



**Banking on "Howard" - p. 3**

Friday  
**May 22, 2026**  
 Vol. 12, No. 38  
 ValleyWeeklyllc.com

**SALUTE!**  
 Rosetta James Foundation  
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



**Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford**

**The Day Music Didn't Need Musicians - Page 10**



**HAPPY  
 104th  
 BIRTH-  
 DAY!!!**

*"Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance." — George Bernard Shaw*

**HMA Announces June 4  
 'Voices of Our Times' Event**

The Voices of Our Times Committee invites guests to experience the magic, music, and stories of Broadway during A New York Evening: Voices from Broadway, an unforgettable installment of the Museum's Voices of Our Times series on Thursday, June 4.

Celebrating the uniquely American art form of musical theater, Voices from Broadway will transport audiences through the rich history and enduring legacy of Broadway with performances and personal stories from celebrated Broadway veterans.

Leading the evening is North Alabama native and former Broadway performer Jo Lynn Burks, who will guide audiences on a musical journey

through Broadway's greatest moments, legendary composers, directors, and stars. Drawing from a career that includes performances on Broadway and at renowned venues such as The Carlyle, The Plaza, and Pat O'Brien's in New Orleans, Burks will combine show-stopping vocals with behind-the-scenes stories from the stage. She currently serves as a professor of Musical Theater at Belmont University.

The Museum will also welcome the current Miss America, Cassie Donegan, an accomplished vocalist, advocate, and arts educator mentored by Burks. As Miss America 2026, Donegan champions Arts in Education and advocates for early and equitable access to

the arts in schools nationwide. To further capture the spirit of New York City, guests will enjoy a dinner experience curated by Chef James Boyce, a New York native whose menu will offer a culinary tribute to the city's iconic flavors and atmosphere.

The evening begins with cocktails in the museum galleries at 5:30 p.m., featuring an appearance from Miss America Cassie Donegan. A live performance from Jo Lynn Burks will follow at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. in Loretta Spencer Hall.

Tickets are \$225 for Museum members and \$275 for non-members.

For more information, visit <https://hsvmuseum.org>.



**CRS Consultant Completes PIPA**

Huntsville Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) Parent Consultant Heather McCray (above, center) recently graduated from the Partners in Policymaking Alabama (PIPA) program in Prattville.

PIPA is a leadership training program designed for individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members. PIPA graduates are prepared to work with policymakers and empowered to be advocates for change.

As a parent consultant for CRS, which is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), Heather provides peer support, local resources, and guidance to families navigating special health care needs.

Heather said her favorite part of PIPA was learning to turn her lived experiences as the mother of a child with a disability into real advocacy and change.

"It gave me the confidence to speak up for not only my son, but for families across the disability community, while connecting with people who truly understood the journey," she said.

**County Juneteenth Tribute to  
 Feature Community Talk, Pitch**

Madison County Commissioner Violet Edwards announces "OH Freedom 2026!"-- the district's 4th Annual Juneteenth Celebration, Friday, June 19, at the Robert "Bob" Harrison Center, at 10 a.m. This year's celebration is presented in partnership with Vision Excellence Company and Freedom Financial Federal Credit Union, bringing the community together

for a full day of education, empowerment, and cultural celebration.

"Juneteenth reminds us that freedom is not a finish line but a responsibility," said Commissioner Edwards. "In this moment, when voting rights, Black representation, and equitable access to power are at the forefront of national conversation, Juneteenth becomes both a celebration

and a charge."

Juneteenth, the nation's oldest commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States, continues to serve as a moment of reflection and unity. Commissioner Edwards' annual event has become a signature gathering for North Alabama, drawing families, leaders, and organizations committed to progress and community uplift.



