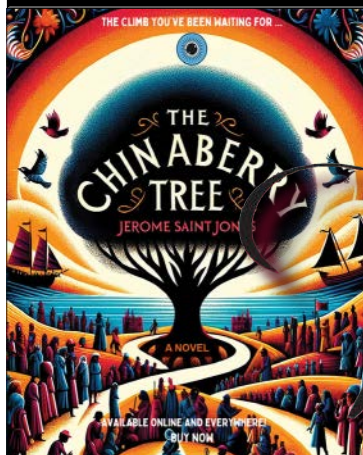


The Chinaberry Tree: Novel Earns "A" Marks - p. 3

FREE



Black Male Screenings at 40! - p. 2

Friday
June 20, 2025
Vol. 11, No. 42
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

The Valley Weekly

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Elder John E. Branch

"The guy who takes a chance, who walks the line between the known and unknown, who is unafraid of failure, will succeed." - Gordon Parks

Burritt on the Mountain Celebrates 70 Years

This year, Burritt on the Mountain proudly celebrates 70 years as Huntsville's first museum and a treasured cultural landmark.

Thanks to Dr. William Burritt, who gifted his mansion

and 167 acres to the City of Huntsville, Burritt brings history alive, inspires natural beauty, and enables community connections to flourish.

From breathtaking views of Huntsville's growing skyline



to historic cabins, barnyard, and the

1938 Burritt Mansion, Burritt is where Alabama's past and future meet.

Visitors of all ages come to Learn, Play, Create, Explore, Experience, Gather, and Celebrate.



Drake Prez on Health Care Board

Dr. Patricia Sims, president of Drake State Community and Technical College, has been appointed by the Huntsville City Council to serve on the Health Care Authority Board of the City of Huntsville, which governs the Huntsville Hospital Health System.

Sims will bring decades of experience in strategic planning, public service, and community collaboration to this vital role.

The Health Care Authority is comprised of an eleven-member volunteer board responsible for guiding one of the largest hospital systems in Alabama.

Film Featuring Alabamians Wins 14 Telly Awards

Audiostate 55 Entertainment has announced that its film, "A Symphony Celebration: The Blind Boys of Alabama with Dr. Henry Pan-ion," III won big at the 46th Annual Telly Awards. The honors included the Top Prize Gold Awards for History for Television and Original Score for Film & Shorts, among a total of 14 Tellys garnered by the multi-award, Emmy-nominated

film.

The film garnered silver awards for: Writing for Film & Shorts (Craft); Directing for Television for Film & Shorts (Craft); Culture & Lifestyle for Film & Shorts (General); Use of Music for Television (Craft); Sound & Sound Design for Film & Shorts (Craft); and Editing for Television (Craft).

Bronze awards: Documentary for Film & Shorts (Gen-

eral); Videography & Cinematography for Film & Shorts (Craft); Music Video for Television (General); History for Film & Shorts (General); and Writing for Television (Craft).

The Telly Awards received over 13,000 entries this year from all 50 states and 5 continents, including global entries from Sweden, Spain, Greece, Germany, Korea, Singapore, China, and others.

Perry O. Ward Memorial Golf Tournament Set

The 13th Annual Perry O. Ward Memorial Golf Tournament will be held June 28 at Colonial Golf Course, 400 Colonial Drive, in Meridianville, Ala., with a shotgun start

at 8 a.m. Onsite registration runs from 7-7:45 a.m.

Sponsored by Evening Star Lodge No. 6 Foundation, Inc., the two-person scramble event costs

\$85/person and \$160 team.

For additional information, contact James Monroe at (256) 404-2804 or email jmonroe81@gmail.com.



ASBCC Hosting E&I Conference in Birmingham

The Alabama State Black Chamber of Commerce (ASBCC) will host the Annual Entrepreneurs & Innovators Conference on June 19-20 at the Marriott Birmingham, Ala. The conference will attract diverse businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs to explore strategies

for business growth, networking, and the latest trends in entrepreneurship.

The keynote speaker for the luncheon will be Kendra Plummer, CEO of Elise Capital, a hotel investment firm with properties in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi.

This year, the ASBCC is add-

ing a special panel dedicated to the entertainment industry. Actor Sean Freeman, one of the stars of the new CBS soap opera Beyond The Gates, will be a special guest, along with other entertainment industry professionals.

"This conference is not just about learning, it's about

empowering small business owners to make meaningful, lasting changes in their business strategies and operations," said Jerry Mitchell, ASBCC President and CEO.

For more information about ASBCC, visit www.alblackcc.org or email info@AL-BlackCC.org.

The Valley Weekly

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PUBLIC NOTICE**CITY OF HUNTSVILLE 2025-2029 CONSOLIDATED PLAN
2025 ACTION PLAN/CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN/ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS**

The City of Huntsville, Alabama is required to prepare a Consolidated Plan every five years. The plan is comprised of a One-Year Action Plan, an Analysis of Impediments, and a Citizen Participation Plan. The Consolidated Plan seeks to address identified community needs with Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A draft of the plan can be viewed on the City's website and the following locations:

<https://www.huntsvilleal.gov/residents/neighborhoods/community-development-public-notices-andreports/>.

