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"GOOD NEWS YOU CAN USE"

The Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc. Connecting Harlem, Queens, Brooklyn and The Bronx

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BROOKLYN NEWS

"Good News You Can Use"

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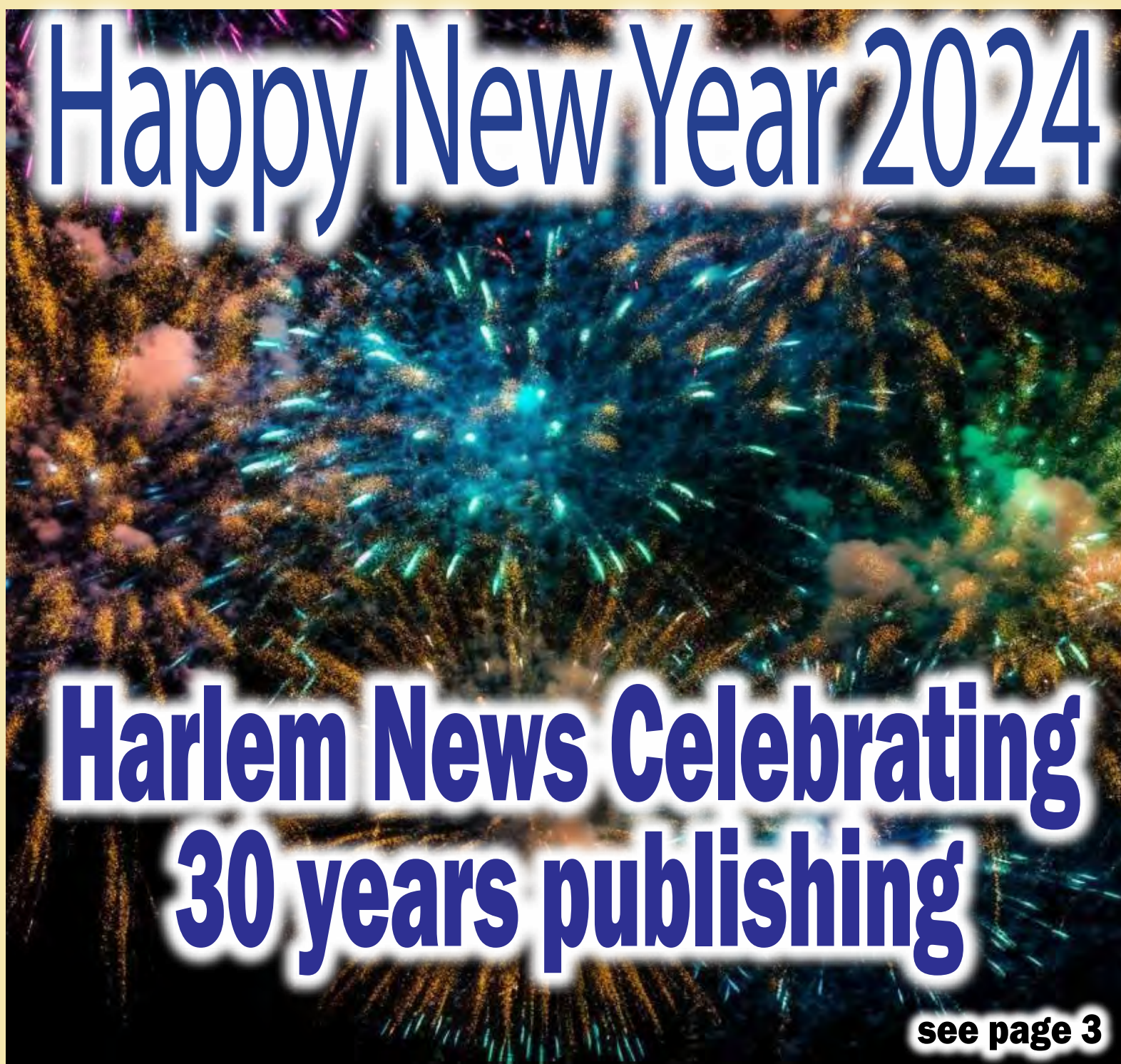
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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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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Editor	Cynthia Horner
Social Media Mgr	Steven Bennett
Layout Mgr	Steven Bennett
Proofreader	Hazel Rosetta Smith
Publisher Assistant	Steven Bennett
Borough Writer	Howard Giske
Feature Writer	Jennifer Cunningham
A&E Editor	Linda Armstrong
Social Media Mgr.	Charlotte Anderson
Travel	Debi Kops
Intl News & Entertainment	Maria Cavenaghi
Society	Audrey Bernard
Columnist	William A. Rogers
Columnist	Zakiyyah
Columnist	Hazel Rosetta Smith
Feature Writer	Erin Lewenauer
Events Calendar	Howard Giske
Writer/Videographer	Marisol Rodriguez
Book Reviewer	Terri Schlichenmeyer
Brooklyn Writer	Keith Forrest
Bronx/Queens Writer	Howard Giske
Photographer	Nadezda Tavodova Tezgor
Photographer	Michelle James
Photographer	Seitu Oronde
Office Asst/Distributor	Dominic Jones
Distribution	Russell Simmons
Computer Director	David Sinclair
Marketing Consultant	William A. Rogers

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Mailing: P.O. Box # 1775, New York, New York 10027
Phone: 646-988-1015•
Email: harlemnewsinc@aol.com
Website: www.harlemcommunitynews.com
Twitter: @harlemnewsinc • Facebook: /harlemnewsinc
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PAT STEVENSON

Happy New Year 2024!
Are You Ready?

It is time to reset, recommit, and get started now. In this issue, we offer some Healthy Resolutions. I reviewed them and needed to be reminded of all of them. It's time to brush off all the old habits and excuses and work on the best version of ourselves we can obtain in 2024. (see page 12)

NNPA offers us a recap of the icons we lost in 2023, including Tina Turner and Harry Belafonte. Tina and Harry's deaths were well publicized. However, actors such as Richard Roundtree and others may not have hit your radar. This is a list worth reviewing. RIP. (see page 9)

We are celebrating 30 years of publishing the Harlem Community News. We are pivoting to a more significant online presence, while maintaining our print editions. Go to our website and subscribe to our daily newsletter, “Harlem Daily.” It is free. Watch for our 30th Anniversary events and support requests—coming soon!

Did you get the COVID-19 booster and your flu shot? I have heard of several people I know who are now dealing with COVID-19. It is still here—get vaccinated!

You can visit our website at www.harlemcommunitynews.com to see past issues, subscribe to our daily newsletter, and view past videos, current events, advertising, subscription information, etc. We are also on Instagram and Facebook.

Again, Happy New Year 2024.

Pat Stevenson
Celebrating
30 years
Publishing

Happy New Year 2024

Harlem Community News: Celebrating 30 Years Of Publishing

By Pat Stevenson

We lit the last Kwanzaa light on January 1, 2024, acknowledging the seventh principle, “Imani” (Faith), as we welcomed the New Year. My unwavering “faith in God and the support of those who believe in what I am doing have kept me on this path of publishing “Good News You Can Use.”

