

ALLSTON: The "Fourth"-coming of HBCUs - p. 5

FREE

GLORIA B: 'Snooze & Lose' - p. 5

Friday
October 4, 2024
 Vol. 11, No. 5
 ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
 Rosetta James Foundation
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



Dr. Katie W. Byrd



Tuskegee's Daniel "Chappie" James Center



PRESTON: Worry Doesn't Work - p. 3

"We've got to decide if it's going to be this generation or never." - Daisy Bates

A&M Transit System Secures \$8.1M Grant

Alabama A&M University's Bulldog Transit System (BTS) has been awarded an \$8.1 million Competitive Low-No Emissions Program Federal Assistance grant for FY 2023. This funding will accelerate BTS's ongoing efforts to achieve a fully zero-emissions transit system by 2031.



"This funding allows us to expand on the infrastructure we've already built and to enhance our solar energy capabilities," says Marshall Chimwedzi, Director of AAMU BTS. "Phase II will include adding chargers, a driver's lounge, and microgrid monitoring rooms to the bus storage facility. We'll also enclose the service bay and upgrade our information systems with real-time monitors."

The project includes an eight-bay expansion to the bus storage station and workforce development programs to train technicians in solar and electric bus maintenance. BTS will also purchase a zero-emissions autonomous shuttle, an electric shuttle bus, and an electric service truck to further support operations. The grant is active from September 16, 2024, through March 30, 2031.

Runoff Nets First Black Councilwoman, New School Board Member



Michelle Watkins, former school board member, pulled ahead of incumbent Devyn Keith in Huntsville City Council District 1 runoff, becoming the first black councilwoman. Unofficial results from Tuesday, September 24, indicate that Watkins

garnered 2,278 votes (54.39 percent) to Keith's 1,910 votes (45.61 percent). In the race for Watkins's school board seat, Chaundra

Jones won over Pat King, 2,213 votes (52.2 percent) to 1,935 votes (47.8 percent). The results were set for canvassing October 1.

AAMU Homecoming Concert Features Glorilla, Boosie & Big Boogie

Alabama A&M students, alumni and fans are getting a head start on their Homecoming plans as the University has announced early event details for the annual event.

A full slate of activities for October 5-12 has been released, with weekly



updates and additional information ahead of an epic AAMU Homecoming.

The current lineup

includes a new 1875 After Party and the return of the Homecoming Comedy Show.

Grammy Award-winning vocalist Le'Andria Johnson, 19-time Stellar Award & Dove

Award-winning artist Pastor Mike Jr., 2023 iHeartRadio Music Awards Best New Hip Hop artist Glorilla, Boosie, Cupid, King George and more have been announced to take the stage at Homecoming events.

The Homecoming Hip-Hop Concert

will be Saturday, October 12, at the Von Braun Center at 7 p.m.

Follow AAMU social media for updates and additional information on 2024 Homecoming.

Visit www.aamu.edu/homecoming for more information.

Newest Market Celebrates Latino Vendors

Camino Alliance, a nonprofit organization that seeks to create flourishing communities by addressing the causes of urban poverty and migration, just announced El Mercado del Pueblo, their newest initiative to serve Latino families in the greater North Alabama area. This

market aims to grow Latino small businesses, celebrate the diversity of Latin culture in Huntsville, and create a space for all to enjoy the food, music, and values contributed by the Latino community.

"The growing Latino immigrant community in the Huntsville area is ready

to establish deeper roots in our city and to build community institutions that will help their children to thrive. Every day, I meet men and women in our community determined to build a better future for their families through their faith, strong work ethic and entrepreneurial

spirit," said Noel Castellanos, CEO of Camino Alliance.

El Mercado del Pueblo will be held every Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., from September 21 through November 9, 2024 at the University Pickers parking lot, 3405 Triana Blvd SW, Huntsville, Ala.).

The first market of

the season brought a cultural event full of music, delicious food, and a family-friendly atmosphere to the West side of Huntsville.

For more information about El Mercado del Pueblo, visit their Facebook page or contact Noel Castellanos at noel@caminoalliance.org.