City of Huntsville
Community Development
305 Fountain Circle
Huntsville, AL 35801

Richard Showers Center
4600 Blue Spring Road
Huntsville, AL 35801

Huntsville-Madison County Public Library
915 Monroe Street
Huntsville, AL 35801

Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind (AIDB)
4092 Memorial Parkway SW, STE 105
Huntsville, AL 35802

Huntsville Housing Authority
200 Washington St NE
Huntsville, AL 35801

North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (NACH)
1400 Evangel Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35816

Submit comments to the City of Huntsville Department of Community Development, P.O. Box 308, Huntsville, AL 35804 or comdev@huntsvilleal.gov. Deadline for comments is July 20, 2025. For more information regarding this public notice or to request special accommodations, please call (256) 427-5400.

AVISO PÚBLICO**PLAN CONSOLIDADO DE LA CIUDAD DE HUNTSVILLE 2025-2029
PLAN DE ACCIÓN 2025/PLAN DE PARTICIPACIÓN CIUDADANA/ANÁLISIS DE IMPEDIMENTOS**

La ciudad de Huntsville, Alabama, está obligada a preparar un Plan Consolidado cada cinco años. El plan está compuesto por un Plan de Acción de un Año, un Análisis de Impedimentos y un Plan de Participación Ciudadana. El Plan Consolidado busca abordar las necesidades identificadas de la comunidad con fondos de Subvención en Bloque para el Desarrollo Comunitario (CDBG, por sus siglas en inglés) y fondos del Programa de Asociación de Inversión HOME del Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano (HUD, por sus siglas en inglés). Un borrador del plan se puede ver en el sitio web de la Ciudad y en las siguientes ubicaciones:

<https://www.huntsvilleal.gov/residents/neighborhoods/community-development-public-notices-andreports/>.

Ciudad de Huntsville
Desarrollo Comunitario
305 Fuente Circulo
Huntsville, AL 35801

Centro de duchas Richard
4600 Camino de la Primavera Azul
Huntsville, AL 35801

Biblioteca Pública del Condado de Huntsville-Madison
915 Calle Monroe
Huntsville, AL 35801

Instituto de Alabama para Sordos y Ciegos
(AIDB)
4092 Memorial Parkway SW, STE 105
Huntsville, AL 35802

Autoridad de Vivienda de Huntsville
200 Washington St NE
Huntsville, AL 35801

Coalición del Norte de Alabama para las Personas
sin Hogar (NACH)
1400 Evangel Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35816

Envíe sus comentarios al Departamento de Desarrollo Comunitario de la Ciudad de Huntsville, P.O. Box 308, Huntsville, AL 35804 o comdev@huntsvilleal.gov. La fecha límite para comentarios es el 20 de julio de 2025. Para obtener más información sobre este aviso público o para solicitar adaptaciones especiales, llame al (256) 427-5400.

“The Chinaberry Tree” Breaks New Ground: A Stunning Literary Debut

It’s not every day that a small newspaper has the honor of celebrating the national debut of one of its own. And yet, here we are—with pride and deep admiration—commemorating the forthcoming *Publishers Weekly* review of *The Chinaberry Tree*, the first novel by our Senior Editor, Jerome Saintjones. The review, scheduled to appear on July 14th in the BookLife section, signals what we at *The Valley Weekly* have long known: that Saintjones is a powerful and necessary voice in American literature.

The Chinaberry Tree is a novel rich with spiritual undertones and vital cultural resonance. Through layered, evocative storytelling, Saintjones explores Black life in America with a rare blend of compassion, critique, and courage. Set in the fictional town of Ebonia—a thinly veiled stand-in for so many Black communities across the country—the novel introduces us to Arnold Giovanni, a white professor at the local HBCU who fancies himself an ally and observer of Black life.

Saintjones masterfully juxtaposes these narratives with Giovanni’s flawed introspection, revealing how racism and white privilege can persist even in spaces where love and learning are intended. Giovanni, in moments of honesty, wonders, “What do you do when you come to realize that the only devil in the world might have sprung from a lineage too close to you?” It is this hard-earned clarity that makes *The Chinaberry Tree* not only a remarkable novel, but also a necessary one.

According to BookLife, this is a “moving, complex tale,” with comparisons to Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* and Dolan Perkins-Valdez’s *Happy Land*—and rightly so. The production grades are nearly flawless, with top marks for cover design, typography, and editing. But beyond the technical polish, the soul of the book lies in its refusal to sanitize the truth. It demands engagement. It invites reflection.

