

Why So Many Bills Come Due Just Before Payday! - p. 8

FREE

PRESTON: Gifts & Talents! - p. 4

Friday

December 26, 2025

Vol. 12, No. 17

ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK

Rev. Dr. Mitchell Walker

The Valley Weekly

"Cheers to a new year and another chance to get it right." — Oprah Winfrey



A&M's Jazz McKenzie Shines in NBC's 'The Voice' Season Finale

Alabama A&M University alumna Jazz McKenzie delivered a powerful and unforgettable performance during the live finale of NBC's "The Voice," closing out a life-changing journey on one of television's biggest stages.

McKenzie captivated a national audience with emotional renditions of Phil Collins' "Against All Odds (Take a Look at

Me Now)" and Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license." Her performances showcased the vocal range, artistry, and stage presence that carried her through weeks of competition.

Selected among the top six finalists from a nationwide pool of more than 40 competitors, McKenzie represented Team Michael Bublé alongside fellow finalist

Max Chambers. The finale also featured Dek of Hearts, Aiden Ross from Team Niall Horan, Aubrey Nicole from Team Reba McEntire, and Ralph Edwards from Team Snoop Dogg.

Though her Voice journey has concluded, McKenzie leaves the competition with national recognition, a growing fan base and momentum that continues to build.

Space Command: Huntsville Offers Unique Ecosystem

Gen. Stephen Whiting, Commander of U.S. Space Command, emphasized the strength of the partnerships that make Huntsville a critical hub for innovation, readiness and mission success during a keynote speech at the annual Redstone Update.

Gen. Whiting highlighted the accelerating pace in space, and the essential role Redstone Arsenal plays in meeting emerging threats. Whiting noted that Huntsville's unique ecosystem – a blend of federal agencies, high-tech companies, academia and a supportive community – has positioned the region to help lead the world in space superiority, missile defense and multi-domain operations.

As Space Command establishes its

home on Redstone Arsenal, Whiting said that collaboration with local partners will be key to maintaining U.S. strategic advantage.

"U.S. Space Command is excited to be moving to Huntsville and north Alabama, and we commit to do so in a professional, expeditious and efficient manner, while ensuring we fully execute all of our ongoing, vital, real-world missions," Whiting said during his keynote.

The FBI announced plans to nearly double its workforce at Redstone by 2030 – bringing its total workforce to nearly 4,000. Deputy Assistant FBI Director Kevin Jones shared about their new Kinetic Cyber Range which was designed to simulate realistic cyber and digital forensics scenarios. The FBI said it's the most advanced unclassified cyber training facility in the world.

"As an unclas-

sified training environment, we'll have the opportunity to have state, local, and federal partners train with us in those facilities," said Kevin Jones, Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI.

Huntsville's relationship with Redstone Arsenal, a Federal Center of Excellence, is more than geographic location – it is a shared commitment to national security and technological leadership.

- Huntsvilleal.gov

UAH Kicks Off Regional Initiative

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) held a signing ceremony Dec. 19 to kick off the Southeastern Quantum Collaborative (SQC), a new regional initiative focused on advancing and applying quantum information science and technology across the Southeast.

SQC is designed to position the Southeast as a global leader in quantum computing and emerging quantum technologies.

Founding members of the SQC include UAH, IBM, Davidson Technologies and Alabama A&M University.

For additional information about the UAH-led initiative, contact Julie Jansen at julie.jansen@uah.edu.

The Valley Weekly

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AAMU Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Bulldog Legacy & Impact Award

The Alabama A&M University Office of Student Leadership & Engagement Black History Month Committee is pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the 2026 Bulldog Legacy & Impact Award, presented annually during the Black History Month Legacy Gala.

This distinguished recognition honors members of the Alabama A&M University community who demonstrate exceptional leadership, service, excellence, and positive impact – uplifting the legacy of Alabama A&M University.

For 2026, the award categories have been expanded to recognize three honorees – one student, one faculty/staff member, and one alumni – each to be selected through the nomination process.



