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

# HARLEM NEWS

COMMUNITY

"Good News You Can Use"

Vol. 32 No. 50

December 11 - December 17, 2025

Free



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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.

## HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWS BROOKLYN COMMUNITY NEWS BRONX COMMUNITY NEWS QUEENS COMMUNITY NEWS

Free copies distributed in your community weekly

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**PAT STEVENSON**

In this week’s issue, we extend heartfelt gratitude to the many restaurants, organizations, churches, and community groups who continue to give generously during this holiday season. Their efforts bring warmth and hope to countless families. A special thank you goes to Jacobs’s Restaurant, which upheld its tradition of serving meals to the Harlem community on Thanksgiving Day. Hundreds of neighbors gathered, with lines stretching around the corner, a true testament to their commitment as a good business citizen in Harlem. (see page 3).

As the season of celebration continues, we encourage families to enjoy the magic of the holidays together. The world-famous Rockettes are marking their 100th Anniversary, a milestone worth experiencing (see page 11)

Closer to home, the Uptown Dance Academy will present “The Nutcracker” on December 20th, showcasing the talent and dedication of Harlem’s youth. Let’s support them and share in the joy of the season. (see page 10)

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays!

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**Pat Stevenson  
Celebrating  
32 Years Publishing**

# Thanksgiving at Jacob's Restaurant: A Tradition of Community and Care

(photos by Nadezda Tavodova Tezgor)

On Thanksgiving Day, the line wrapped around the corner as Harlem residents patiently waited to enter Jacob's Restaurant. The anticipation was palpable, not just for the food, but for the warmth and fellowship that have become hallmarks of this annual tradition. For sixteen years, Jacob's has opened its doors to the community, offering free meals that celebrate both the holiday and the restaurant's deep roots in Harlem.

Guests were welcomed with a choice of traditional Thanksgiving favorites: roast turkey, candied yams, and slices of pie, or Jacob's everyday specialties that reflect the restaurant's Caribbean and soul food heritage. Plates overflowed with choices of fried chicken, jerk chicken, beef stew, collard greens, string beans, black-eyed peas, rice and peas, macaroni and cheese,

fresh salad, fruit, and banana pudding. Each guest also received a beverage, whether a soft drink or a refreshing glass of tea, ensuring no one left hungry.

Owners Rachid Niang and his wife, Kim Lum Chan Niang, have made this event a cornerstone of their mission since opening Jacob's. With two locations, one at Lenox Avenue and 129th Street, and another at Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 143rd Street, the couple has consistently prioritized service to the community. "Doors will remain open as long as there is food," Rachid remarked as the crowd streamed in at noon. His words captured the spirit of generosity that defines the day.

The effort was supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, easily recognizable in their bright orange T-shirts. Their energy and smiles created an

atmosphere of joy, reinforcing the sense that this was more than a meal, it was a gathering of neighbors, friends, and family. Volunteers moved swiftly serving plates and offering kind words to guests. Their presence underscored the collective commitment to Harlem's well-being.

Jacob's Restaurant has always been about more than food. It is a place where relationships are nurtured and community bonds are strengthened. Harlem's greatest asset is its people, and Jacob's has become a central hub for connection and care. The restaurant's longstanding partnership with First Baptist Church further demonstrates its dedication to service. Together, they have organized food drives, outreach programs, and initiatives that extend support beyond the holiday season.

This Thanksgiving event is not simply about tradition, it is about legacy. Jacob's embodies what it means to operate with love, respect, and commitment to one's roots. In a neighborhood rich with history and culture, the restaurant stands as a beacon of generosity. Year after year, it reminds Harlem that community thrives when people come together to share meals, stories, and compassion.

As the day wound down, the line outside eventually disappeared, but the impact of Jacob's generosity lingered. Guests left with full meals, carrying with them the reminder that Thanksgiving is not only about food, but about gratitude, fellowship, and the enduring power of community. Jacob's Restaurant continues to prove that when love guides service, the result is a tradition that nourishes both body and soul.



Rachid Niang, Kim Lum Chan Niang (owners)



Pastor John Davis of First Baptist Church on 8th Ave with Chef David (manages 8th Ave location)



# PONDER THIS! Looking Around for a Christmas Tree



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

The Christmas tree has evolved into one of the most celebrated icons of any season. Before the trees were considered the décor for the holidays, they were simply fragrant evergreens that served as a source of joy during the harsh winter months.

The Christmas tree tradition can be traced to 16th-century Germany, where Christians began to decorate trees. The tradition of adding lights to the tree branches is attributed to Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation movement in the 1500s as he was inspired by the stars in the night sky and wished to re-create the scene in his own home using candlelight.

Despite the Christmas tree's roots in Christianity, most Americans refused to adopt the tradition at first because they believed it to be attached to pagan beliefs. The tradition was mostly contained to Germany until the late 1700s and early 1800s.

The Puritans of New England upheld strict views of Christmas, and people were

severely punished if they celebrated or decorated in any way.

Most people believed the holiday was so sacred that a church service was the only appropriate way to celebrate. The solemn observance of Christmas continued until Irish and German immigrants began to settle in America and established their own traditions despite the Puritan rule.

German settlements, particularly in Pennsylvania, decorated community trees in the late 18th century, and soon the trees started to show up in the individual homes of German families. But most of the country was still skeptical.

Decorations like ornaments (often imported from Germany) became more popular in the late 1800s, and

homemade decorations like cookies and garlands made from popcorn and berries became creative ideas.

There are many types of Christmas trees and finding the perfect one is questionable. Is it prone to drying out quickly? Are the branches sturdy enough to hold numerous ornaments?

The most common types of Christmas trees are firs, spruces, and pines. These are trees that grow and thrive in various locations. The most popular species are the: Scotch Pine from the Scottish Highlands with dark green foliage and widely spaced branches; Sugar Pine is one of the tallest pine tree species in the world, found in the Sierra Nevada mountain range of the Pacific Coast features long for-

est-green pine needles; White Spruce found across Canada features bluish-green needles and it must be watered regularly to prevent needle loss; Blue Spruce native to the Rocky Mountains of North America is popular for its fragrance, and strong branches; Balsam Fir found in the Northeast and the Appalachian mountain range is known for its spicy scent; Douglas Fir is Oregon's official state tree characterized by its pyramid shape and fragrant needles; Fraser Fir is found in the forests of North Carolina featuring dark green needles with silver undersides.