As Saintjones’s colleagues, we have witnessed the careful thought and cultural insight they bring to every editorial decision in these pages. Now, with *The Chinaberry Tree*, the world will experience their gifts in full bloom. We extend our heartfelt congratulations on this incredible achievement.

Ebonia may be fictional—but the issues Saintjones raises are very real. And in telling these stories, they remind us of the sacred responsibility to listen, to reckon, and to grow.

And, we are not surprised that his production grades by *Publishers Weekly* are all A’s in the categories: Cover, Design and Typography, Editing and Marketing copy. If you don’t have a copy yet, you can get it on Amazon.com or visit www.thechinaberrytree2025.com.

Until next week,

Dorothy

JUNE 20 - LIONEL RICHIE - Over the course of his musical career, Richie has sold over 90 million records worldwide, making him one of the world’s best-selling artists of all time. He has won four Grammy Awards including Song of the Year in 1985 for “We Are the World” which he co-wrote with Michael Jackson, Album of the Year in 1984 for Can’t Slow Down, Producer of the Year (Non-Classical) in 1984 and Best Male Pop Vocal Performance for “Truly” in 1982. Richie has also been nominated for two Golden Globe awards and won one. In 1982 he was nominated for Best Original Song for the film Endless Love. In 1986 he was nominated for and won the Golden Globe award for Best Original Song for “Say You, Say Me”, featured in the film White Nights. The song also won the Academy Award for Best Original Song. In 2016, Richie received the Songwriters Hall of Fame’s highest honor, the Johnny Mercer Award.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



The Valley Weekly

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Submissions to TVW do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the editorial staff, and TVW is not responsible for the authenticity of submissions.

ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION

The Valley Weekly
Ad Rates Single Issue

Back Cover	10x10-inches	\$1,500
Full Page	10x10 inches	\$1,200
3/4 Page	7.5x10 inches	\$900
Half Page	Horizontal 5x10 inches	\$600
	Vertical 10x5 inches	\$600
Fourth Page	5x5 inches	\$300
Eighth Page	2.5x5 inches	\$150
Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$75
Classified	1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Take Another Step"

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

What if every time you prayed, God answered your prayers immediately? I don't know about you, but I would be praying all the time. But God wants to know this: Will you still pray if He doesn't answer your prayers when you want Him to? Will you still trust Him? Will you still believe in Him?

You see, sometimes our progress is not as obvious as we would like it to be. But just because your promise isn't obvious, this does not mean your faith isn't working. We all need to learn to take another step, even if nothing appears to be happening. When God allows us to be in a certain situation and we think that it's taking too long for Him to answer our prayers,

focused on our obedience. The outcome is God's responsibility. Obedience is ours. So take another step, and you may just walk on past your problems.

to take another step of faith when you call us to do so.

Question: What are some things that keep you from following the plans that God has for your life?

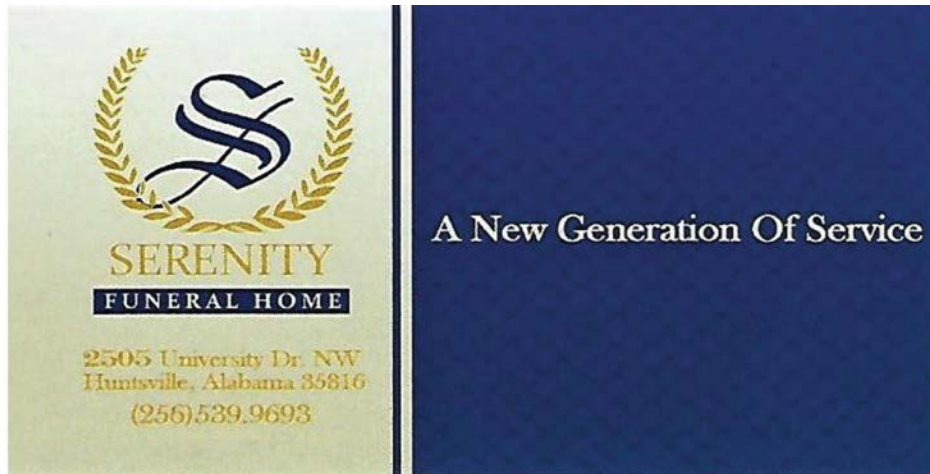
Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my books *Spiritual Game Plans For A Successful Life* and *A Champion Game Plan for Life*, at amazon.com.

NEXT WEEK:
"Don't Be Fooled
by Comparisons"



maybe God wants us to be less focused on the outcome and more

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give us the courage that we need



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THE VALLEY WEEKLY VALLEY DEATHS



SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW - Huntsville, AL 35816
www.serenityfuneralhm.com
(256) 539-9693

Funeral service for **MS. DIANNE ASHBY** (b. 1959); **MS. ANGELA BLACKMON** (b. 1965) and **MR. ARCHIE GRIZZARD JR.** will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. QUINCY OWENS** (b. 1983) was held Sunday, June 8, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35816
www.nelmsmemorial.net
(256) 539-8189

Funeral services will be announced later for **MS. ROBERTA MOSON** (b. 1947); **MR. JOHN W. STEVENS** (b. 1948); **MS. MYRTLE JO CUMMINGS** (b. 1964) and **MR. SOVOY JORDAN** (b. 1937).