The Bulldog Legacy & Impact Award honors individuals who:

- Demonstrate outstanding academic, professional, or leadership achievement
- Serve and uplift their communities and peers
- Represent Alabama A&M University with pride and purpose
- Embody the Uni-

versity motto: *Service is Sovereignty*

- Inspire others through legacy, innovation, and impact

Nominations must be submitted by **January 15** using the official nomination form available [here](#).

Award recipients will be recognized at the 2026 Black History Month Legacy Gala, scheduled for Thursday,

February 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Ernest L. Knight Reception Center Ballroom.

AAMU invites the AAMU community to help identify and celebrate individu-

als who continue to carry forward the proud legacy of Alabama A&M University.



Council Meetings

Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held on the 1st floor of the Municipal Building.

The meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

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The Valley Weekly

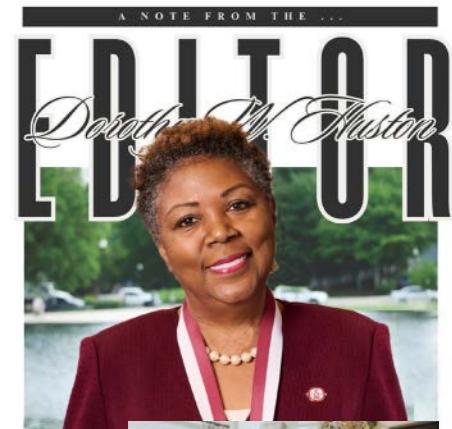
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Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$75
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The Daniels' Annual Christmas Gathering

This event was a beautiful reminder of what community looks like when it is rooted in generosity, joy, and genuine connection. Saturday, December 20th, was a festive evening with neighbors and friends from every walk of life coming together at the Daniels' residence to celebrate this HOLY season. They not only celebrated with good food, live music and holiday cheer, but with open hearts and shared laughter.

Hosted with grace by Rep. Anthony and Dr. Tenesha Daniels, the gathering reflected the very best of Huntsville's diverse, welcoming and embracing diversity, warmth and unity through friendship and gratitude. It was more than a holiday party. It was an evening of togetherness that affirmed how powerful it is when community leaders open their doors and hearts to create space for everyone to feel seen, valued and connected. Until next week . . .

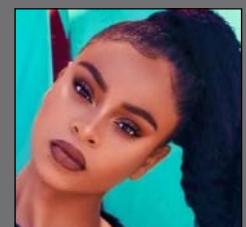


Dorothy



DECEMBER 26 - KORYN HAWTHORNE - Koryn Mattanah Hawthorne is an American contemporary Christian music and gospel singer. Hawthorne was a finalist in season 8 of NBC's singing competition *The Voice*, at the age of 17, as a member on Pharrell Williams's team. After placing fourth on the show, Hawthorne got signed to RCA Inspiration, a division of Sony Music dedicated to gospel music recordings. Her debut studio album, *Unstoppable*, was released on July 13, 2018, and earned her multiple awards nominations, including two Grammy nominations . . . Adam Levine pointed out that never before in the history of *The Voice* had he seen "such a drastic, incredible, unbelievable journey". Williams compared her drive to succeed to that of Beyoncé. Abbeville Mayor Mark Piazza declared May 6, 2015 "Koryn Hawthorne Day" and presented her with the key to the city.

- Blackcelebritybirthdays.org



THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



**NELMS MEMORIAL
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Funeral services will be announced at a later date for **MR. JEFFREY D. COLEMAN** (b. 1976); **MR. MICHAEL A. BROWN** (b. 1956); and **MRS. UMEA LORRETTA BEASLEY** (b. 1994).

Funeral service for **MRS. EMMA JEAN FLAKES** (b. 1950) was Saturday, December 20, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. RICHARD HALL** (b. 1932) was Saturday, December 20, at Center Grove United Methodist Church with Pastor R. Seth Shamery officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. LINDA BRADLEY** (b. 1975) was Saturday, December 20, at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Elder Mylon Burwell officiating.