The tree that is best for your family depends on what you are looking for. However, if you want the beauty and realism of a Christmas tree but do not want to worry about

watering it, dealing with sap, cleaning up dried needles, consider investing in an artificial Christmas tree.

Today, they are more realistic than ever before. With options like pre-lit branches, realistic textures, and convenient storage. Artificial trees offer an appealing alternative to real ones.

Whatever your decision may be as to decorating your home, do not forget the reason for the season is more important than lights and ornaments.

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

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# Roxanne Brown, The First African-American and the First Woman President of the United Steelworkers Union



Brown noted, “When people think about our union, there’s an image that comes to mind that does not look like me. But...we are the most diverse union in North America, in terms of our sectors and membership.”

She recognizes the importance of transcending stereotypes and advocated for a more inclusive image representing the diversity within the union. Amidst the intricate challenges of tariffs and economic pressures, uncertainty remains a theme. Brown explains, “This current environment of tariffs is not strategic and creates uncertainty... not just for sectors but for our ability to use the tools we’ve relied on for survival.”

Brown is poised to take on these challenges head-on with strategies rooted in education, engagement, and advocacy at all governmental levels. She affirmed the union’s commitment by saying, “Engage, engage, engage—because we are charged to do that on behalf of our membership.”

In discussing the broader significance of her leadership and that of fellow African American union leaders, Brown reflects, “Leadership should always reflect who is being led...I’m opening the door so that others know what is possible.”

“It is not about us alone; it is about what we represent and showing what is possible to our members who look like us,” she said.

In a significant moment for the labor movement, Roxanne Brown, set to become the first African American woman elected as President of the United Steelworkers (USW), North America’s largest industrial union, joins Make It Plain with Rev. Mark Thompson. With the official transition happening in March, Brown’s ascent is more than just a personal achievement; it represents a shift in the labor movement’s leadership reflecting the demographics of today’s workforce.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, she moved to New York at the age of two and was raised by what she affectionately refers to as “the Amazons”—a family of strong, single women who were deeply involved in healthcare and unions. Her first exposure to the labor movement came through the nurses union and AFSCME’s CSEA in New York. This early influence clearly set the stage for what would

be a lifelong commitment to labor rights and leadership.

Reflecting on her path to this esteemed position, Brown shared, “I cut my teeth in our policy shop, and I had to learn about our core issues and our core values. I literally spent my entire career fighting on behalf of our members across so many sectors.”

The USW under Brown’s leadership will be setting the tone with what she believes is a much-needed representation change. Brown emphasized, “We are the most diverse union in North America...we’re cradle to grave and have everything in between.”

With a membership boasting varied backgrounds, Brown’s leadership is a reflection of this diversity, as the board she is set to lead will be its most diverse in the union’s history.

Leading a predominantly male union presents its unique set of challenges.

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# A Big City of Small Businesses



By Mayor Eric Adams

New York City is a big city of small businesses — mom and pop shops, bodegas, food trucks, restaurants, and more — and there’s no better time for our businesses to shine than the holiday season. The holiday season adds \$500 million to the city’s economy through increased spending and foot traffic — and this goes back into New Yorkers’ pockets, making the city more affordable for working people.

Last year, during a single day — Black Friday — over 1 million people visited Manhattan retail hubs like Bryant Park, Times Square,

and SoHo alone. Retail hubs like Jamaica and Flushing in Queens, Fordham Road in the Bronx, and Metrotech in Brooklyn, all saw year-over-year increases in foot traffic on Black Friday as well.

This data also underscores the importance of the holiday shopping season for our city’s tourism sector. On Black Friday 2024, two-thirds of Times Square visitors were from outside the city and roughly half were from outside the metro area. It should come as no surprise that New York City retains its appeal as a global holiday destination.

Thanks to steps our administration has taken to make our city safer and more livable, we are now in the eighth straight quarter of crime declines and New York City now has the most small businesses in our city’s history.

Additionally, since the start of 2024, more than 16,000 New York-

ers have attended a Jobs NYC Hiring Hall, which has resulted in more than 5,000 on-site interviews and over 2,000 conditional job offers. And since we know financing and accessing capital is crucial to the success of small businesses, our NYC Small Business Opportunity Fund has awarded more than \$85 million in capital to 1,000 small businesses since launching in 2023. In total, our administration has facilitated more than \$350 million in financing to small business owners and entrepreneurs since we came into office less than four years ago.

Today, more than one in four businesses operating in New York City were created under our administration. In January 2022, as one of my first actions as mayor, I signed the “Small Business Forward” Executive Order to save small businesses an estimated \$8.9 million in reduced fines

and advanced an education-first approach to help small businesses survive. When you combine our efforts to cut red tape with our NYC Business Express Service Team’s work helping small businesses navigate city bureaucracy and avoid fees and fines, we’ve saved small businesses over \$70 million.

Small businesses are the cornerstone of our economy and the heart of our communities. They support families and help the many diverse neighborhoods across our five boroughs thrive. I encourage every New Yorker to go out and support your neighborhood stores and spend locally. New York City is where dreams are made, and we want every small business to get their slice of that dream and deliver opportunity for the working-class people of our city.



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# Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



By Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

You must admit, in today's housing market becoming a first-time homeowner is nearly impossible. Although the prices of homes have leveled off a little, they are still very high. In addition, we are still experiencing an overly aggressive sellers' market. This means the demand for affordable properties is greater than the supply. The competition for almost any reasonably priced property is outrageous. This coupled with the fact that interest rates are still around 6.0% simply means many Harlem residents are finding themselves literally out in the cold. Their monthly gross income simply cannot afford the cost of a mortgage payment.

This means that achieving the American dream of homeownership is quickly fading away and all that remains is a glimmer of hope.