Memorial service for **MR. GREGORY LEON TYSON** (b. 1950) was Wednesday, June 11, at McKenzie Funeral Home in Tuskegee, Ala.

Funeral service for **MRS. CAROL LYNN WILLIAMS POPE** (b. 1955) was Saturday, June 7, at the First Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Dr. Temple Ritchie officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35810 -
www.royalfh.com
(256) 534-8481

Funeral service will be announced at a later date for **MRS. DIANE HAWK** (b. 1958); **MR. CHARLES P. BROOKS** (b. 1942); **MR. RUSSELL E. LEWIS** (b. 1950); and **MR. IRA LEE WARD** (b. 1952).

Funeral service for **MR. MARION EARL PHILLIPS** (b. 1956) was Friday, June 13, 2025, at the First Missionary Baptist Church, 3509 Blue Spring Rd., Huntsville, Ala., with Reverend Temple Richie officiating.

Funeral service for **ELDER BEN LEE PATTON** (b. 1943) was Saturday, June 7, at the Church Street Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 228 Church Street Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Byron McGlathery officiating.

Wrestling Toward Recovering: Jacob, Trump, and the Mirror Called Me

"Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak." - Genesis 32:24

Recapping June 14th's "No King's Day" Nationwide Protests

As we recap June 14th's "No Kings Day" protests nationwide, I reflect on a spiritual question:

Before we point fingers at Trump or others, can we pause and ask, *"Lord, is it I?"* (Matthew 26:22) - the same question the disciples asked on the night Jesus was betrayed.

Why? Because true leadership transformation begins when we wrestle with God long enough to be renamed, remade, and redirected—just like Jacob.

"God touched Jacob's strength (the thigh muscle is the strongest in the body) and turned it into a weakness. From that day forward, Jacob walked with a limp so he could never run away again. It forced him to lean on God whether he liked it or not. If you want God to bless you and use you greatly, you must be willing to walk with a limp for the rest of your life, because God uses weak people." The Purpose Driven Life, pp. 277, 278.

This passage from Genesis reveals a powerful truth: Jacob wasn't wrestling with life—he was wrestling with God. The "man" was no mere mortal. It was God pressing down on Jacob—not to harm him, but to *transform* him.

By sunrise, Jacob walked with a limp—but rose with a new name: *Israel*. The deceiver had become an overcomer.

In our Ego-holism Recovering journey, we too must wrestle with God—until our inflated and deflated ego-holisms are broken. Like Jacob, we must:

- Target our problem (not blame others),
- Own our problem (no excuses), and
- Proceed to action.

Playing S.P.A.I.D.E.S.?

My biggest primary cluster of ego-holisms? I call it **"S.P.A.I.D.E.S."**: Selfishness, Procrastination, Arrogance, Impression Mismanagement, Disorganization, Eye Contact issues, and yes—more Selfishness.

But thank God, the chisel is in His hands—not mine.

Again, true leadership transformation begins when we wrestle with God long enough to be renamed, remade, and redirected—just like Jacob.

For example, my old name was "ego-holic," but my new name is now "recovering ego-holic."

What's your new name? Join me in this recovering ego-holic journey, . . .



Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach & Four-time
Amazon Best-Selling Author
"Leading from the Middle"
(256) 212-0949

<https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>, <https://bit.ly/4cYZyuz>
Email Address: leadingfromthemiddle.tim@gmail.com
Website: www.timallston.com

Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

Out Here Mulling ...

You had an idea! It came, keeps coming, and even saturates your thoughts. You're thinking about it, but now you have moved into overthinking! This can be a double-edged sword. I know, I know, thinking offers clarity, but can also trap you in a cycle of doubt and hesitation.

When a thought keeps resurfacing in your mind, it's a signal that it deserves attention. However, you're out here mulling over it endlessly which can lead to procrastination, holding you back from taking action.

How often have you found yourself defeated by "what ifs"? The fear of "potential" outcomes can stagnate even the most motivated individuals.



But here's the real deal: overanalyzing often leads to missed opportunities. Jim Rohn, my fave, said, "The longer you wait to do something, the better the chances you'll never do it." His words remind us that action is essential for progress.

So, Bruh, what are you waiting for? Every moment spent mulling is time you could be

investing in making your dreams a reality. Start small—set a deadline for yourself, identify the first step, and take it. Move out!! No plan is foolproof, nothing will be perfect, and that's okay.

Stop mulling and get moving!! You've got things to do! Do them!

