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As 2026 Midterms Draw Near, Healthcare Becomes Dominant Issue

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

A looming clash over ACA subsidies and sweeping Medicaid cuts sets the stage for 2026, as Republicans and Democrats battle over policies that could strip millions of coverage, raise costs, strain hospitals, and worsen health inequities amid an already consolidating, high-priced healthcare system.(Photo via NNPA)

As we turn the corner to 2026 and the midterms, one might expect gridlock, as campaign fundraising and election-related lawsuits squeeze out any hope for legislation. Yet, in the ever-increasing buzz of political messaging, healthcare is taking a front seat, a Gallup poll showing 74% of Americans favor extension of the ACA subsidies. This puts Republicans on the defensive as another potential shutdown looms and as millions face lost coverage driven by new rules and budgets.

Since Democrats pushed for extension of the ACA credits, the Trump Administration has considered a two-year extension, with some reforms, PBS reported. Yet, after years of trying to tear down government healthcare, the Republican's reactive approach to recent polling may make putting together a real plan challenging, given the short period of time remaining before year's end.

Whether or not the subsidies are extended, healthcare costs will grow as the number of Americans covered shrinks, noted Tomas Bednar, Senior Vice President and Counsel of healthcare policy consulting firm Healthsperian at a November American Community Media briefing. And though the most expensive drugs will see price reductions negotiated under the Biden Administration beginning in January, rising healthcare, especially hospital

See SUPREMACY, Page 11

Inside...

People In The News ...

Jimmy Cliff

H. Rap Brown

NDG Quote of the Week:

"We have learned to fly the air like birds and swim the sea like fish, but we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers. Our abundance has brought us neither peace of mind nor serenity of spirit." - Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Crisis Created by Trump's Death Threats

- See Page 3

AI Could Help with Screening, Diagnosis

- See Page 4

17 Children Find Love, Family

- See Page 5

Big Moves Made for STEM

- See Page 6

Rising Star Releases Holiday Cheer

- See Page 7

Cowboys' Shocking Comeback

- See Page 8

'Wicked: For Good' Ain't Half Bad

- See Page 9

Sister Tarpley: Looking Backward

- See Page 15

Jimmy Cliff

By Lauren Burke

Philippe Jimenez / Wikimedia

The six-decade career of legendary artist Jimmy Cliff, who was born in the Somerton District of Jamaica, was one of the most influential in reggae history and a global ambassador for Jamaican culture. Cliff was raised in a rural farming community and began writing songs as a child.

His family moved to Kingston as a teenager to pursue his music. What followed over the next thirty years was legendary.

Cliff's wife, Latifa Chambers, wrote on Instagram in the early morning hours of November 24 that, "It's with profound sadness that I share that my husband, Jimmy Cliff, has crossed over due to a seizure followed by pneumonia. I am thankful for his family, friends, fellow artists, and coworkers who have shared his journey with him. To all his fans around the world, please know that your support was his strength throughout his whole career. He really appreciated each and every fan for their love."

She then thanked Cliff's doctors and medical staff.

Jimmy Cliff and Bob Marley shared a parallel rise within Jamaica's dynamic 1960s music scene, each shaping the emerging sound of reggae while carving distinct artistic identities.

The two maintained a relationship marked by mutual respect and an understanding of each other's cultural impact. Cliff, who achieved international recognition earlier, particularly through "The Harder They Come," helped open global doors that Marley would later rocket through as he became the reggae genre's most iconic figure. Marley would, in turn, push the music's political aspects to new heights, which Cliff openly admired.

Their relationship was defined less by collaboration and more by a shared mission: Elevating Jamaican music onto the world stage and using it as a vehicle for storytelling, struggle, and liberation.

Jimmy Cliff achieved his breakthrough moments with a series of socially conscious songs in the 1960s. They included "Many Rivers to Cross," "You Can Get It If You Really Want," and "The Harder They Come." That song became part of a movie soundtrack that would introduce reggae to international audiences and build Cliff's image as a pioneer of the genre. Cliff would become second only to Bob Marley in shaping reggae's global reach.

Over the decades, Cliff continued to change musically and fuse reggae with rock, pop, and world music influences. But he always maintained sharp political and emotional clarity in his songwriting. Jimmy Cliff's musical collaborations included work with the Rolling Stones, Elvis Costello, and Annie Lennox.

Cliff's contributions earned him induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2010, making him one of the few reggae artists to be inducted into the Hall. Known for his charismatic stage presence and unwavering commitment to political messages of resilience, Jimmy Cliff will remain an enduring icon whose music has spoken across generations from Jamaica and beyond.

Jimmy Cliff is survived by his children, Lilty Cliff, Aken Cliff, and Nabiyah Be.

H. Rap Brown

Wikimedia via NNPA

H. Rap Brown did not wait for permission to define himself. Long before federal agents called him a menace and politicians wrote laws in his name, he was a young man from Baton Rouge who believed the country needed an honest confrontation with its own history. Long before he died at 82 in a federal medical facility in North Carolina, he had already become Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, a name he adopted after turning to Islam inside Attica.

"Violence is necessary. Violence is a part of America's culture. It is as American as cherry pie," he said during the height of the Black Power movement.

Brown grew up fighting his way to and from school. He was sent to a Catholic orphanage for discipline and learned early that resistance required both strength and wit. He earned the nickname "Rap" for his unmatched wordplay on the streets of Baton Rouge. His political direction began with his older brother, Ed Brown, who introduced him to the Nonviolent Action Group at Howard University, where Brown met future movement leaders like Courtland Cox, Muriel Tillinghast, and Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael later described him as a serious and strong brother whose calm presence inspired confidence.

By 1967 Brown became chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at just 23 and immediately pushed the group to remove the word "nonviolent" from its name. His speeches captured the rage of Black communities across America. He reminded audiences that Black people had waited a century after emancipation for promises that never came. "Black folk built America, and if it don't come around, we're gonna burn America down," he told crowds from college campuses to street corners.

Federal authorities responded with surveillance and suppression. FBI COINTELPRO documents placed him on a list of four men considered top targets to disrupt. Congress passed the federal anti-riot statute in 1968 and openly called it the "H. Rap Brown Law." When asked for comment, Brown rejected the idea that a statute could contain widespread fury. "We don't control anybody," he said. "The Black people are rebelling."

His arrest record grew as law enforcement pursued him across states. In 1971 he was wounded in a police shootout in New York, denied the charges, and was convicted of robbery and assault. He served five years in Attica. That time behind bars reshaped him. The foreword to "Die Nigger Die" describes his spiri-

See BROWN, Page 11

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Trump's Death Threat Rhetoric Sends Nation into Crisis

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

Image via NNPA

President Donald Trump has again shocked the conscience of the nation with his latest outburst. This time, the president accused six Democratic lawmakers of sedition and declared their conduct "punishable by DEATH" as he reposted calls on social media to "hang them" and demanded their arrest.