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The Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here are the top issues and events in Washington for this week:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in recess until Tuesday, November 12. Last week, Congress approved H.R. 9747, a continuing resolution to keep the fed gov't open on Tuesday when current appropriations lapse through December 20, 2024, at largely FY2024 funding levels, which President Biden signed into law on Thursday. Last Wednesday, House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer (R-KY) sent letters to Attorney General Garland and other Administration officials demanding documents per-

taining to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's visit to the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant in Pennsylvania on Sept 22, where he was accompanied by Gov. Josh Shapiro, Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA), and Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA) – termed by Comer as potentially an abuse of taxpayer funds to benefit the Harris-Walz campaign in a key battleground state.

2. THE WHITE HOUSE. On Monday, President Biden visited FEMA headquarters in DC to discuss the federal response to Hurricane Helene and was set to visit communities impacted by the hurricane this week. On Tuesday, the

President hosted a conference call with rabbis and other Jewish leaders ahead of the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Last week, senior Administration officials met with the U.S. Maritime Alliance, representing employers at the 36 seaports that could be affected by a strike of 45,000 dockworkers at East Coast and Gulf Coast ports beginning Tuesday. The White House announced that the President will travel to Germany and Angola from October 10 to 15. On Tuesday at 9 p.m. EDT, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz squared off against Sen. JD Vance (R-OH) at the Vice Presidential Debate broadcast from CBS Broadcast Center in New York City, moderated by CBS Evening News host Norah O'Donnell and Face the Nation host Margaret Brennan.

3. SUPREME COURT. The Supreme Court will convene next Monday, October 7, to start its 2024-25 term. Key cases this term include cases

on Tennessee's ban on gender transition care for minors, the Biden Administration's regulation of ghost guns (untraceable firearms that can be assembled from kits and lack serial numbers), a Texas law mandating age verification for users of pornographic websites, and the Food and Drug Administration's decision to deny market-ing authorization for flavored e-cigarettes.

4. INFLATION/INCOME REPORT. Last Friday, the Commerce Department announced that inflation in August eased further, with the PCE Price Index falling to a 2.2% annual rate in August from July's 2.5%. Prices for goods decreased 0.9 percent and prices for services increased 3.7 percent. Food prices increased 1.1 percent and energy prices decreased 5.0 percent. Excluding food and energy, the so-called core PCE Price Index increased 2.7% up from July's 2.6%. The report also noted that personal

incomes for August rose 0.2%, down from the revised 0.3% pace in July, reflecting some softness in the labor market, and spending slowed to a 0.1% rise compared with the 0.5% gain over the previous month.

5. EDUCATION. On September 23, Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona sent a letter and white paper regarding the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) to leadership at all of the nation's higher education institutions. The letter updated them on the progress made in the past year, with the help of partners in the field, and detailed the improvements underway for the 2025-26 cycle.

Department of Education officials stated that it is committed to learning from challenges with the launch of the 2024-25 FAFSA form, increasing transparency, and upgrading the experience for students, families, and schools in the coming year. The letter

lists ten actions the Department is taking to address common issues raised by students, families, schools, and partners, and the white paper provides details on those actions.

For example, the Department added more than 700 new call center agents (since January 2024) to handle expected calls this December, when the 2025-26 FAFSA form will be available for all students and contributors. Additionally, the Department will keep some procedures from the last cycle in place to help with the identity validation process for mixed status families.

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Publisher

The Valley Weekly, LLC

Editor-in-Chief

Dorothy W. Huston, Ph.D.

**Editorial Consultant/
Senior Editor**

Jerome Saintjones, Ed.S.

Editorial Assistant

Linda Burruss

Advertising Associate

Phyllis Chunn

- Contributing Editors -

tim allston

Minister Preston Brown

Gloria B. Caldwell

Ron Hamm

Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

Photographers

Anthony "Gip" Gibson

Jerome Saintjones

Website Administrator

Calvin Farier

Mailing Address:

The Valley Weekly

P. O. Box 893 - Huntsville, AL 35804

(256) 651-9028

www.valleyweeklyllc.com

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The Valley Weekly

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A Call to Action for Minority Communities: "The Kamala Kash Karavan"

In the words of leadership expert John C. Maxwell, "Success is nothing without a successor." This resonates with anyone who has experienced the challenges and triumphs of building something bigger than themselves. The minority community, especially, knows the importance of generational success and the need to create pathways for our future leaders.



We've often heard that the rich focus on how to make their money grow while the poor spend what they have. This stark reality underscores a larger principle about legacy: those with foresight plan not just for their success, but for the success of those who follow. Kamala Harris seems to be embodying this principle on the political stage, raising a staggering amount of money, but not just for herself. In fact, her campaign is giving \$25 million to support other Democratic races, from Senate and House to state legislatures.