Lace Up! *Let's Go!*

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Valley Weekly
**VALLEY
 EVENTS**
 HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

June 19*"Oh, Freedom 2025!"*

A Juneteenth Community Conversation

Topic: "The Village R.E.S.E.T.: Revisiting Our Core Values for a Vibrant Tomorrow"

Robert "Bob" Harrison Senior Wellness & Advocacy Center
 6156 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville, Ala.
 10 a.m.

June 20-22

Trey Kennedy Comedian
 Huntsville Levity Live
 2012 Memorial Parkway SW
 Huntsville, Ala.
 (256) 261-3374

June 22

Concert
 Ledisi with Marsha Ambrosius
 Von Braun Center
 Tickets: \$75-\$150
 Huntsville, Ala.

June 25

Silent Book Club

The Orion Amphitheater
 (Backstage/Enter via Artist Meadow off Amphitheater Drive)
 5:30-7 p.m.
 (Free)

June 27*"Jazz in the Garden"*

AJ Ghent & His Singing Guitar with Nina Marie Live and Ryon Schultz

Drake State Grounds
 6-9 p.m.

Concert

No Limit Soldiers Reunion:
 Master P, Silkk The Shocker,
 Mia X, Fiend and Mac and More
 The Orion

June 28-29

DC Youngfly Comedian
 Huntsville Levity Live

OH FREEDOM 2025!
A Juneteenth Community Conversation

10:00AM | June 19th

TOPIC
The Village R.E.S.E.T.
 Revisiting Our Core Values For A Vibrant Tomorrow.

HOST: COMMISSIONER VIOLET EDWARDS

MODERATOR: DR. KAROCKAS 'DOC ROCK' WATKINS

**ROBERT "BOB" HARRISON WELLNESS & ADVOCACY CENTER
 6156 PULASKI PIKE**

All Are Welcome To Join The Conversation. A Food Truck Festival Will Follow.

PANELISTS

DR. CLARENCE SUTTON
 Huntsville City Schools Superintendent

DR. DOROTHY HUSTON
 Diversity Leadership Colloquium Founder

MS. TIFFANY DRAPER
 Women's Expo Hvy. Founder

DR. LYLE LEE
 Huntsville Bible College President

DOC ROCK LEADERSHIP

AAA TRAVEL

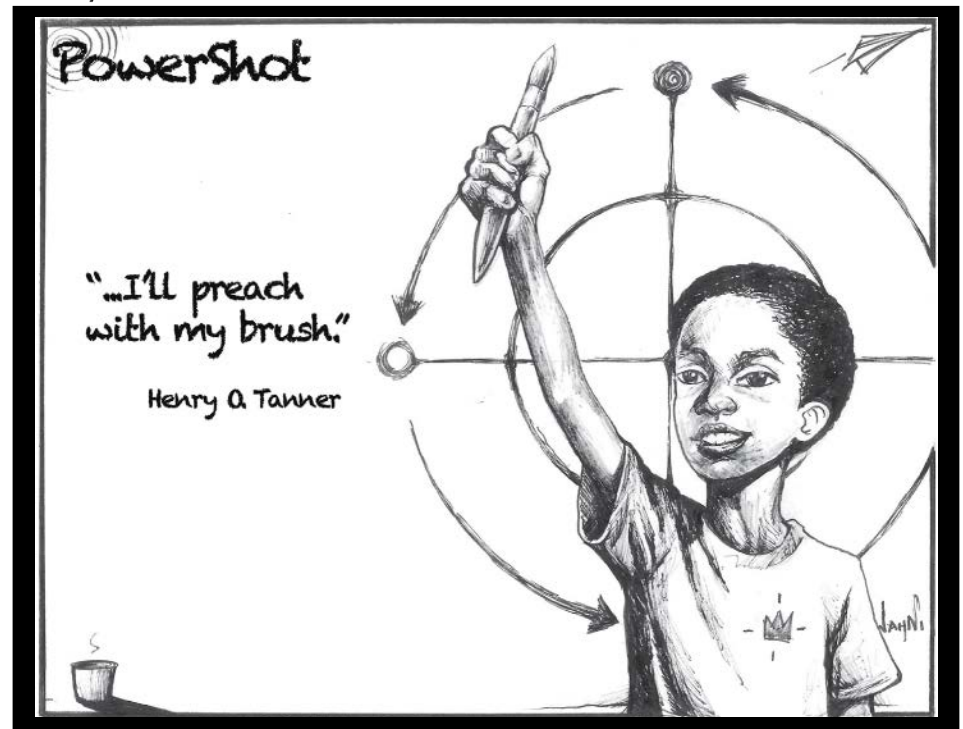
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 2500 Jordan Lane Huntsville, AL 35816

*"You get so taken up
 with the problem of living."*

- Jessie Redmon Fauset



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

Elder John E. Branch

Brother John E. Branch graduated from Greene County (Ala.) Training School in 1964 as Valedictorian of his senior class. He enrolled in Alabama A&M University, where he earned the Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical drafting and design technology in 1968. He pursued further study at Alabama Christian College (Faulkner University) in biblical studies.

