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OUR MISSION STATEMENT
The Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc. will publish positive news and information. Our mission is to deliver “good” and informative news to our readers focusing on health, education, housing, business and employment opportunities. We look for and publish results, not problems. We promote businesses, opportunities and events happening in the communities we serve. We are dedicated to providing our readers with valuable information they can use to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and our communities.

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The Santa Clauses’ Winter Wonderland Returns

The North Pole returns! Bucket Listers - the growing media experience brand behind the New York Bucket List and making every day an adventure - is proud to announce the return of its signature holiday experience, “The Santa Clauses” Winter Wonderland.

Starting November 22, 2023, The Rooftop at Pier 17 will transform into the ultimate Santa Clauses’ headquarters like the city has never seen. This holiday season, the experience is celebrating a brand new location, doubled in size with unmatched skyline views and expanded private dining capabilities, and topped off with the addition of Manhattan’s only rooftop skating rink. The fully immersive holiday activation is inspired by and celebrates season two of the Disney+ Original series “The Santa Clauses.”

Led by head elf Betty, the elves have been working tirelessly to create the perfect holiday adventure. Guests will arrive at the North Pole by stepping into Santa’s hallway, lined with candy cane pillars good enough to eat. Follow the holiday spirit, and you’ll discover Santa’s living room, complete with his plush armchair and the chance to cozy up in front of the Clauses’ oversized fireplace. Visitors can snap a holiday pic under the giant Christmas tree, add to the bustle of Santa’s Workshop, or opt to fill up their stockings at Mrs. Claus’ candy bar. Continue to explore and discover Santa’s famous sleigh, a not-to-be-missed seasonal slide, larger-than-life photo moments, weekend appearances by Santa Claus himself, plus the chance to glide alongside Manhattan’s skyline at its only rooftop skating rink.

The Gingerbread House, an indoor/outdoor bar, will offer guests the finest seasonal treats and cocktails or mocktails (hot chocolate, naughty-or-nice eggnog, holiday hot toddy, mulled wine, and more). Private and semi-private cabins (equipped with heating and TVs) will also be available for advanced reservations, with an additional food menu that includes s’mores. The experience will also offer a signature Santa’s brunch every Saturday and Sunday throughout December.

Follow along at the New York Bucket List for all the latest updates. Tickets are available starting on November 1 exclusively by visiting www.bucketlisters.com. Join the waitlist now and receive the first notification of the latest experience news and ticket availability.

Thousands of businesses and nonprofits are making energy-efficient upgrades to save. Will you join them?

Con Edison’s Small-Medium Business program helped Foodtown of Prospect Heights upgrade lighting and refrigeration equipment by covering $97,000 of the total $139,000 cost - saving them $69,000 on the next year’s electricity bill!

Explore your incentive options at: coned.com/smallbusiness
HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

PONDER THIS! The Amazing Angelou on the Quarter

By Hazel Rosetta Smith

While most seniors of New York City are using the discounted MTA public transportation card with the large R on its face, I drop 5 quarters and 2 dimes in the bus fare box.

My latest roll of quarters contained a prize as exciting as finding a gift in a cereal box. One of the shiny quarters I was about to dump into my change purse had the inscription, Maya Angelou.

Did you know? Maya Angelou is the first in the American Women Quarters Program. The American Women Quarters Program is a four-year program that celebrates the accomplishments and contributions made by women to the development and history of our country. The women honored are from ethnically, racially, and geographically diverse backgrounds.

Beginning in 2022, and continuing through 2025, the U.S. Mint will issue up to five new designs each year. One side of the quarter will maintain the image of George Washington and the other side will contain the honored woman.

My initial observation of the coin did not show any personal Angelou resemblance to what I remembered. However, the design on the coin is dedicated to how Maya rose to international prominence as an author after the publication of her groundbreaking autobiography “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” written in 1970.

The engraving is depicted with her arms uplifted. Behind her are a bird in flight and a rising sun, images inspired by her poetry and symbolism of the way she lived.

Discovering this 2022 quarter brought to mind the remarkable career of Angelou that encompassed dance, theater, journalism, and social activism. Her published works of verse, non-fiction, and fiction include more than 30 bestselling titles.

At the request of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Maya served as the northern coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. She wrote and read “On the Pulse of Morning” at the 1992 inauguration of President Clinton, marking the first time an African American woman presented a poem at a presidential inauguration.

Angelou received more than 30 honorary degrees and was inducted into the Wake Forest University Hall of Fame for Writers. In 2010, President Obama awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri on April 4, 1928. By the age of her passing at 86, she had spent a lifetime writing about racial prejudices she experienced firsthand.

