The Charlotte Post

Life!

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026 SECTION B



ANDREW SEAMAN | UNSPLASH

Hospitalizations and deaths connected to alcohol abuse in North Carolina have spiked over the last four years, according the state Department of Health and Human Services.

NC alcohol abuse and hospitalization rates are on the rise

By Cameron Williams
cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

Alcohol-related hospitalizations and deaths are on the rise in North Carolina.

According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in 2024, more than 5,600 deaths and 68,000 emergency department visits recorded were due to alcohol usage. The data points show higher rates of alcohol-related harms compared to previous years.



Versa

A WFAE report found that over the past four years, the number of alcohol-related hospitalizations has risen annually. By the end of 2026 it is projected there will be more than 10,000 visits.

"The last information we have is about 178,000 deaths annually," said Dr. Allin Vesa, emergency department medical director at Duke Health Lake Norman Hospital. "That was for 2020 to 2021 on average, and that's attributable to excess alcohol use we see in the U.S. … so 4.2 million U.S. emergency department visits involving alcohol, and that was in 2022. And we see this probably on a daily basis in the ED locally."

Please see **ALCOHOL** | 2B

Healthcare costs hit where it hurts

By Enuka Rayasam and Sam Whitehead
KFF HEALTH NEWS

Bill McAdams, a 45-year-old travel nurse from Holiday, Florida, was uninsured last year when he experienced a stroke. He hadn't been able to afford his agency's health plan, which would have cost $3,600 monthly to cover him and his wife. The hospital that treated him sent him a bill for $93,000.

Janet Marx, 56, of Milford, Connecticut, has doubled up on insurance coverage through her husband's employer and Medicare because she has lupus and fibromyalgia, disabling chronic conditions. Still the couple sold their home, the house where Marx grew up, to afford the costs of their medical care.

Sheila Robinson, 61, in District Heights, Maryland, has a $10,000 deductible on her Affordable Care Act plan, so she tries to negotiate cheaper self-pay options when she sees a doctor. She puts the $659 monthly premium on her credit card, even though she knows not paying the bill in full means she must pay interest.

"I am just afraid to even go to the doctor," said

Please see **RISING** | 3B



WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Wake Forest University School of Medicine students Colette Haynie (left) and Iyra Chandra launched a volunteer-based birth doula program for laboring patients.

Medical students expand volunteer doula support

Volunteer-based initiative provides free support to birthing parents

SPECIAL TO THE POST

While Iyra Chandra and Colette Haynie train in Charlotte to become physicians, they are providing free volunteer doula support as a service project.

Thirty-one graduate students were selected North Carolina Albert Schweitzer Fellows for the class of 2026-27, including Chandra and Haynie, who are MD students at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Charlotte.

NC Schweitzer Fellows design and implement year-long community service projects focused on addressing gaps in healthcare access, while meeting their academic obligations. Each project is carried out in partnership with a community-based organization. Fellows pair with both community and academic mentors throughout the year, helping students continue their development as leaders and role models.

"Our primary goal is for our volunteers to serve as sources of continuous emotional support for laboring patients," Haynie said. "Doulas are uniquely positioned to serve patients in a truly muti-faceted way. We can offer hands on techniques such as counter pressure to ease labor pains, guide patients through movement and position changes, and work with their healthcare team to advocate for their needs.

"Serving as a volunteer doula allows us to support patients and has taught me so much about what patient centered care really means. Being part of this organization in Winston Salem has been such a meaningful part of my medical school experience and

Please see **MEDICAL** | 2B

Food bank expands reach through grant

By Cameron Williams
cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

Solo Faith Church has a unique way of serving its community.

The Concord church in early 2025 launched a food bank. But it is not traditional in that food is delivered to clients through a partnership with DoorDash that included a $5,000 grant.

"DoorDash has given us the ability to sign up other organizations for their DoorDash platform for the nonprofit side," pastor Doug Lattimore said. "We uniquely fit in that space unlike any other because we're one of the few online food pantries in the nation. … Once you incorporate AI, our food pantry is AI-powered. Then AI goes in and parses every order that comes in, so what DoorDash did ended up giving us a grant to expand to other organizations."

Lattimore said the food pantry isn't partnered with a food bank, so resources are limited. The DoorDash grant allows them to establish collaborations that have more resources.



SOLO FAITH CHURCH

Concord-based Solo Faith Church received a $5,000 DoorDash grant to expand its online food pantry initiative through an artificial intelligence model to identify clients.

"DoorDash has pretty much anointed us and said, 'Go and establish the partnerships, and we will not only give you $5,000 to help train them, but also help pay for the deliveries.' Then, we are providing the funds so that other organizations can add delivery to their model, which is a win-win situation."