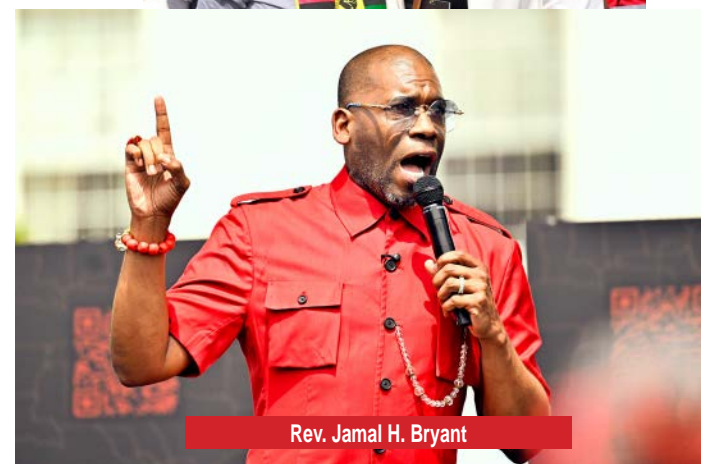
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# “ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE SOUTH!” RALLY

Alabama State Capitol | Montgomery, Alabama | Saturday, May 16, 2026

Exclusive Photos by Ronald Pollard



The Valley Weekly

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**The Valley Weekly**

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Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$75
	Classified 1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

# Building Legacy One Swing at a Time: The Enduring Impact of Howard Bankhead

Continuing my series on making impact and building legacy in our community, legacy is often measured not by personal accolades, but by the lives transformed along the way. By that standard, Howard Bankhead's story is not just impressive—it's deeply consequential.

A 1981 graduate of Alabama State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Bankhead has spent decades redefining what community leadership looks like in Huntsville, Alabama. His path was never linear, nor was it conventional. Yet, through persistence and a clear sense of purpose, he has built a body of work that bridges culture, education, sport, and opportunity—particularly for youth who have historically been overlooked.

Bankhead's induction into the 19th Annual African American Golfers Hall of Fame in Palm Beach County, Florida, is a fitting recognition of that work. The honor, presented during a multi-day celebration of Black excellence in golf, reflects a broader mission articulated by event founder Malachi Knowles: to celebrate those who have helped grow the game of golf among Black Americans since the early 1800s. Bankhead's contributions sit firmly within that lineage—though his influence extends well beyond the fairway.



What makes his journey especially compelling is that golf was not always part of his identity. In fact, like many Black Americans of his generation growing up in the segregated South, Bankhead was excluded from the sport entirely. Even later in life, he initially dismissed golf as inaccessible and culturally distant. It wasn't until age 44—after knee injuries ended his tennis pursuits—that he discovered not only the mechanics of the game, but its deeper lessons.

Those lessons became the foundation of his life's work. Bankhead recognized in golf a set of “spiritual tenets”—integrity, perseverance, civility, and confidence—that could be used to shape young lives. From that realization emerged the Tennessee Valley Youth Golf Development program, launched in 2001 under the umbrella of the Tennessee Valley Jazz Society. Originally founded to promote jazz education in schools, the organization itself reflects Bankhead's multidisciplinary thinking. His “Jazz Education is Cool in the Schools” initiative alone has reached more than 38,500 students since 1998, blending music with academic and cultural literacy.

But Bankhead didn't stop at music. By 2002, his youth golf initiatives were reaching thousands of elementary students through partnerships with Huntsville City Schools. These programs didn't just teach golf—they reinforced reading, writing, math, and character development. They offered structure, exposure, and an alternative narrative for young people often shaped by limited options.

And the impact was tangible. Grants from organizations like the PGA of America, the United States Golf Association, and Hook-A-Kid on Golf helped expand access. In 2004, Bankhead helped establish The First Tee of Huntsville, a milestone that brought national visibility and additional resources to his efforts. Students from the program earned scholarships, appeared on the Golf Channel, and, perhaps most importantly, carried forward the life lessons instilled in them.

Today, that mission continues through Par Excellence Youth Development (PEYD), which serves both rural and urban communities across Madison County. The program integrates life skills with environmental awareness, fitness, and social development—creating a holistic model that goes far beyond sport. Its inclusion in the “Make Golf Your Thing” national DEI initiative underscores its relevance in ongoing conversations about access and equity.

Bankhead's work has not been without resistance. He has openly acknowledged facing skepticism from both black and white golf communities in the early years. Yet his response echoes the enduring wisdom of Langston Hughes and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: keep moving forward, regardless of the pace.