But if there is hope, there is still a chance to become a first-time homeowner. Regardless of how small that ray of hope may be, you must remain positive. You must work harder, but that's alright, you will appreciate your home much more because of the effort you had to make.

Do not get discouraged, if you believe homeowner is worthwhile. If you are tired of paying your landlord's mortgage, then continue to believe that you can and will become a first-time homeowner! Put together your personal purchasing plan. Remember if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. Set a projected purchasing date. This is your home buying target. Stay focused on your goal. Do not allow anything to stand in your way.

Dare to dream! Do not give up on your dream of becoming a homeowner. Understand this is a fight and you must be willing to make some major sacrifices, but you can be victorious. Your financial resources, your credit history and monthly income will play a huge role in buying a home. I know the odds are stacked against you. But so what? The odds

have always been stacked against you. But you have been able to beat the odds just to survive.

You need to have faith in God and faith in yourself that you can accomplish this goal. If you start thinking negatively about the situation it will become overwhelming and you will never achieve your goal of becoming a homeowner.

Think positive. I met with a family from the community recently who told me once their dream of becoming homeowners. They wanted to remain in Harlem and mapped out their personal purchasing plan. They posted their goal throughout their apartment. They told their children we are going to buy a house this year.

They work hard and never gave up on their dream. They eliminated all wasteful spending from their budget. They were pre-approved by a bank and made an offer that the owner accepted. With God all things are possible, if you only believe.

For more information on the home buying process contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at 212 281 4887 ext. 231 or email [cbutler@hcci.org](mailto:cbutler@hcci.org).

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# HARLEM EVENTS

**Dec 11-Dec 28, 7-10PM**

**Make It a Night to Remember at the Holiday Train Show at Bronx Botanical Gardens**

Let roving train conductors welcome you to experience the Holiday Train Show® in a whole new light as we illuminate the exhibition for Holiday Train Nights—lively after-dark celebrations where you can sip seasonal cocktails and mocktails under the glass of the warm and twinkling Haupt Conservatory. Find card-worthy photo ops at every turn as you explore a miniature cityscape of familiar landmarks brought to life by model trains zipping to and fro. Bop along to holiday classics and Christmas pop favorites sung by performers, enjoy sweet and savory bites for purchase, or hop over to the “Bar Car”—back this year with a 21+ bar at the Hudson Garden Grill Patio. You can even get your holiday shopping done at NYBG Shop. It’s the perfect night out, whether you’re planning a memorable date or a wintertime gathering with friends! Tickets Non-Members – starting at \$43

**Dec 11– Jan 2**

**ANNUAL WREATH INTERPRETATIONS EXHIBIT RETURNS TO NYC PARKS’ ARSENAL GALLERY**

NYC Parks is decking the halls for the 43rd year of Wreath Interpretations, featuring nearly 40 handcrafted, imaginative wreaths at the Arsenal Gallery. This year’s unique wreaths are crafted using unexpected materials and motifs to add a touch of novelty to the holiday season. Made of inventive materials like Legos, aluminum, and packing peanuts and covering subjects like the subway system’s switch to OMNY, these wreaths as diverse as the group of artists who crafted them, including many Parks employees. The Arsenal Gallery is located on Fifth Avenue & 64th Street, 3rd Floor. This event is FREE and open to the public. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/parks/art](http://nyc.gov/parks/art). Groups of five or more people can call 212-360-8143 or email [artandantiquities@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:artandantiquities@parks.nyc.gov) to pre-register

**Dec 11, 7:30–8:30 PM**

**Carnegie Hall Citywide Concert – Dave Guy**

Free live jazz/soul trumpet performance by Dave Guy, presented in partnership with Carnegie Hall. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located at 515 Malcolm X Blvd, New York, NY 10037

**Dec 15, 6:00 PM**

**Holiday Caroling at The Forum**

Every Voice Choirs lead a festive community singalong with traditional and modern holiday songs. The Forum at Columbia University located at : 601 W 125th Street, New York, NY 10027

**Dec 20,**

**NYSOM HolidayMania**

Family holiday festival with games, performances, and giveaways for children and families. East Harlem Tutorial Program, located at 2050 Second Avenue, New York, NY 1002

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Dec 18 Harlem School of the Arts



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## Holiday

### NUTCRACKER VIEWING SHOWCASE

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# Uptown Dance Academy “Nutcracker” - Dec 20

Uptown Dance Academy (UDA), is excited to celebrate 30 years of providing dance education as an artform in Classical Ballet, Acrobatics and Contemporary), medians. UDA will also showcase vignettes from its famous “Harlem Nutcracker” and introduce its new home The Agora Space / Uptown Dance Academy, located at 309 East 108th Street. (Between 1st and 2nd Avenues) UDA long standing and highly respected arts institution, has been providing dance education for the mosaic of young people in East, West and Central Harlem for three decades. In previous years, UDC has featured ballet artistic phenomenon Misty Copeland as its Sugar Plum Fairy prior to her ascension to Prima Ballerina at the internationally famous American Ballet Theater. Ms. Copeland, a “Prophecy Artist” per (Dancer, Artist, Actress, Producer / Director and recent Oscar

Winner) Ms. Debbie Allen, was instrumental in securing a \$250,000 donation to UDC from grammy award winner and legendary artist Prince before his untimely death.

This year’s unique performance will start at 7PM sharp and will showcase highlighted segments of the Nutcracker Ballet with cultural infusions as well as a VIP Reception and Tour of its new home. 30th anniversary tickets are \$100.00 and can be purchased on Eventbrite or by visiting <http://Uptowndanceacademy.com>.

Robin Williams started dancing at the age of 4 and hasn’t stopped dancing yet. Born in Detroit, Michigan, Ms. Williams is recognized as one of New York’s highly respected choreographers and dance training principals. She is credited for exposing classical dance to school children in the Harlem area. Performing abroad and throughout the United States, Ms. Williams was a principal dancer with

Dance Theatre of Harlem’s Ensemble, and Ballet Long Island. Her most rewarding performance to date, however, is fulfilling the dreams of young people every day at the Uptown Dance Academy, which she founded.