During these times when so many evils and negative spirits are among us, I find it easy to find some positive light. As I mentioned in my previous publisher’s statement, “I am reminded that no matter how divided this country seems, there is still Unity in families and communities. We continue to be Self-Determined on our journey to fulfill our Purpose in this life. Through Collective Work, Co-operative Economics, and Creativity, we will be successful. Our Faith keeps us steadfast and on the right path as we look forward to the New Year.”

It was 30 years ago I decided to begin publishing Harlem Community News. After being in the media business for a couple of decades, I saw an opportunity to bring community newspapers, shedding light on the “positive” things being achieved by organizations and individuals in Harlem and the New York community in predominantly African American areas. Many critics say that as a news organization, we should report the “news” as it is.

- the good and the negative. I decided there was too much emphasis on the “negative” in communities of color and that I would attempt to balance the scale by tilting toward the “positive.” In three decades, I have no regrets.

Publishing our print edition has been challenging these past few years, beginning with COVID in 2019. First, we faced a paper shortage, which caused the printing cost to go up 50% in the past few years. In 2023, the New York Immigration migration affected us greatly as we depended heavily on New York City advertising, which was cut by more than 75%. We all know that when budgets are cut, marketing is often the first budget line to be decreased or eliminated. It became clear to us that it was time to pivot. We decided to transform toward technology and optimize, embrace, and increase our social media and online presence. Our website is being transformed, so you will notice a better site with greater speed in a couple of weeks.

In the last seven days of 2023, we introduced our new “Harlem Daily” newsletter. We produced seven issues in 2023, focusing on the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Now we will publish daily, Monday-Friday. You can get “Good News” daily in your email. “Harlem Daily” is a free subscription; you just need to go to our website and subscribe at www.harlemcommunitynews.com.

PONDER THIS! A Source of Scented Therapeutic Illumination



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

It is said that candles have been used as a source of light and to illuminate celebrations for more than 5,000 years. The earliest use of candles is often attributed to the Ancient Egyptians. Romans are credited with developing wicked candles to light their homes, to travel by night,

and in religious ceremonies.

Early Chinese candles were molded in paper tubes, using rolled rice paper for the wick, and wax from an indigenous insect that was combined with seeds. In Japan, candles were made of wax extracted from tree nuts, while in India, candle wax was made by boiling the fruit of the cinnamon tree. A major improvement came in the Middle Ages when beeswax candles were introduced in Europe because they burned pure and cleanly, without producing a smoky flame. It also emitted a sweet smell.

The growth of U.S. oil introduced the use of paraffin and stearic acid as basic ingredients. The popularity of candles remained steady until the mid-1980s when interest in candles as deco-



orative items, mood-setters, and gifts began to increase. Through annual occasions, socially and religiously, there is time marked by the lighting of candles, and the joy of cherished traditions. The Advent season is a four-week period of Sundays before Christmas that celebrates the anticipation and the coming of Jesus Christ,

the Messiah. It begins with the lighting of four purple candles with an individual theme: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. The fifth white candle is lit on Christmas day to symbolize the purity of the birth of Jesus.

Hanukkah, which is a Hebrew word meaning dedication, is celebrated by the lighting of the Menorah, a

lampstand that holds nine candles symbolizing divine light, resilience, and unity in Jewish culture. Its candles represent leadership, miracles, and the enduring presence of God's light, fostering joy and gratitude during Hanukkah.

Kwanzaa, which is observed from December 26 through January 1, is celebrated by the lighting of seven candles on the Kinara stand. African roots are anchored by seven principles known as the Nguzo Saba which aims to inspire Black people to be united, self-determined, accountable for their communities, financially invested in Black-owned businesses, purposeful with their lives, creative, and full of faith.

Candles are utilized in numerous ways not just to illuminate, but to inspire,

and soothe nerves through meditation, massage, and for aromatherapy treatment.

Candles are available in a broad array of sizes, shapes, and colors, and consumer interest in scented candles continues to escalate as candle-making companies become profit-making businesses.

As one who is especially fond of candles, I was gifted with several from friends who know it is the right choice for me. Light a candle and let it represent the little light that shines from within you.

[Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director of Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries. Contact: misshazel@twc.com and online at www.hazelrosettasmith.com]

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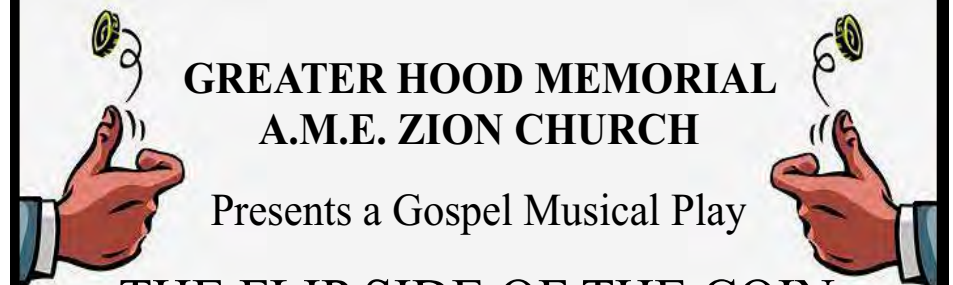
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Tips to Help You Start a Business in the New Year

(StatePoint)

Millions of new businesses are formed nationwide each year and women of color are leading the charge. The Wells Fargo Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report found that Black women are one of the fastest-growing groups of entrepreneurs in the United States, representing 14.8% of all women-owned businesses, and Hispanic/Latina women represent 14.3% of all women-owned businesses.

Steve Hall, vice president of Economic Development and Small Business Lending for Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a non-profit that connects under-invested

people and places with hard-to-tap resources, shares these tips for ensuring your business will succeed in the new year and beyond:

1. Increase financial literacy. It's important to have a solid working knowledge of credit, bookkeeping, projections, financial statements, reporting and financing to help you make sound business decisions. Free educational resources like Hands on Banking can get you started.

2. Be passionate. Running a successful small business requires round-the-clock dedication, so be sure it's something you enjoy and are passionate about.

3. "Run the idea." Speak with a business bank-

er about your business plan, ways to fund your operations and how to establish credit. A strong relationship with a business banker can help set you up for success. They can guide you toward the right financial products for every stage of the business, identify potential barriers you may face, help you find capital and help you avoid predatory debt collectors. Likewise, a certified public accountant can advise you on what paperwork you need to file to start your business, how to structure your business and how to manage monthly financials and taxes. They can also help connect you with the right vendors.

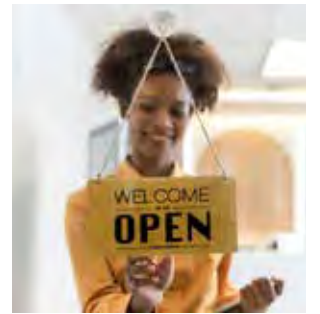
4. Seek out capital. Capital is the fuel to start and grow your business. More

credit options can be the difference between survival and closure. In addition to traditional lending, working with community development financial institutions and minority depository institutions can create an ecosystem of support that provides additional avenues to accessing capital. These institutions specifically work with underserved entrepreneurs, including those in low-to-moderate income areas and minority populations.