The president's words landed with a violent weight, particularly as he continues to publicly support and pardon individuals convicted of attacking the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Trump himself has long faced allegations of encouraging sedition by praising the rioters who erected gallows and hunted his own vice president.

The president escalated his attacks after the lawmakers, all veterans or former intelligence officers, released a video urging members of the military to refuse unlawful orders.

Trump responded with a barrage of posts accusing them of treason and sedition and sharing messages declaring "HANG THEM GEORGE WASHINGTON WOULD."

In one post, Trump wrote that their behavior was "punishable by DEATH," calling their message "really bad, and Dangerous to our Country."

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic Whip Katherine Clark, and Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar released a statement that said political violence must never be normalized.

"Political violence has no place in America," they stated. "Donald Trump must immediately delete these unhinged social media posts and recant his violent rhetoric before he gets someone killed."

Members of Congress across the country denounced Trump's language. Representative Norma Torres said the president's words represented a direct threat to democracy.

"The President of the United States is calling for Members of Congress to be executed," Torres stated. "We will not be intimidated. We will not be silenced."

The six Democratic lawmakers at the center of Trump's attacks include Sens. Elissa Slotkin and Mark Kelly, and Reps. Jason Crow, Chrissy Houlahan, Maggie Goodlander, and Chris Deluzio.

In a joint statement, they reaffirmed their oath to the Constitution. "No threat, intimidation, or call for violence will deter us from that sacred obligation," they stated. "This isn't about politics. This is about who we are as Americans."

Trump's accusations arrive as concerns grow about his willingness to issue illegal orders and expand the use of military force both abroad and domestically. A CNN analysis noted that Democrats are responding to a pattern in which Trump has repeatedly floated illegal military actions.

The analysis cited his past suggestions involving torture, shooting protesters in the legs, and ordering strikes that violated international law.

Lawmakers who served in uniform said the president's charges distort the law. Maine Senator Angus King said the Democratic lawmakers simply reminded service members of a basic principle.

"All these people said was common knowledge," King stated. "Military officers are not required to follow illegal orders. That is simply a statement of fact."

The reaction among members of Congress has been swift, wide, and unusually unified. Even Republican Senator Susan Collins condemned Trump's words.

"The president should not be calling for the death of members of Congress because of what they say," Collins stated. "Such incendiary comments risk sparking political violence."

Texas Democrat Al Green, who has repeatedly sought Trump's impeachment, said allowing this rhetoric to stand threatens constitutional order.

"On our watch, we refuse to allow the demise of our democracy," Green said on the House floor as he renewed his call for impeachment proceedings.

As the warnings mount, the six lawmakers targeted by the president said they will not retreat from their oath.

"In these moments, fear is contagious, but so is courage," they stated. "We will continue to lead and will not be intimidated. Don't Give Up the Ship."

New Artificial Intelligence Model Could Speed Rare Disease Diagnosis

(Newswise) — Every human has tens of thousands of tiny genetic alterations in their DNA, also known as variants, that affect how cells build proteins.

Yet in a given human genome, only a few of these changes are likely to modify proteins in ways that cause disease, which raises a key question: How can scientists find the disease-causing needles in the vast haystack of genetic variants?

For years, scientists have been working on genome-wide association studies and artificial intelligence tools to tackle this question. Now, a new AI model developed by Harvard Medical School researchers and colleagues has pushed forward these efforts. The model, called popEVE, produces a score for each variant in a patient's genome indicating its likelihood of causing disease and places variants on a continuous spectrum.

DWG Studio

In a paper published Nov. 24 in Nature Genetics, the scientists show that popEVE can predict whether variants are benign or pathogenic (disease-causing) and which variants lead to death in childhood versus adulthood.

The model was able to identify more than 100 novel alterations responsible for undiagnosed, rare genetic diseases.

"Our goal was to develop a model that ranks variants by disease severity — providing a prioritized, clinically meaningful view of a person's genome," said co-senior author Debora Marks, professor of systems biology in the Blavatnik Institute at HMS.

The team hopes that popEVE can help clinicians diagnose single-variant genetic diseases — especially rare diseases — more quickly and accurately. The model could also be used to identify new drug targets for genetic conditions.

The tool complements efforts across the HMS community to conduct research, build AI tools, and engage in nationwide collaborations to improve the diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases.

Turning EVE into popEVE

As genomic sequencing has become more accessible, physicians have had access to an increasing amount of information about their patients' genetic variants.

However, for variants whose link to disease remains poorly understood, identifying which of those variants are responsible for a patient's condition tends to be time-consuming, inefficient, and sometimes fruitless. As a result, many patients with rare or unique genetic diseases remain undiagnosed for years.

Several years ago, the Marks Lab developed a generative AI model called EVE that uses deep evolutionary information from different species to learn patterns of mutations that are highly conserved in biology. EVE can then make predictions about how variants in human genes affect protein function.

But EVE couldn't easily compare variants on different human genes to determine which might be the most problematic for health. The same is true of other variant prediction models that have emerged in recent years, the researchers said.

The team believed that finding a better way to compare variants across genes might help clinicians choose which variants to prioritize in their research when trying to diagnose and care for patients, said Rose Orenbuch, a research fellow in the Marks Lab and lead author on the new paper.

To create popEVE, the researchers added two components to EVE: a large-language protein model, which learns from the amino acid sequences that make up proteins, and human population data that captures natural genetic variation. In doing so, they were able to calibrate the model so that the score it produces for each variant can be compared across genes.

Because popEVE combines cross-species and within-species information, it reveals how much a variant affects protein function as well as the importance of that variant for human physiology, Marks explained.

Putting popEVE through its paces

When the researchers tested popEVE on documented variants and case studies, they found that it successfully:

• Distinguished between pathogenic and benign variants.

• Discerned healthy controls from patients with severe developmental disorders.

• Determined whether a variant was likely to cause death in childhood or adulthood.

• Assessed whether an alteration was inherited or occurred randomly, even

See PopEVE, Page 7

Current Heart Attack Screening Tools Are Not Optimal and Fail to Identify Half the People Who Are at Risk

(Newswise) — NEW YORK - Current cardiac screening tools used to prevent heart attacks fail to identify nearly half of the people who are actually at risk of having one, according to a new study led by Mount Sinai researchers. The results, published in a brief report on November 21, in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Advances, expose a major flaw in patient care: that following current screening guidelines may cause missed opportunities for early detection of heart attacks and prevention.