Ms. Williams has Certifications with the Bolshoi Ballet Academy of Russia, Horton Technique from Alvin Ailey, Acrobatic Arts, and is an American Ballet Theater Certified Partner Teacher. She is NYC’s most diversified African American classical ballet teachers, having studied with Tanaquil Leclerc, wife of George Balanchine, Clifford Fears and Talley Beaty from Katherine Dunham Company, Ilya Gaft from the Kirov Academy. She also studied with Vicky Simon and Willie Burman (New York City Ballet) Elena Kunikova (Top Russian Choreographer from Vaganova school, and David Howard (World’s Top Ballet teacher). In 2015 she was selected to be a Fellow at the School of American

Ballet. Ms. Williams’ teaching career began to flourish as instructor for the Harlem School of Arts, Mind Builders, and Professional Performing Arts School. Realizing that young dancers, especially minorities, needed more than the principals of dance to survive in the world of the arts, she formed the Uptown Dance Academy. Since opening its doors, Ms. Williams and her staff are dedicated to assisting urban youth as they embark on careers in dance and the arts, giving advice on additional education and skill development. Under her guidance, students of the Academy have been selected for commercials, movies and Broadway Shows. They have also won beauty pageants and Competitions. Her students have been accepted into, Laguardia, Professional Performing Arts School, Julliard, American Ballet Theater, Bolshoi Ballet Academy of NY, Seven (7), Dance Theater of Harlem and the



Lion King. Khalia Campbell soloist of Alvin Ailey was trained at UDA.

in choreography and Black Theater. She is a member of the Harlem Business Alliance that honored her as Entrepreneur of the Year in 2018.

As a choreographer, she has created an innovative style of dance which is a fusion of ballet, contemporary, acrobatics, and jazz. Her choreography won the 2009 and 2014 McDonald’s Gospel fest, and an Audelco Award for Innovation

For further information or to schedule interviews with Ms. Robin Williams, contact Raymond P. Lewis, at 929-228-2239 or [rpleventsandpr@gmail.com](mailto:rpleventsandpr@gmail.com)



# The 2025 Christmas Spectacular Celebrates Rockettes 100th Anniversary

by Audrey J. Bernard

The annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular Starring the iconic Radio City Rockettes officially kicks off the exciting Holiday Season in New York City while setting the stage for unforgettable fun! The start of this year's celebration was unlike all others as it celebrated the Rockettes milestone 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Before the epic Opening Night on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, Jessica Tuttle (Executive Vice President of Productions, MSG Entertainment) spoke onstage to honor the more than 500 current and Legacy (former) Rockettes who came from all over to join the festive celebration of New York's most favorable holiday show which has been extended through January 5, 2026 due to overwhelm-

ing demand.

To commemorate the Rockettes 100th anniversary, audiences who attend the Christmas Spectacular this year will be able to experience unique activations onsite at Radio City Music Hall that celebrate the history and legacy of this incredible line of women, including archival displays and costume retrospectives. Fans will also have access to special Rockettes 100th merchandise at Radio City Music Hall and online at [www.shoprockettes.com](http://www.shoprockettes.com).

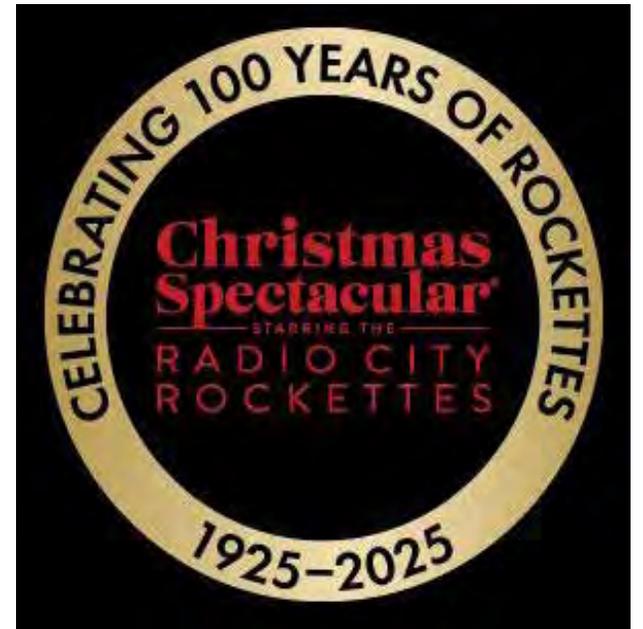
The 2025 Christmas Spectacular will also mark the debut of Sphere Immersive Sound at Radio City, bringing the nearly 100-year-old venue into the future and making it the best sounding theater in the world. Sphere Immersive Sound uses next-generation

3D audio beamforming and wave field synthesis technology to transform how audio is delivered. The result is controlled, consistent, and crystal-clear audio for audiences – whether you're in the front row of the orchestra or the back of the third mezzanine, the audio experience, including the volume, remains the same. With more than 7,000 speakers, this technology will substantially improve the audio experience at Radio City.

A staple of the magical holidays in New York City, the awe-inspiring Christmas Spectacular features intricate choreography performed by the incomparable Radio City Rockettes throughout nine show-stopping numbers. The production, which can only be seen at Radio City Music

Hall, blends classic numbers that audiences know and love, such as "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," with innovative technology that extends the show beyond the stage – including digital projections, holographic animations, fairy drones, and the world's most advanced audio system – Sphere Immersive Sound. Since it opened at Radio City in 1933, the Christmas Spectacular has brought holiday joy to more than 72 million people from around the world.