Solo Faith's food bank reaches approximately 160 families in the greater Concord area per month. Lattimore anticipates the number will not only increase because of the grant, but also the holidays being right around the corner. Along with food, they are also able to send hygiene products to those

Please see **CONCORD** | 2B

Try herbal centerpieces for fun and flavor at your next gathering

By Melinda Myers
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Try something different this year when planning dinner parties. Dress up the table with a centerpiece of fresh herbs. Family and guests will enjoy snipping a few fresh sprigs of herbs to season meals to their taste.

Purchase plants so they will be ready to harvest in time. Check local garden centers, the grocery store produce department or online.

Include favorite herbs and those that complement the menu. Grow plants in individual containers or plant several in one larger decorative pot. Select a container with drainage holes that will also complement the table setting.

Double pot plants when using a decorative container that lacks drainage holes. Plant herbs in a smaller pot with drainage holes. Set the potted herb on a layer of pebbles or any item that elevates the pot above excess water that collects in the bottom of the decorative container. This reduces the risk of root rot, eliminates the need to pour off excess water and as the water evaporates, it increases humidity around the plant. It's less work and better for the plants.

Use a quality, well-drained potting mix when moving herbs into another container. Be sure to place a saucer or tray under the pot to protect furniture. Set it on a decorative placemat for added protection and add a few seasonal items to complete the display.

Include some basil to dress up pizzas, salads, or soup with just a few leaves. Add some oregano for seasoning any tomato-based dishes such as pizza and pasta. Use fresh thyme to add flavor to cheeses, eggs, tomatoes, and lentil. Lemon thyme makes a great and tasty tea.

Chives' mild onion flavor is great on potatoes, but consider adding it to soups, dips, seafood dishes, and omelets. Just snip a few leaves and cut them into smaller pieces before adding them to the meal.

Parsley is high in vitamin C and often added to soups, pasta, salads, and dressings. It makes a nice garnish and breath freshener.



ALL AMERICA SELECTIONS

Sprigs of Sweet Dani lemon basil.

Start or end gatherings with some fresh mint. Have guests add a leaf or two to their favorite cocktails or mocktails as they gather. Use a few leaves to garnish a favorite dessert or serve tea along with a pot of peppermint or spearmint to help everyone settle their stomachs after enjoying the meal.

Always water plants thor-

Please see **TRY** | 2B

Medical students expand volunteer doula support

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we're so excited to bring the program to Charlotte."

North Carolina's rate of maternal mortality is higher than the national average, and the presence of birth doulas has been shown to improve maternal and infant outcomes, especially in communities of color that experience disproportionate maternal health challenges.

To meet that need, the program will start in labor and delivery at Atrium Health Cabarrus. Medical and nursing students will be trained to be birth doula volunteers by community doulas and other healthcare professionals. The volunteers will start in the fall.

The project is an expansion of the Deacon Doulas program in Winston-Salem, which began as an original Schweitzer Fellowship project, by Abby Peoples and Callie Ollish, that continues today at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.

Last year, Chandra and Haynie served on the program's student leadership group in Winston-Salem. They were trained as doulas from teammates across various specialties, nurses, midwives and community doulas, and gained insight from national research studies linking continuous labor support to improving patient outcomes.

Since moving to Charlotte for their third-year rotations, they've identified a similar community need in the area. They are now looking to explore ways that their volunteer birth doula program can provide support the women and infants in the local community.

"This is a way to bring a similar labor support program to Charlotte," Chandra said. "Colette and I are both passionate about improving maternal health outcomes and ensuring all patients receive compassionate, high-quality support. We also saw this as an opportunity for medical students to engage with patients earlier in their education."

For Haynie, serving these patients is an aspiration she's had for years, inspired by her late great-grandmother, who worked as a midwife for decades, and provided labor and delivery care to African American women prior to when hospitals were integrated.

Haynie's initial exposure to healthcare began when she started working at a physical therapy clinic on a summer break from high school. By the time she entered college, she became a certified physical therapy technician, where she guided patients through difficult and often painful exercises to assist them in their recoveries from injuries and surgeries. This experience also encouraged her to become a doula, as she enjoyed working closely with patients toward a shared outcome.

During college, Haynie participated in the Cultivating Opportunity and Realizing Excellence Leadership Program through Georgetown University School of Medicine, which focused on exposing pre-medical students to gaps in healthcare access and outcomes. Haynie says the stark disproportions in maternal mortality rates were something that she couldn't ignore.

Chandra says she grew up advocating for the sexual and reproductive health of women in her family, which helped pique her interest in uplifting patient voices and providing health education to women. She advocated for an equitable gender pay gap and conducted research on community programs supporting opioid-exposed mothers and infants.