Celebration of Life service for **MRS. ROSIE MARIE TAYLOR** (b. 1931) was Thursday, December 11, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. CHRISTOPHER DEWAYN TONEY** (b. 1974) was Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at Little Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church, 884 Indian Creek Road, Huntsville, Ala., with Elder Dwight Clark, Jr., officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. ELLIS M. HAMBRICK** (b. 1953) was Tuesday, December 9, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Larry Davidson, Jr., officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. GLORIA RAGLAND** (b. 1965) was Saturday, December 6, at Moses Chapel Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Joe Hereford officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. MARILYN RUSSELL WAREN** (b. 1954) was Saturday, December 6, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.

Celebration of Life for **MR. MICHAEL HUMPHREY** (b. 1955) was Sunday, November 23, at New Life Seventh-Day Adventist Church with Pastor Nelson Stokes officiating.

Valley Weekly
Spiritual Game Plan



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:
“Gifts and Talents”

Matthew 25:15 says, *“To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.”*

Do you appreciate the gifts that God has given you, or do you always see the wrong things in your life? God wants us to be thankful for the gifts and talents that He has given us.

That's why we can't afford to sit around and compare what we have to what others have. This behavior will only make us miserable.

So, it's important that we like ourselves as well as the gifts that God has blessed us with. When we do this, we can begin to like and appreciate other people, as well.

Matthew 25:29 goes on to say, *“For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what*

he has will be taken from him.”

When we look at this scripture, we see that God simply wants us to be thankful for what we have. Because when we do, more will be given.

So, let us also learn to enjoy the people who are in our lives—our friends, our families, our coworkers, people with whom we interact daily, because friends and family members are gifts from God, as well.

But the only way that we can do this is to stop focusing on everything that is wrong with them. It's time to make a change and be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

Prayer: Loving Father, help us to appreciate the



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:
“Replacing Bad with Good”

Stay encouraged, my



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Millennial Moment

The Valley Weekly

by
Gloria B. Caldwell

NEW YEAR ... Who Has Your Ear?

As we dive into 2026—Oh, what a blessing!—let's take a moment to be intentional about who has our ear. Who are the people surrounding you? It's essential to recognize that those we choose to listen to hold immense power over our lives, influencing our thoughts, beliefs, and ultimately, our destinies. That's a heavy realization!

If you're surrounded by individuals who spew negativity, gossip, defeat, or doubt, it can weigh you down and steer your life in the wrong direction. They might not mean any harm, but their energy can become a distraction and hinder your progress. It's time to evaluate who you've



allowed into your inner circle. Are they encouraging your growth, challenging you to be better, and propelling you toward excellence? Or are they holding you back with their toxic mindset?

This isn't just about friends; it includes family members too. While we cherish our loved ones, it's important to set boundaries with those who bring negative energy into our lives.

Surround yourself with those who uplift, inspire, and challenge you—people who believe in your potential and push you to reach new heights.

As we step into this new year, commit to select a circle that resonates with positivity and ambition. Take control of your narrative and cultivate relationships that reflect the life you want to lead. Embrace this opportunity for growth, and remember—who has your ear matters!

Let's make 2026 a year of thriving and joy! We can do it. One decision at a time!

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Sherrone Moore, the Mirror, and the LMD Factor

"Be sure your sin will find you out." - Numbers 32:23

Sherrone Moore ...

On December 10, the University of Michigan fired head football coach Sherrone Moore for what the university described as an "inappropriate relationship with a staff member." Headlines followed. Opinions multiplied. Allegations flew.

... the Mirror, ...

But before we rush to judgment, we should pause — because moments like this are not just news stories. They are mirrors.

Years ago, I heard a sermon that changed my leadership life. The preacher said simply: "Leadership magnifies defects; what you don't get out now will come out later" — bigger, louder, and more costly.