The researchers assessed the accuracy of a widely used tool, the atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) risk score, and of a newer measure, called PREVENT, which adds variables and is intended to provide a more comprehensive estimate of cardiovascular risk along with symptomatic screening .

"Our research shows that population-based risk tools often fail to reflect the true risk for many individual patients," says corresponding author Amir Ahmadi, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. "If we had seen these patients just two days before their heart attack, nearly half would NOT have been recommended for further testing or preventive therapy guided by current risk estimate scores and guidelines.

"This study suggests that the current approach of relying on risk scores and symptoms as primary gatekeepers for prevention is not optimal," Dr. Ahmadi continued. "It may be time to fundamentally reconsider this model and move toward atherosclerosis imaging to identify the silent plaque – early atherosclerosis- before it has a chance to rupture."

In current practice, doctors calculate a patient's ASCVD risk score during annual primary care visits. This is typically done for people between 40 and 75 years old without known heart disease. This score estimates a person's 10-year risk of having a heart attack or stroke using factors such as age, sex, race, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and smoking status. Physicians use the ASCVD or PREVENT calculators to guide decisions about preventive treatment, including whether to start statin therapy.

Cardiologists also rely on these same risk calculators as a guideline. Patients with intermediate or high scores are typically prescribed cholesterol-lowering medication and may be referred for additional testing. Those with low or borderline scores, especially if they have no symptoms like chest pain or shortness of breath, are often reassured and sent home without further evaluation. However, this study found that if patients who had their first heart attack had been evaluated two days earlier, nearly half of them would have been labeled as low or borderline risk and not recommended for preventive therapy by ASCVD, and more than half of them would have been

See HEART, Page 5

Seventeen Dallas youth find permanent families on National Adoption Day

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Dallas County District Court judges and court officials donated their time to finalize the adoptions of 17 children living in foster care, helping them join loving, permanent families at the annual National Adoption Day celebration. Amidst a courthouse decorated with balloons, the event for joyful families featured costumed superheroes to celebrate the families, as well as first family portraits with professional photographers and many special activities to mark this life-changing occasion.

Courtesy photo

Dallas CASA coordinated the event, which brings together children, families, Dallas CASA volunteers, Child Protective Services staff, judges and attorneys. Judge Delia Gonzales and her staff donated their time to preside over adoptions. Officials from the Dallas County Sheriff's Office, the District Clerk's office, Henry Wade security staff, the Dallas County Child Welfare Board and the Dallas County juvenile department were in attendance. Chairs of the event are SanJuana Ramirez, Nicki Stafford and Lisa Truppa, members of the Dallas CASA Children's Council.

The event took place on the 3rd floor of the Henry Wade Juvenile Justice Center.

National Adoption Day is celebrated in more than 400 communities nationwide, with more than 90,000 children adopted from foster care since its inception in 1999. In Texas, nearly 6,000 children are currently eligible for adoption. The goal of National Adoption Day is to recognize the importance of adoption and celebrate the families who open their hearts to children in need of loving homes.

Dallas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) seeks to protect children, restore childhood and help child victims of abuse or neglect achieve their full potential.

The agency's trained and supervised community volunteers are assigned by judges to advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are living in the protective care of the state. For many children in foster care, their Dallas CASA volunteer is the only consistent, caring adult in their lives during a frightening, uncertain time. Dallas CASA envisions a day when all children experience safe childhoods and grow into resourceful, healthy adults.

Now in its 45th year, Dallas CASA serves more children than any of the more than 900 CASA programs nationwide. Since 2019, Dallas CASA has been able to accept 100% of court appointments to Dallas County child welfare cases.

Volunteers are needed, to learn more, visit the Dallas CASA website (dallascasa.org).

(You can find more photos in our online edition at northdallasgazette.com.)

HEART, from Page 4

so labeled by PREVENT.

To assess the effectiveness of current screening tools, researchers did a retrospective analysis on data from 474 patients under age 66 with no known coronary artery disease. All patients were treated for their first heart attack at Mount Sinai Morningside and The Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City between January 2020 and July 2025. The team collected personal information including patient demographics, medical history, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and when their symptoms, defined as chest pain or shortness of breath, first appeared. For each patient, the 10-year ASCVD risk was calculated and a simulated assessment was performed as if the patient had been evaluated two days before their heart attack. Patients were divided into four risk groups: low (under 5 percent), borderline (5-7.5 percent), intermediate (7.5-20 percent) and high (more than 20 percent).

The results focused on two main factors: who would have qualified for preventive treatment based on their risk score, and when symptoms began. Overall, 45 percent of patients would not have been recommended for preventive therapy or diagnostic testing under current ASCVD-based guidelines, and this number increased to 61 percent when using the newer PREVENT calculator. Most patients (60 percent) did not develop symptoms such as chest pain or shortness of breath until less than two days before their cardiac event, showing that symptoms often appear too late to help with changing the course of disease. Together, these findings reveal a critical gap in current prevention strategies: patients who appear healthy by standard measures may already have significant, silent heart disease. Relying solely on risk scores and symptoms delays diagnosis until it is too late for prevention.

"When we look at heart attacks and trace them backwards, most heart attacks occur in patients in the low or intermediate risk groups. This study highlights that a lower risk score, along with not having classic heart attack symptoms like chest pain or shortness of breath, which is common, is no guarantee of safety on an individual level," says first author Anna Mueller, MD, an internal medicine resident at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. "Our study exposes a major flaw where tools effective for tracking large populations fall short when guiding individualized care. Instead, doctors should shift their focus from detecting symptomatic heart disease to detecting the plaque itself for earlier treatment, which could save lives."

Researchers say more studies are needed to further this work, and future research should focus on optimizing strategies to enhance early detection and prevention including cardiovascular imaging.

DWG Studio

RRC Engages Texas Educators at CAST 2025 to Support STEM Learning and Classroom Resources

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) demonstrated its commitment to public engagement and education by participating in the Convention for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST) from November 13–15, 2025, in Dallas.

The RRC shared a booth with the University of Texas at Austin's Hildebrand Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering (PGE), connecting with more than 3,000 STEM K-12 teachers from across Texas.

Organized by the Science Teachers Association of Texas, CAST is the state's premier professional development event for science educators. Throughout the convention, RRC staff highlighted the agency's role in energy regulation and environmental stewardship, while showcasing K-12 classroom resources available online.

These materials introduce students to real-world applications of geology, engineering, and energy production, with resources tailored by grade level.

By engaging directly with educators, the RRC aims to build lasting partnerships that support classroom learning and create opportunities for future outreach events, including career days and other educational initiatives.