Prior to medical school, she also worked at a free OB/GYN clinic and as a coordinator on gynecological oncology trials improving accessibility to patients that faced barriers to care. Her motivation for pursuing a medical career stemmed from wanting to support women who face health inequities and working to mitigate these disparities in the local community.

Both medical students have worked or volunteered in various healthcare settings that inspired them to help improve women's health and maternal outcomes. Their experiences becoming a doula in medical school and working directly with patients as part of a volunteer labor support program were monumental in building their own passions, career goals and learning how to be better advocates for patients facing barriers to care.

"Doulas are associated with fewer birth complications and more positive labor experiences and the idea behind doing a birth doula volunteer program is that we're an extra set of hands that can mitigate some of these challenging moments for patients and really stand up and listen to them," Chandra said.

"Doulas were traditionally a private service that was not covered by insurance and was largely out of pocket, which made it inaccessible to most patients. Our goal is to be a free resource for any patient who might want someone or might be alone during the laboring process."

> **Doulas were traditionally a private service that was not covered by insurance and was largely out of pocket, which made it inaccessible to most patients. Our goal is to be a free resource for any patient who might want someone or might be alone during the laboring process.**
>
> Wake Forest University Medical School student **IYRA CHANDRA**

Alcohol abuse, hospitalization rates are on the rise in NC

Continued from page 1B

Vesa said there's been an increase in alcohol-related illnesses post-COVID.

"I think a lot of it has to do with probably stress and isolation," he said, "but people are delaying their medical care more than they have in the past, so allowing chronic disease to progress, and probably the cumulative effects of long-term alcohol consumption are just catching up with them."

Vesa emphasized stress and isolation are factors in alcohol-related illness, but another could be hereditary.

"I think one thing we need to keep in mind is that there is no particular demographic," he said. "I think alcohol [abuse] comes from all walks of life. We see it in every demographic. From my perspective as an emergency physician, I mainly focus on illness, treating its complications, and helping patients access the care that they need. Certainly stress. Certainly work-related, family issues. Alcoholism is considered a disease, so it does tend to run in the family as well. Those are all contributing factors.

"In terms of what are the most common alcohol-related emergencies we see in the ER, there's certainly acute intoxication, and those symptoms include altered mental status, falls, injuries."

Quitting cold turkey can cause other health issues like hallucinations, seizures and other withdrawal symptoms. But there are programs to help.

"Ultimately, it's going to be long-term weaning off alcohol," Vesa said. "It's going to be long-term preventing these complications, but then ultimately getting into a program where they stay off it. And there are programs inpatient, there are programs outpatient. It all depends on the severity, and it all depends on the willingness because it's not easy."

For anyone feeling stressed, or isolated to the point of drinking, Vesa urges them to seek assistance.

"Ask for help," he said. "Do not isolate yourself; ask for help. If you don't have anyone, then certainly seek care from your local primary care physician, clinic or ER. We have resources where you can get you plugged in to the right inpatient or outpatient facility that will get you on the right path. Whether that is behavior, psychiatric, whether that is therapy, there are resources in the community that can help you."

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Try herbal centerpieces for fun and flavor at next gathering

Continued from page 1B

oughly when the top inch of soil starts to dry. Basil likes slightly moist but not soggy wet soil. Pour off excess water that collects in the saucer if needed.

And don't forget the snips to allow everyone to add their own favorite herbal seasonings to their meal. Encourage guests to make the cut above a set of leaves. This keeps the plant looking good and the wound will close quickly. And don't be timid; regular harvesting encourages new growth for future harvests.

When the herbal centerpiece is not decorating the table, move it to a sunny window or under artificial lights. Avoid drafts of hot and cold air and continue watering it thoroughly as needed.

Everyone will appreciate sharing the fun and fresh flavor of seasoning their own entrees and desserts right at the table.

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. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Concord food bank expands reach through DoorDash grant

Continued from page 1B

that need it.

"We typically get about 2,000 pounds of food every week," Lattimore said. "It sounds like a lot, but it really isn't. During the holidays, we get close to about 2,000 pounds per day. ... We are looking to increase that probably about three times as much. ... So, to give you a clear number, probably about 400-500 families just from our location during the holidays, not including our location partners who also have their own food resources."

Lattimore said the church works with several local resources to gather food.

"There's farms in the area," he said. "We work with the YMCA. Rowan Cabarrus YMCA has opened their garden to us. We work with Rocky River Processing. During hunting season, they're FDA approved, FDA inspected, and so whenever hunters are trying to donate their kills to fight hunger, then Rocky River processing calls us, and we're able to get meat, and it's how we get meat and vegetables, and then we buy food.

"We have a budget to purchase food. We partnered up with First Presbyterian Charlotte, and they gave us a 10-cents-a-meal grant, which gives us the ability to purchase food as well."