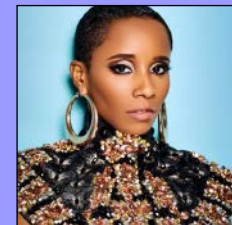
That persistence has earned him numerous accolades, including the Key to the City of Huntsville in 2018. Still, his own measure of success remains grounded in something simpler—former students who remember the lessons, not just the game. In an era often preoccupied with visibility and instant results, Howard Bankhead represents a different model of impact: quiet, sustained, and rooted in service. His legacy is not confined to trophies or titles, but lives in classrooms, on golf courses, and in the character of the hundreds of young people he has mentored.

And that kind of legacy doesn't just endure—it multiplies. Until next week ...



*Dorothy*

**MAY 22 - VIVIAN GREEN** - Vivian Sakiyyah Green is an American R&B singer-songwriter and pianist. Green took an interest in singing, playing the piano, and songwriting at a very young age. At the age of thirteen, she became a member of a female quintet called Younique. She is a graduate of what is now Parkway Northwest High School for Peace and Social Justice. Green has credit for writing “Dear God” by Boyz II Men, from their 1997 album Evolution. Green received her big break at the age of nineteen when she became a backup singer for Jill Scott, who took her on an international tour. She signed to Columbia Records in late 2000.



- [Blackcelebritybirthdays.org](http://Blackcelebritybirthdays.org)

THE VALLEY WEEKLY  
**VALLEY  
DEATHS**



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Funeral or memorial services for **MR. RAY WHITE** (b. 1946); **MS. BRANDY NICOLE KING** (b. 1981); and **MR. BOBBY HEREFORD** will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. WILLIE WATTS, JR.** (b. 1930) was Monday, May 18, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Reverend Earla Lockhart officiant and eulogist.

Funeral service for **MR. EUGENE "DICK" SCRUGGS, SR.**, (b. 1938) was Sunday, May 17, at St. Bartley Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Dr. Mario Ford eulogist.

Celebration of Life for **MS. TISHEMAR TISIANA TISKA JOSEPH** (b. 1976) was Saturday, May 16, at 7500B Byrd Spring Rd SW, Huntsville, Alabama.

Celebration of Life for **MS. LORETTA BANKS** (b. 1965) was Saturday, May 16, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home.

Funeral service for **MR. ANTHONY D. RAY** (b. 1961) was Friday, May 15, at Blackburn Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

Graveside service for **MR. CURTIS L. DOUGLAS** (b. 1963) was Friday, May 15, at Meadowlawn Garden of Peace with Pastor Michael Bellamy officiating.

Funeral service for **MOTHER HATTLE L. BURTON** (b. 1934) was Saturday, May 9, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. IRENE STEPTER** (b. 1935) was Friday, May 8, at First Baptist Church of Russellville, 200 South Denver Avenue, Russellville, Arkansas.

Funeral service for **ELDER EDDIE B. RAGLAND, JR.**, (b. 1971) was Sunday, May 3, at the Consolidated Flint River and Running Water Memorial Tabernacle with Elder Danny Baker officiating.

Valley Weekly  
**Spiritual  
Game Plan**  
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:  
**"Plan for Love: Desire,  
Discipline and Delight"**

Psalms 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

I believe that one of the keys to being successful in life, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually, involves three words: desire, discipline, and delight. In other words, no matter what we want to achieve it all starts with the desire to make it happen. If there is no desire, there is no discipline, which means there is no delight in doing anything. For example, how do we delight in the Lord if we don't develop a relationship with Him?

When I played professional football, I had the desire to be the very best at my position. In order for me to do that, I had to be disciplined. Discipline will fuel your desire as well as keep you on a schedule that will create an atmosphere for success. When we create this atmosphere for success, we will delight in what we are doing. How can we delight in something that we don't like?

God requires us to

love Him more than we love anything else. When we do, He will give us the desires of our hearts. How do we learn to love God with all of our hearts? It starts with creating a place in our residences where we meet with God on a daily basis. This is a place where we study His word, pray, and meditate on His word. This will help us develop a routine that we can continue. This will give us the game plan that we need to discipline ourselves until the behavior becomes part of



our schedules. When we do this, it will create an atmosphere for a successful relationship with God. Remember that desire leads to discipline and discipline will allow us to delight ourselves in the Lord.