She stood tall at six feet with stature and grace. “Life is not just to survive,” she once said, “but to thrive, and to thrive with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

I cherish this unexpected piece of silver that found its way into my stash. Coins can be valuable collectibles, along with all U.S. currency. What do you have in your wallet?

[Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director for Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries and HRS Speaks! Contact: misshazel@twc.com and online at www.hazelrosettasmith.com]
Councilwoman Selvena N. Brooks-Powers Presents A Veteran’s Day Luncheon With The Bartlett Ensemble

Recently, 2023 Queens Councilwoman (Dist.31) Selvena N. Brooks-Powers celebrated United States Veterans by remembering and honoring veterans for their service and sacrifice with a special Veteran’s Day Luncheon.

This event at the VFW Post 1790 provided an elaborate lunch with tasty desserts and beverages and had a live, diverse musical component featuring the Bartlett Ensemble. This musical contribution was made possible by an in-kind donation from the Bartlett Foundation Inc., a 501(c)(3) public charity organization.

Several other elected officials supported this luncheon with their presence, including Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, State Senators James Sanders Jr. and Leroy Comrie, and Assembly Member Khaileel Anderson. Not present but represented were Queens DA Melinda Katz and Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman.

This event started with the Presentation of Colors, the National Anthem, welcoming remarks by Councilwoman Brooks-Powers, and remarks from all elected officials present.

Keynote Speaker James Hendon, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Veterans’ Services, gave a very insightful and thought-provoking message concerning our veterans, which helped bring new awareness to many in attendance.

The afternoon’s highlight was the presentation of the honorees and awards and citations. Pastor David Cockfield offered a heartfelt Benediction. The attendees left well satisfied with a swag bag in hand. Kudos to event coordinator Lezah Morgan.

QUEENS UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 2 Winter Wonder at Botanical Gardens

Nov 18 Mobile Pantry Food Distribution at Queens Public Library, Rochdale. Distribution of fresh produce, protein and shelf-stable items. Remember to bring your own shopping carts and recyclable bags! Being held at Rochdale Village, 169-09 137th Avenue. For more info call 718-723-4440.

Nov 24 5:30-9:30pm Astra Lumina at Queens Botanical Garden One-mile-long enchanted night walk through the Garden that guides visitors on a journey to discover the wonder of visiting stars. Through the magic of projections, lighting, and music, astral energy transforms the Garden into a celestial pathway, connecting visitors to the stars and the vast world around them.

Nov 27 7:00pm A Conversation with Millie Jackson at Black Spectrum Theater

The Black Spectrum Theater is located at 177 St & Baisley Blvd. A conversation with Millie Jackson (Live & Uncensored!) discussing highlights from her long 60 year career. Tickets $45. For more information call 718-723-1800 or go to www.blackspectrum.net.

Dec 2 12:00pm-5:00pm Winter Wonder at the Garden

Celebrate the best of December with live musical performances, a tree and menorah lighting, holiday crafts, selfies with Santa, and sales at the QBG Shop and outdoor Holiday Market. Enjoy a selection of beverages at the Holiday Bar for purchase. Included in admission. Free for members.

Dec 27-Dec 30 Wed 11am Thur, Fri, Sat 2pm & 7pm Twas the Night Before Kwanzaa (A Comedy) at Black Spectrum Theater

A holiday comedy that finds Santa Claus diverted to Africa to learn about Kwanzaa. The Black Spectrum Theater is located at 177 St & Baisley Blvd. A conversation with Millie Jackson (Live & Uncensored!) discussing highlights from her long 60 year career. Tickets $45. For more information call 718-723-1800 or go to www.blackspectrum.net.

Dec 27-29 Kwanzaa at Black Spectrum

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, State Senators James Sanders Jr. and Leroy Comrie, and Assembly Member Khaileel Anderson. Not present but represented were Queens DA Melinda Katz and Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman.

Dec 21 Rochdale Village

Dec 16 Rochdale
OP-ED: The PACT Act Fulfills Our Obligation to Veterans

By Assistant Democratic Leader James E. Clyburn

The United States has long been described as a nation of ideas. The founding fathers wrote, “with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence...mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

This closing line of the Declaration of Independence underscored that the founders of this great country were willing to put their lives on the line to protect the God-given freedoms we continue to hold dear. Today, our brave servicemembers carry on that torch, entering dangerous circumstances to secure our unalienable rights.

In return, we have a solemn responsibility to prepare those we send into harm’s way and care for them and their families when they return home. This is a promise we have not always kept. And the impacts have often been devastating. But Democrats, under the leadership of President Joe Biden, are taking giant steps to right these wrongs and fulfill this sacred obligation.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military engaged in an aggressive chemical warfare program, codenamed Operation Ranch Hand, to eliminate forest cover and destroy crops, attempting to gain military advantage over North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. More than 20 million gallons of various herbicides doused roads, rivers, rice paddies, and farmland across Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, causing massive environmental devastation. Several herbicides were manufactured, commonly referred to as Agent Pink, Agent Green, Agent Purple, Agent White, Agent Blue, and the most widely used, Agent Orange.