The pantry, which also serves Charlotte and Kannapolis, is looking to build more collaborations.

"We need partnerships," Lattimore said. "Whether that is corporate sponsorships or people interested in adding delivery to what they already do. ... I am working my tail off to try to make sure that we get the funding we need in order to help people. It brings a sense of dignity back to these people."





Rising healthcare costs hits where it hurts most

Continued from page 1B

Robinson, who has arthritis, a pinched nerve in her neck, and high blood pressure. "Every month, I am in the hole."

This year, KFF Health News has chronicled how rising healthcare costs are upending the lives of Americans. Reporters have heard from more than 130 people across the U.S. who are trying to afford their premiums, copayments, prescriptions, and medical bills even as housing, energy, and food costs swell. People told us they are forgoing health insurance coverage, rationing their medications, cutting back on doctor visits, and putting off health procedures.

"We're not talking about the uninsured or those who are low-income who are struggling now," said Rebecca Kirch, executive vice president at the National Patient Advocate Foundation. "Now it's become an all-of-us issue."

While healthcare costs have largely grown faster than the overall economy for decades, they've escalated at a dizzying pace recently. In 2023 and 2024, health spending hit its highest growth rates in two decades excluding 2020's covid-fueled surge.

The prices that hospitals, doctors, and other clinicians charge have increased, along with how much care people are getting. Overall health spending hit nearly $5.3 trillion in 2024, up from $3 trillion a decade earlier, according to federal data.

American health costs, expected to continue growing faster than the overall economy and help fuel it, are projected to hit 20% of the nation's gross domestic product by 2032, up from just under 19% today.

At the same time, Americans are shouldering higher insurance premium payments and other out-of-pocket costs. Low-income and middle-class people with health conditions are feeling the brunt.

The GOP-led Congress decided against extending covid pandemic-era subsidies for Affordable Care Act plans and cut billions from other federal health programs to offset the costs of tax cuts for wealthy Americans and heightened immigration enforcement, arguing that government insurance programs are rife with fraud and waste.

Despite $500 rebate checks sent by President Donald Trump to fewer than 5% of higher-income ACA marketplace enrollees, his administration has been expanding access to insurance plans with higher deductibles and lower premiums that push more costs to patients if they need care. Employers are passing along rising healthcare costs to employees, and clinicians are charging patients up front.

It's not all bad news for consumers: Prescription drugs recorded their biggest price drop in decades this year. The Biden and Trump administrations both worked to help lower them amid consumer pressure.

But many say they're still feeling the pain of rising prices. Ahead of the November congressional midterm elections, healthcare costs continue to top a list of the public's worries about affordability, according to polling conducted in mid-September by KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. Nine in 10 Democratic respondents and three-quarters of Republican ones said the U.S. healthcare system needs either a complete overhaul or major changes.

'Profit margins everywhere'

The typical American family spends about $5,600 a year, or 9% of their income, on health insurance premiums, out-of-pocket healthcare costs, and taxes that fund health programs, according to the Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker. But overall, the nation's annual healthcare spending comes to the equivalent of more than $15,400 per person.

The reason behind those high U.S. healthcare costs is straightforward: The prices that clinicians, hospitals, drugmakers, and other players in the health system charge are high. For example, while doctors in the U.S. perform about a third as many inpatient knee replacements as in other wealthy nations, the cost per surgery is higher than in most of those countries, according to the Peterson-KFF tracker.

More recently, multiple trends have driven that price growth in the U.S., health economists and policy researchers said. Hospitals are merging and using their consolidated market power to charge more. New technologies and therapeutics, such as GLP-1s for weight loss and diabetes, have high price tags. Inflation and the Trump administration's tariffs are layering costs onto everything from latex gloves to medical devices. And higher numbers of uninsured Americans means fewer people to bear more of the costs.

"It's really everything all together at once," said Christopher Whaley, a Brown University health policy researcher.

Why the U.S. has high healthcare prices, however, is more complicated. Whaley and other health economists point to how the American healthcare system is structured and financed. Clinician charges and administrative costs are higher in the U.S. than in other countries. The U.S. doesn't centrally set all prices for services, ration care, or control for quality.

In most local American markets, insurers negotiate prices with hospitals, clinicians, and drugmakers, which then charge for every test, procedure, or medicine regardless of its outcome. More than half of all healthcare payments were based on this fee-for-service model, according to a 2022 research brief published in the journal Health Affairs. Under this model, hospitals and doctors make more as they bill more.

The complexity of different billing systems, rates, insurers, and networks adds to the price tag. The cost of sending out bills and managing paperwork can be hundreds of billions of dollars. Insurers try to keep medical costs in check, in part by limiting what they'll reimburse. They also take their own cut along the way.