At first, I thought that message was for someone else. Later, I realized it was for me.

Eight months after hearing this sermon while serving in my first senior leadership role, I was fired — not because leadership created my flaws — but because my leadership exposed them.



... and the LMD Factor

This is what I now call the LMD Factor: Leadership Magnifies Defects.

We often tell leaders — especially men — to practice more self-control. That's true, but only to a point. Anything that begins with self - Self-control. Self-awareness. Self-esteem. Self-development - is limited. They're a start — but they are not enough.

Eventually, leaders must move from self-control to God-control, from self-esteem to Christ-esteem. Because on our best days, our appetites — for money, power, affirmation, or pleasure — are stronger than we are.

Lust: A Definition

Oswald Chambers once defined lust simply as, "I must have it now." That applies far beyond sex. It applies to spending, power, platforms, and entitlement.

The Race Card?

Some will view this case through the lens of race — and rightly so. Racism, sexism, elitism, and classism remain bedrock realities of human systems.

But even that truth does not exempt leaders from the deeper lesson: power without guardrails is dangerous for anyone.

What God joins together, no platform can protect from erosion. Trust, once fractured, is never casually repaired.

The real warning here is not about football. It's about idolatry — making gods out of leaders who have neither heaven nor hell to give us.

Leadership does not make us special. It makes us visible.

So stay close to home. Stay close to the truth. Stay close to the guardrails.

And remember the LMD Factor: Leadership magnifies defects. What you don't get out now will come out later.



Tim Allston
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VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

December 31

Noon Year's Eve Party
Madison Public Library
142 Plaza Boulevard
Madison, Ala.
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

New Year's at Noon
Orion Amphitheater
701 Amphitheater Drive
NW
Huntsville, Ala.
10 a.m.

New Year's Eve at Dave &
Buster's
950 Makers Way NW
Huntsville, Ala.
4-7 p.m.

New Year's Party at Field
Day
6123 University Drive NW

Unit 110
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.-1 a.m.

New Year's Eve at The
Camp
5909 University Drive NW
Huntsville, Ala.
7-11:59 p.m.

"A Symphonic Toast"
Huntsville Symphony
Orchestra
700 Monroe Street
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.

Skating in the Park
Rink Hours: 11 a.m.-10
p.m.

New Year's Eve Lil' Ball
Drop
Huntsville Museum of Art

300 Church Street NW
8:30 p.m.

2026 POP!NYE Party at
The Electric Belle at Stove-
house
3414 Governors Drive SW
Suite 310
Huntsville, Ala.
9 p.m.

"Lights, Glamour, Garden"
A New Year's Eve Premiere
Huntsville Botanical Gar-
den

4747 Bob Wallace Avenue
SW
Huntsville, Ala.
9 p.m.-1 a.m.

New Year's Eve 2026
Topgolf Huntsville
MidCity
Huntsville, Ala.
9 p.m.-1 a.m.

The Final Act
One Eleven
111 Washington Street NE
Huntsville, Ala.
9:30 p.m.

January 16-17
Harry Potter and the Pris-
oner of Azkaban

Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

January 25
*Fantasia with Anthony
Hamilton*

Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
8 p.m.

January 27-February 1
The Sound of Music
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

February 1
Harlem Globetrotters
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
3 p.m.

February 6
Diana Krall
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

February 22
Heart

Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 7 p.m.

February 28-March 1
Disney on Ice
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

March 5
KC and The Sunshine Band
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall/Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.
8 p.m.

March 27-29
The 6th Annual Women's
Expo Conference
The Westin Hotel
Huntsville, Ala.
www.thewomensexphohsv.com

April 10
The R&B Lovers Tour
Featuring Keith Sweat, Joe,
Dru Hill and Ginuwine
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

April 17
Concert
Rod Stewart
"One Last Time"
(with Special Guest How-
ard Jones)-RodStewart.com
The Orion Amphitheater

Huntsville, Ala.