When American troops began returning home after the war, many of them and their families began reporting strange symptoms and afflictions, from painful rashes to miscarriages, birth defects, cancers, and varying diseases.

In 1988, Operation Ranch Hand scientist and Air Force researcher Dr. James Clary wrote to Senator Tom Daschle that “when we initiated the herbicide program in the 1960s, we were aware of the potential for damage due to dioxin contamination in the herbicide. However, none of us were overly concerned because the material was to be used on the enemy. We never considered a scenario in which our personnel would become contaminated with the herbicide.”

Dioxin, the dangerous byproduct produced by herbicides, was found in all herbicides used in Vietnam. It is also the byproduct of trash incineration or burn pits. Doctors raised concerns about the impacts of burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan as early as 2004 but were publicly ignored by the U.S. government and military. The Department of Defense has since closed out most burn pits and plans to close out those that remain, but they have already caused significant harm to our veterans.

Last year, under the leadership of President Biden, Congress finally acted to address these harms. August 10, 2023, marks one year since the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act was signed into law — the largest expansion of veterans’ benefits in decades.

We must continue to honor our veterans by providing them with the care and support they need to live safe, healthy lives after they return home. One year after President Biden signed it into law, it is clear the PACT Act is delivering on this sacred commitment.

(Photo courtesy of James Clyburn)
Home Buying in Harlem
Be Prepared to Buy Now

Can anyone afford to buy a home in Harlem? The answer is not one that most prospective home buyers are looking forward to hearing. But the escalating home values and the limited home buying opportunities for first-time home buyers are the realities that most of us are now facing.

As a prospective home buyer, you must make a very tough decision regarding your home buying goal. Are you going to quit and forgo your dream, or will you use all your available resources to accomplish this goal? If you are willing to go forward with the process, you are going to have to establish an extremely aggressive spending plan. This is an excellent time to start the plan as we approach the holiday season.

It would help if you immediately started to eliminate all excessive and wasteful spending. It becomes imperative that you save as much as you possibly can towards the purchase of your home. Regardless of your income, you are now faced with needing more money. That money is going to have to come from your assets. If necessary, consider using a portion of your retirement account.

Go to several lenders to determine who can offer you the best deal. See who has a first-time home buyer product that will provide financial assistance to offset some of your closing costs. You will find most of them will offer very competitive interest rates. But the difference will be in their first-time mortgage products and the closing costs assistance. Also, remember not every lender will offer every type of mortgage product. Some will not offer FHA, while others will not offer SONYMA. There are companies that will not write new mortgages on construction or HDFC cooperative units.

Another possible option to consider is receiving a gift from a family member or friend. I recently counseled a young couple planning on becoming first-time homeowners. They informed me that the wife’s father was giving them a gift of $500,000 towards the purchase of their home! Now, most of us do not have wealthy, generous family members like that, but if you could get 10-20 family members to give you $1000, that might be attainable. Every little bit will help.

Plan to combine that with other grant programs you might be eligible to use during this process. Find out which lenders are willing to write mortgages on Housing Development Fund Cooperative units (HDFC). These limited equity units are still the best bargain in Harlem.

Low- to moderate-income prospective first-time home buyers must fully comprehend the challenges they are facing in their quest for homeownership. No one said this process would be easy, but if you are successful, homeownership will be well worth the effort.

If you are interested in attending a HCCI workshop or have questions regarding the home buying process, contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at (212) 281 4887 ext. 231 or email at cbutler@hcci.org.

MTA Procurement

The MTA encourages vendors who have not done business with us to register for our bidders list using MY MTA Portal for vendors at www.mymta.info. Registered vendors can search for procurement opportunities across all MTA agencies and receive invitations to bid or propose on the types of goods and services they can provide. Certified minority and women-owned businesses (M/WBE), service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOB), and disadvantaged businesses (DBE), are strongly encouraged to compete for MTA opportunities. Visit our website at https://new.mta.info/doing-business-with-us for detailed information and guidelines.
Nov 20 7:30pm
In Conversation: Cold Chillin' Records Showcase at the Apollo Theater
Calling all old school hip-hop heads! Join us for a conversation with iconic hip-hop label Cold Chillin’ Records Tyrone “Fly Ty” Williams, Ralph McDaniels of Video Music Box and Ant Marshall (Lyricist Lounge) with special appearances by Big Daddy Kane, Roxanne Shante, Marley Marl and more, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the historic Cold Chillin’ Juice Crew All-Stars Apollo Theater Showcase. Tickets $15

Dec 1-3
25TH Annual Crafts at the Cathedral for the Holiday Shopping Season
Four years since it was last held in the soaring gothic nave of the world’s largest cathedral, the fine juried craft show Crafts at the Cathedral returns this holiday season on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 1 through December 3, 2023, at The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, located at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street), Manhattan.