In a recent editorial, I likened politics to a race, where there are sprinters and marathoners. Winning the White House may feel like a sprint, but governing, building lasting change, and representing diverse voices requires the endurance of a marathon. Kamala Harris is preparing for that marathon, not just for herself, but for all of us. She knows that to effectively lead, she'll need a Senate and House majority, as well as support from state

legislatures, governors, and attorneys general who align with her values.

Harris's decision to invest \$25 million in down-ballot races speaks volumes about her commitment to collective success. She's giving \$10 million to Senate races, another \$10 million to House races, and millions more to state-level races and associations supporting Democratic candidates. For those of us in minority communities, this is a critical reminder: success doesn't happen in isolation. It takes unity, strategy, and investment in others.

Look around: when was the last time you saw such a selfless political move? While others may hoard resources, Harris is investing in the future, laying the foundation for a long-term vision that supports diversity, equity, and justice at every level of government.

The question I pose to you is simple: Are you merely spending what you have, or are you investing in a future that extends beyond your own? Just as Harris is planting seeds of progress for future leaders, so too must we invest in our communities, not only in the political arena but in every aspect of life.

Let's be clear: this isn't just about Harris's campaign. It's about ensuring that our voices are heard, that policies reflecting our needs are passed, and that we leave behind a better world for those who come after us. "The Kamala Kash Karavan" represents more than just financial backing—it represents a movement for change, one that is grounded in the idea that when we uplift each other, we all rise.

The choice is yours. Will you spend what you have today, or will you invest in tomorrow? Kamala Harris has made her decision—now it's time for us to make ours. Until next week ...

Dorothy



OCTOBER 4 - CLIFTON DAVIS - Clifton Duncan Davis is an American actor, singer, songwriter, minister, and author. Davis wrote The Jackson 5's No. 2 hit "Never Can Say Goodbye" in 1971. He has numerous Broadway credits, including Hello, Dolly! (opposite Pearl Bailey), Aladdin, Wicked, his Tony Award®-nominated turn in Two Gentlemen of Verona, among others. Davis starred in the television shows That's My Mama, Amen, Madam Secretary, and others. He has hosted the Stellar Gospel Music Awards, Gospel Superfest and Lifestyle Magazine. Davis has appeared on the game shows Match Game and Pyramid and appeared in many movies. Davis served as a minister of a Baptist church and has also operated an interdenominational ministry for many years. He has been a guest on the Trinity Broadcasting Network many times. Davis also hosted an annual celebrity golf tournament at Elizabeth City State University, where he served as its vice chancellor for Institutional Advancement. He was executive director for Welcome America, a non-profit organization located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which hosts the largest Fourth of July celebration in the nation each year. - BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



"Color is not a human or a personal reality; it is a political reality."
- James Baldwin

HMBCC Meetings

The Huntsville Metro Black Chamber of Commerce is a 501 (c) 3 community based economic development non-profit organization serving the Huntsville Metro Region, promoting, creating and fostering economic development opportunities. HMBCC meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 12 noon. The meeting location varies. Call (256) 427-2650 or e-mail info@hsvblackchamber.org.

Council Meetings

Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held on the 1st floor of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Council work sessions are also held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Chambers.

Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly
PRESTON BROWN'S



Game Plan for Today: “Worry Doesn’t Work”

Matthew 6:26 says, “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus deals with worry from a different perspective. He says “look at the birds.” God is always trying to get us to look at something other than ourselves.

Remember, he told Abraham to come out of his tent, look up at the sky, and count the stars, if indeed he could count them.

Today, I believe that Jesus is telling all of us to look at something other than our current circumstances, because He is greater than all of these things that we tend to worry about.

Jesus goes on to say that no one can add anything to his or her life by worrying. We can work on our problems and we can work on our situations, but we don’t need to worry about them. Worry doesn’t work.

Let us all remember that Jesus wants us to consider Him the solution to any problem we have. In other words, instead of praying to God about how big our problems are, pray about how big our God is and that He is capable of handling any problems we may have.



May God, with the love of Jesus, give you spiritual success in dealing with your problems.

Question: What problems do you tend to worry about that are not under your control?

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:
“Do You Want to Be Happy?”