April 17-19
Jim Cummings
Huntsville Comic & Pop
Culture Expo
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

April 24
Cake
Orion Amphitheater
MidCity
Huntsville, Ala.
8 p.m.

May 2
Ethel Cain
Orion Amphitheater
8 p.m.

May 5-10
"Water for Elephants"
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

June 11-13
"Rock the South"
The Biggest Party in the
South!
Jason Aldean, Riley Green,
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gift in the
present,
unwrapped
when we're
bold enough
to be fully here."

J.T. Moore



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"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other
people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

— Audre Lorde



Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring
Rev. Dr. Mitchell Walker

Pastor Mitchell M. Walker, Sr., is a native of Dyersburg, Tennessee. The older of two sons, he was born on December 11, 1952, to Tom Millard and Zella Mai Walker. He began preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ at age 4 years old at the then Rocksprings (Colored) Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Graduating from Dyersburg High School in 1970, Pastor Walker earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Bethel University in 1974. In 1977, he acquired the Master of Divinity degree in Christian education from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. In 1996, he graduated with the Doctor of Ministry degree with a pastoral care/counseling emphasis from Columbia Theological Seminary. The religious leader obtained a Graduate Certificate in Addiction Counseling from Memphis Theological Seminary in 2011.

Beginning September 1, 2000, Dr. Walker began as Pastor of the Church Street Presbyterian Church in

America (CPCA) family in Huntsville, Alabama. This is after serving 23+ years as Pastor of St. James CPCA in Cleveland, Tennessee, as well as other pastoral

leadership responsibilities since the age of 16. At Church Street, Senior Pastor Walker is responsible for leading in preaching, teaching, worship, pastoral care, administrative responsibilities, as well as community involvements/engagements. The ministerial leader further assists the congregation in planning for present-to-future visioning matters pertaining to both inreach and outreach, which includes the implementation of the construction and completion of a new church facility in 2018.

Pastor Walker has enjoyed a nearly 22-year affiliation with the Huntsville Bible College (HBC). Beginning as an Instructor in August 2002, he has continued to provide vision and guidance as its Dean of Graduate Studies since May 2017. Being tasked by the former HBC President, he created a doctoral program, submitted and approved by the HBC Board of Directors and by the Association of Higher Biblical Education (ABHE), with its 5th Cohort.

As former Moderator of the Huntsville Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, Dr. Mitchell served as the elected presiding officer of



the 19 congregations of the Huntsville Presbytery. In addition to several elected and appointed positions of service, he served as Moderator of the national General Assembly of the CPCA, from 1985-1987.

A former Honor Graduate Military Chaplain for the TN Army National Guard and the United States Army Reserve in Chattanooga, Tennessee, he served over a decade, including at the Headquarters Unit that was the backfield unit to Ft. Campbell. In this post, Chaplain Walker administered the Commander's religious and morale program and led training in suicide prevention, among other responsibilities as assigned.

He is married to Mary Elaine (Friend) Walker and has three children and six grandchildren.

"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.



Nelms Memorial Funeral Home

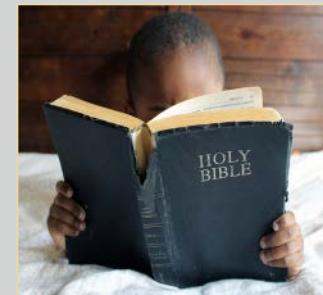
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BUT WE CAN MAKE IT EASIER"**



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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, December 28, 2025
**First Sunday after
Christmas Day**



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 147

Second Lesson:

Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

GOSPEL:

John 1:1-18

John 'Jahni' Moore
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AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN...

Why So Many Bills Come Due Just Before Payday!

If it feels like your biggest bills are always due right before your paycheck hits, you're not imagining it.

Let's keep it real ...

Utilities, insurance companies, and other large creditors often set due dates near the end of the month—usually the 25th through the 30th—even though millions of workers are paid on the 1st. This isn't an accident, and it isn't personal. It's structural.