Thanks to new efforts, more small businesses have a shot at success. Through its Open for Business Fund, Wells Fargo is helping to create greater access to capital and resources. This industry-leading effort has donated roughly \$420 million to nonprofits

that serve small businesses. Since the fund was created, Wells Fargo has given grants directly to community development financial institutions and provided more than \$50 million to nonprofits to support entrepreneurs with technical assistance. In the program's third and final phase, the focus is on funding nonprofits to assist small businesses in growing equity in their business, with money going to strategies such as acquiring property and equipment as part of physical business improvements.

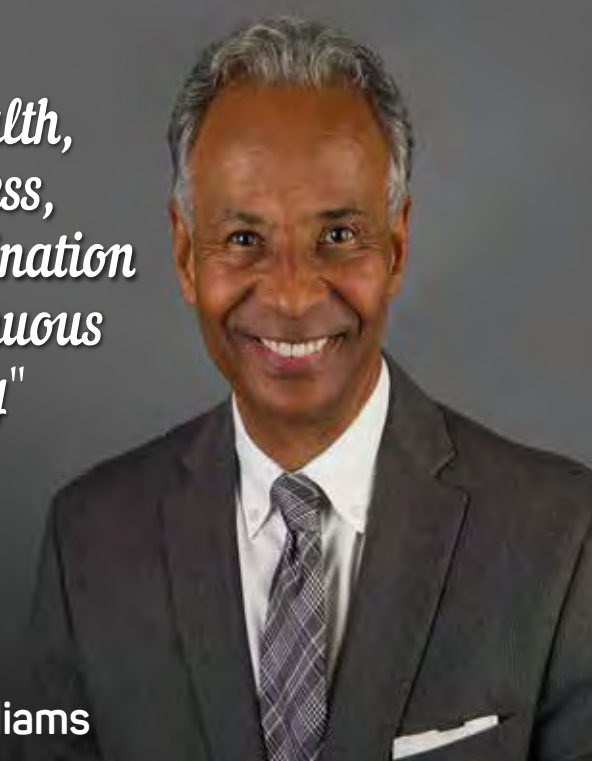
5. Solicit trusted advice. Check out LISC's webinars, local networking events and online resource center. No matter what industry you're in, SBA.gov and your local cham-




ber of commerce can also be helpful. For guidance in accessing capital, lean on Business Development Organizations, which serve as trusted ambassadors to underinvested communities, guiding business owners in accessing loans and resources.

"It takes passion and grit to start and grow a business. It also takes planning, important financial decisions and a series of legal steps," says Hall. "Fortunately, a range of resources exist to guide an entrepreneur

"Dental health, like success, is not a destination but a continuous journey"



Dr. George Williams



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The Small Business Microloan from UMEZ



This program has been extended to **Jan. 31, 2024**
 Let's talk: umez.org

UMEZ is a Community Development Financial Institution

Op-Ed: Pathways to Success for Our Young People



By Mayor Eric Adams

Our city's future depends on being able to help our young people grow, fulfill their potential, and thrive in an ever-changing economy.

These days, it's rare to think about spending decades at the same job, and education is the key to developing the flexibility and resourcefulness that our youth need to succeed. Helping each child find their way and achieve the career of their dreams has been a goal of our administration since day one.

That is why we expanded our Summer Youth Employment Program and Summer Rising to serve a record number of young

people and launched FutureReadyNYC with Google and Northwell Health to provide our youth with apprenticeships and opportunities in in-demand sectors, like tech and health care.

And now, we are building on those initiatives with Pathways to an Inclusive Economy: An Action Plan for Young Adult Career Success. This is a more than \$600 million, forward-thinking roadmap that will position 250,000 young people to thrive in our city's economy.

The plan includes notable new investments like \$10 million in the CUNY 2x Tech initiative, which offers our young people a pipeline to the tech sector, by bringing the initiative to five new CUNY campuses, including community colleges for the first time ever.

Additionally, we have secured a \$130 million grant from the federal government to become the first city to partner with the U.S. Department of Labor Jobs Corps Program. This will allow us to train, place, and provide wraparound sup-

port to 2,000 young adults in fast-growing industries — all free of charge.

We also know that all young people don't start at the same place. We must be able to serve our youth where they are. The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority are piloting new electrical pre-apprenticeship programs for 50 out-of-school and out-of-work young adults, thanks to a \$1.7 million grant from the Department of Labor.

It is important for New Yorkers to understand what all these programs mean for our young people. Right now, a middle schooler has the opportunity to attend Summer Rising, visit a CUNY college, and realize that college is a possibility. Each of these steps are crucial.

Helping them visit a CUNY college expands their horizons and allows them to dream big.

In high school, our young people can get a paid internship at a tech firm

through the Summer Youth Employment Program and perhaps realize they love computers. After that, they can attend that same CUNY college they visited when they were younger, major in computer science, and become an apprentice for a tech company, gaining a mentor and hands-on experience.

Our goal for our young people is to have them graduate with a degree in one hand and a job offer in the other because the government has been creating the right environment for them every step of the way.

Our message is clear. We are telling employers your future talent is right here in New York City. Not only are you going to get young people with technical skills, but you're going to get real New Yorkers — people who can handle a variety of situations and bring a diversity of backgrounds and experience to their work.

This plan is for our young people because New York City is still the place where anything is possible.



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Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

I wish all of you a healthy and happy New Year! For those who successfully completed the home-buying process in 2023, congratulations on achieving your goal while being confronted with a tough and unpredictable economy!

However, if you want to purchase a home this year, you must know the obstacles will be even greater. But do not be discouraged; you can still, with a good plan, successfully navigate the home-buying landscape and realize your dream of homeownership.

The first thing is to start the process now! You cannot afford to procrastinate any longer. This is a new year, so you must come out decisively to be competitive. The market value of Harlem properties will remain relatively high. This is

still a seller's market, meaning the demand exceeds the supply of affordable homes.

There is still uncertainty concerning the economy. Interest rates, by all indications, will not be decreasing. Because of these factors, many homeowners are reluctant to place their homes on the market. These factors make homeownership extremely difficult for the low to moderate-income first-time buyers. Hopefully, your employer will provide a cost-of-living increase, but that money is usually absorbed through increased living expenses.

So here are a few tips to increase your savings as you prepare for homeownership: (1) Create a monthly household budget. This is the primary tool you must use in home buying. Your budget will tell you how much you can save each month, how soon you will be ready to buy, and how much you can afford to spend on a home. Consider increasing your monthly income by taking on a part-time job.

(2) Pay yourself first. Set a goal to save a specific amount of money each month. Do this as soon as you get paid. Push yourself

to save as much as possible aggressively. Review your budget periodically to make sure you are working towards meeting your goal. Reduce your monthly expenses wherever possible. Turn off the cable, lower the thermostat, and bring your lunch to work. Eliminate all wasteful spending.

