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POSITIVE | INSPIRATIONAL | EDUCATIONAL

The Valley Weekly

The Voice of the Valley

HUNTSVILLE • MADISON COUNTY • NORTH ALABAMA



SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Rev. Dr. Oscar L. Montgomery

Friday
November 20, 2026
Vol. 13, No. 12
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

A&M FPIC Demonstrates Progress

What does it take to turn a family recipe, specialty sauce or innovative beverage into a product ready for store shelves? At Alabama A&M University, the answer may be closer than aspiring entrepreneurs realize.

Through its two-year-old Food Product Innovation Center (FPIC), Alabama A&M is helping entrepreneurs transform culinary ideas into commercial opportunities by providing access to food scientists, specialized laboratories and product development expertise. From testing a new tea blend to improving the shelf life of a barbecue sauce, the center offers scientific support that can make the difference between a promising recipe and a market-ready product.

"Our vision for the Food Product Innovation Center is to transform food science research into meaningful solutions that improve lives," said Dr. Martha Verghese, professor and chair of the Department of Food and Animal Sciences. "By integrating innovation, health/nutrition, and sustainability, we aspire to develop healthier food products, empower communities through education and outreach, and support entrepreneurs in bringing innovative, sustainable products from concept to market. Our ultimate goal is to make science-driven food innovation accessible, impactful, and beneficial to the communities we serve while building our brand."

Entrepreneurs and businesses interested in food product development, testing or technical assistance can learn more: **FPIC**

STATS: Black Americans 20-Year Birthrates Plummet

For two decades, the United States has experienced a sustained decline in childbearing, affecting Black, White and Hispanic Americans alike. Federal statistics reveal a demographic transformation with potentially significant consequences for the nation's future.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the nation's general fertility rate fell from approximately 66 births per 1,000 women of childbearing age in 2005 to 53.2 in 2025—a decline of roughly 20 percent.

The pattern crosses racial boundaries. In 2024, non-Hispanic Black women recorded 50.9 births per 1,000 women ages 15–44, compared with 51.5 among non-Hispanic White women and 64.3 among Hispanic women. All three populations have experienced substantial declines over the longer period.

The numbers



raise questions about economic security, delayed marriage, housing affordability, reproductive choices and the growing costs of raising children. However, national statistics alone cannot establish which factors are responsible for the decline.

For Black Americans, another important question remains unanswered: How much of the birthrate reflects families descended from enslaved Americans, and how much reflects Black immigrant populations and their descendants?

Federal birth reports generally combine these populations under the broader racial classification of Black or African American. Consequently, the statistics cannot establish the distinct fertility patterns of foundational Black Americans.

That distinction matters. Immigration, ancestry and generational history can influence demographic trends, but without more detailed reporting, the experiences of historically distinct populations remain obscured.

America's declining birthrate is unmistakable. Understanding whose birthrates are declining—and why—requires a more precise demographic lens.

- TVW Staff/Aunt Irma via CDC/NCHS - Births in the U.S., 2025 (Oct. 2026).

Huntsville City Schools Earn "A"

Huntsville City Schools (HCS) has earned an A on the Alabama State Report Card, achieving an overall score of 90 for the 2025–2026 school year, according to the newest report cards released by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

The results mark another milestone in the district's continued pursuit of academic excellence, reflecting a one-point increase from last year's score of 89 and an 8-point improvement since the 2021-2022 school year, when the district received a score of 82.

HCS has demonstrated sustained academic progress with this year's results representing the district's highest score ever and its first overall A.

"Earning an A is a tremendous accomplishment for Huntsville City Schools and a reflection of the hard work taking place in our classrooms every day," said Dr. Clarence Sutton, superintendent of Huntsville City Schools. "This achievement belongs to our students, teachers, school leaders, support staff, families, and community partners who share our commitment to excellence. While we are proud of this milestone, we remain focused on building upon our progress and ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed."