Come and experience the magic of Christmas Starring the Rockettes which has been going strong since 1925 and holds the title of being the longest-running precision dance company in America. The Rockettes have been part of Americana throughout their his-

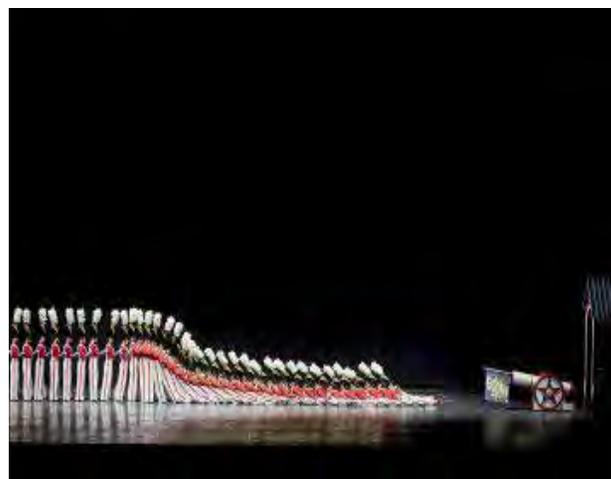


tory, entertaining hundreds of millions of people and appearing at some of the biggest events in entertainment over the last century. The star-studded Opening Night was attended by VIPs who added to a memorable evening. Tickets for the

2025 Christmas Spectacular, taking place during the Rockettes milestone 100th anniversary, are on sale now at [www.rockettes.com/christmas](http://www.rockettes.com/christmas) (Photos courtesy MSG Entertainment)



Carla Hall & Radio City Rockettes



## Voza Rivers Legacy Series Celebrates Emerging Voices in Theater and Film

The Inaugural Voza Rivers Legacy Series officially kicked off on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, with a lively Press Day held at The City College of New York (CCNY). Presented by New Heritage Theatre Group (NHTG), in partnership with The City College of New York, the event, which was preceded by a competitive citywide open mic contest, brought together the series' visionary producers, industry leaders, and the promising new talent selected from the groundbreaking series dedicated to uplifting the next generation of Playwrights and Screenwriters.

"Today we not only honor the legacy of storytelling but to actively create and present the next generation of storytellers," shared the esteemed Voza Rivers. "The talent joining us is phenomenal, and we look

forward to sharing their voices with the creative community."

The Press Day centered around the five winning writers of the Open-Mic Competition, three of whom were in attendance to share their creative journeys. The celebrated group included screenwriter Syndie Helsop (Little Girl Blue), and playwrights Eric Richardson-Hagans (If Only Yesterday)—a student at The City College of New York—and Allison Shillingford (At the Table). Tony Award-winning Producer Irene Gandy added, "The energy at CCNY was electric. We believe in providing real opportunities, and this series will give these five winners the visibility and resources they deserve to bring their work from the page to the stage or screen."

The Voza Rivers Legacy Series is the brainchild of a

powerhouse production team: legendary producer Voza Rivers, Tony Award-winning producer Irene Gandy, Amy Sprecher, and Aaliytha Stevens. This series is dedicated to fostering diverse, innovative storytelling and providing a crucial platform for emerging writers in theater and film. The series is supported, in part, by West Harlem Development Corporation, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, the Nederlander Organization, and the Shubert Organization.

The Voza Rivers Legacy Series is much more than an artistic competition; it is a commitment to continuing the legacy of its namesake. Voza Rivers' six-decade career has left a profound mark on Harlem and the global arts landscape.

Known for his humility, generosity, and tireless commitment to uplifting new talent, Rivers has made remarkable contributions across theater, film, music, dance, and social justice. His efforts have fostered vibrant, safe, and inclusive spaces for creativity, and empowered generations of artists to share their stories both locally and around the world. As the man famously responsible for bringing the iconic South African musical *Sarafina!* to Broadway, Rivers maintains a deep, vital connection to the global diaspora. The Legacy Series is specifically designed to continue this work by nurturing new multidisciplinary voices from historically marginalized communities, including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and artists with disabilities, with accessibility and inclusion standing as its core principles.



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# Mayor Adams and Others Open \$11 Million “Harlem Field of Dreams” Renovated Athletic Field at Historic Harlem Brigadier General Charles Young Playground

Mayor Eric Adams was today joined by New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, New York Yankees All-Star CC Sabathia, and members of the Harlem community to celebrate the \$9 million transformation of a dilapidated dirt field at Brigadier General Charles Young Playground in Harlem into a state-of-the-art 150,000 square foot multi-sport synthetic turf field, also known as the “Harlem Field of Dreams.” The plan for the now completed project was first announced in Mayor Adams’ 2025 State of the City address earlier this year.

This revitalization project is a key component of a collaborative policing strategy led by the Adams administration, city agencies, and local community-based organizations aimed at transforming the relationship between communities and law enforcement. It builds on the administration’s upstream approach to public safety in New York City, which invests in free programming to keep young people safe and engaged when not in school. By focusing on youth development and violence prevention initiatives, the Adams administration continues to invest in a safer and more connected future for everyone — already contributing to a significant reduction in major crimes across the five boroughs, especially in shootings and homicides.

“If you build it, they will come, and today, we are announcing the completion of the ‘Harlem Field of Dreams’ as we make children’s dreams come true,” said Mayor Ad-

ams. “This \$11 million project not only fulfills another one of our State of the City commitments by transforming a once-dilapidated field into a vibrant and enriching space where more than 800 young people can play baseball, football, soccer, and lacrosse, but also upholds our promise to making the smart, upstream investments that prevent crime in the first place. Today, we are giving hundreds of families both a safe place to send their children and an outside space for them to grow in as we continue to make New York City the best place to raise a family.”

“Today, we are proud to officially open the newly renovated athletic field at Brigadier General Charles Young Playground. The ‘Harlem Field of Dreams’ is now a reality — a space where Harlem’s young people and families can come together, play, and thrive,” said NYC Parks Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa. “With a new synthetic turf field that supports multiple sports and expanded community programming, we are not only providing state-of-the-art facilities, but also creating lasting opportunities for health, connection, and growth. By honoring the legacy of Brigadier General Charles Young, this field will continue to inspire future generations for years to come.”

“Giving back has always been at the heart of everything I do,” said CC Sabathia, founder, PitCCh In Foundation. Through the PitCCh In Foundation, we’re proud to support spaces that empower young people to dream, grow, and thrive. This field represents opportunity, resilience, and community—val-

ues that shaped me growing up and continue to inspire me today. New York has become my second home, and I’m honored to help build brighter futures right here.”