May God grant you spiritual success with creating a place in your residence where you meet God on a daily basis.

*Question:* What are the things that you desire the most?

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my books, *Spiritual Game Plans For A Successful Life* and *A Champion Game Plan for Life*, at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

**NEXT WEEK:**  
**"Seizing the Opportunities"**

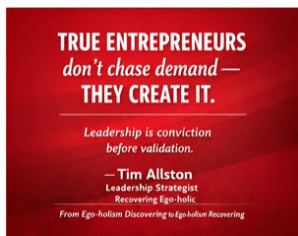


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## True Entrepreneurs Don't Chase Demand — They Create It

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty ...." Genesis 1:1,2*

Entrepreneurship is widely misunderstood.

Many believe it's about identifying market gaps and filling them efficiently. But that's optimization—not creation.

True entrepreneurship begins earlier and goes deeper.

It's the courage to introduce something the market doesn't yet know it needs. And since God the Father created something from nothing in the beginning - and took a calculated risk by dispatching God the Son (Jesus) to rescue mankind from himself - God is history's first entrepreneur.

History shows us this clearly. Visionaries like Steve Jobs, Sara Blakely, and Reed Hastings didn't merely improve existing systems — they reshaped consumer behavior itself. They acted on conviction before validation.

That same principle governs spiritual leadership.

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew simultaneously in wisdom, stature, and favor with both God and humanity. Leadership, at its core, is holistic development — internal transformation producing external impact.

I learned this firsthand in 1991 when Hampton University entrusted me with guiding new students from a "13th-grade mindset" into adulthood. Through intentional culture-building and retention programming, we achieved nationally recognized freshman-to-sophomore retention rates. At the time, I thought I was just managing students.

In reality, God was teaching me how to cultivate future demand.

Years later, when I introduced Ego-holism and Ego-holism Recovering, I faced resistance — even ridicule. I had no proof of concept. No credentials. Only conviction.

But that conviction later produced five Amazon bestselling books, corporate leadership tools, and EMC<sup>2</sup> — a framework measuring the hidden cost of unmanaged ego in organizations.

Entrepreneurs who create demand accept uncertainty. They act before applause arrives. They understand that transformation precedes recognition.

Genesis reminds us that God Himself created something out of nothing. That remains the defining characteristic of true entrepreneurship: calculated risk-taking in creating something out of nothing.

Leaders don't chase demand.  
They give birth to it.



**Tim Allston**

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, "Leading from the Middle"  
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Website: [www.timallston.com](http://www.timallston.com)

# Millennial Moment

The Valley Weekly  
by Gloria B. Caldwell

## "Dealing with Difficult People ..."

*As we go about living our everyday lives, we'll inevitably encounter difficult people.*

People struggling to deal with themselves will project their frustrations off on you. Sometimes, these people are some of the closest ones to you. People you work for and with, or were married to and have kids with, friends or family members. People who harbor bitterness.

Sometimes, it's over you; sometimes, it has nothing to do with you ... it's them trying to process their past.

So, the question is, "How do you deal with these people?"

Do you repay chaos, hatred, rudeness, and

frustration with chaos, hatred, rudeness, and frustration?

Do you stand in that foolishness with them?

Do you jeopardize your character on their behalf? Do you take the bait and get involved in the "pettiness"?

The initial moments of these encounters may be to do just that. However, don't waste time, or energy on people or things you can't change.

You need that time and energy to move about your day, reach your goals, and deal with your children, parents, and people who matter.

Don't spend major time fooling with minor people. Stay in peace.

Change your mind set. Don't allow them to



control you. Don't give them the authority to ruin your day. It's your choice. Stay calm and respectful, despite.

I know you think it's not fair. However, you won't gain favor with God by returning that negativity. The word says to bless your enemies, despite. Let God deal with them.

Do just that!