(3) Pay off all outstanding credit debt as quickly as possible. You want to avoid paying excessive interest rates and late fees. But remember to keep the accounts open and active. Do not open any new accounts. Friends, the only way homeownership will happen is you must make it happen. Take control of your spending and credit. You must be committed to this process to purchase a home in Harlem. Maintain your focus. Do not allow anything to get in your way of achieving your goal. You can do it!

If you are interested in attending a Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. (HCCI) workshop or have questions regarding the home buying process, contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at (212) 281 4887 ext. 231 or email 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.

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HARLEM CALENDAR OF COMMUNITY EVENTS



Jan 10 Max Roach Tribute at the Interchurch Center



Jan 21 Chevalier at United Palace



Feb 4 Afrique en Cirque

Jan 10
7:00pm-8:30pm
Max Roach
Tribute at
Interchurch Center

Join us for an unforgettable in-person event at THE CHAPEL AT THE INTERCHURCH CENTER. We are celebrating the incredible legacy of Max Roach with a special tribute by Winard Harper. Get ready to immerse yourself in the soulful tunes of jazz and experience the magic of live music. This event promises to be a memorable night filled with rhythm and harmony. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to celebrate the legendary

Max Roach and enjoy the musical talents of Winard Harper. Grab your friends and come groove with us

Jan 21
4:00p to 6:00p
"The Chevalier"
at United Palace

The Harlem Chamber Players will join this musical play presented by Music Before 1800 and the United Palace. The Chevalier tells the incredible true story of Joseph Bologne, the composer, conductor, abolitionist, and hero of the French Revolution. Commissioned by The Tanglewood Music Center, this original work of

concert-theatre combines orchestra with actors who portray W. A. Mozart, Marie Antoinette, Bologne, and Choderlos de Laclos as they navigate the gathering clouds of revolution in 1778 Paris. For tickets go to <http://harlemchamberplayers.org>

Sunday
February 4, 2024
AT 8:00PM
Afrique en

Cirque is a show by Yamoussa Bangoura, inspired by daily life in Guinea. This performance shares the beauty, youth and artistry of African culture. A colorful show

beyond its scenery, costumes and staging, it makes any theatre vibrate with energy and represents the strength, agility and life's joys of young Africans. The audience will see acrobats execute gravity-defying moves and human pyramids, accompanied by the contemporary sounds of live Afro-Jazz, percussion, and kora. Welcome to the universe of Kalabanté Productions, and prepare for an unforgettable journey.

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Remembering the Icons We Lost in 2023

By Stacy M. Brown |

NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

In a year of achievements and setbacks, we said goodbye to several significant personalities who left a lasting impression on the entertainment, sports, civil rights, and art industries in 2023. Their achievements have influenced countless generations. Here, we list just some of those losses.

• **Tina Turner: Legendary Singer and Performer (1939–2023)**

The music world mourned the loss of Tina Turner, the legendary singer renowned for her sultry voice and a string of platinum hits. Turner's impact on the music industry and her boundless passion for life captivated millions worldwide.

• **Richard Roundtree:**

Iconic Star of "Shaft" (1942–2023)

Hollywood said goodbye to Richard Roundtree, the iconic "Shaft" star. While forever tied to the role that made him famous in 1971, Roundtree remained active for over four decades, leaving an enduring mark on cinema.

• **Harry Belafonte: Singer, Actor, and Civil Rights Activist (1927–2023)**

The world said goodbye to Harry Belafonte, a singer, actor, and staunch civil rights activist. Belafonte's lifetime of activism transformed the arts while advocating for civil rights, leaving an enduring legacy.

• **Richard Hunt: Visionary Sculptor and Art Pioneer (1935–2023)**



Tina Turner

The art world bid farewell to Richard Hunt, a trailblazing sculptor, and the first Black artist to receive a solo retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. With over 160 public sculptures across the U.S., Hunt's seven-decade career left an indelible mark on contemporary art, influencing generations.

• **Jean Knight: Soulful Songstress and Grammy-Nominated Artist (1943–2023)**

The soulful voice behind "Mr. Big Stuff," Jean Knight, passed away, leaving a void in the world of R&B. Knight's legacy extends beyond her musical achievements.

• **George "Funky" Brown: Kool & The Gang Drummer and Songwriter (1949–2023)**

The rhythmic heartbeat of Kool & The Gang, George "Funky" Brown, left an indelible mark with his contributions to iconic songs like "Celebration" and "Ladies Night." Brown's musical genius and resili-

ence were evident even in the face of a battle with stage-4 cancer.

• **C-Knight (Arnez Blount): Rapper and "Cha Cha Slide" Creator (1971–2023)**

The hip-hop community lost a creative force with the passing of C-Knight, known for birthing the international dance craze with the "Cha Cha Slide." His legacy lives on through the rhythmic beats that brought joy to countless dance floors, making him a lasting presence in music.

• **Hughes Van Ellis: Tulsa Race Massacre Survivor and WWII Veteran (1921–2023)**

The nation bid farewell to Hughes Van Ellis, one of the last surviving witnesses of the Tulsa Race Massacre. A proud US Army veteran who fought alongside the British in WWII, Ellis symbolized resilience and a living connection to a crucial chapter in American history.

• **Zoleka Mandela: Granddaughter of Nelson Mandela (1980–2023)**

South Africa mourned the loss of Zoleka Mandela, Nelson Mandela's granddaughter. Her battle with cancer came to an end, leaving behind a legacy intertwined with the struggle for justice and freedom.

• **Clarence Avant: "The Black Godfather" of Music (1931–2023)**

The music industry lost a true legend with the passing of Clarence Avant, known as "The Black Godfather." Those he inspired will always recognize Avant's contribution to the entertainment industry.

• **Sheila Oliver: New Jersey Lieutenant Governor (1952–2023)**

New Jersey mourned the loss of Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, the first Black woman to serve in a statewide elected position. Oliver's dedication to public service and pioneering role in New Jersey's political landscape will be remembered.

• **John Beasley: Actor and Activist (1943–2023)**

Best known for his roles in "Everwood" and "The

Soul Man," the actor died after being hospitalized in his hometown of Omaha, NE., after his health took an "unexpected turn for the worst."

• **Jim Brown: Football Legend, Activist, and Actor (1936–2023)**

The sports and entertainment world lost a multifaceted icon with the passing of Jim Brown, a football legend, activist, and actor. Brown's influence extended beyond the field, making him a prominent figure in popular culture.

• **Willis Reed: NBA Hall of Famer and Knicks Legend (1942–2023)**

In basketball, fans mourned the loss of Willis Reed, an NBA Hall of Famer and iconic Knicks captain. He led the Knicks to two NBA championships, which made him a basketball legend.

Many others were lost, and though they are too numerous to print, they are also fondly recalled, and their contributions are not forgotten.

Photo Credits Courtesy



Harry Belafonte

Easy Ways To Find January Sales

By Josh Hastings,
Wealth of Geeks via The Associated Press

According to a recent survey by the National Retail Federation, 70% of Americans include after-holiday shopping in their plans. You can take advantage of some huge January sales with these simple steps.