The newly renovated athletic field at Brigadier General Charles Young Playground now accommodates five sports — baseball, softball, soccer, football, and lacrosse. The upgrades to the park include improved drainage and water detention, a new synthetic turf surface, drinking fountains, fencing, backstops, benches, dugouts, and a sports mister.

The \$11 million project was funded through approximately \$7.5 million in law enforcement asset forfeiture funds from the New York / New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program, in partnership with the New York City Police Department and the New York City Police Foundation, along with contributions from former New York Yankees pitcher CC Sabathia’s PitCCh In Foundation, Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players’ Association Youth Development Fund, the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation, the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, and the New York City Council.

The renovation builds on earlier improvements made by the Adams administration in 2023, including new asphalt and fencing for the main basketball court, repairs and new coatings for three basketball courts, and the conversion of one court into a soccer pitch. The field house bathrooms are also set to be upgraded with \$2.5 million in



funding provided by the Mayor’s Office, the City Council, and the Manhattan Borough President’s Office.

In addition to the capital improvements, free youth sports programming will be offered on the new field through the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development’s Saturday Night Lights program. This initiative gives young people safe spaces to play, while building trust between law enforcement and communities — helping youth develop skills and relationships that will support their future success.

The project reflects the Adams administration’s holistic approach to public safety, which begins with investing in programs and opportunities that keep young people safe and engaged. Last year, Mayor Adams announced the city’s first indoor baseball center in Washington Heights to provide year-round training, launched a new Saturday Night Lights website to better connect families with free sports programming, and pledged \$163 million over five years to expand



some of the city’s most successful youth programs in his State of the City address earlier this year. Mayor Adams also committed to opening more schoolyards in underserved neighborhoods for after-school, weekend, and summer use — ensuring that thousands more New Yorkers are within a 10-minute walk of safe, supportive spaces to play.



## Holiday Health Check: Tips to Prevent Muscle Decline During Weight Loss

(StatePoint)  
**A**s the holiday season rolls in, with its festive feasts, travel plans and cozy indulgences, it's easy to let your health goals slip into the New Year's resolutions pile. But while you're managing your weight or trying the latest trending diets, there's one vital part of your health that deserves extra attention this time of year: your muscles.

In today's world of trending weight-loss hacks, shedding pounds has never seemed more accessible. But while the number on the scale may drop, there's an important — and often overlooked — part of your health that might be taking a hit: your muscle mass.

From miracle diets to powerful GLP-1 weight loss injections, millions of people are embracing today's science to achieve rapid weight loss — but many report significant muscle loss, too. In fact, studies show that up to 40% of weight loss can come from muscle, not fat.

And muscle loss isn't just a fitness issue, it impacts your metabolism, energy levels, balance, and long-term ability to stay active and independent. During the holidays, when rich foods and busy schedules collide, supporting muscle health becomes especially important for staying strong, energized and resilient.

Whether you're trying to maintain your weight through the season or

jumpstart healthier habits, here are some smart ways to keep your muscle mass merry and bright:

- Prioritize protein in your diet
  - Incorporate strength training at least 2–3 times per week
  - Stay active daily — even light movement helps
  - Focus on nutrient-rich whole foods over strict calorie counting
  - Incorporate a krill oil supplement into your daily routine, it's been shown to help preserve muscle and support sustainable weight loss
- Krill Oil: Protecting Muscle During Weight Loss**

Did you know that krill oil naturally supports muscle function, enhances

movement and protects joints? It also helps combat aging, oxidative stress and inflammation at the cellular level. Backed by science, krill oil offers a proactive way to maintain muscle health — key to aging well.

Recent research has shown that krill oil supplementation can help preserve muscle strength and fat-free mass during dieting, particularly when paired with strategies like alternate-day fasting. In overweight and obese adults, krill oil supported functional strength, reduced inflammation, and helped ensure that weight loss did not come at the expense of muscle mass, protecting metabolism and long-term health.

Unlike typical omega-3



sources, krill oil delivers a natural complex of phospholipids, omega-3s, choline and astaxanthin in their most bioavailable form — nutrients that work synergistically at the cellular level to support muscle, metabolism and overall wellness.

To learn more, visit <https://www.superbakrill.com/blog/how-krill-oil-can-help-address-a-hidden-risk-in-weight-loss-muscle-loss>.

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This holiday season, give yourself the gift of health: keep your muscles strong, your metabolism humming, and your body ready to take on the new year.

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# “True Love” in For Pricey Holiday Shopping Season According to Data

(StatePoint)

**T** rue Love is at it again this holiday season – and paying more than ever. According to PNC’s Christmas Price Index (CPI), the final price tag to buy all of the gifts in the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” comes to \$51,476.12 this year, headlined by drastic increases in the price of gold and the famed partridge’s Pear Tree.

For more than 40 years, PNC has tracked the price of the birds, entertainers, and other gifts that comprise the classic holiday song as part of its Christmas Price Index, a light-hearted take on the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index. Fulfilling True Love’s shopping list will cost 4.5% more in 2025 than it did in 2024, outpacing the BLS index, which rose 3% from October 2024 to October 2025.

“This year’s index reflects

pressures from a tight labor market and lingering global economic uncertainties,” said Amanda Agati, chief investment officer of PNC’s Asset Management Group. “However, tariffs are not a driver at all because True Love’s shopping list only includes domestically produced goods and services.”

**Highlights from this year’s index:**

• **The gold standard**

For two years the price of The Five Gold Rings stayed flat, but that brief run of stability is over. The rings jumped by 32.5% – the biggest increase in the CPI this year. That’s an actual annual price increase of more than \$400, reflecting a surge in gold prices overall. Inflation, expected Federal Reserve interest rate cuts, and a declining U.S. dollar have pushed investors to precious metals in 2025.