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Funeral service for **MS. MYRTLE THIBODEAUX** (b. 1941) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. LARRY GILBERT** (b. 1955) was held Saturday, September 28, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. KEVIN WYNN** (b. 1975) was held Saturday, September 28, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **DR. SHERRY TORAIN** (b. 1955) was held Saturday, September 21, at Fellowship of Faith Church, 3703 Memorial Parkway NW, Huntsville, Ala.

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Funeral services for **MS. JACQUELYN D. CHRISTIAN** (b. 1962) and **MR. TERRY F. JAMES, SR.** (b. 1966) will be announced later.

Funeral service for **MR. COURTNEY D. JACKSON** (b. 1995) was Saturday, September 21, at the Mount Zion MB Church.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

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Funeral service for **MRS. MARY FRANCES JOHNSON HANKINS** (b. 1932) will be 1 p.m., Saturday, October 5, at the Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church, 3020 Belafonte Avenue, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Jaymes E. Mooney officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. LYNN S. ISBELL** (b. 1954) was Monday, September 30, at the Royal Chapel of Memories with CSM (R) Scott Morgan officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. MERL NELSON, SR.** (b. 1936) was Saturday, September 28, at The Family Worship Center, 3105 8th Ave SW, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Jvon Hearn officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. MARCHAS BERNARES WILLIAMS** (b. 1979) was Saturday, September 28, at the New Life Baptist Church, 2314 Hine Street S, Athens, Ala., with Pastor Antoyne Green officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. CHARLES EDWARD McSHANN** (b. 1937) was Friday, September 27, The Fellowship of Faith Church with Pastor Troy Garner officiating.



The “Fourth”-coming of HBCUs

“A farmer went out . . . to sow grain. . . some of it fell on a footpath and was trampled on . . . Other seed fell on shallow soil with rock beneath. . . began to grow, but soon withered and died for lack of moisture. . . . Other seed landed in thistle patches, and the young grain stalks were soon choked out. . . . Still other fell on fertile soil . . . grew and produced a crop one hundred times as large as he had planted. . . . If anyone has listening ears, use them now!” - Luke 8:5-8

As this parable indicates, when this farmer attempted to produce a harvest, the fourth and final time produced the greatest harvest - a testament that by not giving up, his fourth time proved bountiful.

Similarly, America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) appear to be on the verge of producing their greatest harvest, due to achieving a fourth milestone: the un-intended “gift” from the Supreme Court, and the ascendancy of HBCUs’ newest bright ambassador, VP Kamala Harris.

“Howard University helped shape everything I am today, and historically Black colleges and universities are preparing the next generation of leaders,” wrote Howard alum Harris of her alma mater, <https://bit.ly/3ztO6Jt>.

My Four HBCU Milestones

To me, the four milestones for HBCUs are:

1. Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and 1862’s Morrill Land Grant Agricultural and Mechanical College Act. The Emancipation Proclamation freed African American slaves and the Morrill Act created many of the nation’s land-grant schools such as HBCUs Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical College and Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute - all now universities found to educate newly freed slaves and their offsprings;
2. Another milestone of renewed attention to HBCUs came with the 1980s TV sitcoms *The Cosby Show* and *It’s A Different World* spinoff, and Morehouse College alum Spike Lee’s movie *School Daze*;
3. The 2020 lynching of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter Movement. Sparked renewed interest in HBCUs, <https://bit.ly/3xVwdP0>; and
4. The Supreme Court’s un-intended benefit from its 2023 dismantling affirmative action has re-ignited interest in HBCUs: [Interest in HBCUs surges after affirmative action ban](#).

What do you think? In your mind, what are four milestones that rekindled national and media interests in HBCUs?

Still, plant your seeds for future growth in HBCU soil, and watch them also grow a hundredfold!



Tim Allston
 Leadership Player-Coach & Four-time
 Amazon Best-Selling Author
 “Leading from the Middle”
<https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>, <https://bit.ly/4cYZyuz>
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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

Snooze and Lose ...

Back to this topic.

Not because SZA came across my Spotify but just thinking about the opportunities that I let pass me by because they weren’t packaged like I thought they should have been. It wasn’t perfect enough, it wasn’t appealing enough, or didn’t involve who I thought it should have involved.

It was subtle or needed work or attention, so I let it go. Not realizing maybe I needed to put work into it. Or work with it to get it to a certain space and in doing so I would grow to what I needed to be, which was better.

Think about it. Sometimes we look at ourselves, accepting what we have to

offer so readily. We don’t see ourselves from others’ perspectives. We give ourselves passes and have justifications and understanding of where we are



and why we operate the way we do.