1. Browse the Christmas Aisles & Big Box Stores

Many big box retailers have to unload all the Christmas stuff they didn't sell. This includes Christmas decorations, Christmas gift wrapping and packaging, Christmas themed candy and foods, or anything else that is holiday-themed.

2. Use Apps To Save Bigger

The best way to take advantage of shopping deals is in person, down the discount aisles. That being said, if you are not one for crowds or are worried about the latest COVID-19 numbers, then you can check out apps to see what kind of deals are out there, too.

Rakuten

Rakuten is a popular retail shopping app that is formerly known as eBates. Users earn points that they can redeem for cash back after they spend money shopping. Rakuten has partnerships with over 2,500 online retailers and stores, making it the perfect place to go to find sales.

Rakuten features cou-

pons, deals, promotions, and, of course, cash back for your purchases. Since its inception in 1997, Rakuten has paid over \$800 million in cashback. Obviously, you have to spend money to earn it back, so why not get a little cash back if you planned on spending already?

Groupon

From group vacation deals to dining, Groupon has everything to offer, including online shopping deals. This is a great app or shopping website to consider for your shopping she-nigans.

Whether you are looking for a discounted oil change or even scrambling to get a gift for someone, Groupon is a great place to start. Some cool features Grou-



pon offers include:

- Deal of the day
- Support local businesses with their shop local tab
- Unique offers in dining, travel, and service

Ibotta

Unlike Rakuten, known for its retail bargains, Ibotta is typically ideal for grocery and everyday shopping. You can also shop with Amazon through Ibotta!

3. Shop Smart

Now beginning to hit panic mode with Valentine's Day fast approaching, retailers are desperately looking to unload the leftover holiday excess items to find more floor space for their boxed chocolate displays.

This is when the somewhat ransacked Christmas aisles become littered with 75% off signs and "Buy One Get One Free in This Section" promotions.

Side Hustle Idea : If you are a hustler and like to sell things online, a novel idea is to flip items you buy at a discounted rate. Things like winter wear offer great resale value; just make sure you have storage for all the deals you plan on capitalizing on!

Photo courtesy AP

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Shop Smarter in the New Year With These Tips

(StatePoint)

For many people, the start of a new year is an opportunity to revamp their routine and make game-changing resolutions. That's why industry experts are offering smart shopping tips that will have you saving time, money and hassle in 2024.

According to Christa Anz, director of Sensormatic Solutions North America Marketing, the global retail solutions portfolio of Johnson Controls, it all starts in January.

"Outside of the holiday season, there isn't a better time to shop than the start of a new year," says Anz. "Research shows gift cards continue to grow in popularity, so even after the gift-giving season is over, consumers

are treating themselves and will be popping into stores reenergized. After the holiday rush, shoppers can rediscover the fun of browsing stores for anything they didn't receive from their wish lists."

As Anz also points out, shopping at the start of the year isn't just fun, it's also cost-effective, as retailers are likely to plan promotions to help sell excess inventory, making it a good time to stock up on essentials and other items.

To shop smarter in January and all year long, Sensormatic Solutions is offering these tips based on their insider retailer predictions and data.

• **Make post-holiday returns strategically:** Though November and



December are the busiest months of the year for shopping, January has a monopoly on returns. With many shoppers still utilizing "buy online, pick up in-store" (BOPIS) options, the number of people looking to return or exchange goods may be higher than you expect. If you need to make returns or exchange items

during this period, you can streamline the process by reviewing return policies before heading to the store and arriving earlier in the day to avoid long lines or delays.

• **Make time:** Retailers will continue to implement loss prevention and security measures to combat rising organized retail crime rates.

This extends to essential items, such as toothpaste, deodorant and razors. Factor extra time into shopping trips as you may need to wait for associate assistance to retrieve these items from locked display cases.

• **Enjoy peace of mind:** Preferred by many for shopping during the pandemic, options like BOPIS will continue to grow in popularity as consumers enjoy its convenience and speed. Use such options to your advantage to secure deals via apps or websites and enjoy the peace of mind that comes from knowing the items you need will be there when you arrive.

• **Interact with experiential retail:** Retailers are focused on enhancing in-store experiences in 2024,

and that's great news for shoppers. You might take an in-store workshop at a tech store so you can make better use of your new device, or co-design your pair of sneakers with a brand to ensure your shoes are one-of-a-kind. Pay attention to local events and promotions at your favorite stores as brands find innovative ways to promote new products, partnerships and savings.

For more shopping insights, visit sensormatic.com.

Whether shopping for fun or for the essentials, understanding the latest industry trends can help you make your 2024 consumer experiences more enjoyable and less stressful.

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Make These 10 Doctor-Recommended Health Resolutions in the New Year

(StatePoint)

The New Year is the perfect time to hit the reset button on your health and wellness. Not sure where to start? Doctors say you can make the biggest impact with small, incremental tweaks to your routine.

“It is quite common after the holidays to think about all you’ve eaten or your reduced physical activity and get discouraged,” says Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, M.D., MPH, president of the American Medical Association (AMA). “But the good news is you don’t have to make major health changes in one fell swoop. You can make small, positive health choices right now that can have long-lasting effects.”

Want to get started today? Here are the 10 resolutions the AMA recommends top your list this year:

1. Get moving. Exercise is essential for your physical and mental health. The American Heart Association recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes a week of mod-

erate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity. Just can’t get to the gym? No problem: start off by going for a family walk, taking the stairs at work or parking a little farther away from the mall entrance when you’re making those post-holiday gift returns.

2. Tweak your diet to include more water and less sugar-sweetened beverages. Replace processed foods -- especially those with added sodium and sugar -- with nutritious, whole foods. Stock your fridge and pantry with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry.

3. A number of respiratory viruses circulating this winter can be serious and even life-threatening. Get up to date on your vaccines to protect yourself and your family. These include the annual flu shot and the updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccines are also available to protect older adults from severe RSV. New tools to protect

infants during RSV season include maternal vaccination and monoclonal antibody immunization. If you have questions, speak with your physician and review trusted resources, including getvaccineanswers.org.

4. Get screened. Estimates based on statistical models show that since April 2020, millions of screenings for breast, colorectal and prostate cancer may have been missed due to pandemic-related care disruptions. Check in with your physician. If you’re due for preventive care, tests or screenings, make an appointment. These measures are designed to keep you healthy and help your doctor spot certain conditions before they become more serious.

5. High blood pressure, often referred to as hypertension, can increase your risk of heart attack or stroke, and it affects millions of Americans. Visit ManageYourBP.org to understand what your blood pressure numbers mean and what you can do to get your blood pressure under control.

6. One in 3 American adults has prediabetes, a

condition that can lead to type 2 diabetes if left unmanaged. However, healthy eating and exercise can help delay or even prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Learn your risk by taking a simple 2-minute self-screening test at DoIHavePrediabetes.org. This resource also features helpful lifestyle tips that can help you reverse prediabetes.