The RRC expressed gratitude to UT Austin's PGE Department for providing the opportunity to attend CAST and for its support in inspiring the next generation of energy professionals.

Educators or organizations interested in requesting an RRC speaker for events can visit the Commission's public engagement page. Additional information about CAST is available on the official convention website.

Host Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on Slate for New $100 Million STEM Facility at UNT Dallas

The University of North Texas at Dallas (UNT Dallas) will celebrate the grand opening of its new $100 million STEM facility on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025, at 9 a.m. The four-story academic building is the most significant capital addition in the university's history and will open for student instruction in January at the start of the Spring 2026 semester. The ribbon-cutting and program will begin at 9 a.m.

The innovative building includes 18 to 20 classrooms, nine teaching labs for biology and chemistry, three research laboratories, a large event space, multiple study and collaboration areas, faculty and staff offices, and a dedicated student STEM center. Students preparing for medical or professional health careers will also have access to the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) space, enhancing opportunities for advanced academic preparation.

The new STEM facility represents a major step in UNT Dallas' plan to expand access to high-demand degree programs and strengthen the pipeline of highly skilled STEM graduates for North Texas employers. The building will support academic pathways into healthcare careers, including medical, nursing, and pharmacy school, as well as graduate programs in science, technology, medicine, and wellness.

The project is expected to support economic growth in southern Dallas through

See STEM, Page 13

Rising Star Señoj Brings Holiday Magic With Two Festive Favorites

Acclaimed singer, songwriter, and producer Señoj rings in the season with two festive tracks, the timeless classic "Santa Baby" and her original composition "Only On Christmas Day", now available on all digital streaming platforms.

These holiday releases showcase Señoj's signature blend of R&B charm and contemporary pop sensibilities, delivering warmth, joy, and her unmistakable vocal style to listeners everywhere.

"I wanted to create songs that bring people joy and put them in the holiday spirit," says Señoj. "Santa Baby and Only on Christmas Day are my way of celebrating the magic of the season while sharing a little fun, love, and cheer with my fans."

Youtube

Señoj's take on the timeless holiday favorite "Santa Baby" brings a fresh and playful energy to the classic tune. With her sultry vocals and signature R&B/pop flair, she delivers a fun, flirty, and glamorous performance that highlights the song's cheeky charm while making it her own. She balances the nostalgic holiday appeal with contemporary style, creating a version that feels both familiar and delightfully new.

Her original "Only on Christmas Day" captures the bittersweet and reflective side of the holiday season. The song tells the story of feeling a sense of longing and loneliness that surfaces just once a year during Christmas while balancing the playful anticipation of holiday gifts and surprises.

Through heartfelt vocals and emotive storytelling, Señoj explores the complexity of holiday emotions including hope, nostalgia, and the desire to be remembered by someone special all wrapped in a warm, festive musical setting.

Music videos for "Santa Baby" and "Only On Christmas" are available on Youtube.

Señoj's rising momentum is backed by strong industry recognition. Her breakout track "Running" was highlighted by SoundCloud, which named her a "new pop diva" and compared her unique R&B sensibilities to artists such as Ariana Grande, NAO, and Sinead Harnett. SoundCloud praised her "alluring style of modish R&B" and celebrated her vocals as "the perfect tone for a contemporary pop song."

A classically trained pianist and vocalist who also plays guitar, Señoj has collaborated with renowned industry heavyweight Slikk, a multi-platinum, Golden Globe, and GRAMMY-winning producer known for work with Ariana Grande, Chris Brown, Lil Wayne, and Tamala Mann.

Expanding her artistry, Señoj made her acting debut in the 2023 independent film Pressure, starring as Rachel, a young woman navigating life-altering decisions. The film garnered "Fan Favorite" honors at a Charlotte, North Carolina film festival.

Her music has also reached the big screen with her track "Leave It Alone" featured in the Amazon Prime film The Morning After. Beyond entertainment, Señoj is a thriving entrepreneur and co-owner of The Naked Bar, an Atlanta-based vegan dessert company.

She has graced prominent stages such as the Black College Expo Tour and is a recipient of the Ella Fitzgerald Songwriters Scholarship at the Grammy Songwriter's Camp. Señoj also recently released her empowering single "OK", further highlighting her artistry and confident presence in R&B.

With her holiday singles lighting up the season and her artistic growth continuing to accelerate, Señoj stands out as one of the most exciting emerging voices in R&B and pop today. As she looks forward to 2026, fans can anticipate more music, creative projects, and unforgettable performances from this rising star.

Stream "Santa Baby" and "Only on Christmas Day," available now on all digital streaming platforms.

Follow Señoj on Instagram at @senojmusic.

PopEVE, from Page 4

without having parental genetic information.

Importantly, the model did not show ancestry bias by performing worse in people from underrepresented genetic backgrounds and did not overpredict the prevalence of pathogenic variants.

The researchers then applied popEVE to a cohort of around 30,000 patients with severe developmental disorders who had not yet received a diagnosis.

"These are diseases that we assumed were genetic and caused by a single variant based on their severity, but the variant hadn't been found," said Orenbuch.

The analysis led to a diagnosis in about one-third of cases.

Perhaps most notably, the model identified variants on 123 genes linked to developmental disorders that had not been previously identified — essentially finding the likely genetic causes of the disorders.

In fact, 25 of these genes have since been independently confirmed by research in other labs to cause the disorders.

"We think prioritizing variants based on predicted disease severity will improve the odds of diagnosis and ultimately pave the way for better treatment and drug discovery," Marks said.

Dallas Delivers Stunning Comeback to Beat Defending Champions

By Jamal Baker
NDG Sports Writer

DWG Studio

In a game that truly was a tale of two halves, the Dallas Cowboys overcame a 21-point deficit to stun the defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday at AT&T Stadium.

Cowboys kicker Brandon "Butter" Aubrey walked the game off with a game-winning 42-yard field goal to seal a 24-21 victory.

How were the Cowboys in a position to pull off an improbable upset win over the Eagles? Let's start from the beginning.

Each of the Eagles' first three possessions resulted in touchdowns, while the Cowboys opened with a turnover on downs, a punt, and a lost fumble.

"Yeah it's what we've talked about from the beginning," head coach Brian Schottenheimer said following the game. "You know, you've heard me say it 1,000 times. You can't win the game in the first quarter, second or third, but you win the game in the fourth quarter. Man, we just talked about that. We shot ourselves in the foot.

"I told them that, but I told them to believe. Believe in each other, believe in the fact that we'll find a way to do it. And I think today really epitomized a lot of things that those guys have been believing and doing, and it's great to get that win against a damn good football team."

Quarterback Dak Prescott had himself a day—posting 354 passing yards and three total touchdowns, including one where he turned back the clock and somersaulted into the end zone on a scramble.