We overlook things and

miss out on wonderful opportunities unbeknownst to us.

I’m just saying to settle. I am simply saying, think about things a bit more. Don’t snooze and lose out on something that would be the best thing for you.

Make today amazing. You have the choice to do so.

God loves you and so do I.

He has given you a gift; open it.

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The Valley Weekly
VALLEY
EVENTS
 HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

October 3

Creed Fisher
 Mars Music Hall
 Huntsville, Ala. - 8 p.m.

October 4

Movies in the Park
 Sponsor: Downtown Hsv.
 Inc.

October 5

PAW Patrol Live! Heroes
 Unite!
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala. - 10 a.m.

Gulf Coast Challenge
 AAMU vs. Jackson State
 Ladd-Peebles Stadium
 Mobile, Ala.

Concert
 Todd Rundgren
 Mars Music Hall
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

Homcoming Dusk Til
 Dawn Kickoff Party
 Alabama A&M University

October 6

Alabama A&M University
 Gospel Explosion
 Featuring Pastor Mike Jr. &
 Le'Andria Johnson
 The Event Center
 7 p.m.

October 7

Masons' Wreath Laying

Ceremony
 Council Memorial-The
 Block
 Alabama A&M University
 11 a.m.

"Don't Be a Menace to
 A&M" Cookout/Basketball
 Game (Free)
 Frank Lewis Gym
 Alabama A&M University
 6-8 p.m.

October 8

Recipes from the Vault
 with Chef Cam
 Learning Resources Center
 Alabama A&M University
 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Top 30 First Generation
 Graduate Awards Recep-
 tion
 Clyde Foster Auditorium
 Alabama A&M University
 pamelalittle@aamu.edu
 6:30 p.m.

Bulldog Groove Skate
 Night
 Involve App/Student ID
 (First 500 students)
 7-9 p.m.

October 9

Homecoming Fashion
 Show
 Ward Modeling Troop
 Elmore Gymnasium
 Alabama A&M University
 7 p.m.

Songs and Stories of Dean
 Dillon
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.
 7 p.m.

Neck Deep "The Dumb-
 struck ..."
 Mars Music Hall
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.
 7:30 p.m.

October 10

Homecoming Golf Tourna-
 ment
 Alabama A&M University
 Alumni Association, Inc.
 Hampton Cove
 8 a.m.

"The Tempest"
 Bulldog Players Production
 Showcase
 Johnson Little Theatre
 Alabama A&M University
 3:30 p.m.

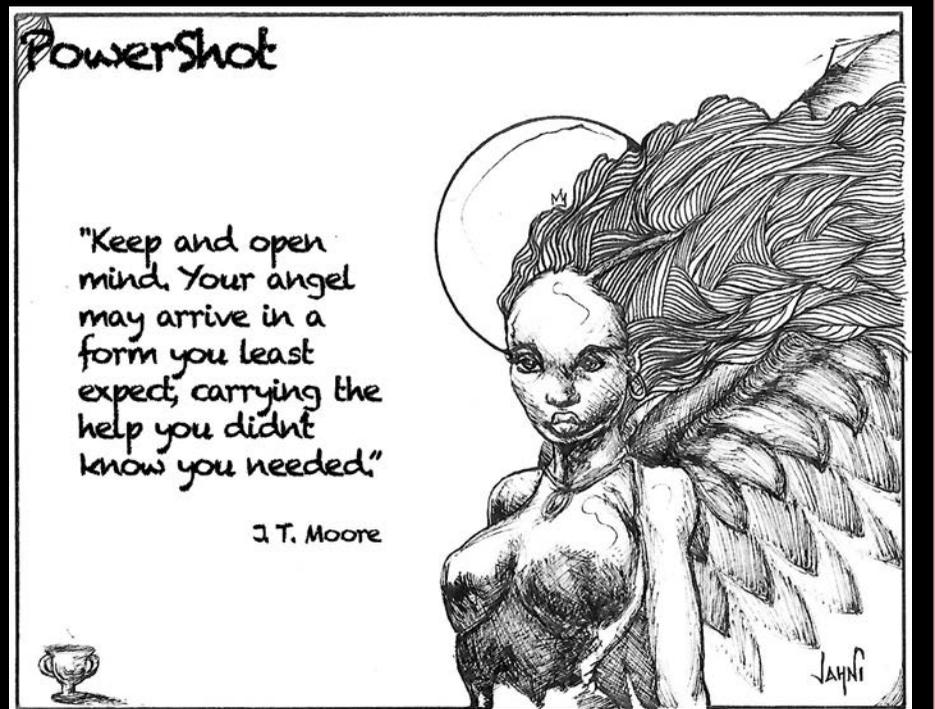
Alumni Pep Rally &
 Homecoming Mixer
 Hosted by Area Alabama
 A&M University Alumni
 Chapters (Free)
 The Dome at Orion
 6-11 p.m.