Dec 2 8:00p
Dezron Douglas Quartet at Miller Theater at Columbia University School of the Arts.
Miller is located at 2960 Broadway at 116th Street. Tickets start $25. Students with valid ID $10

December 2
Bebe Winans
The Apollo’s Historic Theater. Tickets start at $40. Six-time Grammy winner BeBe Winans returns to The Apollo for a historic live album recording concert backed by Donald Lawrence & Company. Among the artists Winans has written and produced for are Whitney Houston, Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, David Foster, Gladys Knight, Anita Baker, Bobby Brown, and The Clark Sisters - as well his younger sisters Angie and Debbie Winans.
Tickets are on sale now at www.apollotheater.org/holidays-at-the-apollo-2023/

December 4, 7:30pm
Shoshana Bean and Friends
The Apollo’s Historic Theater.
Tickets start at $54.95 Tony and Grammy Award-nominee Shoshana Bean returns to The Apollo with her legendary holiday concert spectacular. This annual one-night-only event has become a New York holiday tradition and features very special guests from stage and screen. Music Direction by David Cook. Produced by Shane Scheel for For The Record Live. Tickets are on sale now at www.apollotheater.org/holidays-at-the-apollo-2023/

December 9, 1:00pm
Winter Wonderland
The Apollo’s Marquee . FREE & open to the public
Under the twinkling lights of our famous marquee, The Apollo invites audiences to bring the whole family for a wide array of holiday-themed activities including picture taking with Santa Claus and amazing performances. This event is hosted by The Apollo Tour Director and Ambassador, Billy Mitchell.
Tickets are on sale now at www.apollotheater.org/holidays-at-the-apollo-2023/

December 9, 7:30pm
Amateur Night Holiday Special
The Apollo’s Historic Theater. Tickets start at $30. The Apollo Amateur Night Holiday Special showcases talented alumni of the show’s “Stars of Tomorrow” segment, spotlighting the young performers hoping to follow in the footsteps of Apollo Legends like Ella Fitzgerald and H.E.R., whose careers were launched on the stage of The Apollo. Tickets are on sale now at www.apollotheater.org/holidays-at-the-apollo-2023/

December 3, 1:00pm
Double Dutch Holiday Classic
The Apollo’s Historic Theater. Tickets start at $40. The National Double Dutch League returns to The Apollo for the annual Double Dutch Holiday Classic where world-class Double Dutch teams of all ages from around the world compete for the championship title of “Best of Show. Tickets are on sale now at www.apollotheater.org/holidays-at-the-apollo-2023/
Harlem EatUp! Luminary Awards Dinner
Honors Tamron Hall and D-Nice

Harlem EatUp! co-founders Marcus Samuelsson, the award-winning chef and restaurateur, and Herb Karlitz, an veteran event marketer and international food festival producer, presented the sixth annual Luminary Awards earlier this month.

Honorees included two-time Emmy Award-winning TV host, executive producer, and author Tamron Hall and DJ and photographer D-Nice, of Club Quarantine fame. The Harlem EatUp! Luminary Awards Dinner was co-presented by Citi and Mastercard, and took place at the Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem.

The Luminary Awards Dinner kicks off a series of events heralding the return of the acclaimed Harlem EatUp! festival in spring 2024. “We are excited to reignite the Harlem EatUp! festival this fall and continuing into 2024. The community met a lot of challenges over these past few years. While things still aren’t easy, we are eager to share Harlem’s renowned hospitality, incredible culture and amazing eats!” said Samuelsson. “After a 3-year hiatus, we’re thrilled to be planning the relaunch of HEU in person, starting with three high-profile Harlem dinners in November, then gearing up for May 2024 when we’re back to celebrate this iconic neighborhood, its residents, food, art, and music,” said co-founder Karlitz.

The Harlem EatUp! Luminary Awards Dinner was created to spotlight local visionaries and leaders and has been a signature Harlem EatUp! event since the festival’s launch in 2015. Past honorees include The Honorable David Dinkins, Dapper Dan, Thelma Golden, Jonelle Procope, Bevy Smith, Lana Turner, and Madame C.J. Walker (posthumously.)

This year’s awards dinner was hosted at Harlem’s historic Alhambra Ballroom. This unique neo-classically designed venue was built originally as a vaudeville theater in 1905 and played an important role in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s and in the jazz scene of the 1930s and 1940s, hosting performances by Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and others.