Upon his graduation from AAMU, Branch served briefly as a design draftsman for the Sperry Rand Corporation in Huntsville, Ala., where he designed PC boards, schematic diagrams and wiring harnesses for the instrument section of the Saturn V rocket. From 1969-1972, he made topographical surveys and designed roadways, runways and drainage ponds for the U.S. Army, 160th Engineering Command, at Fort Bragg, N.C. For nearly 40 years, Branch worked in Facility Engineering preparing design drawings for electrical modifications to NASA buildings and test stand structures.

He continues to give back to his community



extensively. He assisted the Girl Scouts with electrical design modifications to their building on Sparkman Drive in Huntsville, Alabama. In the 1980s, he taught technical drawing night classes for two years at his Alma Mater, Alabama A&M University. Moreover, he served on the board of AGAPE of North Alabama for two years and as speaker for the "Words of Life" religious program on WEUP AM for the past 18 years.

Minister Branch has served as Pulpit Minister of Northwest Church of Christ since May 1978.

He has coordinated visitation outreach ministry to homeless shelters; supported mission efforts to churches in Monrovia, Liberia; served on the policy and procedures committee for Huntsville City Schools; serves on the Advisory Board of the Robert "Bob" Harrison Advocacy & Wellness Center; and has facilitated and coordinated marriage retreats with wife for last 26 years.

Minister Branch celebrated 55 years of marriage to Gladys Smith Branch on August 17, 2023.



"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. 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.



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No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

This Sunday's Lessonary

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Second Sunday
after Pentecost



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

1 Kings 19:1-4, [5-7], 8-15a

Psalm 42

Second Lesson:

Galatians 3:23-29

GOSPEL:

Luke 8:26-39

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Allstate

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"POWERSHOTS"

John "Jahni" Moore

TRUTH 2 POWER

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"It is not impossible, you just haven't found a way yet!"
J.T. Moore

"Dream more than others think practical. Expect more than others think possible. Care more than others think wise."
Howard Schultz

What Have You Been Missing?

The Valley Weekly
valleyweeklyllc.com

New Study: Americans Rate Their Financial Happiness 4.9 out of 10

(BPT) - On America's financial scorecard, people rate their happiness with their overall personal finances a 4.97 out of 10 - and scores need improvement across the board, as the majority (91%) are prioritizing their financial health and happiness in a year of decisions ahead. New Empower research introduces comprehensive findings on how Americans plan to navigate the next wave of decisions on saving, investing, and the value of good advice.

Self-assessment across all dimensions of people's financial happiness is flagging: Americans rate their satisfaction with their retirement savings an average of 4.54, and the likelihood of retiring at their goal age at 4.93 out of 10. When rating their financial success, scores come in at 4.46, as over half feel success is further away now than it was a year ago (55%). Contentment with salary notches in at 4.65, and people grade their ability to afford a home at a 4.83.

Economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and market volatility may be influencing scores, and delaying some choices: 69% think the economy is too uncertain to make big money moves. Still, Americans say

they plan to make important decisions in 2025, including figuring out how to make more money (43%); how to be financially happy (37%); and start an emergency savings fund (31%) - as 76% believe they need more savings to prepare for the unexpected. Nearly a third intend to make a financial plan (42% Gen Z, 39% Millennials).

"We are living in a 'Great Decide' as people forecast their fortunes in an unpredictable world. People feel they have to be financial futurists to make heads or tails. This era could majorly shift patterns of saving, investing and, critically, where people turn for advice," says Rebecca Rickert, head of communications and consumer insights at Empower.

Navigating decisions

When it comes to making investment decisions, half of Americans say they're ignoring the noise and taking the long-view approach to the stock market (49%). For 2 in 5 (39%), this time of uncertainty is ripe to make money moves, believing the adage "the bigger the risk, the bigger the reward" - a figure that rises substantially higher for younger generations (Gen Z 51% and Millennials 49%; compared to Gen X

40%, Boomers 22%) and for those with higher incomes (50% for those earning over \$100k+). Almost half say they are going back to the basics by investing more in cash and gold (46%).

Rather than a generational divide, the study also uncovers "a generational decide" taking place. To navigate uncertainty, Americans see an opportunity to strengthen their network effect, which people currently pinpoint at a 5.55 out of 10. These valuable connections are perceived as linked to career and wealth building, particularly as the largest financial exchange in history is underway, with younger generations projected to inherit an estimated \$84 trillion.¹ For almost all, financial independence and interdependence go hand-in-hand: people say not having to rely on anyone else for money is as much a part of their happiness (84%) as being able to financially take care of their loved ones (81%).

Advice advantage

Six in 10 (58%) say they need trusted financial counsel now, more than ever, as confidence in getting good financial advice trails at a 5.14 out of 10 and satisfaction with their financial plan

is a 5.08.