Afro-American Spiritual
 Concert
 Alabama A&M University
 Choir
 Fellowship Presbyterian
 Church
 6-7 p.m.

October 11

Movies in the Park
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Class Reunion Scholarship
 Brunch
 Ernest Knight Reception
 Center



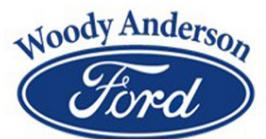
"Man cannot live by profit alone."

- James Baldwin



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*I've learned that making a living is not
 the same thing as making a life.*

- Maya Angelou



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

Dr. Katie W. Byrd

Dr. Katie W. Byrd has led a life replete with extensive community volunteerism and leadership for more than four decades. Her diligent service as a Sunday School teacher spans more than 35 years and her affiliation with worthwhile organizations and associations is legendary.

Dr. Byrd rendered service to The Normal Historic District Preservation Association at Alabama A&M University; The Mary M. Chambers Heritage Trail (AAMU); The Links Incorporated, Greater Huntsville Chapter; Delta Sigma Sorority, Incorporated; The Harris Home for Children and its Foundation; and many others.

An exemplary and revered leader, Dr. Byrd served as Board President of the Harris Home for Children, and she served on the Board for six three-year terms. Other leadership examples are manifest-

ed by her affiliation with the Community Action Agency, for which she



vice president, Madison County Democratic Executive Committee, District

19. She conducted and/or participated in more than 25 voter registration campaigns; was an alumna of Leadership Huntsville Class #3 and Leadership Alabama Class 4; served on the Regional Leadership Team on Organizational Development for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated;

and served on the National Leadership Team for the United Way of America.

Professionally, Dr. Byrd devoted 25 years to executive leadership in federal government administration and management. Her contributions to higher education were achieved through faculty assignments at The Pennsylvania State University, Alabama A&M University and Oakwood University.

served as Board President and devoted two three-year terms; the United Way of Madison County, serving as Secretary to the Board and Chair of Planning and Allocations (8 years); and state recorder for the Alabama Women's Political Caucus, State Recorder.

Dr. Byrd was vice president of the Madison County Women's Political Caucus; vice president and co-founder of the Alabama New South Coalition, Huntsville Chapter; and



"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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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, October 6, 2024

Twentieth Sunday

After

Pentecost



(Track 2, Year B)

First Lesson:

Genesis 2:18-24

Psalm 8

Second Lesson:

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

GOSPEL:

Mark 10:2-16

UAB Professor Will Conduct, Arrange Orchestras on Upcoming Tours by Stevie Wonder

Producer, composer, arranger and orchestrator Henry Panion III, Ph.D., will join music legend Stevie Wonder on his just-announced 11-city tour.

Wonder and Panion have collaborated musically for more than 30 years. Panion

will conduct orchestras for shows in each city for the tour.

A 25-time Grammy winner, Wonder is an Academy Award winner and has been honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom, among countless other honors.

Panion is a University of Alabama at Birmingham University Professor of Music and director of Music Technology in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Music.

"Stevie shared with me his desire to help spread

joy, peace and love during these troubled times, a message he has been about his entire life, and asked me to serve as conductor on this tour," Panion said.

The tour, titled "Sing Your Song! As We

Fix Our Nation's Broken Heart," was announced Sept.



19. Wonder will perform the select dates throughout October and Nov. 2, "at the height of a critical election season and a

pivotal juncture in American

politics and culture, in a call for "joy over anger, kindness over recrimination, peace over war," according to the announcement.

The tour will begin October 8 in Pittsburgh and end October 19 in Atlanta. Tickets are on sale now.

