?

LEGEND: Early in my career, I was signed to GOOD Music. Kanye (West) was very involved in executive producing all my albums, and so it wouldn't have made sense for me to do a whole album with a whole other producer at the time. I'm more of a free agent now and able to just do whatever I want musically. My label, Republic Records, kind of lets me have free rein with whatever I want to do musically and wherever my muse takes me — no pun intended.

Please see **JOHN** | 6B

« ON THE MARQUEE »



LEVINE MUSEUM OF THE NEW SOUTH

The 22nd annual Dia de Muertos Festival is Nov. 1 at Camp North End celebrates Mexican culture through art, music, and food.

22nd annual Dia de Muertos Festival at Camp North End

Also: Hope, Healing & Triumph takes the stage at Booth Playhouse

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

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

Nov. 1

The Latin American Coalition and Levine Museum of the New South sponsor the 22nd annual *Día de Muertos Festival* at Camp North End, 300 Camp Road, 12-6 p.m.

The celebration of Mexican culture and traditions through art, music, food and community for the first time, the Catrina Parade is open to anyone who wants to participate. Community members are invited to arrive in Día de Muertos-inspired makeup and costume and join the procession, departing from the Ford Building at 4 p.m.

The altar exhibition is also open to community participation, with individuals, groups and organizations invited to apply to create an ofrenda honoring loved ones who have died. Altars, traditionally decorated with photos, candles, flowers, food and mementos, are a central part of Día de Muertos.

More information and an application can be found on diademuertosclt.org.

There is also an expanded Kids Zone at the Camp North End green area with face painting, a bounce house and other activities.

· *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: blumenthalarts.org.

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 Takeila Fox will perform alongside Charlotte Ballet 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. 5

Historic Rosedale Book Launch, 3:30-5:30 p.m. at Historic Rosedale, 3427 N. Tryon St. The Book Launch will feature comments and insights from the co-authors, as well as a Q&A session.

Books will be on sale and for signing. Light refreshments served. The event is free and open to the public, but advanced registration is suggested via simpletix.com or www.historicrosedale.org.

Nov. 6-22

Three Bone Theatre's production

Please see **WALTER** | 6B

Uneven 'Wicker' scales feminist plot twists

By Dwight Brown
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Wicker
2.5 stars

Sticks and stones won't break her bones, but words will really hurt her.

It's easy to sympathize with Fisherwoman (Olivia Colman), a hardworking, well-known member of her village who's constantly ridiculed. Folks can smell her coming from a mile away as she sells her catch of the day. Some take great joy in degrading her and her occupation, especially the Tailor's Wife (Elizabeth Debicki), who leads the other mean girls in making Fisherwoman's life miserable.

All the lonely woman wants is what they seem to have: love, affection and a man.

Ursula Wills' short story "The Wicker Husband" thoughtfully explores a protagonist so desperate for companionship that she wants a spouse custom-built. The me-against-the-world setup, coupled with the ingenuity of breaking the mold, makes a compelling premise. Set in the 17th century, the story unfolds in a fictional rural village where folks don't have names and are called by their professions.

The setting is ripe for a fable, in the tradition of the Grimm fairy tales, with lessons to impart, villains who bully the innocent and a touch of magic and whimsy.

Writers-directors Alex Huston Fischer and Eleanor Wilson unevenly bring this medieval story to life. Some scenes are fantastical. Others are too stagey and talky, especially the village scenes, which look more like a backlot than a lived-in community. Cinematographer Lol Crawley ("The Brutalist") fares better with intimate firelit interiors and captivating pastoral landscapes. Production designer Renátó Cseh likewise makes the homes and barns more convincing than the town itself.



TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Nabhaan Rizwan and Elizabeth Debicki in "Wicker."

Costume designers Tóth András Dániel and Attila Godena-Juhász dress Fisherwoman simply and appropriately, while the Basketmaker's wardrobe features an eye-catching mix of fabrics and colors. Many villagers' clothes, however, look too new and clean for the rustic setting.

Editor Sofi Marshall effectively weaves together gossipy village chatter, erotic scenes and agrarian life. Anna Meredith's musical score, with its dissonant strings, embellishes the story's sorrow, joy and menace. All in all, it feels like someone is turning the pages of a storybook—but not one meant for a kindergarten class.

Desperate but determined, Fisherwoman approaches the local Basketmaker (Peter Dinklage) with an unusual request: "I want you to make me a husband." He obliges, and it turns out that her handful of coins buys her a whole lot of man.

The Wicker Husband (Alexander Skarsgård) is tall, dark and handsome. A hunk of sticks. They retreat to her little farmhouse. And as new lovers do,

Please see **WICKER** | 6B

Walter Mosley at Charlotte Library's Verse & Vino

Continued from page 5B

of *"Liberation,"* Arts Factory, 1545 W. Trade St.

Showtimes: Thursdays–Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: $32.50 in advance online at threebonetheatre.com; $37.55 on night of show and $21.80 for students and educators.

Three Bone opens its 15th season with Bess Wohl's Tony and Pulitzer Award-winning play directed by Donna Bradby. The play production follows six women who form a women's liberation group in the 1970s and a daughter who revisits their stories 50 years later. The program explores feminism, friendship, generational divides, and the fight for equality.

Nov. 7

Historic Rosedale dedicates the African American Legacy Memorial Garden, 1-3 p.m.