7. If consuming alcohol, drink only in moderation. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans defines that as up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

8. Your health care provider can offer resources and guidance for quitting tobacco and nicotine. Declare your home and car smoke-free to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.

9. Follow your doctor’s instructions when taking prescription drugs – especially opioids. Always store and dispose of medications safely to prevent misuse. Whenever prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as directed. Not



taking the full course can lead to antibiotic resistance, a serious public health problem, and will not make you feel better if you have a virus, such as a cold or flu.

10. Good mental health is part of good overall health. Manage your stress, get sufficient sleep, exercise and seek help from a mental health professional when you need it.

If you don’t have health insurance, the AMA encourages you to sign up for coverage be-

cause those with coverage live healthier and longer. Healthcare.gov has new, affordable insurance options. The enrollment deadline for 2024 coverage is Jan. 15, 2024. Find more health resources at ama-assn.org.

For a healthy 2024 and beyond, invest in your wellness with these doctor-recommended New Year’s resolutions.

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Tips to Support Your Metabolic Health in the New Year

(StatePoint)

Good metabolic health is the backbone of great overall health. Unfortunately, many Americans misunderstand what metabolic health is and are not aware of its importance.

A recent poll from Metavo/Harris Poll Study reveals that nearly three in four North Americans have experienced at least one issue related to metabolic health in the past year, while only 52% have heard, read or seen information on metabolic health issues.

What's more, only 30% of North Americans know that metabolic health is not the same as gut health, and many falsely believe that metabolic issues mostly occur in those who are overweight.

"This knowledge gap plays a factor in why many health issues related to metabolic health, such as brain fog, food cravings and energy slumps, often go unaddressed," says Dr. Paul Spagnuolo, associate professor in the Department of Food Science at the University of Guelph, whose research includes finding new ways for people to proactively support their metabolic health.

Issues related to metabolic health can take a toll on your mental wellbeing, your ability to perform your job, and even your social life and personal relationships, making it critical to nip them in the bud. To improve your metabolic health and feel your best in 2024, consider these tips:

- **Get active.** Whether



you're hitting up the gym for a weight training session or simply going for a longer walk during your day, daily physical activity is recommended to support your metabolic health. Find activities, daily movement and workouts you enjoy

and stick with them.

- **Prioritize proper sleep.** Maintaining proper sleeping habits can help to keep your insulin and hormone levels balanced.

- **Fuel often.** Fueling more frequently can boost your metabolism. Being sure to eat smaller portions at regular, consistent times every day and drinking plenty of water can also help improve metabolic health. Set alerts on your phone, or even use a hydration app, to help you remember to drink up.

- **Explore supplements.** Consider taking a daily supplement designed to support metabolic health and activate metabolism naturally, like Metavo. Featuring the proprietary avocado compound Avocatin B, also known as AvoB, Metavo

Advanced Glucose Metabolism Support activates your metabolism naturally at the cellular level.

"Having a flexible metabolism at the cellular level enables the body to properly metabolize fats, proteins and carbs to help improve insulin sensitivity, glucose tolerance and energy," says Dr. Spagnuolo, whose research led to the development of Metavo.

The brand also carries Metavo Advanced Weight Support, a supplement featuring clinically proven ingredients that help burn fat, support weight loss, and provide increased energy, as well as Metavo Advanced Weight Support Meal Replacement Powders, which are designed to be the perfect "metabolic" meal, with 20 grams of

complete protein and whole food vitamins and minerals. These supplements can complement GLP-1, or other medications that treat obesity and diabetes. Plus, there is Metavo Glucose Metabolism Support with Berberine, which targets metabolic inflexibility to increase insulin sensitivity, support healthy glucose metabolism, cardiovascular support and more. To learn more, visit www.metavo.com.

When it comes to metabolic health, consistency is key. In the New Year, resolve to make physical activity, healthy eating, proper sleep and the right supplements a regular part of your routine.

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Wellness Tips for a New You in the New Year

(StatePoint)

If your list of New Year's resolutions is a mile long, you may be feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start. Let these three essential wellness tips set you up for a successful year and give you the power, energy and determination you need to reach all your other goals.

Make Time For Breakfast

Many people make the mistake of skipping breakfast, particularly if they are trying to lose weight. But breakfast is an essential part of your overall health and wellbeing, giving you the fuel and energy you need to power the day until lunch. This is important to help kickstart your metabolism and regulate your hunger.



Think you don't have time to prepare a healthy breakfast? You're not alone. However, many are open to implementing this habit with quicker breakfast op-

tions that cut prep time in half. In fact, 51% of consumers agree that frozen breakfast foods are the most convenient option and 37% said they would eat frozen

breakfast foods more often if they were healthier, according to market research from Mintel. Thanks to quick and tasty options like Eggland's Best Frozen Breakfast Bowls, made with hearty ingredients and ready to eat in minutes, there are efficient ways to enjoy a nutritious breakfast. Not only do the bowls taste great, but they are made with nutritionally superior Eggland's Best eggs, which contain six times more vitamin D, more than double the Omega-3s and 10 times more vitamin E compared to ordinary eggs, so you can feel confident that you're getting optimal nutrition before taking on the busy day ahead. The bowls are available in three great tasting flavors, Sausage & Cheese, Salsa, Bacon &

Cheese, and Loaded Potato Scramble, meaning you certainly won't get bored putting your new breakfast plan into action.

Practice Self-Care

Between work, family life and other commitments, it can seem challenging to carve out time for yourself. But a little self-care goes a long way toward helping you recharge and better manage all your responsibilities and stressors. Whether it's going for a run, taking a yoga class, doing arts and crafts or reading a book, be sure to spend some time each week doing something that you love that makes you feel your best.

Prioritize Sleep

Prioritizing sleep will improve every aspect of your physical and men-

tal wellness and help you achieve all your other goals. Unfortunately, streaming devices, social media and other distractions make it all too easy to stay up later than you intend. Setting an alarm in the evening can serve as a gentle reminder that it's time to put down devices and start your bedtime routine, helping you create a more consistent sleep schedule. This will also eliminate exposure to blue light late in the evening, an environmental factor that has been proven to make it harder to fall asleep.

Achieving your goals starts with feeling your best. Make that happen in the New Year by prioritizing the most essential building blocks of health and wellness, from sunrise to sundown.

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Urbanology: Winter, the Season of Water



By W.A. Rogers

The season of winter will be with us until Tuesday March 19, 2024. Taoist wellness strategies consider winter to be the season of the element of water. There are five elements: Fire, Water, Wood, Metal, and Earth. Ancient

Taoist sages created wellness strategies for each of the five elements, using their uncanny understanding of the relationship between the human body and the cosmos.

During the winter season, the two vital organs that attention should be given to are the kidneys (Yin organ) and the bladder (Yang organ). Winter's positive emotion is Gentleness; winter's negative emotion is Fear. People will tend to urinate more during the water season, and Mercury is the planet that influences the solar energy of Earth during winter. Winter is a

good time for men to have their prostate checked.