"Just take it one play at a time," said Prescott. "We have to find that unique place that I was talking about — being down. We've had it almost going with every game with that mindset. We have to win every game. With that being said, you can only do that by winning every play and giving it your best every play. When you do that, can stay focused, and finish with elite execution, you're going to feel confident and good about what you've done.

Let's also give wide receiver George Pickens his flowers. The former Georgia Bulldog had nine receptions on nine targets for 146 yards and a touchdown.

Pickens is a bonafide superstar and the Cowboys need to give him whatever he wants when it is time to negotiate his new contract this summer.

"It's hard for me to say [Pickens] exceeds my expectations," said Prescott. "My expectations are limitless with that guy, and he'll tell you, he's not from here. I am sure you all read his article [in the Player's Tribune]. He's not from here. He's not from this planet."

"I'm not gonna put limitations on him. … The guy loves the game, stays focused, and the communication, I know I've mentioned before, but [he talks] to other guys in the huddle about staying focused and to just keep doing what they're doing."

While the offense certainly did its part in the victory, you can't mount a comeback without stopping the opposing team series after series.

The Dallas defense stepped up in a huge way by not allowing a single point in the final 41.5 minutes against the Eagles.

New Cowboys DT Quinnen Williams is a true game-wrecker and makes everyone around him better.

Remember when the Cowboys could not stop the run? Over the last two weeks, the Cowboys have allowed just 90 total yards on the ground.

"I think everybody's taking accountability and trying to do the things that we can individually do to win football games. You got guys like [DeMarvion] Overshown coming back, he's playing great football. You got Logan Wilson here, and you got guys in the defensive line room who have just been balling and doing the things that they can do to win football games." Williams said.

"I think we're hitting our stride and it's all coming together. Like I always say, one person can't change everything around, I can't go out there and do everything on my own. Nobody can. This is a team sport, and I just think we're all putting our heads together and executing as one."

The Cowboys improved to 5-5-1 on the season and are preparing for a Thanksgiving Day matchup against the Kansas City Chiefs. With little to no room for error at this point of the season, every game should be treated as a must win if Dallas wants to make the postseason tournament.

Enjoy the ride Cowboys fans, and let's see if Dallas can go on a late season run.

DTC and NTFB Join Forces to Bring Hope This Holiday Season

The Dallas Theater Center (DTC) and the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) are celebrating the season of giving with a partnership that combines the power of art and generosity. During this year's run of A Christmas Carol, DTC audiences can help provide meals for North Texans facing food insecurity.

Patrons attending A Christmas Carol can contribute through monetary donations after each performance or by donating nonperishable food items in the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre lobby. Every dollar collected helps provide three nutritious meals for neighbors in need.

"As we reflect on the Cratchit family's humble meal in A Christmas Carol, it reminds us how meaningful it is to share food with the people we love," said Sarah Burns, Vice President of External Affairs for the North Texas Food Bank. "Too many of our neighbors struggle to put food on the table, even during the holidays. Thanks to DTC and its audiences, we can help ensure families across North Texas can enjoy this season with full hearts and full plates."

"As the preeminent professional theater in North Texas, Dallas Theater Center is proud to create Tony Award-winning theater in, for, and with the community we serve," said Kevin Moriarty, Executive Director of Dallas Theater Center. "Our partnership with North Texas Food Bank allows us to give back in meaningful ways—through service, aware-

See DTC, Page 13

Film Review: 'Wicked: For Good' Ain't Half Bad

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

Courtesy photo

(***1/2) "I've heard it said. That people come into our lives for a reason…"

That poet lyric is from the song "For Good," arguably the second most famous tune from the Broadway musical Wicked. The words hint at the theme of this final half of the Wicked duology, which has been magically created by screenwriters Winnie Holzman and Dana Fox and manifested brilliantly by director extraordinaire Jon M. Chu.

Their 2024 film version of Wicked, a stroke of genius, earned $750M+ at the international box office, becoming the most successful Broadway musical adaptation of all time. It was also nominated for 10 Academy Awards and won two. Nominations: 1.) Best Achievement in Makeup and Hairstyling. 2.) Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures. 3.) Best Sound. 4.) Best Achievement in Visual Effects. 5.) Best Motion Picture of the Year. 6.) Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role (Cynthia Erivo). 7.) Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role (Ariana Grande). 8.) Best Achievement in Film Editing (Myron Kerstein). Wins: Best Achievement in Production Design (Nathan Crowley, Lee Sandale) and Best Achievement in Costume Design (Paul Tazewell).

The difference in 2025 is that Wicked: For Good could sweep all those previous categories and give Chu a directing award for making arguably the best Broadway-to-screen film of our times. The visuals and sounds are exquisite and enchanting. The acting is superb, with Erivo and Grande finding and using all the nuances in their two lead characters to make them truly iconic. They blur the lines between frenemies, bosom buddies and jealous sisters. Credit the script and direction for building the personas and the two women for developing the characters to the fullest extent.

Chu, ever the mastermind, corrals and manages all the moving parts superbly. The elaborate sets, sound effects and music. Exhilarating action scenes that break up the high drama and romance. Intimate moments of discovery and retrospect. It's like you're drawn into the lead and supporting characters lives as they figure out who they are, who they love, who'll love them back and who must pay for the misdeeds they've done.

It's hard in the film's first twenty minutes to remember all the details of the previous chapter and bring them forward. Pity anyone who didn't see the first adaptation and is trying to discern this one without previous knowledge. Regardless, getting reacquainted takes a minute, and songs in the beginning sequences aren't that stunning or memorable. So be patient. Focus your attention initially on the tale that's unspooling. Then eventually, other important aspects kick into high gear too, as the compelling storyline evolves in ways that will intrigue children, teens and adults—right until the end.

As the famed Yellow Brick road is being built by animal labor, Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) is on the lam. She's hunted by the Wizard of Oz (Jeff Goldblum), his henchwoman Madame Morrible (Michelle Yeoh) and the army of fierce flying monkeys they control. Morrible: "The Wicked Witch can't allude us forever!" Both schemers, using lies and deceit, have turned the people of Emerald City against the witch, who's now been deemed wicked. Even the love of Elphaba's life, Prince Fiyero (Jonathan Bailey), heads the soldiers who track her. Elphaba's younger sister Nessarose (Marissa Bode) is bitter that she's been left behind and is grappling with her romantic feelings for Boq (Ethan Slater), a munchkin. Surprisingly, Glinda (Arianna Grande) only seems moderately interested in her friend's plight. Luxuriating in her majesty, flying in a new vehicular wagon sphere, a bubble that floats her up, down and around. All while she's being catered to by her two sycophants Pfannee (Bowen Yang) and Shenshen (Brownyn James).