Overall, just more than half the gifts rose in price in 2025. Aside from gold, the biggest movers were the Partridge and the Pear Tree, and the Ten Lords-a-Leaping. For the former, the overall 13.5% increase is entirely attributable to the Pear Tree, reflecting increases in the price of labor, land and fertilizer and also serving as a proxy for U.S. housing costs.

The Ten Lords-a-Leaping have consistently grown in price over the life of the index – aside from 2020 pandemic restrictions on live entertainment. The lords remained the highest priced overall gift in the index at \$15,579.65 and are a reflection of the growing cost of performers. The four entertainment-related gifts all increased in price in 2025, with the aggregate price increasing by 5.4%.

• **Status quo for birds**

Aside from the Six Geese-

a-Laying, which rose by 3.3% this season, the other four gifts consisting entirely of birds cost the same as they did in 2024.

Historically, the bird gifts are some of the most consistently priced in the CPI, with both the Four Calling Birds and the Seven Swans-a-Swimming remaining unchanged for more than a decade. The Swans – formerly the most expensive gift in the index are only roughly \$5 more than they were in 1984. Despite their consistency, their elevated total price of \$13,125 has historically inflated the index, leading to a “core index,” which measures growth in the CPI independent of the Swans. This year that grew by 6.1%.

• **Online shopping relief**

Trekking from store to store for all these goods can be cumbersome, but it’s ultimately cheaper than fulfilling True Love’s list online for



\$55,748.05 – shipping and packaging all those birds is expensive.

• **Getting technical**

If you’ve ever heard or sung “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” you know the verses repeat after each gift is introduced. If you’re feeling traditional and wanted to buy all the gifts as the verses repeat, you’ll pay the “True Cost of Christmas,” which is \$218,542.98 in 2025.

PNC’s Christmas Price Index is now in its 42nd year.

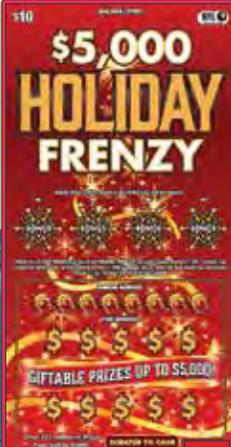
Visit the PNC Christmas Price Index website for more information and interactive charts.

“With the Fed’s recent focus on looser monetary policy, it will be interesting to see where the CPI shakes out in 2026,” says Agati. “Will we get the gift of substantially lower inflation, or will still-elevated inflation be the proverbial lump of coal in shoppers’ and investors’ stockings? It all depends on whether the purple haze of policy uncertainty dissipates in the new year.”



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# URBANOLOGY: The African Unconscious



By William A. Rogers

“The African Unconscious” by Edward Bruce Bynum is a well-researched scholarly work that follows the development of the early human race which began in Africa and migrated throughout the world.

The foundations for many of the cultures and religions that we know today can be traced to early Egypt. The

Ta-Seti the world’s oldest known civilization for many years was considered the mother of ancient Kemet (Egypt). There is now research that shows that there were twelve Nubian Kings who ruled in the Middle East before the first Egyptian dynasty.

When we talk about the golden years of ancient Egypt, we now understand the great minds that developed the science, religion and technology were Nubian. This knowledge was erased from European history (or his-story) by scholars who Bynum describes as “sophisticated prostitutes” and during that time the big money was in capitalism, slavery and the expansion of Europe into Africa and the Americas.

In time according to By-

num it became inconceivable in the West that black Nubian Africans could have made the great accomplishments of early Egypt. To this day many still believe that the early Egyptians were white or mixed, but not black.

A fine example of this attempt to change history can be found in museums that have exhibits of ancient Egyptian art. The noses of many of the figures are disfigured or completely missing.

When Napoleon marched through Southern Egypt and discovered the Great Sphinx, one of the greatest monumental sculptures of the ancient world; carved out of a single ridge of limestone he had his artillery shot off the Nubian nose. Even though it was suppressed for centuries the knowledge of ancient Egypt

still holds an unconscious present in the culture of the Western world.

The politics of religion forced this knowledge underground yet the majority of great minds in the arts and sciences were members of secret societies who studied Hermetic philosophies of ancient Egypt, Da Vinci, Newton, Shakespeare, Jung, and Marx to name a few.

The Founding fathers of America were mostly Masons or Rosicrucians. Thomas Jefferson was a Rosicrucian, Benjamin Franklin was the grand master of the Philadelphia Masonic Lodge, and George Washington was initiated into a Masonic lodge in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Washington D.C. our nation’s capital has many relics and references to the wisdom

of an ancient society led by Africans who were Nubian, even our American currency has symbols of ancient Kemet. Is it any wonder why this information until only in recent times was kept away from Africans in America. Some will read this and say so what?

Knowledge is power would be my first response. There is a conscious and/or unconscious relationship to Africa in all members of the human race. It is important for Africans throughout the world to learn the wisdom developed by their Nubian ancestors; wisdom that has been used and kept secret for the purpose of control. The ancient Egyptian phrase “Know Thy Self” was considered the first step towards enlightenment.

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By Zakiyyah

## HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE

### Healing Foods in the Kitchen - Part 1

Most of the illnesses and diseases we experience are a direct result of the types of foods we eat, and don’t eat. More often than not, we forget that “herbs are nature’s medicine.” A place in our homes that is bursting with healing herbs/foods is the kitchen. Preparers of food hold the power of health, and can redefine “health care” and the quality of “medicines” with what can be found in the kitchen. In their natural states, almost all our foods, spices and condiments have healing properties.

**BLACK PEPPER** (rids congestion) taken with gin-

ger and pure/raw honey eliminates excess mucus, eases asthma and other lung congestive disorders: 1 part honey, ¼ part black pepper (ground peppercorns only) and ½ part ginger (powdered) – take 1-3tsp daily or as needed. Black pepper is a natural antihistamine and stimulates the immune system, strengthens the eyes, improves digestion, and relieves constipation and gas.