The kidneys are the Yin water organs; they filter all the fluids, removing excess water and toxins. Kidneys can only move about six cups of liquid per day, including what is already in the body as well as what you drink. If the kidneys get overloaded with toxins due to drinking too much, it can cause an energy imbalance that can weaken the Immune System.

The bladder is the Yang water organ that receives and eliminates urine (It is not waste. It is filtered blood). The bladder chan-

nel has a relationship with most body functions. It runs close to the spine and can influence the Sympathetic Nervous System (ANS). The ANS influences many body functions, including heart rate, digestion, perspiration, respiratory rate, and sexual arousal.

Ki Energy treatments and many other Taoist energy-balancing techniques, including Tai Chi, Acupuncture, and Chi Nei Tsang, have been used for centuries to balance every vital organ, including the bladder and kidneys. Scientific research in Quantum Physics has identified

energy fields surrounding all material forms in the universe. These fields are called "Subtle Organizing Energy Fields" (SOEFs).

When the mind, body, and spirit energy is in balance, the SOEFs surrounding each vital organ are energized, providing all the necessary energy needed to be healthy. The scientific definition of this state of being is negative entropy. Stress caused by negative emotions can cause an imbalance in the body, separating the mind and spirit from the body. The scientific definition for this state of being is positive entropy.

Fear and anxiety are the negative emotions of winter, and the negative energies of fear and anxiety will weaken the SOEFs that surround the Kidneys. The above-mentioned treatments and techniques are very effective in naturally bringing balance to the body by reviving negative entropy energy.

I provide information on wellness strategies for each season in my book "The Art of W.A.R Strategies for Self-Empowerment." Send an email to onuwon@gmail.com or call 917 821-7099 for details. Happy New Year!

Answers to Puzzle on page 17

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HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE MORE KITCHEN HERBS: Celery Seeds and Bay Leaves

By Zakiyyah

As the preparers of food, women (and today, many men) hold the power of health as s/he alone can redefine "health care" and the quality of "medicines" s/he chooses for the family right from the kitchen. Almost all our foods, spices, and condiments have healing properties.

CELERY SEED: Tea sipped slowly will improve appetite relieve hives, and hysteria. It will ease insomnia when taken one hour before retiring. It eases lung congestion (flavor with a little peppermint) and is good for nervousness/hyperactivity (with equal parts skullcap). Promotes urination and, as an exter-

nal wash/internal douche, will relieve itching, rashes/venereal disease.

BAY LEAVES: For cramps, take as a warm tea. For dandruff, use tea as a hair rinse; for earache – 1-2 drops of oil extract in the ear. You can treat nail fungus by soaking nails in strong decoction. If you have indigestion, take a tea with meals. If you have rheumatism or sprains, use the oil extract or tincture applied externally (it's better when used with heat). Use the oil on a cotton ball placed on the side of the cavity as a toothache remedy. To treat vaginitis/uterine infection, use a douche of strong decoction.

Suggested reading: "The Complete Book of Spices" by John Heinerman

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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: theherb-alist1750@gmail.com, call 347-407-4312. **ENERGETIC(NO-PAIN) PRANIC FACE LIFT:** <https://tinyurl.com/y3aldpzv>; blog: www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com. View my upcoming book: booklaunch.io/Zakiyyah/theenergetic-sofherbs.

See answers on page 16 and 18

CROSSWORD

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THEME: WORLD CUISINE

ACROSS

- *Like popular Pad
- Limit
- Boozehound
- Bring home the bacon
- *Combine cuisines
- Door holder
- Between ports
- *America's favorite cookie, according to some
- Driver's 180
- *Like poke bowl
- Magician, in the olden days
- Type of wrench
- Campaigner, for short
- Traditional sock pattern
- *Southeast Asian spiky fruit, pl.
- Unequivocally de-

testable

- Same as ayah
- "That is," Latin
- Urge Spot to attack
- Chilled (2 words)
- Observation point's attraction
- *Soft and soft type of tofu
- Ship pronoun
- Thrusts out or causes to protrude
- One way to steal gas
- Without professional help, acr.
- Energy to motion converter
- H.S. math class
- *Wasabi is popular in this cuisine
- *Type of soda bread
- g in 10 g
- Francis Coppola's middle name
- End of tunnel
- Casanova, e.g.
- In the thick of
- Saturn's wife

- Human limb
- *Russian borscht vegetable

DOWN

- *Brew from China, originally
- *American _____ browns
- Acreage
- Sort of (3 words)
- Marie or Pierre, physicists
- Southeast Asia org.
- Lowly laborer
- Like a bug in a rug
- Princess Fiona, by night
- Square root of 100
- Thwarted
- SNL's forté
- *Nationality that gave us gelato
- Administer
- Wound fluid
- Not dead
- Radices, sing.
- *Clarified butter of

- Indian origin, pl.
- *Peking fowl
- Mennonite's cousin
- Jack Black's Libre
- Martin of "Apocalypse Now"
- Terrorist org.
- Fat of olives
- *Like certain meatballs
- Tear-jerker
- Hog heaven
- Posthumous type of tax
- Like 90 degree angle
- Reassembled dwelling
- Feudal dwelling
- Poppy tears
- Acid "journey"
- Semis
- France/Switzerland border mountain range
- Not all
- Canal in a song
- U.N. workers' grp.
- Banned insecticide, acr.

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“The Risk It Takes to Bloom: On Life and Liberation” by Raquel Willis

REVIEW by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor

The catalogs should start arriving soon.

If you're a gardener, that's a siren song for you. What will you put in your pots and plots this spring? What colors will you have, what crops will you harvest? It never gets old: put a seed no bigger than a breadcrumb into some dirt and it becomes dinner in just weeks. All it needs, as in the new memoir “The Risk It Takes to Bloom” by Raquel Willis, is a little time to grow.

The last time Raquel Willis remembers being completely safe and loved without strings attached was at age

five, at a talent show. Shortly afterwards, some elders began telling Willis to speak with “a particular brand of clear,” to move differently, to act differently. Willis was a Black boy then, and that was how her father worked against his son’s “softness.”

Willis didn't know the truth about herself then, but other boys did. So, eventually, did the girls, as a grade school Willis “gravitated... toward” them. Young Willis prayed for God to “just make me a girl” but the bullying that had already begun only got worse.

She changed schools and things were no better; mean-

while, her father tried “even harder to correct who I was becoming.” Friends and online friends were encouraging and supportive, offering her courage to come out to her mother, who thought it was “a phase.” Her father was angry, then accepting. Other family members took Willis' news in stride.

It was going to be okay. More than okay, in fact, because Willis was introduced to drag, and she started to feel more comfortable in women's clothing than in men's attire. To Willis, the drag troupe had begun feeling like family. She settled into life as a gay drag performer, because that was the “language” she had.

And then one day, while talking on the phone with an on-again off-again boyfriend, something important hit Willis, hard.

“I think I'm a woman,” she told him. “I'm a woman.... I am.”