The upshot is 78% say having a financial plan to guide their decisions ahead makes them happier and less stressed. For the majority, health equals wealth (70%) and most agree that talking with a financial professional about their money goals is important (65%).

"Measuring what matters is one goal of our research. Everyone has their own idea of a perfect score as they define financial happiness," notes Rickert.

More key findings from the report:

* Stress relievers: To reduce their financial stress, Americans are decreasing their discretionary spending and non-essential expenses (32%), switching to cheaper brands than they normally buy (32%) and building an emergency savings fund (30%).

* In advice we trust: Americans say financial professionals are the most trusted source of good money advice (50%) compared to just 10% for social media, 9% for AI, and 7% for influencers or podcasters.

* Barriers to making it: Americans say the biggest roadblocks to achieving financial happiness include income (35%) and feeling like expenses are adding up (35%). Close to a third feel that they are not in a place where they can save money (31%).

* Windfall wins: 74% say having more money would solve most of their problems, but a little can go a long way - 71% agree a windfall of just \$5,000 would increase their financial happiness by at least six months. One quarter (22%) say they are banking on an inheritance to make ends meet.

* Signs of the times: Just over half of Americans say money can buy happiness (51%), which is a slight drop from the 59% who answered yes to the same question in 2023.

* Eye on AI: Americans rate the likelihood of AI replacing them at their jobs one day at a 3.72. They rank their level of comfort using AI for their personal finances nearly the same (3.73).

Visit The Currency™ to read Empower's full research report, "The Great Decide."

*ABOUT THE STUDY

Empower commissioned the "The Great Decide" study; based on online survey responses from 2,208 Americans ages 18+ fielded by a third-party vendor from March 20-21, 2025.

* Cerulli Associates. "Cerulli Anticipates \$84 Trillion in Wealth Transfers Through 2045."

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District 5 Councilman Funds Support Ability Plus Inc.

"It's a privilege to support businesses that support our community," said District 5 councilman John Meredith. "That is why I allotted \$7,000 to Ability Plus Inc. from the District 5 Community Improvement Fund to provide funding for clients with limited resources to go toward residential needs and other expenses."

Meredith (left) presented a check to Ability Plus CEO Karockas "Doc Rock" Watkins, thanking him for the efforts in providing quality-of-life opportunities



for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

AbilityPlus is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that maintains residential homes for

individuals in North Alabama with intellectual disabilities. Its residential homes are designed to enhance the lives of residents by providing a loving

and compassionate family-like environment with 24-hour care and all the comforts of home, along with numerous other services.

Countdown: Drake's 'Jazz in the Garden'

Drake State Community & Technical College will host world-class music and culture at Jazz in the Garden, set for Friday, June 27, on the college's scenic, tree-lined campus.

Set against the backdrop of Drake State's walking track, this outdoor jazz festival promises an exceptional night of smooth melodies, vibrant rhythms, and artistic celebration.

The event will begin at 6 p.m.

This year's headliner, AJ Ghent and His Singing Guitar, will bring his electrifying fusion of jazz, blues, and soul to



the stage, delivering a performance that is both powerful and deeply moving.

Also featured are the dynamic talents of vocalist Nina Marie Live and saxophonist Ryon Schultz, each bringing their unique sound and energy to the lineup.

In addition to live music, guests can enjoy a variety of local food trucks, including the

authentic New Orleans flavors of Forever Grateful, and VIP seating with exclusive perks, all set within a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere under the stars.

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at drakestate.edu/jazz-in-the-garden. Early purchase is encouraged, as space is limited.

Screenings Black Men Should Start in Their 40s

You reach a major life milestone when you enter your forties, a critical age when certain health exams become essential. Because Black males have a higher risk of certain diseases, these examinations are very important.

Preventing and controlling possible concerns may be greatly improved with proactive health management and regular check-ups.

Blood Pressure Screening. The "silent killer" moniker is apt for hypertension or high blood pressure, as the condition never causes any noticeable symptoms despite its potential to create major health problems. Hypertension is more common among Black males; thus, it's important to check their blood pressure often.

- **What to Expect:** During screening, your doctor will use a blood pressure cuff to measure the force of blood against your artery walls. A reading of 120/80 mm Hg or lower is considered normal.
- **Frequency:** You should check your blood pressure at least once a year or more frequently if you have a history of high readings.

Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test: Black men have a disproportionately greater risk of prostate cancer, which is a major health issue for all men. One way to

diagnose prostate cancer or any disease affecting the prostate is using a PSA blood test, which measures the amount of prostate-specific antigen.

- **What to Expect:** The PSA test is a simple blood test. Elevated PSA levels don't always mean cancer, so further testing may be required if levels are high.