Supporting sponsors include Foster GrantTM and such wine and spirits sponsors as Aslina Wines, B. Stuyvesant Champagne, and Ten To One Rum.

Chef Marcus and Chef Ed Brumfield of Marcus Samuelsson Group will partner with executive Chef Daniel Philogene of the Alhambra Ballroom to create a festive meal celebrating African and African American cuisines featuring Harlem culinary favorites.

Marcus Samuelsson is the renowned chef behind many restaurants worldwide, including Red Rooster in Harlem (NYC) and Overtown (Miami); Hav & Mar in Chelsea (NYC); several MARCUS locations, including Montreal, the Bahamas, Newark, and Atlanta; and his newest concept, Metropolis at the Perelman Performing Arts Center (World Trade Center, NYC), which opened in October.

Samuelsson was the youngest person to ever receive a three-star review from The New York Times and has won eight James Beard Foundation Awards. He is a longstanding judge on the hit Food Network show Chopped, head judge of Top Chef Family Style, and Iron Chef on Netflix’s rebooted Iron Chef: Quest for an Iron Legend. Samuelsson is the author of multiple books, including The New York Times bestselling memoir Yes, Chef and The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food.

Harlem EatUp! is the nation’s premier African American-focused food festival showcasing the diversity and vibrancy of Harlem’s hospitality mecca as well as its world-famous arts and culture. The festival brings together Harlem’s dynamic restaurateurs, chefs, artists, and local entrepreneurs to celebrate the neighborhood’s food, art, music, and culture.

Photos by Seitu Oronde
ALL ARE INVITED TO ENJOY AN
INTERNATIONAL TASTE OF HARLEM
THRU SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH

To find out more or visit
www.greaterharlechamber.com
@international.taste.of.harlem

in partnership with
30 Establishments Participate In The International Taste of Harlem

By Jared McCallister

The International Taste of Harlem (ITOH) — a celebration of generations of culinary delights and an economic boost for uptown restaurants and bakeries — is currently underway, with 30 establishments participating in the initiative, presented by The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (GHCC). The ITOH runs through November 26, 2023.

With cuisine from the Southern United States, Africa, Central America, Europe, and Asia, restaurant-goers and bakery customers are regularly offered a world of choices when dining in Harlem. During the month-long ITOH, extra enticements such as raffles and special discounted menu items are offered by the participating establishments. Along with the dining specials - some establishments regularly provide live music and other entertainment. In addition to aiding Harlem’s appetites, the neighborhood’s economy also benefits.

The wide range of culinary options encompasses Harlem’s past and present role as a home for immigrants:

- **Rugelach** — the tasty traditional Jewish pastry — survives long after the Jewish population moved from Harlem in the 1920s. The source is baker Alvin Lee Smalls, owner of Lee Lee’s Baked Goods on W. 118th Street. It’s his specialty!
- **Fried chicken and waffles** were made famous and became a soul food staple during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1930s, when Wells Supper Club and other Harlem establishments added the dish to their menus.
- **East Harlem** was called Italian Harlem when Pasty’s Pizzeria was founded in 1933. The restaurant — in East Harlem at 2287 1st Ave. (between E. 117th Street and E. 118th Street) — is still open today, selling traditional “authentic, Sicilian coal oven pizza.”
- **New cuisine options** are still being added to Harlem’s already diverse menu options. Senegal-born Chef Elhadj Cisse’s Ponty Bistro (at 2375 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd, at W. 139th Street,) serves French and West African cuisine.
- **Matthew Trebek’s Oso** restaurant (at 1618 Amsterdam Ave., between W. 139th and W. 140th Streets) is known for its “Mexican Street Food,” including tasty tacos, gorditas, tamales — and tequila, of course.

“Try Mexican or try African. We want to encourage that. Harlemites need to know what’s in their neighborhood,” said Lloyd Williams, the President and CEO of the GHCC. Williams noted the growing number of global food choices available in the area. But he also stressed the economic advantages of Harlemites dining in Harlem and buying at neighborhood businesses. “Residents also need to leave some of their disposable income in our neighborhood to support businesses and create jobs. The retention of money within a community is very important. Support your own community,” he said.

Williams also noted that the ITOH initiative provides much-needed assistance for all the Harlem businesses that were negatively affected by the years of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Many restaurants and bakeries suffered during the health crisis, and the ITOH will provide a necessary focus on the establishments, along with needed economic assistance.

For more information on the International Taste of Harlem, visit greaterharlemchamber.com, contact Baron Carr of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce at (212) 862-7200, and visit the Chamber’s social media pages.
Veteran Day Parade

In photos below Seitu focused on African American, Asians and native Americans who have served in our armed forces.