"There's profit margins everywhere, and there are varying degrees of financial incentives throughout the healthcare system," Whaley said.

The incentives, however, don't necessarily promote better health.

Steven Ullmann, director of the Center for Health Management and Policy at the University of Miami Business School, where he's a professor, said that the country's health system encourages expensive treatments over low-cost preventive care. He said that keeps people locked into seeing clinicians because they're in their insurance networks, not necessarily because they produce better outcomes.

Even though people in the U.S. pay more for care than in other countries, Ullmann said higher prices don't always mean better quality. For example, he said the prices for prenatal ultrasounds in Orlando vary widely with no obvious difference in quality.

"Same city, same procedure," Ullmann said. "That is a reflection of a broken system."

And those high prices can keep people from seeking needed services.

In 2025, a health system garnished the wages of Carmilla Collins, 52, of Omaha, Nebraska.

Collins, a single mother, said she didn't question the tests or medicines doctors ordered when she got diagnosed with thyroid disease or received regular preventive procedures such as a colonoscopy — until she found herself in debt. The hospital hired a collection agency to sue her for unpaid medical bills that she accrued when she was both insured and uninsured. Then a court allowed the debt collector to take hundreds of dollars out of her paycheck.

Collins remembered being "spitting mad." She almost couldn't make rent.

"I'm working two jobs," she said. "And I'm going to be homeless because of this noose that's around my neck."

Collins eventually qualified for financial assistance from the hospital, but she said she put off thyroid surgery for four months even as a goiter swelled against her throat, making it hard for her to eat. She had health coverage through her employer at that point but was worried about affording the costs of her deductible and other fees. Eventually, she said, her health declined until she could no longer put off the surgery.

"I equated taking care of my health with debt that I couldn't afford," she said.

No quick fixes

How to slow rising costs — and overall U.S. health spending — has long vexed elected leaders and policymakers.

That's because reducing overall healthcare costs for patients means doctors, hospitals, drug companies, insurers, or other players across the health system would get paid less.

"For the most part, health spending for us is income to someone else," said Zack Cooper, a health economist at Yale University.

Eliminating administrative complexity or setting price caps — which is how some countries lower overall costs — faces steep odds at the federal level. Since 1998, the health sector has spent more than $14 billion lobbying members of Congress in both parties, according to OpenSecrets, a nonprofit that tracks money in U.S. politics.

After Lynn Ludaway, 40, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis three years ago, she said, she considered divorcing her husband just to make her eligible for aid to cover medical costs, even though they wanted to stay together.

She initially had coverage through her husband's job but still faced large out-of-pocket bills. Ludaway, who lives in Evanston, Illinois, also racked up expenses from navigating life with a disabling health condition, such as paying for Uber rides and a cane as her mobility declined.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »



WIKIPEDIA

Barber-Scotia College graduate Mary McLeod Bethune co-founded Bethune-Cookman University and was an advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Mary Bethune: Educator and presidential advisor

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

The daughter of formerly enslaved parents, Mary Jane McLeod Bethune became one of the most important Black educators, civil and women's rights leaders and government officials of the20th century.

The college she founded set educational standards for today's Black colleges, and her role as an advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave African Americans an advocate in government.

Born on July 10, 1875, near Maysville, South Carolina, Bethune graduated in 1894 from Scotia Seminary (now Barber-Scotia College), a boarding school in Concord. Bethune next attended Dwight Moody's Institute for Home and Foreign Missions in Chicago. But with no church willing to sponsor her as a missionary, Bethune became an educator.

In 1904, Bethune opened a boarding school, Daytona Beach Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls. Eventually, the school became a college, merging with the all-male Cookman Institute to form Bethune-Cookman College in 1929. It issued its first degrees in 1943.

A champion of racial and gender equality, Bethune founded many organizations and led voter registration drives after women gained the vote in 1920, risking racist attacks. In 1924, she was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and in 1935 became founding president of the National Council of Negro Women.

Bethune also played a role in the transition of Black voters from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party during the Great Depression. A friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, in 1936 Bethune became the highest ranking African American woman in government when President Franklin Roosevelt named her director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration, where she remained until 1944.

In 1937 Bethune organized a conference on the Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth and fought to end discrimination and lynching. In 1940, she became vice president of the NAACP, a position she held for the rest of her life.

As a member of the advisory board that in 1942 created the Women's Army Corps, Bethune ensured it was racially integrated. Appointed by President Harry S. Truman, Bethune was the only woman of color at the founding conference of the United Nations in 1945.





Classifieds

To Place An Ad:
Call 704-376-0496

Classified Deadline: Monday at noon, prior to Thursday's edition

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAACP Charlotte-Mecklenburg Branch #5376 Executive Committee Election

On November 19, 2026, the election of officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee will be administered using our electronic voting platform. Voting will open from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. In order to vote in a Branch election, one must be a member in good standing of the Branch 30 days prior to the election.