Sometimes, it takes awhile to understand the person you really are. Half a book, in this case, because “The Risk It Takes to Bloom” is quite wordy: author Raquel Willis tells her story in excruciating detail, and it can get rather long.

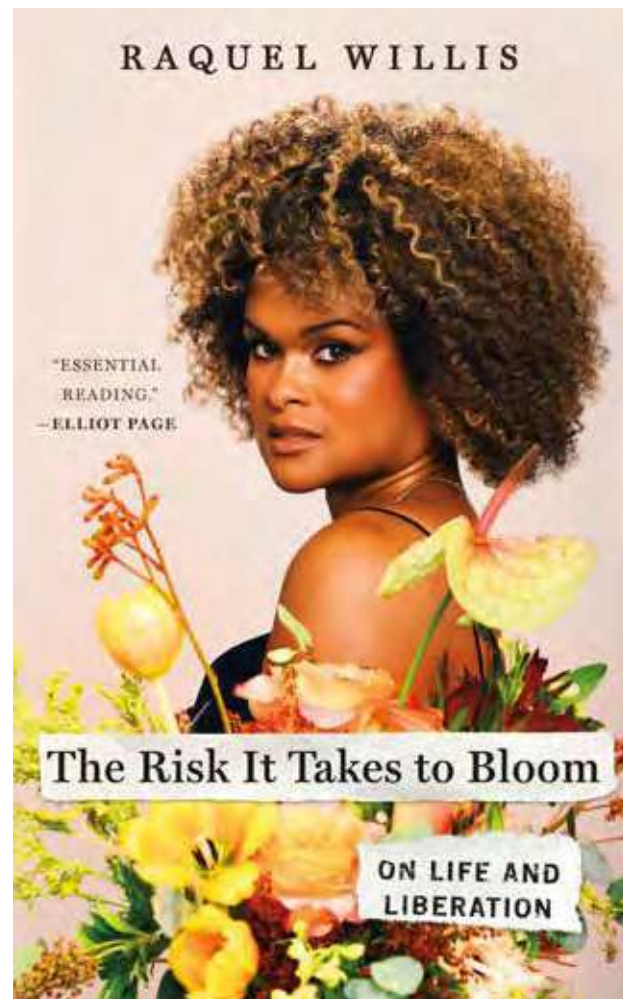
And yet, the length allows for clues that readers can follow, to truly see the woman, the activist and writer, who penned this book. But is that enough to attract readers? What sets this book apart from other, similar books by star-powered Black trans women?

The answer lies in the approachability of its author.

Willis tells her tale with a more anchoring feel, more down-to-earth, like she could have lived up the street from you or sat in the last row of your high school Algebra class. You could've known her. You could know someone like her. Or Willis could be you.

Indeed, this book might hold plainspoken inspiration for anyone who needs it. If that's you, get “The Risk It Takes to Bloom,” find a chair, and plant yourself.

“The Risk It Takes to Bloom: On Life and Liberation” by Raquel Willis
c.2023, St. Martin's Press, \$29.00, 384 pages



SUDOKU ANSWERS

8	1	4	3	9	7	5	6	2
9	6	3	5	8	2	4	1	7
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3	5	2	1	7	9	6	4	8
7	3	8	9	6	1	2	5	4
5	2	1	7	4	3	8	9	6
4	9	6	2	5	8	1	7	3

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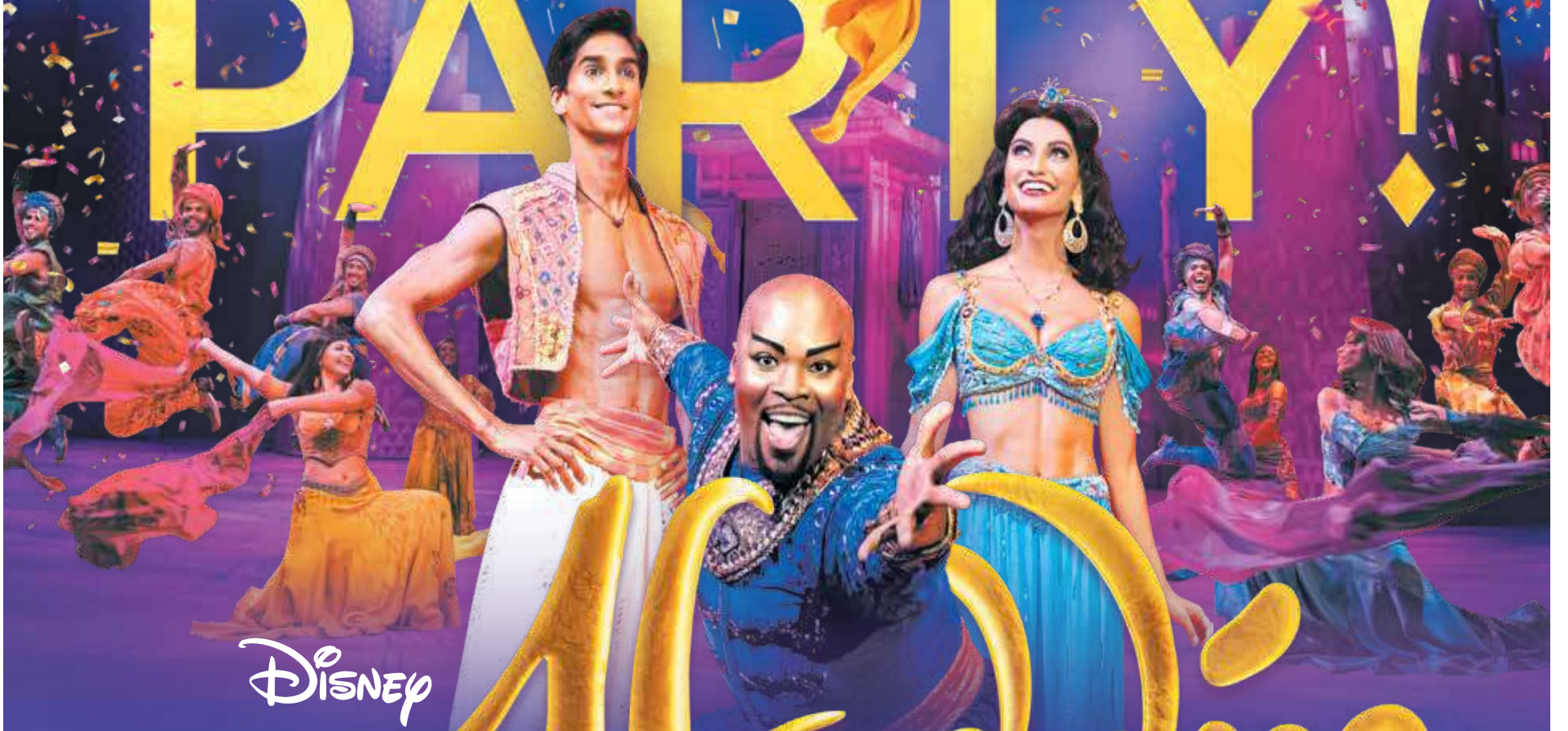
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