- Shannon Thomason, UAB

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Notes of a Native Son: Same Sun

- by afroblastik (John 'Jahni' Moore)

My oldest daughter was born in Crozier-Chester Medical Center in Chester, PA. Those hallowed grounds were once occupied by the Crozer Theological Seminary attended by such notables as J. Pious Barber, Samuel Dewitt Proctor and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. These were giants of men, men of faith I hold in high regard. I often walked these grounds where they walked in honor, remembrance, and reflection.

We had relocated to Pennsylvania on faith in what I do as an artist to start a new life. We named our daughter Imani, which means faith with Arabic and Swahili origins in East Africa, as a testament to that move. This year Imani returned from Alaska, another faith move – there and back. At the morning of this writing, she is on a beach in Maryland, as I am in one of my favorite places on the planet, Chicago. We

exchanged sunrise images. The one thing constant in them both is the glow of the morning sun. Faith is the knowing that the sun will always rise. No matter how dark the night or tumultuous the storm, that golden orb ascends to the heavens as a metaphoric reminder. A reminder that we can always begin again, and that success came before us on the same planet that we walk. Sometimes even the same ground that we walk over. Remembering and thinking on things like this can help to put things in perspective as we go about the tasks involved in doing what we do.

Think of your most revered luminary. In this case allow it to be someone that you admire in your field of choice. Someone who has made accomplishments in the area of which you aspire to succeed. See them in action in your mind going about their tasks from the mundane to the mag-



nificent. Above them every day is the same sun that shines down on you. The setting of your story has the same lighting as theirs. The warmth, the light, the brilliance — all of it bathed their path just as it bathes yours. The same source of energy that sustained their journey is sustaining you now, fueling your own rise, your own breakthroughs.

It's easy to look at those who've gone before us and imagine that they had some secret, some hidden resource, but the truth is they moved forward in the same rhythm of faith, resilience, and consistency. Like the sun, they showed up, even on cloudy days when success seemed distant. And just like the sun, their brilliance was a reflection of what already existed inside them.

Faith, like the light of the sun, is a force we often take for granted, yet it's always with us. Just as we

trust that the sun will rise each morning, we must trust that our own light, our own success, will also emerge — even when it's not immediately visible. Even on those days when we whisper in quiet desperation, "What the hell am I doing?"

Imani, faith, is not just the name of my daughter; it's the principle that guides the journey. It's in the small actions, the steady discipline, and the unwavering belief that, just like the sun, the time will come to rise higher. No storm, no night, can prevent the dawning of your potential.

So, as we stand on this shared ground, beneath this shared sun, know that you're already on the path — step by step, light by light, day by day, moment by moment — to becoming the luminary that will shine for the generations to come.

City's Get-A-Way Skatepark to Host Free Event

Skateboarders and skate enthusiasts of all ages and abilities are invited to check out The Oververt Challenge at Get-A-Way Skatepark in John Hunt Park on Oct. 6.

The event will feature a high-energy skate jam with cash and prize giveaways, followed by a skate clinic, sponsored by The Skatepark Project and Exposure Skate, and led by USA Olympians Bryce Wettstein

and Jordyn Barratt.

"Huntsville is excited to host this great event at the Get-A-Way Skate Park, a favorite spot for skateboarders of all ages," Huntsville



Mayor Tommy Battle said. "We're sure to witness some incredible talent, which will undoubtedly inspire the next generation of skaters."

From 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., The Oververt Challenge will take over the ¾ pipe with an open skate jam, featuring several pro skaters. Skaters can register from 9:30-10:30 a.m. to participate in the jam, where they'll have a chance to win cash prizes and other giveaways.

A free skate clinic from 1-2:30 p.m. will provide an opportunity for skaters to learn from some of the best

in the sport. USA Women Olympians Bryce Wettstein and Jordyn Barratt will lead the clinic, offering their expertise and skills to help skaters of all levels improve.

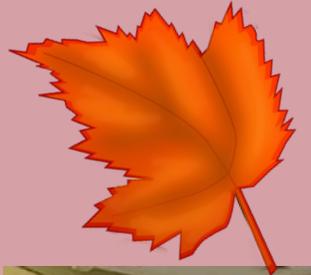
Thanks to the generous support of The Skatepark Project and Exposure Skate, there will be a limited number of free boards and helmets given away to participants.

"We're thrilled to bring this event to Huntsville and share the incredible energy of skateboarding with the local community," said Mark Russell, Huntsville Sports Commission Executive Director. "It's amazing to see young skaters grow and push themselves, and we hope the clinic inspires more people to get on a board and give it a try."

- Huntsvilleal.gov

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