From the creditor's perspective, earlier due dates improve cash flow. Money collected before the month closes looks better on the books, reduces



outstanding balances, and helps organizations report stronger financial health. When multiplied across thousands—or millions—of customers, pulling payments forward by even a few days matters.

Creditors also understand how households behave under pressure. Rent, utilities, and insurance rise to the top of the priority list. A hard due date near month's end forces

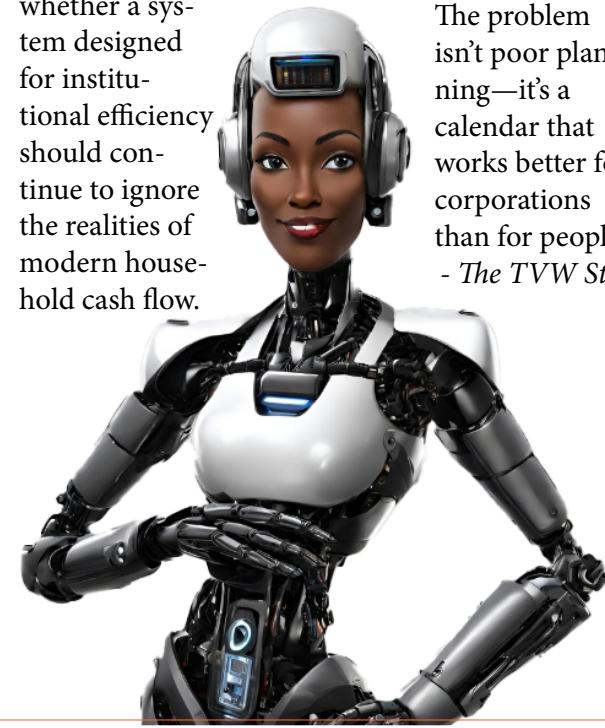
families to reshuffle food money, delay gas purchases, or push other expenses just to keep the lights on. Late fees and short delays quietly boost revenue, but the real gain is predictability: they get paid first.

This system hits paycheck-to-paycheck households hardest. For many Black families, retirees, fixed-income households, and hourly workers, cash flow is not evenly spread across the month. When bills cluster before income arrives, the result isn't irresponsibility—it's stress. And stress compounds. A late fee here triggers a shortfall there, creating a cycle that repeats every month.

What's rarely advertised is that some utilities and creditors allow customers to request a different due date, enroll in budget billing, or receive late-fee waivers once or twice a year. These options exist, but they're usually hidden behind phone calls, forms, or fine print.

The larger question isn't whether companies are "wrong" to choose convenient

due dates. It's whether a system designed for institutional efficiency should continue to ignore the realities of modern household cash flow.



Until that changes, recognizing the pattern is power. The problem isn't poor planning—it's a calendar that works better for corporations than for people.

- The TVW Staff



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THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

They're Not Like Tim!

Tim Allston

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Five Really Simple Ways to Fight the 'Winter Blues'

(BPT) - Have you noticed that you feel a little low during the winter months? You're not alone. As daylight hours shorten and temperatures drop, many people experience lower energy and mood, often called the "winter blues."

Luckily, there are easy steps you can take to lift your spirits, so you can continue to feel energetic no matter how cold and dark it is outside. Check out these five simple tips from Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist Dawn Jackson Blatner that can help keep the winter blues away this season.

Move in ways that feel good

Moving during the colder months is key to keeping yourself happy and healthy during the winter. You don't have to incorporate an intensive workout. Instead, focus on moving your body in a way that feels comfortable to you. Stretching, dancing, yoga or a brisk walk around your neighborhood can boost your circulation and mood throughout the dark and cold months of the year.

Prevent energy crashes by limiting added sugar

Added sugars in your food and drinks may temporarily boost your energy. However, the sudden spike in blood sugar can quickly lead to a "sugar crash," leaving you tired and irritable. This winter, be mindful of what you're eating and



limit added sugars, so you can prevent energy crashes and mood dips throughout your day.