Should a run-off election be necessary, that election shall occur within (10) days of the original election, via electronic voting platform for (at least 1 hour).

Harriett Mendinghall, Secretary

BIDS

Sealed, hand-delivered proposals will be received until 2:30 pm, on Tuesday, November 24, in the office of Mecklenburg County Asset & Facility Management Department, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 6000, Charlotte, NC 28208, for the **Bette Rae Thomas Recreation Center PV Panel Installation Project**, at which time and place Bids will be opened and read aloud. Single-prime, lump sum bids will be taken for the PV construction project as indicated in the bidding documents.

The project is located at 2921 Tuckaseegee Rd., Charlotte and a mandatory **pre-bid** meeting shall be held there **Nov 10, 2026 at 10am**. Prime General Contractors wishing to submit a bid for this project 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 shall be required for this project.

For Drawings with Specifications, please contact: Louis Gerics, Innovative Design, 850 W. Morgan St., Raleigh NC 27603, Phone: (919)832-6303, gerics@innovativedesign.net

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 (919)832-6303.

Sealed, hand-delivered proposals will be received until 2:00 pm EST, on Tuesday, Dec 8, 2026, in the office of Mecklenburg County Asset & Facility Management Department, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 6000, Charlotte, NC 28208, for the **Valerie C Woodard Building Deep Energy Retrofit Phase 2 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 3205 Freedom Dr. Charlotte, NC 28208 and a mandatory **pre-bid** meeting shall be held there **Nov 19, 2026 at 10am**. Meeting will begin at Suite 6000.

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 both: Julie Jackson and Cameron Sunkel, Gensler, 101 South Tryon St. Suite 2100, Charlotte, NC 28280, Phone: (704)377-2725, julie_jackson@gensler.com, and 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.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS/ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Cabarrus County Schools (CCS) is accepting sealed bids for Concord High School Parking Lot and Roadway Improvements on Tuesday, December 8, 2026, at 3:00 PM at the offices of Cabarrus County Schools at 4425 Old Airport Road, Concord, NC 28025.

The improvements will include patching existing pavement, paving, and thermoplastic markings for approximately 19,400 SY of parking lot and roadway. All Bids must be in accordance with the Bidding Documents on file with Cabarrus County Schools (Owner) and at the office of Alley, Williams, Carmen & King, Inc., 120 South Main Street, Kannapolis, NC 28081. Copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained from Alley, Williams, Carmen & King, Inc. at the address stipulated above at a charge of $50.00. No refunds will be made.

Optional Pre-Bid Conference Location, Date, and Time:
An optional pre-bid conference will be held at Concord High School (near the main office parking lot off of Miramar St NE), at 481 Burrage Rd NE, Concord, NC 28025 at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, November 10, 2026..

Bid Opening Location, Date and Time:
Sealed Bids will be received by Cabarrus County Schools (owner) at the office of Cabarrus County Schools at 4425 Old Airport Road, Concord, NC 28025 until 3:00 PM, local time, Tuesday, December 8, 2026, for Concord High School Parking Lot and Roadway Improvements. At said place and time, and promptly thereafter, all Bids that have been duly received will be publicly opened and read aloud.

BIDS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
The City of Hendersonville has the following out for bid: 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

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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
oBids 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

EMPLOYMENT

Bioinformatics Scientist, Tract Pharmaceuticals Inc., Charlotte, NC. Arch multi-omics data integ levergng proprietry stemECHO platfrm to discvr & valdte novel onclgy therapeutc trgts. M-F 8a – 5p ET & occ ot & w/e. Reqs mast in bioinform/comp biolgy/CS/Bio/gentcs/rel/equiv. Reqs 1yr bioinform exp incl 1 yr: Python/R prog exp for biol data anlys; anlyz hi-dim NGS data; engg & auto bioinform pipelns for data proc; wrk w/i Linux/Unix OS & HPC clustrs; deply stat modls/ML algrthms for data anlys; Git; 6 mo: integ/ mange multi-omics data sets; use pipeln tools. Reqs <5% U.S. trvl. Apply: res to shaki@tractbio.com and ref#120331.



MISCELLANEOUS









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The Charlotte Post

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026 PAGE 5B

« MUSIC REVIEW »

‘Pitcoin’ keeps the party going but is short on standouts

By Maria Sherman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At any given moment, it is hard to imagine anyone on earth having as much fun as Pitbull.