This can't go on. Animals are fleeing the Land of Oz afraid of arrests or being imprisoned, like Dr. Dillamond (Peter Dinklage). Morrible and the Wizard are becoming more conniving and malicious every day. Lying to their public and blaming Elphaba for all that's wrong. The Wicked Witch of the West becomes crestfallen but never loses her zest for exposing the truth and fighting for the less fortunate. That spirit drives her. Is it enough to counter the rumors, degradation and evils set upon her by those who wish she would melt away?

Unlike the first chapter, in this episode the Land of Oz has an interloper. Dorothy. Yes that Dorothy. Her quest adds an extra winsome tone as the little girl from Kanas, wearing ruby slippers, tries to find her way home with a dog, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion (Colman Domingo) and Scare-

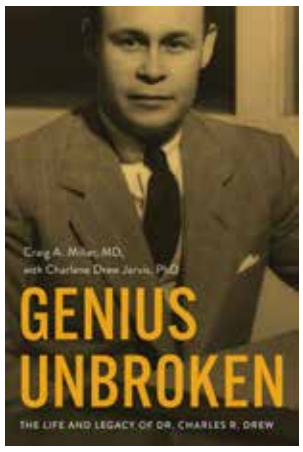
See FILM, Page 10

NDG Bookshelf: 'Genius Unbroken' is Good Medicine for History Buffs

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Stayin' Alive."

That's the BeeGees song to remember, the song with the perfect cadence for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Each beat is a pump; each pump, a lifesaving action, which is handy information to know, if you ever need it. So now read "Genius Unbroken" by Craig A. Miller, MD, with Charlene Drew Jarvis, PhD, and meet the man whose legacy takes over when CPR isn't enough.



Almost from the moment he could walk, Charles Richard "Charlie" Drew was an active boy.

Growing up in Washington DC's Foggy Bottom neighborhood, an area that was more equal than most in the early 1900s, gave him opportunity to explore his surroundings, to get a good education, to learn to swim and to excel at athletics.

Sports and music were his passions then, in fact. But when his younger sister, Elsie, died, and he incidentally learned while attending Amherst College that he enjoyed the study of biology, Charlie decided to be a doctor.

Sadly, there was no money for medical school. Still, he applied to Howard University School of Medicine, which turned him down so he went to work at Morgan College in Baltimore as a teacher before heading to Quebec, where he received a fellowship at McGill University to study medicine. He entered Howard in early 1935, for his residency.

In 1938, he was invited to Columbia University, to work as a fellow in surgery.

Eagerly, he took on extra projects, one of which was the nature of shock, a condition that could lead to circulatory failure and death. Laboratories everywhere were "were dedicated to studying the phenomenon in all its… physiologic complexity." World War II was raging, banked blood would save a lot of lives, and Charlie set to work figuring out how to do it. But one of the questions was "whether to accept blood donated by African Americans" like him…

How many times have you been warned not to judge a book by its cover? Probably a lot, so don't do it here. The cover of "Genius Unbroken" isn't colorful or splashy, yet this may be one of the more interesting books you read this fall. But it does have its bumps.

Authors Craig A. Miller, MD and Charlene Drew Jarvis, PhD belabor Charles Drew's athletic expertise, and the tales of those exploits melt together in their similarities. It may be a safe bet that readers who pick up this book up will want the story of Drew's accomplishments in medicine, instead of a litany of sports tales.

Fortunately, the rest of Drew's life story and that of his career and his activism eventually become front-and-center here, and then you'll be riveted. It helps that the authors are careful to explain the medical parts of the story in layman's terms, making this a book you ultimately won't want to put down.

That "Genius Unbroken" becomes a lively biography is a nice surprise that will appeal to true medicine readers or Black history fans. Look for it, and you'll know who to thank when you're stayin' alive.

FILM, from Page 9

crow in tow. It's a nice touch to what is already an increasingly engrossing storyline. A narrative that gets richer and more fanciful with every frame. The two-hour and 18-minute movie musical swirls to an ending with enough twists to surprise everyone. A finale that strays from the Broadway musical, so even hardcore fans will be amazed.

Chu's direction and the excellent production elements are extraordinary. But perhaps the film's strongest elements are the two leads. They sing well, separately and together. The script gives the lead characters arcs that take them to a revelatory understanding about themselves, each other and life. Erivo and Grande mine the small things and big moments in their characters' journeys. Erivo's Elphaba is brave. Grande's Glinda needs and has the most growth. A wondrous metamorphosis. And both singers' voices are angelic in ways that leave lasting impressions.

You'll have a feeling of nirvana as you watch their relationship grow and learn from their experience. It's a lesson about friendship and how two people can find their way back to each other. All done with a guidance and style way more deserving of Oscar® wins than just nominations.

Elphaba and Glinda summate what audiences will feel when they hear their song "For Good." "I know I'm who I am today. Because I knew you."

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

HEALTHCARE, from Page 1

costs, will make having coverage more crucial than ever.

Stripping almost a trillion dollars from the Medicaid budget over ten years, the Budget Reconciliation Act, H.R.1 is turning back Medicaid to its original function, that of serving the disabled and those at the national poverty level. The budget bill was passed last Summer by Republicans, with no Democrats signing on.

Much of the pain will be felt in the 41 states that signed onto the 2014 Medicaid expansion, which added coverage for 20 million, including earners up to 138% of federal poverty, including those without children. After improving health outcomes and lowering overall medical costs, the cuts will set back American progress while forcing expansion states to either find new funding, reduce expanded coverage, or cut payments to insurers, said Bednar. Otherwise, expansion states will face major budget shortfalls come January 2027, when the Medicaid cuts take effect.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates 10 million people will lose Medicaid, about half of those simply due to the red tape of having to prove they are working, said Amber Christ, Medicare and Medicaid expert and leader of Justice in Aging, an organization working to end senior poverty. If the ACA subsidies are not renewed, an additional 4.2 million will also lose their insur-

See ACA, Page 13

BROWN, from Page 2

tual shift as a change rooted in self-discipline and study, noting that he embraced Islam and emerged committed to building a moral path forward.

After his release, now known as Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, he settled in Atlanta's West End. He founded a mosque, ran a small store, organized youth programs, and worked to rid the neighborhood of drugs. He preached self-control and responsibility. He explained that the Muslim's duty began with teaching oneself and then guiding one's family, adding that successful struggle required remembrance of the Creator along with the doing of good deeds.

For many in Atlanta, he became a trusted spiritual leader. A local Islamic civic leader called him a pillar of the Muslim community. To law enforcement, he remained the militant figure they had pursued in the 1960s. FBI agents infiltrated his religious circle. The New York Times reported that some investigations began shortly after the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993.