Photos by Seitu Oronde
Gingerbread NYC’s Great Borough Bake-Off Kicks Off

Back by popular demand, the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) proudly presents Gingerbread NYC: The Great Borough Bake-Off – MCNY’s second annual gingerbread competition and celebration of communities and neighborhoods in each of the five boroughs. On view to the public starting Friday, November 10, 2023, through Monday, January 15, 2024, the Gingerbread NYC installation at the Museum gives New Yorkers and tourists a delicious opportunity to celebrate the city.

MCNY invited professional and independent bakers from across the city to create a gingerbread display representing their respective neighborhoods, inspired by the theme “Iconic New York.” Submissions represent all five boroughs, and a cohort of prominent New York City-based bakers, curators, and restaurant owners judged the final designs. Prizes will be awarded in a range of categories including “Best in Borough,” “Grandest,” and “Most Iconic.” There will also be an opportunity for visitors to scan a QR code to vote for their favorites.

“We are savoring MCNY’s centennial year and celebrating the holidays with our second annual Gingerbread NYC installation,” says Stephanie Wilchfort, Ronay Menschel Director and President of the Museum of the City of New York. “Last year’s installation was a joy to behold (not to mention to smell). Now, we again have the sweet opportunity to highlight the special ingredient that makes New York, New York, creative people -- professionals and amateurs alike -- who hail from around the city.”

Participants in Gingerbread NYC 2023 include the following:

**BRONX**
- Camaxti Gallegos – Bronx Zoo
- Egidio Pastry Shop – Yankee Stadium
- A Cake Baked In Brooklyn – Brooklyn Icons
- Kathryn Irizarry & Kayla Wong – Brooklyn Icons
- Ida Kreutzer – Water Street
- L’Appartment 4F – Brooklyn Bridge
- Patty Pops – Hip-Hop
- Valerie Carrington – Yankee Stadium

**BROOKLYN**
- A Cake Baked In Brooklyn – Brooklyn Icons
- Kathryn Irizarry & Kayla Wong – Brooklyn Icons
- Ida Kreutzer – Water Street
- L’Appartment 4F – Brooklyn Bridge
- Holly Longworth – Circo’s Pastry Shop
- Leonard Marino – Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- SottoVoce & Something Sugared – Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch (Grand Army Plaza)
- Debbie Wee – Brooklyn Museum

**MANHATTAN**
- César Aldrete – The Met Cloisters
- Cray Cray for Cakes LLC – Jefferson Market Library and Garden
- Lorenzo Delgado – Rockefeller Center
- Loretta Bricchi Lee – American Museum of Natural History
- Ma Smith’s Dessert Café – The Apollo Theater
- Sonia Dębek – New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center

**QUEENS**
- Karen Chin – New York Hall of Science
- Filiz Cihan Cemberci – Engine 293 Firehouse
- Sherry Kozlowski – Louis Armstrong House Museum
- Nishat Shahabuddin - 74th Street, Jackson Heights

**HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS**
5 Tips for Picking a Health Plan This Open Enrollment Period

(StatePoint)

For many Americans, it’s time to pick a health plan for the coming year, or revisit current coverage to ensure it’s still a good fit.

Taking place between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15, with some flexibility for enrollment until the end of January, Open Enrollment is the only time of year (besides qualifying life events) when people can update or choose a new health plan. While millions of Americans are offered health coverage through their employer, there is a massive (and growing) segment of the workforce who work for themselves — gig workers, freelancers, contractors, consultants and more — gig workers, the workforce who work for themselves. While millions of Americans are offered health coverage through their employer, there is a massive (and growing) segment of the workforce who work for themselves — gig workers, freelancers, contractors, consultants and more — and therefore need to shop for health plans themselves.

Independent workers deserve the same financial security as full-time employees, and the right health insurance is a key component of that.

To help you and your family find affordable, high-value coverage this Open Enrollment Period, digital health company Stride Health offers the following tips:

1. Consider health needs. Assess your family’s health needs for the upcoming year. If you only use your benefits for preventative care and the seldom urgent care visit, then you might be able to get away with a high deductible plan.

If you see specialists regularly, then you may want to consider paying a higher premium to save on out-of-pocket expenses. Likewise, if anyone in your family takes prescription medications regularly, you’ll want to factor in drug coverage on any plans you’re considering. Shop with providers that make it easy to check whether your doctors and medications are covered by the plan before you enroll.

2. Identify your budget. Review your monthly net income to determine how much you can budget for your health plan, keeping in mind that most health plans don’t cover adult dental and vision. The good news is that coverage is likely more affordable than you realize. In fact, perceived affordability is the number one barrier in accessing health coverage. In a Stride Health survey, 80% of gig workers who don’t have health coverage said that they think health insurance costs more than $100 per family member. But in reality, 72% of gig workers who have insurance say they spend less than $100 per family member on coverage.