The memorial garden honors the lives and legacy of people who were enslaved at the former plantation and their descendants after emancipation. The public is invited to the free dedication, which will include an invocation, music and an orientation of the garden's symbolism. The guest speaker will be Lawana Holland-Moore, director of grantee impact and engagement at the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Advance registration is suggested at historicrosedale.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. 13-14

Bach 360, Charlotte Symphony, Booth Playhouse.

Take in a 360-degree view of the musicians as you dive into the lives and works of monumental composers through theatrical storytelling and intimate performances in the round.

All musical roads lead back to J.S. Bach in an up-close look at his enduring music and the musicians who bring it to life. Resident Conductor Christopher James Lees traces Bach's reach across generations, exploring how his music became a foundation for composers long after his time.

Details: charlottesymphony.org.

Nov. 14

Boney James, Knight Theater, 7:30 p.m.

The contemporary jazz artist is live in town for one night only. The concert includes an intimate show of with classic favorites and live music magic. Tickets: blumenthalarts.org.

Nov. 19-21

The Lotus Project's production of *"Shrek the Musical."* Showtimes are at 7 p.m. with a 2 p.m. matinee on Nov. 21.

Opening Night performance is dedicated to Charlotte's LGBTQ+ community, featuring a post-show discussion with partners Charlotte Trans Health, Time Out Youth, and Gender Education Network.

Tickets: $18 at thelotusprojectnc.com/tickets.

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.

John Legend on musical push with album 'Muse'

Continued from page 5B

AP: You've worked with everyone from Lauryn Hill and Jay-Z to Nipsey Hussle, Rick Ross and Clipse. Do people overlook how much hip-hop has impacted your career?

LEGEND: I think a lot of people know it and they acknowledge it to me. Jay-Z one time came up to me and said, "You're our voice." I think a lot of hip-hop fans know that these MCs bring me onto a song when they think that I'll add something special to it. … I love that hip-hop is such a big part of my legacy and my body of work over the years.

AP: What makes revisiting "Imitation of Life," with its themes of race and identity, important now?

LEGEND: What we found interesting was the challenge of writing it as Black creatives and centering the Black woman Delilah at the heart of our storytelling in a way where she was never centered before. Making it a musical when it never was a musical before was also an interesting challenge. It allowed us to write an era that's really interesting in our musical history and our cultural history, the time of the Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age.

AP: What scares you more at this stage: taking a creative risk that doesn't work or making music that no longer surprises you?

LEGEND: I don't know if anything scares me. I would say I don't want to get complacent. I want to continue to hold myself to a high standard, hold anything I release to a high standard, and I refuse to just rest on my laurels.

I guess you could call it fear, but I don't think it's really fear. It's motivation and challenge that I put in front of myself.

'Wicker' scales the feminist plot twists

Continued from page 5B

after feeling each other out emotionally, physically and sexually, they make wild, passionate love. In fact, the villagers can hear Fisherwoman's moans and groans throughout the valley.

Their sexcapades are so vigorous that they break her bed! Even after the townspeople learn to accept the new, unusual couple, jealousy persists. And the Tailor's Wife? She, like a witch, venomously plots their downfall.

The script gets some aspects right, sustaining interest while raising questions about tolerance, acceptance and conventional notions about love and marriage. Fisherwoman's rejection of the town's tradition of a bride wearing a matrimonial collar shows her defiant nature.

Her romance also challenges the expectation that people should only date within their own race, religion or social class. These are noble themes.

The screenplay's two main structural weaknesses become more apparent around the 45-minute mark, after the novelty of the premise wears off. First, the villagers' cruelty provides the story's most compelling source of dramatic tension.

Yet Fisherwoman's insecurity becomes a primary antagonist in its own right, shifting attention away from that stronger external conflict without developing her inner struggles sufficiently.

Second, protagonists have to slay their own dragons. Relying on someone else to settle the score denies Fisherwoman the opportunity to claim her victory—and deprives the audience of the satisfaction of watching her do so.

The directors' interpretation of this romantic comedy-drama is competent, though at times a looser, more improvisational approach—with the comic timing of an "SNL" skit and less dialogue—might have made the characters feel more natural.

For example, Dinklage's long-winded monologues seem out of place, better suited to a West End play. The Basketmaker is far more interesting when he's weaving wicker figures and toying with the mean villagers than when delivering extended speeches.

Fisherwoman is a complex character filled with anxiety, self-doubt, hope, lust and frustration. Colman gets to the heart of her character, making her humor, outrage, vulnerability and desire feel authentic. Skarsgård turns the man-made man into the town stud, radiating love, sex appeal and sensitivity.

Beneath his wooden façade, he reveals a gentle, intelligent nature, far removed from the lumbering brute audiences might associate with Frankenstein's monster. He declares, "You are the reason I live and breathe," conveying that tenderness with ease, even while wearing an eye-catching wicker bodysuit and mask created by Joe Dunckley and Weta Workshop (Avatar).

Debicki makes the disgruntled wife suitably malicious, while Dinklage brings wisdom to the Basketmaker. The supporting cast (Richard E. Grant, Nabhaan Rizwan, Ella Bruccoleri and Kiell Smith-Bynoe) blends into the film's storybook atmosphere, like members of a traveling theater troupe.

Yes, "Wicker" is a feminist story, and Fisherwoman challenges the social order that expects her to conform. But a stronger feminist allegory would give her a more active role in outsmarting her tormentors. She needn't break bones with sticks and stones; she needs to shape her own destiny. That's a triumph that audiences could cheer.

Visit film critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