In 2000 two Fulton County deputies were shot while serving a warrant. One died. The surviving deputy identified Imam Al-Amin.

He denied involvement. Federal inmate Otis Jackson later confessed repeatedly and under oath to being the shooter. The Fulton County District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit interviewed Jackson but never moved to vacate the conviction.

After Imam Al-Amin's death in federal custody, CAIR and its Georgia chapter renewed their call for justice. CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad issued a statement that read, "To God we belong and to Him we return. Imam Jamil Al-Amin was a hero of the civil rights movement and a victim of injustice who passed away in a prison, jailed for a crime he did not commit." Awad added that the justice system should reopen the case and clear his name.

Brown's life spanned eras of open segregation, mass rebellion, state repression, spiritual transformation, and community leadership. He understood that freedom movements required structure and purpose.

In one of his clearest reflections on struggle, he said liberation movements had to rest on political principles that gave meaning and substance to the lives of the masses. "And it is this struggle," he said, "that advances the creation of a people's ideology."

AI-Powered Holiday Travel Plans May Offer Both Convenience and Risk

(Newswise) — As more people turn to artificial intelligence (AI) for help planning their holiday trips, travelers may be relying on AI tools for everything from flight prices to hotel picks to local recommendations. But while these tools can be helpful, Juan Luis Nicolau, a professor of revenue management in Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business, says they should be used carefully.

"It's critical that people verify everything," Nicolau said. "AI is excellent for idea generation and trip inspiration, but it can be risky to make decisions without independent confirmation. Think of it as a smart first draft, not the final word."

Nicolau said travelers should still do their own research even when AI provides a useful starting point. "Always look at the airline's website, compare hotel reviews across multiple platforms, and confirm local recommendations such as opening hours or transportation schedules," he said. "AI can point you in the right direction, but the details still need human eyes."

He also encourages travelers to be as specific as possible when interacting with AI tools. "Generic prompts lead to generic answers," he said. "If travelers want useful results, they need to tell AI exactly what matters most."

Nicolau recommends asking AI for multiple versions of an itinerary. "Request three itineraries that each emphasize a different focus," he said. "One should prioritize cost, another convenience, and another cultural experience. Seeing the trade-offs laid out helps travelers make better choices."

Privacy should also remain a priority. "People shouldn't paste personal information like passport numbers, booking codes, or home addresses into AI tools," he said. "Common sense privacy still applies."

Looking ahead, Nicolau expects agentic AI systems to play a larger role. "These tools will function more like personal travel assistants that query multiple vendors, scan airlines and hotels for real-time perks such as upgrades or late checkouts, and automatically rebook flights when disruptions are expected," he said. "Future tools will make travel planning more adaptive, personalized, and stress-free."

STEM, from Page 6

partnerships with industry, schools, and regional employers. Nearby developments, including University Hills and Rivulet, exemplify growing investment tied to the campus and reflect the university's role in advancing educational and economic opportunities for the community.

Remarks and ribbon-cutting participation are expected from President Dr. Warren von Eschenbach of UNT Dallas, Chancellor Michael Williams of the University of North Texas System, State Senator Royce West (TX 23), and student Isabelle Chung. Additional invited guests include members of the Dallas City Council, state representatives, area school superintendents, Dallas College trustees, STEM industry partners, and local hospital administrators.

The program will take place at UNT Dallas, 7300 University Hills Blvd., Dallas, TX 75241. Media may park in visitor lots located at the campus' main entrance and should avoid reserved or numbered parking spaces.

This STEM facility represents UNT Dallas' commitment to advancing education in high-demand fields and strengthening the healthcare and STEM workforce pipeline across North Texas.

ACA, from Page 11

ance.

"These cuts undo decades of progress and will drive more older adults and their families into poverty and crisis," said Christ.

These losses will mean overwhelmed emergency rooms, higher death rates, and increasing system costs, noted Senior Director of Health Policy at Families USA, Sophia Tripoli. After the cuts, growing uncompensated costs will mean many hospitals will close their doors, this reducing health access in rural areas and communities of color. While everyone feels the strain, impacts are not evenly distributed, said Tripoli. With fewer providers, rural areas, communities of color, and low-income families will necessarily bear higher medical debt and worse health outcomes.

Insurance rates will also rise for the general public given the smaller, sicker risk pool, she said. Private premiums are projected to grow 25% in 2026, in addition to any losses for the ACA tax credits.

Premium increases, due to high hospital and provider prices, are mainly driven by corporate consolidation and prescription drug costs, said Tripoli. With fewer insurance companies controlling a greater market share, these companies have more power to raise prices. The higher rates also keep wages stagnant as employers absorb added insurance costs, she noted.

As hospitals merge and insurance companies consolidate, healthcare costs tend to increase, said Tripoli. This means higher premiums, higher deductibles, and confusing bills, which don't add up to real costs. "Consolidation and misaligned incentives create a business model where success is defined by getting bigger, gaining leverage and charging higher prices, not by delivering better outcomes," she said.

Part of the problem is the fee-for-service payment system that pays for every test and procedure whether or not it improves health. "It rewards expansion, not efficiency, and it certainly doesn't reward prevention . . . It rewards doing more, not doing better," she noted.

The cuts to Medicaid will also greatly hurt the Medicare system, a program that is propped up by Medicaid and for which people pay in taxes, added Christ. Coverage gaps for dental, vision, hearing, and long-term care are covered by Medicaid in addition to medications, high Medicare premiums, coinsurance, copays, and Medicare deductibles. At-home care, the program which allows people to remain at home and connected to their communities, is also covered under the program. This means Medicaid cuts will be particularly painful, said Christ, since without Medicaid, Medicare becomes basically unusable.

H.R.1 is significantly redistributing household income, Christ added. The bill effectively pays for its tax cuts, a majority of which benefit only the top 10%, by cutting programs for vulnerable populations, like legal immigrants and older adults, who've had increasing poverty rates since 2020. The planned SNAP and Medicaid cuts of 3% will reduce low incomes by $1,200 while moving the highest incomes 3% ($13,600) in the other direction, she said.

It is also ending Medicare eligibility for millions of lawful immigrants, including people who've been paying into the program for years, who'll not be able to afford marketplace coverage without ACA credit extensions, she said. This, as new green card application rules consider immigrants who access benefits a risk of growing too reliant on government services, explained Bednar, effectively barring them from the system.