The Valley Weekly

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

1. CONGRESS. The Senate returned Monday, and the House returned Tuesday. The Senate is expected to hold a final vote this week on the bipartisan permitting reform bill, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (BAAJA). If the bill passes, it goes to the House, where Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and other House Democratic leaders oppose it in its current form. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) announced last week that he is adding extra legislative days to the Senate's lame-duck schedule to confirm more of the President's judicial nominees.

Last week, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) — who is likely to be the new Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee next year — announced that another short-term stopgap through next March or April is increasingly likely as Congress approaches the Dec 11 deadline to act on FY2027 appropriations. After Friday's nationwide ground stop, FAA and DOT staff briefed House T&I Committee staff Monday — with DOT Secretary Duffy seeking $50 billion to fix the air traffic control system (although he has not yet spent the $12.5 billion provided in 2025's "One Big Beautiful Bill Act").

Last week, the House voted 211-204 to send Rep. Thomas Massie's (R-KY) resolution to impeach Secretary of War Pete Hegseth to committee, which effectively kills it for the rest of this Congress. Massie was the only Republican to vote against the motion.

Leadership elections: Last Tuesday, House Republicans elected Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) as Minority Leader for the next Congress, defeating Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) 106-73 in a secret ballot. Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN) will remain as Whip, the party's No. 2 post. Senate Republicans kept Thune as their leader, although some members initially delayed the vote to discuss the election results. House Democrats held their leadership elections this Wednesday and Thursday, with Jeffries running for Speaker, Katherine Clark (D-MA) for Majority Leader, Pete Aguilar (D-CA) for Majority Whip, and Ted Lieu (D-CA) for Caucus Chair. In the Senate, Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) announced Thursday that he will challenge Chuck Schumer (D-NY) for Majority Leader in elections on Dec 1.

2. THE WHITE HOUSE. The President left for Asia Monday to attend the ASEAN summit of Southeast Asian leaders in Manila and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shenzhen, China. The Manila stop included a Quad meeting (the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India) on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will host the President for a state luncheon. The two are expected to renew their countries' longstanding treaty alliance. The President is also expected to press Southeast Asian countries to join "Pax Silica," his effort to make AI and chip supply chains independent of China. In Shenzhen, he will attend the APEC Leaders' Meeting Thursday morning, followed by a bilateral meeting and working lunch with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The trip ends with the first-ever meeting of U.S., Chinese, and Russian leaders, as the President, Xi, and Vladimir Putin sit down to discuss nuclear proliferation. The Washington Post reported on Sunday that new Chief of Staff Stephen Miller issued a memo last week barring White House staff from meeting with registered lobbyists without prior approval from the White House Counsel's office — with the exception of meetings with the Office of Public Liaison.

3. THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS. In Mississippi, Democrat Scott Colom defeated Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MI), who conceded Wednesday evening. Colom becomes the state's first Black senator since Reconstruction. Alaska's Senate race is now the only one still unresolved. Democrat Mary Peltola has 49.9% of the vote, compared with Sen. Dan Sullivan's 46%. If no candidate passes 50%, the ranked-choice tabulation will take place Wednesday, and officials aim to certify results by Nov. 25. A Peltola win would give Democrats a 56th Senate seat. In the House, Democrats have won 256 seats to the GOP's 169 — with 10 races left to be called, according to the AP map (2 runoffs in LA, 4 races in NC, and 1 each in AK, TN, CA, and MN).

4. SUPREME COURT. The Court has no arguments scheduled until November 30. Last Monday in a ruling on its emergency docket, the Court allowed the administration to continue building the border wall in southwestern Texas, in an 8-1 vote — with only Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson dissenting.