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The Valley Weekly

# VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES &amp; MORE!

- May 21**  
North Alabama Health & Wellness Fair  
Sponsor: 100 Black Men of Greater Huntsville  
Calhoun Community College  
Wynn Drive  
Huntsville, Ala.  
9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- May 22**  
Concert  
Hardy  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.
- May 23**  
Butterfly Release  
Huntsville Botanical Garden (\$8-\$27)  
10-10:30 a.m.
- Old School and Blues Festival 2026  
*Featuring:* The Zapp Band, Cherrelle, F.P.J, Jazz McKenzie, Project Pat, Yoshiana, Urban Mystic  
www.jde.live  
502 Quarter Mountain
- Road  
Harvest, Ala. - 11 a.m.
- Concert  
Godsmack, Stone Temple Pilots & Dorothy  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7 p.m.
- May 25**  
Memorial Day
- May 26**  
The St. John The Worker Career Networking Club Meeting  
(Every Tuesday Except State/National Holidays)  
St. John Catholic Church  
Hughes Road  
Madison, Ala.  
12:30-2 p.m.
- May 29-30**  
Kam Patterson  
Comedian  
Huntsville Levity Live  
2012 Memorial Parkway SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
(256) 261-3374

**May 30**  
Elite Wrestling  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.

**May 31**  
Pop Culture & Wrestling Expo  
“Dream On” (\$12)  
Stovehouse Event Center  
3414 Governors Drive SW  
Huntsville, Ala

**June 1**  
“Throw Your Rope Across the Fence”  
Career Mentoring and Networking Ministry Meeting  
First Missionary Baptist Church  
3509 Blue Spring Road NW  
Huntsville, Ala. - 1-3 p.m.

**June 2**  
The St. John The Worker Career Networking Club Meeting  
(Every Tuesday Except State/National Holidays)  
St. John Catholic Church  
Hughes Road  
Madison, Ala.  
12:30-2 p.m.

**June 4**  
“Voices of Our Times”  
(Featuring Broadway Stars and Miss America)  
Tickets: \$225, \$275  
Catered by Chef James Boyce  
Loretta Spencer Hall

Huntsville Museum of Art  
300 Church Street SW  
Huntsville, Ala.

**June 5**  
“Master Artist Workshop with Elder Jones”  
Huntsville Museum of Art  
300 Church Street SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
https://hsvmuseum.org  
1-4 p.m.

**June 9**

The St. John The Worker Career Networking Club Meeting  
(Every Tuesday Except State/National Holidays)  
St. John Catholic Church  
Hughes Road  
Madison, Ala.-12:30-2 p.m.

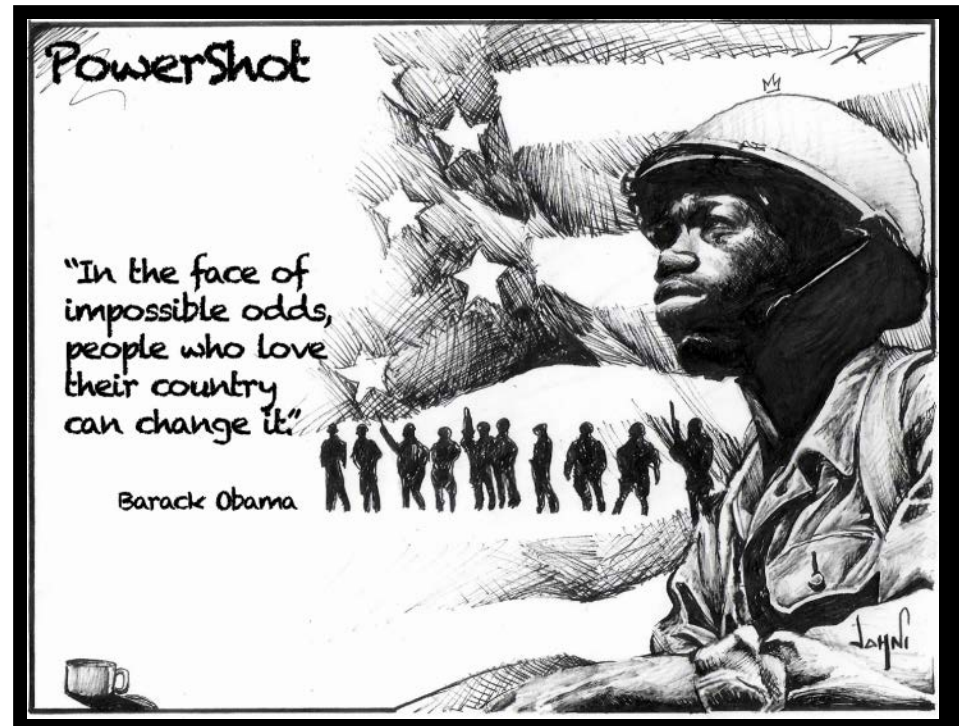
**June 11**  
“Master Artist Workshop with Qiang Huang”  
Huntsville Museum of Art  
300 Church Street SW