And since serious disease is more costly than preventative care, overall health costs will rise as people fail to get checkups. Though new requirements for nutrition education in medical school and preventative measures under Robert F. Kennedy Jr. may help some down the line, deep cuts to research and staff under his leadership could put the public at greater risk, especially considering his efforts to limit vaccine access. This includes replacing decision-making staff at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the posting of scientifically disproven information on the CDC website. These measures alone could increase prices significantly down the road.

We need members of Congress to come from both sides and make systemic changes addressing root causes of high premiums, urged Tripoli. This means requiring hospitals and health plans to disclose prices before care is given. It means stopping plans from exaggerating patient health risks to gain higher payments. It means drug companies no longer raise prices through patent abuses. It means stopping predatory billing rates because a procedure is performed in a hospital. It also means modernizing the system so providers are not rewarded for the number of services but for keeping people healthy, said Tripoli.

DTC, from Page 8

ness, and raising funds that support their vital mission to end hunger. We are honored to stand alongside the Food Bank during our annual production of A Christmas Carol, which reminds us all that the true spirit of the Christmas season is found in caring for others."

Adapted by Moriarty from Charles Dickens's timeless story, A Christmas Carol follows Ebenezer Scrooge on his redemptive journey through Christmases past, present, and future. With music, magic, and heart, this Dallas favorite continues to bring audiences together in celebration of generosity and hope.

Tickets for A Christmas Carol are available at dallastheatercenter.org or by calling (214) 522-8499. The production runs November 28 through December 27 at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre.

Fall Fell Way Too Soon This Year

By Dr. James L. Snyder

This summer was the best I have had in a long time. I enjoy summer because the weather is always warm, sometimes even hot.

I was so focused on enjoying my summer that I did not realize Fall had arrived.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came into my office the other day and said, "Do you know what day it is today?"

Looking at her with a smug smile, I said, "Yes, my dear, I do know what day it is. It's today."

She chuckled and said to me," Oh, you don't know what today is. It's Fall. Don't you keep up with anything?"

Looking at her with a bit of hesitation, I said, "What do you mean it's Fall?"

It was then that I began to understand what she was saying. The leaves were turning from their vibrant green to a dull brown, the air was getting crisper and the days were getting shorter. Summer is over, and now it is Fall. For me, Fall fell way too soon. I need a little more summer time before I am ready to graduate to Fall.

During the summer, I get many things done in the "catch-up" category. I was not quite all caught up when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage announced that it was officially Fall.

The critical thing about summertime is The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage stocking up on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's activities. She packs the refrigerator and freezer to their maximum. By the time summer is over, she is already prepared for the upcoming holidays.

It takes her a few weeks to find the right turkey for the holiday season. She is an expert in finding the right turkeys; after all, she found me.

What I like about the summer season is the variety of activities available. I do not have to make an excuse to go and do something. I'll say, "It's summer and I'm going to enjoy this season."

Now that I'm a little older, I have to scale back my physical activities. Years ago, I used to go bowling with some friends. Now, it takes me a while to gather the energy to go and watch a bowling game.

I can take a couple of days off and say to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, "After all, it is summertime." I try to take advantage of this as often as possible. It is almost impossible to trick The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She knows what I'm doing before I tell her what I'm going to do. However, I still try.

Now that summer is over, I have graduated into the Fall season. There are some advantages to this time of the year, and I am still learning what some of them are.

One advantage I use as much as possible is the weather. In the Fall, it is colder than in summertime. Of course, with me, when the temperature drops below my age, I am freezing.

So, there is an advantage to this because if The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage wants me to go outside, I renege and say, "Oh, boy, I really would love to, but it is so cold I really can't handle it."

Looking at me, she will smile and say," If you think it is cold, why don't you put on a sweater and then go outside?"

She has me at that. I try as much as possible, and occasionally it works; that is all that is important.

The other aspect of the Fall season is the many holidays celebrated during this time. They go from Halloween to Easter. Once it starts, it is tough for me to keep up with these holidays.

I am not a holiday person, except for the food, which I like. However, these holidays come so fast; I do not know which one I am celebrating at any given time. As long as there's food on the table, I will celebrate whatever holiday it is.

Of course, the great benefit of all these holidays is that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage organizes our family get-together. It is during the summer that she stocks up on all the food for these get-togethers. Then, when that holiday comes, I really do not care what holiday it is; I am going to celebrate the food she puts on the table.

I do not think anybody makes a better pumpkin pie than The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Actually, it does not matter which pie she is making; they are all marvelous as well as delicious. My favorite pie is the one I'm eating at the time. I would make up a holiday if it meant I could have one of her pies.

If it weren't for all these holidays, I wouldn't have gotten to see some of my family. Therefore, the great thing about graduating to the Fall season is about families. Nothing is greater than gathering around the dinner table with your family and eating the delicious food that is there for us.

As I considered gathering as a family to celebrate, I thought of a verse in the Bible.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:8).

Gathering together is a great time to celebrate all that God has blessed us with during the year. And He has blessed us wonderfully.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamessnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamessnyderministries.com.

Looking Backward

Sister Tarpley
NDG Religion Editor

"O LORD, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed." **Psalm 30:7.**

It is often difficult to recognize the hand of God when we are in the midst of adversity.

We often feel God has hidden His face from us. When the Lord takes us through deep valleys, there will be fruit from the deep valley that we cannot see. You must press into Him with all you have during this time.

God uses the deep valley to frame our lives to create a change in our nature, not just a change in habits. The depth and width of our valley is often an indicator of the level of calling and influence we will have on others in the future.

Our adversity is not just for us, but others who will be in our future path of influence.

This is not very comforting when you are in the middle of the valley, but know this is a truth in the Kingdom.

It is often years later when we discover the wisdom of God and why He intentionally led us through the dark valley. Life is often lived forward, but understood backward.

It is not until we are down the road and we stand on the mountain looking back at our life through valley that we can appreciate the terrain God has allowed us to scale and the spiritual deposits He has made in our life while we were there.

It will help you if you ask God to help you to take one day at a time. Let His Word reminds you, *"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* **Matthew 6:34**.

I give Him your worries and concerns. God is the all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present, Almighty God and you can ask Him for His peace, grace, and wisdom in your valley.

"He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light." **Job 12:22.**

When you begin to realize this, you sit back and breathe a sigh of relief because you know that God was in control all along. It didn't seem like it at the time, but He was.

Do you find yourself in the valley at this time in your life? Now is the time to fully trust God to guide you to higher ground in your spiritual life.

Remember, it takes two mountains to make a valley; and I love to add this fact that I learned long ago; and it blesses me when God leads me through a valley, think about this fact, God will have blessed you at least twice before He leads you into a valley in order to help you grow spiritually.

(This column originally ran in November 2013. Sister Tarpley passed away in May 2024. We keep her words alive every week in our print edition.)