5. THE ECONOMY. The Labor Department reported last Tuesday that consumer prices rose 0.4% in October, down from a 0.6% rise in September. Core prices rose 0.3%. There is no year-over-year figure for October, because the 2025 government shutdown prevented the Bureau of Labor Statistics from collecting October 2025 data. This week, October retail sales come out on Tuesday. The Fed's preferred inflation gauge, the PCE price index, follows on November 25.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION. New international student enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities fell 15% this fall, according to preliminary Institute of International Education data from a survey of more than 800 institutions. Total international enrollment is down 9%, with graduate students posting the steepest decline at 15%, compared with 3% for undergraduates and 6% for Optional Practical Training (OPT) participants. The drop comes amid heightened visa scrutiny and an administration proposal to charge schools $70,000 per student seeking OPT and $30,000 for program extensions, while competitor countries step up their recruitment. Because international students often pay full tuition, institutions should weigh the budget implications now, particularly as 95% of reporting schools say students would likely look elsewhere if OPT is limited.

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The Valley Weekly
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HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

Let's Make Common Sense More Common!



Thanksgiving has always held a special place in my heart. Growing up on a farm, Thanksgiving was more than a holiday; it was a celebration of the harvest, the rewards of hard work, God's provisions, and the blessings of family and community wisdom.

By Thanksgiving, we had gathered our crops and canned enough fruits and vegetables to sustain us until the spring crops came in. There was nothing quite like homemade preserves, crackling bread and syrup, a slice of ham from the smokehouse, or salt meat from the salt box to season our beans, greens, and peas.

Sweet potatoes were stored in the underground potato cellar. When we wanted one, we simply tossed it beneath the hot coals in the fireplace until it became soft and naturally sweet. We gathered and stacked firewood for the winter to keep our home warm and fuel the wood-burning stove in the kitchen. That was hard work.

Relatives came home from near and far. We shared stories, played cards, laughed, and ate seemingly day and night. I don't recall hearing much conversation about diabetes or high blood pressure, likely because we certainly didn't have access to doctors or the diagnostics available today. What we had was fellowship, physical activity, food we had grown ourselves, and a genuine appreciation for one another.

Competence mattered in those days. It was not measured by college degrees, but by personal expertise, practical experience, sound judgment, and the ability to get things done. When the children were sick, the mothers of the community were our first line of care. Because segregation denied us access to the local hospital, we relied heavily on their collective wisdom, homemade balms, salves, and remedies. My mom worked, as a maid, for a local doctor and building contractor; yet, we relied on community resources and competence!

Today, despite extraordinary advances in education, medicine, science, and technology, we find ourselves living in a space where competence does not always seem to matter, where the conditions of our neighbors are too easily ignored, and where preventable diseases, such as measles, are resurfacing despite the availability of effective vaccines. Last week's shutdown of the FAA was likely a result of little to no competence, along with lack of concern about how it would impact everyone.

I am not suggesting that we abandon modern technology and medicine, or return to the hardships of yesterday. Rather, I am suggesting that we reclaim the wisdom, resourcefulness, compassion, personal responsibility, and common sense that sustained us. Let's keep some experts in the room.

As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables this year, let us remember that making an impact and building a legacy are not simply about what we accumulate, but how we contribute, whom we serve, and what values we pass on to future generations.



We have more knowledge, more technology, and more resources than our parents and grandparents could have imagined. Yet, I cannot help but believe that if we exercised a little more common sense and demonstrated a little more concern for one another, we would all be a lot better off.

May we never become so advanced that we forget the simple wisdom that brought us this far - work hard, thankful hearts, and care for our neighbors.

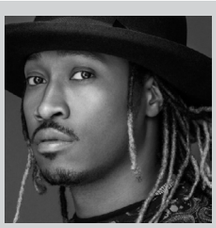
Happy Thanksgiving!

Until next week ...

Dorothy

NOVEMBER 20 - FUTURE - Nayvadius DeMun Wilburn aka Future, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, and record producer. Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Wilburn first became involved in music as part of the Dungeon Family collective, where he was nicknamed "the Future". After amassing a series of mixtapes between 2010 and 2011, Future signed a major record label deal with Epic Records and A1 Recordings, which helped launch Future's own label imprint, Freebandz. He subsequently released his debut album, Pluto, in April 2012 to positive reviews. Future's second album, Honest, was released in April 2014, surpassing his debut.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S



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 gifts and talents that you have blessed us with and help us to stop comparing what we have to what others have.