3. Understand the plan. You want to feel confident about the plan you choose. Educate yourself on its costs and structure, including its monthly premium, theeductible, the annual out-of-pocket maximum, co-pays, and such details as whether a referral is needed to see a specialist. Opt for a Qualified Health Plan that covers preventive care, basic primary care and has no maximum out of pocket on emergency care. Avoid short-term medical plans or products like cancer or accident insurance, which have limited scopes of coverage.

4. Lower your premium. You may be eligible for a lower premium through a subsidy. Also known as an advanced premium tax credit, this refundable tax credit offered by the government helps eligible individuals and families with moderate to low income afford health insurance. Thanks to these credits, 45% of insured gig workers report paying $0 on premiums. Another 27% report paying between $1 and $100 per family member for health insurance. Cost Sharing Reductions, another form of financial assistance that works on Silver plans, could save you thousands in medical costs.

5. Shop around. Picking the right plan can be complicated and confusing. But there are companies out there to help. Stride brings all costs front and center for you so there are no surprises when you go to the doctors or fill a prescription. You can also get trusted tips and advice from Stride Health’s blog and website.

It’s important to remember that health care needs and plan details can change. Spending a little time each Open Enrollment to pick the right plan for you and your family can save you money and ensure you get the care you need at an affordable price.

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Urbanology: The Economic Benefits of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

T he tourism and hospitality industry has been used as an economic development tool worldwide. Many countries, cities, and towns have used tourism and hospitality as a tool to create employment, career, and business opportunities. In America, many areas rely on tourism as their location’s leading economic development engine.

I first learned about the benefits of tourism and hospitality from the Honorable Percy E. Sutton. Mr. Sutton was a visionary who believed that New York City and New York State could use the tourism and hospitality industry to address many of the city’s and state’s financial challenges at that time.

In 1975, New York City ran out of money and faced bankruptcy. The infamous response from President Gerald Ford when New York political leaders asked for federal financial support was, “New York can drop dead.”

Ford never said those exact words, but he did refuse to give federal support to bail out New York City in a speech that sparked an infamous front-page Daily News story. Mr. Sutton then ran for mayor that year, announcing his candidacy in a speech focusing on building the tourism and hospitality industry as an economic development option that could help the city’s financial issues.

Mr. Sutton was the architect of two major New York City tourism-related projects that are still going strong: the five-borough New York City marathon that started in 1976 and Harlem Day, which kicked off in 1974. The New York Marathon is the largest annual tourism and hospitality event in New York.

Harlem Day is always the third Sunday in August. HARLEM WEEK will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024. The first HARLEM DAY theme was “The Beginning of the Second Harlem Renaissance.” Most of the hotels in Manhattan were sold out during marathon week. The New Harlem Renaissance Marriott Hotel on 125th Street was also sold out.

The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce launched a 28-day International Taste of Harlem program (from October 30-November 26 during Harlem’s marathon week celebration on November 1, 2023. More than 27 Harlem restaurants and three bakeries are participating. The Harlem Tourism Board (HTB) is one of the community partners for this project. HTB is focused on being the primary promoter of the ever-growing Harlem Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

As Harlem’s tourism and hospitality industry grows, employment, career, and tourism-related business opportunities will also increase.

The 125th Street BID will have the annual Holiday Lights on Tuesday, November 14 {https://www.harlemlightitup.com}, including a parade of lights and the beginning of the holiday lighting on the 125th Street corridor. This event will attract tourists and much-needed business to begin the holiday shopping season.

The HTB website, www.goharlem.org, is being structured to be the one-stop shop where you can learn about programs, activities, and events that are part of the Harlem Tourism and Hospitality Industry. For more information on HTB, send an email to harlemtourismboard@gmail.com.

Answers to Puzzle on page 17

HERBS ARE NATURE’S MEDICINE

Kitchen Herbology: ROSEMARY

By Zakiyyah

People often ask me whether using fresh or dried herbs is better. There are many times when a few fresh leaves added to a dish clearly enhance the flavor, but dried herbs are actually stronger than fresh, simply because when the water is removed, it concentrates the herbs’ constituents and flavor.

Drying also enhances and strengthens the healing values of the herbs. The dried, concentrated version of rosemary provides a greater nutritional intensity of all its constituents: 93 calories, 12 grams of fiber, and 45% of the daily value in iron, 35% of calcium, 29% of vitamin C, and 18% of the vitamin A needed each day. A simple cup of rosemary tea is good for inflammation of the joints, headaches, indigestion, and colds.