Huntsville, Ala.  
https://hsvmuseum.org  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**June 11-13**  
“Rock the South”  
The Biggest Party in the South!  
Jason Aldean, Riley Green, Zach Top and Dozens More!  
The Raised Rowdy Stage  
The Fields at Decatur  
Decatur, Ala.

## ON THIS DAY

*Langston Hughes, one of the most prolific and celebrated poets, novelists, and playwrights of the 20th century, died in New York City at age 65 on May 22, 1967. As a central figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes is remembered for his vibrant “jazz poetry” and his brilliant chronicling of the Black American experience. - BET.com*



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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

# Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford

Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford is recognized as one of the most scholarly musicians in the United States. Her versatility as lecturer, performer, author, conductor and teacher are widely respected and honored. As the Director of University Choir at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) for 40 years, she brought an unprecedented standard of distinction to the AAMU Choir.

She initiated the Annual Christmas Musicales at AAMU in 1948, elevating it from a Christmas concert to a full production. Under her leadership, the Christmas Musicales became a beloved holiday tradition for hundreds of families and individuals throughout the North Alabama region.

Mrs. Bradford's teaching was designed to challenge her students to achieve their maximum potential, and she demanded excellence from the classroom to the performance stage. Thus, the University Choir traveled and performed at many functions in the local community and various cities, consistently receiving high ratings.

**Happy 104th Birthday!**  
**May 19, 2026**

Mrs. Bradford received her degrees from Sherwood Music School in Chicago, where she received the Bachelor of Music; Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin College, where she earned the Master of Music; and she pursued additional studies with Madeline Marshall (a specialist in English diction); with Maxine Lagerstrom of Chicago Musical College; and Oakland University in Michigan under the oversight of Robert Shaw, who music critics often regard as one of the greatest choral conductors in the world.

Her professional teaching experiences include assignments in the public-school system of Edwardsville, Illinois; Baltimore, Maryland; and at Leland College in Baker, Louisiana.

She arrived at Huntsville in the 1940s for the first time to teach music in the laboratory high school of Alabama A&M Institute. At AAMU, she was an Associate Professor and the Director of the University Choir. As a gracious steward of her God-given musical ability, she served for more than three decades as Director of Music Ministry at Church



Street Cumberland Presbyterian Church, serving as primary pianist and choir director.


Throughout her life, Mrs. Bradford has been an active leader and member in several organizations. Some of her past and current affiliations include founding member, The Society of Professional Women; charter member, Huntsville Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; and member, National Association of Choral Directors.

For her contributions and service to mankind, she has received scores of awards, honors, citations and resolutions.

Mrs. Bradford is the widow of the late Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr. The mother of two children, Dr. Andrea Bradford and Dr. Henry Lane Bradford, she also has one grandson, Dr. Henry Lane Bradford, Jr.

THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

## They're Not Like Tim!



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"POWERSHOTS"

## John 'Jahni' Moore

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## MILLENNIAL MOMENT

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*Gloria B*

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# This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, May 24, 2026

## The Day of Pentecost



(Track 2, Year A)

**First Lesson:**  
Acts 2:1-21  
Psalm 104:25-35, 37

**Second Lesson:**  
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

**GOSPEL:**  
John 20:19-23



"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at [www.rosettajamesfoundation.org](http://www.rosettajamesfoundation.org). Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to [info@valleyweeklyllc.com](mailto:info@valleyweeklyllc.com).