Question: Are you satisfied with the gifts and talents that God has blessed you with?
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 TODAY!

NEXT WEEK:
"Be Thankful!"

This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, November 22, 2026
Last Sunday
After Pentecost



(Track 2, Year A)
First Lesson:
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
Psalm 95:1-7a
Second Lesson:
Ephesians 1:15-23
GOSPEL:
Matthew 25:31-46

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*Funeral service for **MRS. WANDA FAYE FORD** (b. 1967) is incomplete and will be announced at a later date.*

*Funeral service for **MS. ANNETTE DUNCAN** (b. 1962) was Sunday, November 15, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Minister Michelle Miller officiating.*

*Funeral service for **MS. MARY LOUISE MITCHELL** (b. 1957) was Saturday, November 14, at St. James #2 Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 2950 Jeff Road NW, Harvest, Ala.*

*Funeral service for **MASTER ARLO UNDERWOOD** (b. 2026) was Saturday, November 14, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.*

*Funeral service for **MRS. ALLEAN KING** (b. 1935) was Friday, November 13, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel, 2501 Carmichael Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.*

*Graveside service for **MR. CHARLES HAROLD PENN** (b. 1934) was Thursday, November, 12, at Pleasant Grove Cemetery with Rev. Gregory Bentley officiating.*

*Funeral service for **MRS. MILDRED SPRAGINS FIELDS** (b. 1934) was Monday, November 9, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Wendell Davis officiating.*

*Funeral service for **MRS. MARY STEGER-CARROLL** (b. 1947) was held Saturday, November 7, at First Missionary Baptist Church, 3509 Blue Spring Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.*

*Funeral service for **MR. CHARLES BIRDSONG** (b. 1944) was Saturday, November 7, at Potter's Hand Church Ministries, 983 Indian Creek Road NW, Huntsville, Ala..*

*Funeral service for **MR. RANDY "ROCK STEADY" D. GREEN** (b. 1958) was Sunday, November 1, at Bethany Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Elder James Battles officiating and eulogist.*

*Funeral service for **MS. PATSY L. POPE** (b. 1954) was Saturday, October 31, at Zion Progress Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Hernandez Ford officiating.*

*Funeral service for **REV. EARLA S. LOCKHART** (b. 1947) was Friday, October 30, at First Missionary Baptist Church, with Rev. Dr. Carlos D. Williams officiating.*

- Submissions by Brenda Friend and Angel S. Wilson

Are We Preparing for Only Half of Life?

Why We Need to Plan for Life's Lows as Well as Its Highs

"The best time to prepare for famine is during the feast."

— ELLEN G. WHITE, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, ch. 21, p. 224.[1]

At a recent Sabbath dinner with six fellow retirees, a retired pediatrician made an observation that stopped me in my tracks.

"We as Black people don't like to talk about death, deal with death, or plan for death," she said.

She acknowledged that although she and her husband had established a trust, she had not completed her will. Why? She described a fear that planning for death might somehow hasten its arrival.

Around the table, five of the seven of us had wills. Two did not. That conversation raised a larger question: Why do we devote so much attention to preparing for success but so little to preparing for life's inevitable trials, defeats, and losses?

Death is not necessarily defeat. But death, disaster, and failure remind us that we cannot control everything. And sometimes our egos resist that reality.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF PREPARATION

My favorite author, Ellen G. White, provides a powerful leadership lesson in her account of Joseph's preparation for Egypt's famine. In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, she writes:

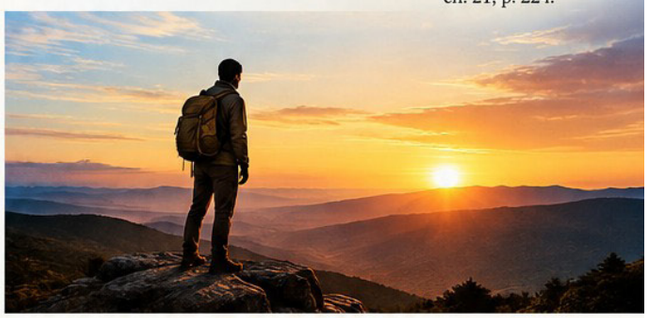
> *"At the very opening of the fruitful years began the preparation for the approaching famine."*
>
> — ELLEN G. WHITE, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, ch. 21, p. 224.[1]

Imagine that! Joseph didn't wait for famine to begin preparing for famine. He used the years of prosperity to prepare for the approaching years of scarcity. The best time to prepare for famine is during the feast.