The Grammy Award-winning rapper, singer-songwriter and actor, so synonymous with his hometown of Miami that he’s referred to as Mr. 305, the city’s area code — as well as Mr. Worldwide for his global popularity — is known for his ceaseless, motivational enthusiasm. It imbues all of his biggest singles, like the 12-times platinum “Timber,” 11-times platinum “Give Me Everything,” “No Lo Trates,” and “Time of Our Lives,” to just scratch the surface. And it carries through to his public persona and live show.

“Pitcoin,” his latest album, continues that legacy. But it doesn’t evolve it. Across 24 tracks, “Pitcoin” is brimming with joy — songs to soundtrack a commute, a cafe, a quinceañera, a Friday night, a waiting room, a beach bar, anywhere really — as long as the party does not quit. But it lacks the huge singles Pitbull fans have come to know him for.

To put it another way: There is fire, but no “Fireball.”

It may be because “Pitcoin” overflows with collaborations spanning genre, generation and language. Here’s a sampling: KISS, Bon Jovi, Enrique Iglesias, Lil Jon, Jason Derulo, Akon, Wiz Khalifa, Ne-Yo, Afrojack, Gente de Zona, Jowell & Randy, Anthony Ramos, Zion and Lenier. Lil Jon appears on three tracks; Iglesias on two.

The KISS collaboration opens the record — the aptly titled “Reach for the Stars,” which lifts heavily from “Rock and Roll All Nite” but doesn’t improve upon it — and the song with Bon Jovi, “Now or Never,” directly samples the

Please see PITCOIN | 6B

‘Clayface’ a good revenge thriller-horror romance show

By Mark Kennedy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Someone rather bluntly popped up on X recently to ask Hollywood writer-producer James Gunn a pointed — and here sanitized — question: “Who asked for a ‘Clayface’ movie??”

Gunn, the guy behind the seriously weird “Guardians of the Galaxy” franchise, clapped back, asking who called for “Back to the Future,” “Casablanca” or “Weapons,” among others. “Clayface” may have no right belonging at that exalted level, but after seeing it, the score is Random Internet Hater, 0; Gunn, 1.

“Clayface” is a surprisingly good revenge thriller-romance, body-horror origin story for a lesser-known villain from the Batman comics. We may not have asked for it, but it’s a crowd-pleaser, mimicking its title character’s ability to be a little something for everyone.

Tom Rhys Harries stars as Matt Hagen, a pretty-boy rising actor whose long road from poverty finally nets him an Oscar nomination and industry respect. Cue celebratory drinks at a nightclub.

Except that night he gets involved with a mobster’s girlfriend and the mobster isn’t happy, using a switchblade to carve open our hero’s face. And without those cheekbones and perky nose, he’s finished. “My life is over,” he wails.

He soon thinks he’s found salvation in Dr. Caitlyn Corr, a rebel scientist on the cutting edge of nanotechnology, played with real soul by Naomi Ackie. He offers to be her human guinea pig and she injects him with her still-unproven serum of stem cells that begin to repair his scarred face.

The serum does work but only temporarily — leaving Hagen’s face droopier than after a visit to the orthodontist — and Corr has to find a way to stabilize the experiment.

Wait, did we detect some other chemicals drifting between the good doctor and her patient, maybe dopamine and serotonin? (One clue is the weird use of Chicago’s 1976 romantic hit “If You Leave Me Now.”) Yes, sparks are indeed flowing between them, which the American Medical Association frowns on. Plus, she’s got a boyfriend.

« ON THE MARQUEE »



CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY

Charlotte Symphony music director Kwamé Ryan leads the annual gala concert Joshua Bell plays Bruch on Nov. 7 at Knight Theater.

‘A Room of Her Own’ celebrates creative space

Also: Three Bone Theatre production of ‘Liberation’ at Arts Factory

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

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

Through Nov. 29

“A Room of Her Own,” Queen City Art Gallery, 4237 Raleigh St, Suite 5.



Faulkner

A month-long celebration of women, creativity, healing, storytelling, and the power of making space.

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:

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 youth workshop 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 Q&A session.

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

Nov. 6-7

Noel Freidline and Maria Howell with guest Morgan James, Middle C Jazz. The soul and R&B vocalist will perform as part of the jazz club’s seventh anniversary.

For tickets: middlecjazz.com.

Nov. 6-22

Three Bone Theatre’s production 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

Please see AUTHOR | 6B

« MOVIE REVIEW »

Portrait of the Black experience in Vietnam War

By Dwight Brown
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Soul Patrol
3.5 stars

It’s a soldier’s story.

Veterans in this poignant documentary revisit their past and contemplate the present as writer/director J.M. Harper archives their experiences. Home life, combat and the aftermath of the unpopular Vietnam War are up for discussion.

Grainy Super 8 footage shot in the 1960s, other archival footage, present-day interviews and compelling reenactments vividly share the details in this carefully assembled scrapbook.