# Want to Lead Better ... Starting Today?

by Tim Allston

Here are 5 science-backed shifts you can begin right now, according to 5 Things You Can Start Doing Today to Instantly Become a Better Leader, Backed by Organizational Science:

## Stop holding so (darned) many meetings.

- Research: cutting meetings by 40% boosts productivity ~70%.
- Also: meeting attendance can reduce participants' effective IQ by 15–20%.



## CUT THE MEETINGS, UNLEASH THE MINDS

Reduce meetings by 40%  
→ productivity up ~70% Inc.com

## Embrace the 'mere presence' effect.

- Just being around — even without heavy talking — builds respect, trust, and relational capital.

## Stop serving "feedback sandwiches."

- The "compliment-critique-compliment" model muddies your message and can feel manipulative.
- Instead, practice "benevolent honesty": be direct, clear, kind.

## Flip your lens.

- Seek out what's working. Look beneath surface issues for hidden wins.

## Say "thank you" more.

- Gratitude matters. Even small acts of appreciation build morale, loyalty, and psychological safety.

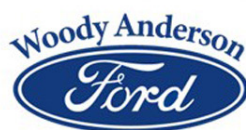
Q: Who's going to test one of these today and share the results?

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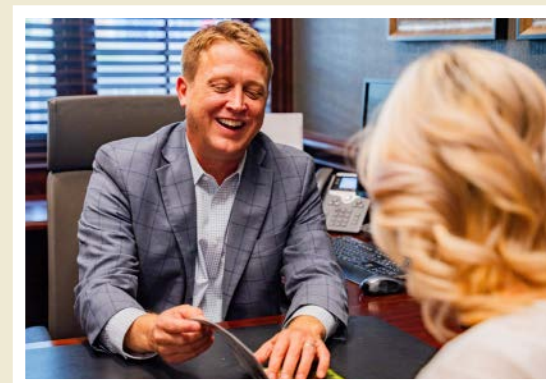


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Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for this week.

**1. CONGRESS.** The House and Senate are in session this week (though the House has no votes until Wednesday). Last week, Senate Parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough ruled that parts of the proposed \$72 billion GOP Budget Reconciliation bill to fund ICE and CBP violate the Senate Byrd Rule (which dictates that reconciliation bills can include only measures with a direct impact on the federal budget), including \$1 billion for the new White House Ballroom and \$19.1 billion for Customs and Border Protection. GOP leaders will attempt to rewrite these portions to satisfy the parliamentarian and avoid a floor

vote to waive the Budget Act, which would require 60 votes. Despite this setback, the House and Senate still plan to approve the Reconciliation Bill this week to get it to the President by his June 1 deadline. On Sunday night, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee released the text of the 5-year, \$580 billion surface transportation reauthorization bill for highway, transit, and freight programs funding — the “Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America’s 250th Act” (BUILD America 250) — which it intends to mark up in committee on Thursday. Among other bills, the full House will take up the long-anticipated SCORE Act to establish federal regulation of student-athlete

compensation — the so-called “name, image, and likeness” (NIL) deals — and a bipartisan Housing Affordability bill. The House is expected to take up another War Powers Resolution to end the Iran War this week (last week’s vote on the resolution failed in a 212-212 tie, with 3 R’s joining all D’s except Rep. Jared Golden, D-ME, who announced that he will support this week’s vote). The Senate’s vote last week on a War Powers Resolution was narrowly rejected on a 49-50 vote.

**2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH.** On Monday, the President hosted a meeting at the White House on healthcare affordability. On Tuesday, the President convened a meeting with his national security advisors in the White House Situation Room to discuss potential military options against Iran. Last Friday, The New York Times reported that the President is proposing to drop his \$10 billion lawsuit against the IRS (over the leak of his tax returns) in exchange for creating a \$1.7 billion

taxpayer-funded compensation pool to pay claims by individuals who argue they were targeted by the government’s weaponization of the legal system, including those charged in the January 6 Capitol attack.