**ROSEMARY**, which is often used to season breads and meats, is useful for bad breath, coughs, headaches, and bronchitis, when taken as a tea (and asthma when made into a syrup with

equal parts mullein and coltsfoot); as a heart stimulant, a liver tonic and to alleviate gas/indigestion, low blood pressure, menopause, nervousness, poor circulation, Rheumatism, premature balding, dandruff, urinary problems and wounds/sores

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*This information is to help balance your body’s natural healing energies, and is not intended as diagnosis, treatment or cure. Email: theherbalist1750@gmail.com; phone: 347-407-4312; blog: www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com.*

### Answers to Crossword on page 17

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# "Bloom How You Must: A Black Woman's Guide to Self-Care and Generational Healing" by Tara Pringle Jefferson

Review by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor  
You've just about had it.

Everything and everybody is on your last nerve, which marks the official end of any self-restraint you might've had. You're out of patience, out of breath, out of any shred of willingness to give things more time. You're out of cares. Nope, as of now, and in the new book "Bloom How You Must" by Tara Pringle Jefferson, you're taking care of you now.

All it took was a minor health crisis.

With two kids, a freelance business, and eighteen hour days, Tara Pringle Jefferson had been experiencing a lot of pain that she usually powered through – until she couldn't anymore. Her doc-

tor examined her, then told her to take the weekend off. Seriously, rest.

This made Jefferson think. For generations, Black women had made sure what needed doing was done. How did they cope under oppression, overwork, few resources?

Looking into the lives of influential Black women in history, she discovered the secret: self-care. Even Coretta Scott King took time away from Martin and the family, Jefferson says. Black women have a legacy of self-care that's usually passed down from mother to daughter, and it's up to each woman to make sure she finds what makes her feel complete

again.

Jefferson offers ways to get you started.

Physical Wellness reminds you to moisturize your skin, eat right, get enough sleep, and enjoy the body you have. Host a sister circle for Social Wellness. Find your own definition of success for Professional Wellness. "Do church" in a new way for Spiritual Wellness. Don't let a need for Mental Wellness to be stigmatized. Find your inner child, learn to play again, and tap into your Creative Wellness. And know that you are a child of survivors who gave you strength but who also passed down intergenerational trauma, so be gentle and kind to yourself. Remember: you're still rehabilitating.

As with most self-help books, "Bloom How You Must" is full of a lot of commonsensical things you probably already know. Also, as with most self-help books, it's always nice to be reminded, with the info you need all in one place.

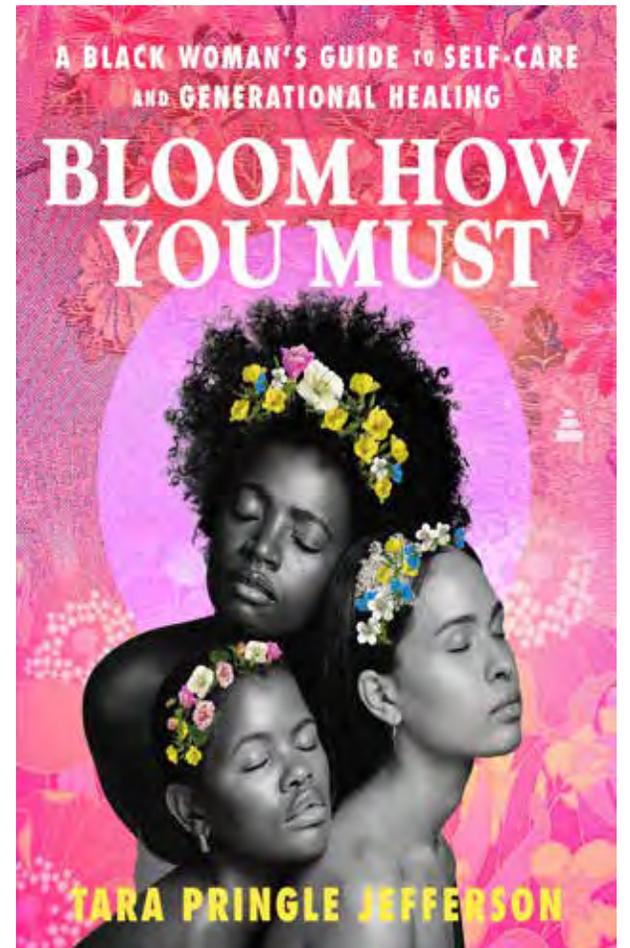
The best thing about this self-help book is that author Tara Pringle Jefferson focuses exclusively on the self-care and well-being of Black women only. In doing so, she reaches into history to remind readers that the stress they're experiencing today is a modern problem, but it's also nothing new. The care she advocates, therefore, has tinges of ancestry, which is comfortable but can also be surprising, in that she candidly discusses sex, relationships, and changing the way readers approach their spiritual well-being. Readers

who are open and willing to change for better health and happiness may be taken aback by that, but it's undoubtedly also going to leave you thinking.

Men who are curious can absolutely read this book but it's not for them – it's purely for Black women who need help they can only get from inside. If that's you, then find "Bloom How You Must." Because you must have it.

"Bloom How You Must: A Black Woman's Guide to Self-Care and Generational Healing" by Tara Pringle Jefferson

c.2025, Amistad  
\$28.00  
304 pages



## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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**HOT FOOD:** SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN, COLLARD GREEN, WHOLE OVEN BAKED TURKEY, CANDIED YAMS, SPAGHETTI WITH MEAT 'N' TOMATO SAUCE, SWEET FRIED PLANTAINS, BAKED CHICKEN, HONEY B.B.Q CHICKEN WINGS, BAKED SALMON, WHITE RICE, YELLOW VEGETABLE RICE, BEEF SHORT RIBS, B.B.Q PORK RIBS, RICE AND BEANS, MACARONI & CHEESE, SWEET BUTTERED CORN, LIMA BEANS, OXTAILS, STRING BEANS, STEAMED CABBAGE, HERB ROASTED POTATOES, MASHED POTATO, CORN BREAD, JERK CHICKEN, SMOTHERED PORK CHOPS, SMOTHERED CHICKEN, CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE, MEAT LOAF, BUFFALO WINGS, CURRY CHICKEN, CURRY GOAT, CHICKEN STUFFING, PIG FEET.

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