One of my favorite tips to share is to melt down some butter, add rosemary (with other of your favorite culinary herbs), and quickly sauté; then pour into ice cube trays to freeze. Add a cube or two to your favorite omelet, soup, or meat dish. Or melt and brush on top of (or mix in) freshly baked bread or biscuits.

For the full recipe, see my latest Blog post.

. . . MAKE NATURE’S MEDICINE YOUR OWN

This information is to help balance your body’s natural healing energies, and is not intended as a diagnosis, treatment, or cure. Check with your doctor before changing your health regimen. Email: theherbalist1750@gmail.com; phone: 347-407-4312; ENERGETIC( NO-(PAIN) PRANIC FACE LIFT: https://tinyurl.com/ysyalp0y; blog: www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com. View my upcoming book: booklaunch.io/Zakiyyah/theenergeticsofherbs.
THEME: CATS & DOGS

ACROSS
1. Baby powder
5. Hundredweight, acr.
8. Same as gauge
12. S squared, e.g.
13. Actor Wyle
14. Undergraduate’s field of study
15. J. Edgar Hoover’s man
16. Norse capital
17. Extremely angry
18. *Tweety chaser
20. Bob Ross’ do
21. Not quite right
22. Hawaiian dish
23. Directed
26. Brought down
30. Deed
31. Rifle’s backward move
34. Denim innovator
35. Like salad greens
37. Greek R
38. Read-only memory device
39. Western Samoan money
40. Oklahoma athlete
42. Tiny guitar
43. Relating to dreams
45. Like certain Debbie?
47. U.S. Marine Corps gift recipient
48. Gin mixer
50. Title for Turkish leader
52. *1929 Best Actor Oscar nominee
53. Like certain Debbie?
56. Lallygags
57. Medley
58. Pineapple producer
59. Suggestions
60. *Lassie’s mark in Hollywood sidewalk
61. Arabian bigwig
62. Banana leftover
63. New York time
64. “Wanted!” state

DOWN
1. Labels with a name, on Facebook
2. Major or general employer
3. Same as #36 Down, archaically speaking
4. Painter’s surface
5. Receipt listings
6. *Corgi’s homeland
7. Marvel Comics hammer wielder
8. *Jon Arbuckle, Odie and ___
9. A bit cracked
10. Kind of move, 2 words
11. Bard’s before
13. End of rugby match
14. *Cat sound
15. J. Edgar Hoover’s man
16. Norse capital
17. Extremely angry
18. *Tweety chaser
20. Bob Ross’ do
21. Not quite right
22. Hawaiian dish
23. Directed
26. Brought down
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61. Arabian bigwig
62. Banana leftover
63. New York time
64. “Wanted!” state
Your skin was not even broken. No cuts, no scratches, no stitches needed. There was no blood and no bruise, either, not even the least bit of soreness. And yet, you’re wounded, raw, wincing. You’re absolutely not okay right now, and in the new book “The Invisible Ache” by Courtney B. Vance & Dr. Robin L. Smith, with Charisse Jones, it’s from a hurt you cannot see.

The phone call came early in the morning in the middle of the week. Courtney Vance’s father had taken his own life, leaving his adult children and a wife who was all but paralyzed with grief. Vance “felt like a boy suddenly dealing with big man stuff,” but he helped his mother, who, after the funeral, insisted that Vance and his sister seek therapy.

Vance had known that his father was in emotional pain for a long time, for a variety of reasons – and he came to understand that he was, too. It was almost like a legacy, one that he says many Black men suffer.

Says Vance’s co-author, “Society’s mirror doesn’t reflect how varied Black men really are...” Black boys are not supposed to cry or be vulnerable, although Smith says, “To be vulnerable is to be strong.” Black men are taught to deal with their problems alone, in silence, but Smith says that talking through trauma allows room for reclaiming power.

Seek support, she says, and remember that “life isn’t virtual,” so draw boundaries and step back from social media sometimes. Don’t be afraid “to talk to young men [and] young women about the sanctity of their bodies.” Find your sense of gratitude and remember that church isn’t the only place to pray.

Have you hit your discomfort level yet? If not, well, just wait. Authors Courtney B. Vance and Dr. Robin L. Smith will take you there soon enough – and in “The Invisible Ache,” they’ll bring you back whole.

Part autobiography, part advice, this book is like getting poked and prodded until a deep self-inspection is performed – and then being asked to look again. It’s very raw, like removing the bandages the day after cutting off a piece of yourself, but it’s oddly cathartic. Vance tells his tale and that of his father in a calm way that makes readers want to keep going despite how much it hurts. Smith then takes over and soothes the pain with leading statements that feel like having your hand held. It’s a nice mix and very helpful.

“The Invisible Ache” by Courtney B. Vance & Dr. Robin L. Smith with Charisse Jones  
c.2023, Balance $30.00  
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