Reset your rhythm with light therapy

The short and dark winter days can disrupt your circadian rhythm, leading to poor sleep, lower energy and even a grumpy disposition. Consider starting your day by sipping a cup of coffee in front of a light therapy lamp. A light therapy lamp mimics natural sunlight, which can help reset your body's rhythm when daylight is short. Just 15 minutes a day can make a difference! If a lamp isn't available, bundle up and go on a morning walk because even cloudy natural light can support your sleep-wake cycle.

Stay connected

It can be challenging to see your friends and family when the weather is cold,

rainy and snowy. However, staying connected with your loved ones is vital to maintaining high spirits during the dark winter months. Get into the habit of making quick phone calls to catch up, sharing a meal or planning a fun activity to nurture your relationships and keep feelings of isolation at bay.

Start your morning with vitamin-rich meals

Starting the day with a meal that fuels your body and lifts your mood is a simple yet effective way to weather the winter months. When choosing a breakfast recipe, look for meals that are rich in Vitamin D - which strengthens immune cells so they can defend against harmful bacteria - and Vitamin E - which acts as an antioxidant to reduce oxidative stress and protects your cells from damage.

Try this Shiitake Mush-

room & Red Bell Pepper Frittata with Smoked Salmon recipe using Eggland's Best eggs. These eggs contain six times more Vitamin D and 10 times more Vitamin E compared to ordinary eggs to help support your energy, mood and overall wellness all winter long.

Shiitake Mushroom & Red Bell Pepper Frittata with Smoked Salmon

Prep time: 12 minutes; Cook time: 12 minutes; Yield: 14

Ingredients

* 6 Eggland's Best eggs, large

* 2 tablespoons olive oil

* 6 ounces shiitake mushrooms stems minced fine, caps sliced 1/4" wide

* 6 ounces red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces

* 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric

* 3 tablespoons milk, preferably almond or oat milk

* 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, divided

* 1/4 teaspoon salt

* 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

* 4 ounces smoked salmon, coarsely chopped

* 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt

Preparation

1. Heat a 10-inch skillet with sloped sides over medium heat. Add olive oil. After 30 seconds, add mushroom caps and bell pepper. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

2. Preheat broiler.

3. In a medium bowl, beat together eggs, milk, 1 tablespoon of thyme, and salt and pepper. Stir in smoked salmon. Set aside.

4. Add turmeric and black pepper to the skillet, stirring for a few seconds. Stop stirring and pour egg mixture into skillet over vegetables. Mix well.

5. With a spatula, press vegetables down into an even layer under egg mixture. Cook without stirring until eggs are set on bottom, about 5 minutes. (Center will be wet.) Transfer to broiler. Broil 4-5 inches from heat source for 2 minutes or until eggs are set.

6. Cut into wedges.

7. Drop on spoonfuls of yogurt and sprinkle the remaining one tablespoon thyme over frittata before serving.

Recipe Notes: Crimini mushrooms may replace the shiitake mushrooms but with less savoriness. Two teaspoons dried thyme may replace the fresh thyme. Crush the dried herb for extra aroma. Lox that is not salty may replace the smoked salmon.

Just a few simple tweaks to your day can help you fight the winter blues, so you can continue to thrive no matter the weather.

To find even more recipes to start your winter mornings with energy and drive, visit EgglandsBest.com.

Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington, D.C.:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate have adjourned for the year and will reconvene on January 5, 2026. The House last week approved a narrow GOP healthcare bill but did not allow a vote on extending the Obamacare COVID-era subsidies. As a result, 4 Rs (Reps. Fitzpatrick R-PA, Lawler R-NY, Bresnahan R-PA, and Mackenzie R-PA) crossed the aisle and provided the final 4 signatures on a Democratic discharge petition to force a vote on a 3-year extension of the subsidies in January, when the House reconvenes. The Senate approved the \$900 billion FY2026 Defense Authorization Act and sent it to the President for signature (which he signed into law on last Thursday). Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH), an ex-officio member of the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees, accused Kennedy Center officials of muting her online presence at last Thursday's board meeting as she attempted to speak against the board's vote to change the facility's name to

"The Donald J. Trump and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts." Roll Call newspaper has published the combined House and Senate calendar for 2026.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The President announced during his speech to the nation last Wednesday evening that service members would receive a \$1,776 "warrior dividend" bonus to be paid immediately. The Washington Post reported that the dividend will be funded by diverting most of a \$2.9 billion fund approved by Congress to supplement service-members' housing allowances (as part of the mammoth tax bill enacted last summer). Last Thursday, the President suspended the green-card lottery program - known as the diversity visa (DV) program, which was used by the suspected gunman in the Brown University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology shootings to enter the U.S. and makes up to 55,000 immigrant visas available worldwide through random selection. The President left DC for his Mar-a-Lago Club

in Palm Beach, FL last Friday and will remain there for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

3. SUPREME COURT.

The Supreme Court is in recess until January, and when it returns, it will hear arguments in cases on transgender athletes, gun rights, and the limits of presidential power. On Jan. 13, the court will take up the cases of Little v. Hecox and West Virginia v. B. P. J., which challenge the constitutionality of laws in Idaho and West Virginia that prohibit transgender women and girls from participating on women's and girls' sports teams.

4. VENEZUELAN BLOCKADE. As part of an intensifying campaign against the government of President Nicolas Maduro, last Tuesday the President ordered a blockade of all oil tankers to or from Venezuela that are subject to U.S. sanctions. Yesterday (Sunday), it was reported that the U.S. Coast Guard, with assistance from the Navy, was pursuing a 3rd tanker after having boarded a 2nd ship on Saturday and the 1st ship on Dec. 10. The President has also demanded that Venezuela return assets and land it allegedly seized from U.S. oil companies in 1976 (although The Washington Post reported that U.S. oil companies Exxon,

Mobil, and Chevron were each paid \$1 billion in 1977 by the Venezuelan government for their assets).

5. NOVEMBER INFLATION REPORT.

The Hill reported last week that economists are cautioning against giving too much credence to the federal government's November Consumer Price Index (CPI) report from last Thursday, which showed a surprising reduction in the annual inflation rate to 2.7% from September's 3.0%. The report was delayed after October's report was canceled and may have been compromised by the federal government shutdown (Oct 1- Nov 12). For example, data collection occurred during the last 2 weeks of November, when many holiday discounts kicked in. The report also showed prices for meat, fish, poultry, and eggs up 4.7% together, and energy prices up 4.2%, with the cost of electricity rising 6.9% on an annual basis. Citing

wariness of the official inflation data, the article stated that markets gave the Federal Reserve only a 26.6% chance of cutting interest rates in January 2026. The next CPI report will be released Jan. 13, 2026. In related news, Tuesday's November Jobs Report showed unemployment ticking up from September's 4.4% to 4.6%, with the economy adding only a meager 64,000 jobs. The jobs report noted a steep decline of -168,000 jobs in the federal government, as federal employees who accepted DOGE/Elon Musk's deferred resignation offer came off federal payrolls in October and November.

6. EDUCATION.

On Friday, the Justice Department released a December 2 memorandum declaring that multiple Education Department programs with race-based eligibility criteria are unconstitutional, affecting roughly a dozen Minority-Serving Institution initiatives.

The opinion states that programs supporting Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions, and Native-serving institutions cannot continue in their current form, though some competitive grants may be preserved if race-based elements are removed. Education Secretary Linda McMahon said the department will halt funding for programs with race-based enrollment thresholds and will work with Congress on potential reforms. The department is still assessing the full impact of the ruling and expects to provide additional guidance.

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