Editors Byron Leon, Niles Howard and Gabriela Tessitore weave the material together seamlessly. The back-and-forth between times and places is fascinating and easy to follow. All elements are elevated by a musical soundtrack that embodies times gone by. Old soul music blares throughout, with feisty toe-tapping songs by James Brown that evoke the rebellious feel of the 1960s Black experience. The more calming, moody sounds of Jimmy Ruffin’s “What Becomes of the Brokenhearted” articulate their thoughts: “As I walk this land with broken dreams, I have visions of many things. But happiness is just an illusion, filled with sadness and confusion…I know I've got to find, some kind of peace of mind.”

The music becomes a spiritual guide, connecting the young soldiers to the lives and communities they left behind. Even overseas, it kept home within reach.

Back in the ‘60s, when they were young, these men dealt with racism and segregation in the United States. Martin Luther King’s assassination was a devastating blow to humanity and their sense of self. Then Robert F. Kennedy’s assassination compounded their despair. Despite the gains of the civil rights movement, equality remained elusive. The chaos was obvious; the solutions not so much.

One by one, and sometimes collectively, the survivors deliver testimony



TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The recollections of Black American soldiers during the Vietnam War powers “Soul Patrol.”

as compelling as anything heard in a formal inquiry. These are stories the government or the press should have sought out decades ago. In Vietnam, bigoted commanding officers and fighting the Viet Cong put them under pressure.

Fighting and killing brown-skinned people was a perplexing part of their job—like it or not. Then those who’d risked their lives and could come home on their own two feet, and not in a casket, returned to an indifferent and disrespectful America. That was the final insult. Anger, sadness and frustration followed. The boys became men; the men became elders, and the wisdom of their experiences became indispensable.

Audiences may not hear it explicitly, but the parallels between the treatment of Black soldiers then and now are alarming. These heroes’ achievements received little fanfare, as if they were invisible. Years later, the current controversy over the Department of Defense’s removal of historical content celebrating minority veterans raises troubling questions about how much America has learned. After so much progress, with Black service members reaching the highest ranks, their accomplishments and contributions deserve recognition, not erasure. Seeing and hearing what happened back then makes today's issues all the more apparent. It's another reason this enlightening documentary has such far-reaching significance.

The joy and camaraderie forged in barracks, bunkers and on battlefields break up the sobering tone of this historical war documentary. The members of the Vietnam War’s first special operations all-Black Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol unit found happiness in their friendships.

The brotherhood that began in their teens and 20s has endured into their 80s. As the veterans reflect on their PTSD, share anecdotes and reveal their struggles, the footage becomes therapeutic. It’s a cleansing experience, one that has a healing effect and will warm viewers’ hearts.

Harper’s thoughtful direction is evident in the way he brings the veterans together. He gives them room to reminisce, express themselves and reclaim the dignity they were once denied.

Author Walter Mosley at Verse & Vino fundraiser

Continued from page 5B

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.

· *Charlotte Symphony* annual gala concert: Joshua Bell Plays Bruch, Knight Theater, 8 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan leads Charlotte Symphony in the concert featuring internationally acclaimed violinist Joshua Bell in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, a cornerstone of the violin repertoire known for its melodies, orchestral writing, and virtuosity.

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

Special EFX featuring Chieli Minucci, Middle C. Jazz.

The acclaimed jazz fusion ensemble performs. For tickets: middlecjazz.com.

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 to J.S. Bach in a 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.



Jones

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

Nov. 19-21

The *Lotus Project* 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.

'Pitcoin' keeps party going but is short on standouts

Continued from page 5B

band's 2000 rock anthem, "It's My Life."

On a scale of 1 to 10, the nostalgic energy is set to 100. But so is much of Pitbull's discography, and unfortunately, the good time "Pitcoin," for all its charms, doesn't rise to the level of, say, 2015's "Dale." Those hoping to recapture that spirit would be wise to skip ahead to the arena-sized anthem "Me Paraste El Corazón" or to "Gringa Repartera." On the latter, Pitbull explores the Cuban genre reparto for the first time with some help from Gente de Zona and a sample of the classic "La Tuba" by Elvis Manuel.

Despite its bloated runtime, "Pitcoin" is straightforward in its aims. Here, like in all his work, Pitbull is dedicated to keeping his audience dancing.

Take it from Mr. Worldwide himself, who described his own anthems as "there for when you're feeling a certain way in life. It can help pick you up or it can take you to the next level," as he told The Associated Press last year. "When I'm making those records, that's what it's about. I make sure that the beats are something that I know people could dance to. I know that it's not complicated."

On "Pitcoin," as in the whole of his discography, that's clearly the point. But he has other albums, and songs, that deliver on the premise with more precision.

Two and a half stars out of five.



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