TRIUMPH AND DISASTER: TWO IMPOSTORS

Rudyard Kipling, in his poem *If—*, challenges us to meet triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same. Both can deceive our egos. Triumph can convince us we're invincible. Disaster can convince us we're worthless. Neither is true.

Life is a roller coaster. There are exhilarating climbs, unexpected drops, and moments when we cannot see what lies beyond the next curve. We cannot eliminate the roller coaster. But we can learn to manage our egos while riding it.

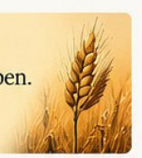


THREE DISCIPLINES FOR A FULL LIFE

For years, I've taught what I call The Discipline of the Day After: Don't worship yesterday's victory. Don't waste yesterday's defeat. Ask, "What next?" But Joseph's example suggests two companion disciplines. Together, they offer a practical framework for managing life's inevitable roller coaster.

1 The Discipline of the Day Before

Anticipate and prepare for what may happen. Use today's abundance to prepare for tomorrow's uncertainty.



2 The Discipline of the Day

Manage today's opportunities and responsibilities with humility and wisdom.



3 The Discipline of the Day After

Reflect, learn, recover, and determine what next? A setback is not the end — it can be the setup for the next success.



Planning a will, preparing a successor, documenting important decisions, or discussing final wishes doesn't invite disaster. It demonstrates responsibility toward those who may eventually depend upon us.

Leadership isn't merely preparing for the successes we desire. It's also preparing for the challenges we cannot always avoid. And that requires managing our egos through both.

Plan for the triumphs.
Prepare for the trials.
Manage your ego through both.



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The Valley Weekly Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

"A Plus, Not a Must ..."

I was listening to a podcast with Diane von Furstenberg when she said four words that stopped me cold: *a plus, not a must.*



I had to shake it off. I thought about how many things in my life I've treated as a must. The house. The car. The business. The title. The certification. The experience I think I'm missing. The approval of people I love. And when I didn't have them, I shrank. I called it an obstacle. I called it too hard.

But I wake up every morning whole. Whatever I have, whatever I am, and every experience I've lived goes with me. Everything else is a plus. Not required to be me.

Then I had to check myself. "A plus, not a must" can set you free, or it can give you permission to quit. The gym becomes a plus. The follow-up call becomes a plus. The dream becomes a plus. That's not freedom. That's an excuse wearing a nice outfit.

So, some things must stay musts, and you choose them on purpose. My faith is a must. Showing up is a must. Keeping my word to myself is a must.

Most of us have the lists backwards. We treat stuff and approval as musts and treat discipline as a plus.

This week, take out two sheets of paper. On one, write what you've been calling a must that is really a plus. Release it. On the other, write the few things that truly are musts. Protect them.

Stop shrinking over pluses. Start standing on your musts.

God loves you, and so do I. He has given you a gift; open it.

The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

November 19
Women's Basketball
vs. UAB
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 6 p.m.

November 19-22
Don D.C. Curry
Huntsville Levity Live
Comedy Club
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.

November 20
Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Lipscomb
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7 p.m.

November 26
Thanksgiving

December 3
Women's Basketball
vs. Tuskegee
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 6 p.m.

December 15
Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. LeMoyne-Owen
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7 p.m.

December 25
Christmas Day

December 29
Women's Basketball
vs. Allen University
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 6 p.m.

December 30
Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. William Carey
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala.

January 1 (2027)
New Year's Day

January 2
Women's Basketball
vs. UAPB
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 2 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. UAPB
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 4 p.m.