- **Frequency:** Discuss with your doctor about starting PSA testing in your early 40s, especially if you have a family history of prostate cancer. Regular testing may be recommended depending on your risk factors. - blackdoctor.org



Community Leader Inducted into Golfers Hall of Fame

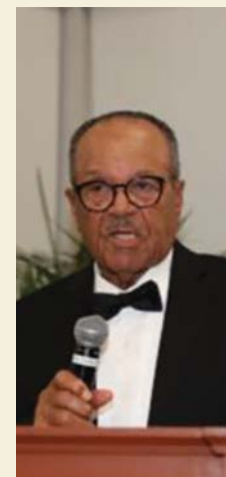
Dr. LeRoy Gradford, Jr., was recently inducted into the African-American Golfers Hall of Fame in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Because of his love for the community, Dr. Gradford Jr., has donated innumerable financial, and equipment resources to the First Tee of Hunts-

ville (former), Par Excellence Youth Development (PEYD), and other youth programs. He has garnered over \$3 million to move low-income families toward self-sufficiency.

The retiree and Prichard, Ala., native has devoted considerable amount of

time in volunteer service to professional community organizations, and has received many commendations for his commitment. He now serves as a gubernatorial appointee on the Alabama Sickie Cell Oversight, and Regulatory Commission.



Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington:

1. CONGRESS. The House is in recess this week and will reconvene next Monday. The Senate is in session through Wednesday and will then recess in observance of Thursday's Juneteenth federal holiday. Senators will complete work on the GENIUS Act to regulate the \$250 billion stablecoin market, with a vote on final passage scheduled for Tuesday ... Last week, in another squeaker, the House narrowly approved the White House-requested

\$9.4 billion rescissions bill by a 214-212 vote—but only after 2 GOP “nay” votes were persuaded to flip to “yea” during the voting: Reps. Bacon (NE) and LaLota (NY). The bill will cut \$8.3 billion in already-appropriated FY2025 foreign aid funds and \$1.1 billion from 1,500 local public radio and TV stations supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (which represents the next 2 years in appropriations for CPB and is 98% of its budget). The bill now must be taken up by the Senate before a July

18th deadline for enactment.
2. SECURITY BRIEFINGS. On Tuesday morning, Senators received a security briefing from the U.S. Capitol Police following the tragic assassination of former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband on Saturday, as well as the shooting of State Senator John Hoffman and his wife.
3. GOP RECONCILIATION/TAX CUT BILL. As soon as Monday, the Senate Finance Committee released the text for the tax and Medicaid portions of the Senate's reconciliation/tax cut bill, which the Senate is trying to approve by mid-July (after Senate GOP leaders acknowledged that a July 4th deadline was not feasible).

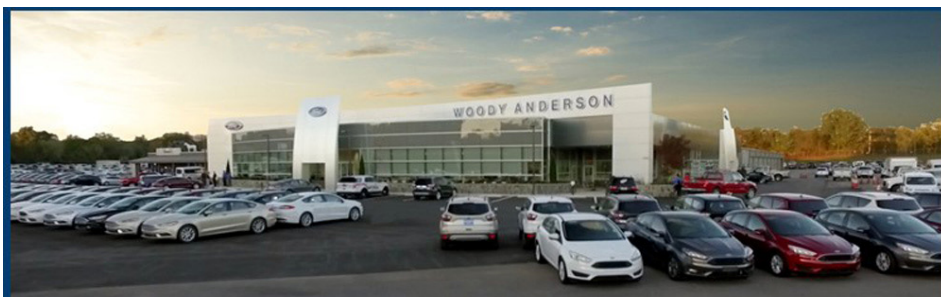
4. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. Through Tuesday, the President is attending the Group of 7 (G7) Summit in Alberta, Canada. Last Thursday, the

9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily halted U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer's order that blocked the President's mobilization of 4,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles and required him to return control of the troops to California Gov. Gavin Newsom.
5. FEDERAL RESERVE. The Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee met this Tuesday-Wednesday to leave interest rates unchanged, consistent with its wait-and-see mode for the impact of the trade war on the economy. Last Wednesday, the Labor Department announced that inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose by

0.1% in May, beating expectations of a 0.2% increase, for an annual inflation rate of 2.4% (up slightly from April's 2.3%).
6. EDUCATION and LABOR. The U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Labor (DOL) signed an agreement on May 21 to shift control of career, technical, and adult education grants—historically, managed by the Education Department—to the DOL. This move aligns with President Trump's plan to centralize federal job training programs under a single “Make America Skilled Again” initiative ... However, a preliminary injunction issued in ongoing litigation

regarding the proposed dissolution of the Education Department has paused the transfer. In a June 10 court filing, the administration acknowledged the injunction is blocking efforts to implement “operational efficiencies and cost-savings,” including the Education-Labor agreement. Critics note the DOL itself has faced staffing cuts under Trump's budget, raising concerns about its capacity to absorb new responsibilities. The DOL has declined to comment.

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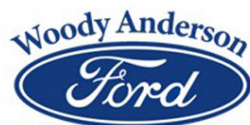


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