**3. SUPREME COURT.** In a brief, unsigned order, the Supreme Court on Friday evening turned down a request by Virginia’s attorney general asking the justices to block a May 8 ruling by the Virginia Supreme Court that invalidated a voter-approved amendment to the Virginia Constitution allowing the state’s Legislature to enact a new congressional map for the 2026 election that would have favored Democrats. Last Thursday, the Court issued an order that continues a temporary hold on a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit that prohibits the mailing of mifepristone, one of two drugs used in medication abortions, which are in turn the most common form of abortion in the United States, while the

litigation continues in the lower courts. The Court is expected to issue more rulings from its current docket on Thursday.

**4. APRIL INFLATION REPORT.** Last Tuesday, the Department of Labor announced that prices rose 0.6% in April, pushing the annual rate to 3.8%, the highest since May 2023. Surging energy and gasoline costs stemming from the war in Iran are driving the rising cost of living, which is now outpacing wage growth (for the first time in 3 years).

**5. EDUCATION.** On May 14, Education Secretary Linda McMahon appeared before the House Committee on Education and Workforce, fielding pointed questions from Republicans and Democrats alike about the Department’s new federal graduate loan limits. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle raised concerns about new regulations that exclude graduate students in nursing, social work, and education from the higher

\$200,000 borrowing cap, limiting those students to \$100,000. Critics warned that the restrictions could worsen healthcare workforce shortages. McMahon defended the caps as a way to pressure colleges to lower tuition. Separately, Democrats pressed McMahon on the Department’s civil rights record, highlighting data showing the Office for Civil Rights resolved a very small fraction of its nearly 12,000 pending cases in 2025. The administration’s proposed FY2027 budget would cut OCR funding by roughly 35% and reduce its staff by nearly half. McMahon pushed back, noting the Department inherited a significant case backlog and touting recent settlement activity as evidence of progress.

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# AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN ...

## The Day the Music *Didn't* Need Musicians

Aunt Irma remembers when folks said singers had “paid their dues.” These days, it looks like the industry wants the dues without the singers.

Now don't misunderstand me. Technology itself ain't evil. The same microphone that recorded Aretha Franklin can also record foolishness. The issue has never been the machine. The issue is always who owns the machine — and who gets squeezed by it.

For years, the music business sold us dreams dipped in gold. Sequined jackets. Stretch limousines. Crowds screaming under bright lights. Meanwhile, many artists were quietly signing contracts that would make a payday loan company blush. Some of those singers we danced to at weddings and family reunions died arguing over royalties that should've been theirs in the first place.

Now comes artificial intelligence strolling into the room like it just invented rhythm.

Record companies

are experimenting with computer-generated artists who don't age, don't complain, don't ask for ownership, don't develop addictions, don't get politically outspoken, and don't need a tour bus with six bunk beds and fried chicken at 2 a.m. The perfect employee. Or perhaps the perfect servant.

Aunt Irma can already hear some executive in an expensive office saying, “At last — all the profits with none of the drama.”

But here's the thing they may not understand: people don't just fall in love with songs. They fall in love with souls.

Folks listened to Billie Holiday because pain had fingerprints in her voice. They listened to Marvin Gaye because he sounded like a man wrestling with heaven and earth at the same time. Human struggle leaves little cracks in music where listeners can place their own lives.

A machine can imitate sound. Can it imitate surviving?

And while we're here,

let's stop acting shocked that corporations would try this. Businesses have always searched for ways to reduce dependence on labor. Factories did it. Newspapers did it. Retail stores did it. Now the entertainment industry is trying to do it to emotion itself.

That ought to trouble people.

Because once art becomes fully manufactured, somebody eventually asks another dangerous question: if songs can be engineered, can feelings be engineered too? Not with spooky backward messages like old church folks used to warn about, but through endless algorithms studying what keeps people clicking, buying, crying, raging, and consuming.

In other words, the jukebox may soon know us better than we know ourselves.

Still, Aunt Irma suspects there will always be a hunger for the real thing. In a world full of synthetic voices, an imperfect human voice may

become more precious than ever.

Funny how that works.

The more artificial the world becomes, the more expensive authenticity gets.

- Valley Weekly Staff





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