January 4
Women's Basketball
vs. Mississippi Valley
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 5:30 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Mississippi Valley
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

January 16
Women's Basketball
vs. Alabama State
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 2 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Alabama State
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 4 p.m.

January 21
Women's Basketball
vs. Prairie View A&M
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 6 p.m.

January 23
Women's Basketball
vs. Texas Southern
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 2 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Texas Southern
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 4 p.m.

January 25
Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Prairie View A&M
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7 p.m.

February 4
Women's Basketball
vs. Grambling
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 6 p.m.

February 6
Women's Basketball
vs. Southern
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 2 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Southern
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 4 p.m.

February 8
Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Grambling
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7 p.m.

February 9-13
"The Wiz"
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall | Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

February 18
Women's Basketball
vs. Bethune-Cookman
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 5:30 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
vs. Bethune-Cookman
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
Normal, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

February 20
Women's Basketball
vs. Florida A&M
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center | 2 p.m.

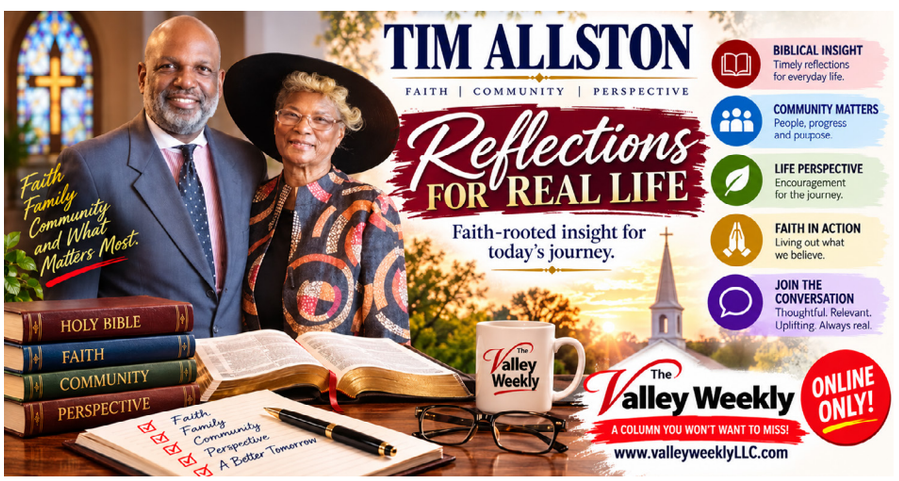


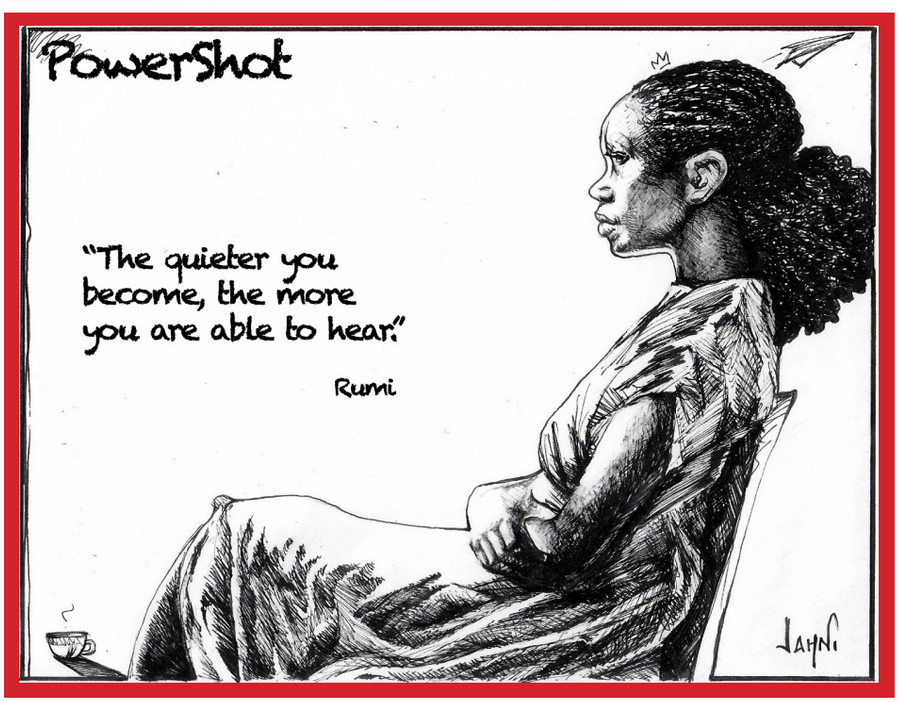
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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Rev. Dr. Oscar L. Montgomery



Born in Chapman, Alabama, the Elder Dr. Oscar L. Montgomery is a lifelong visionary whose drive to make an impact grew throughout elementary and high school. He has a lengthy list of academic accomplishments. He earned the Doctorate of Ministry from Trinity Theological Seminary, Newburgh, Indiana – Pastoral Ministries; Doctorate of Philosophy and Master of Science degrees from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana – Soil Genesis, Mineralogy, Classification and Remote Sensing; and a Bachelor of Science degree from Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama, in agronomy/chemistry. While impressive, these academic pearls have not been his driving force.

It is his love and concern for the "least of these my brethren" that really drives him. His devotion to making the world a better place for all has driven his major decisions in life. He spent 22 years at Alabama A&M University serving as a professor, researcher, and administrator. As he served in these different positions (i.e., director of external affairs, executive assistant to the president for institutional advancement and development, director of grants and contracts, vice president for student affairs, and vice president of research and development), he always had the students as his top priority. His end goal was always to make life easier and better for the students he served.

In 1977, while still employed at Alabama A&M University, Pastor Montgomery heeded his call to become pastor of Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church. His small congregation of 35 to 50 has grown to over 700 members and more than 2,000 have passed through these sacred doors and have moved on to spread the "Good News" about Jesus, Union Hill and Pastor Montgomery's vision all over the world. There are few places you can go without someone saying, "I used to go to Union Hill, how is Pastor Montgomery?" He has demonstrated that he is a shepherd sent from the heart of God. Indeed, he has a heart for winning souls, making disciples and feeding people by sharing his knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. As God leads him, so he leads.

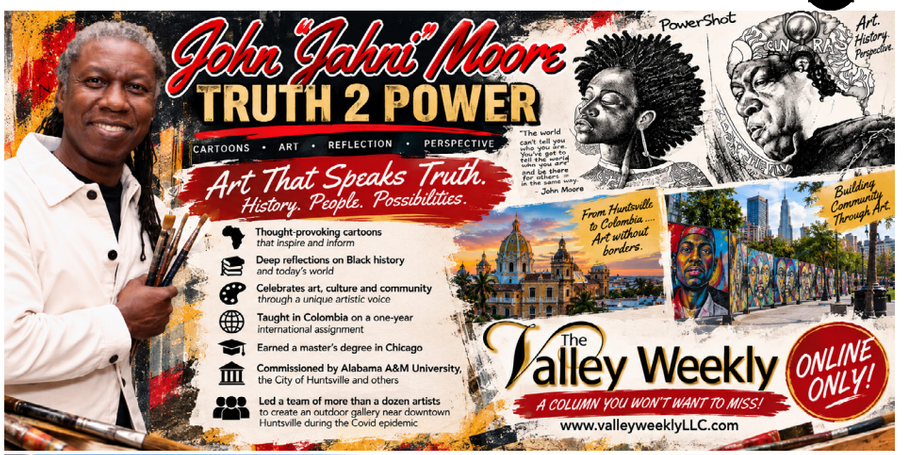
Dr. Montgomery is known for his unselfish and untiring leadership among his many religious, civic and community affiliations. He is the current president of North Huntsville Community United for Action; a member and past president of the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship; and past President of the NAACP of Huntsville; Moderator of the Flint River and Running Water Primitive Baptist Association, past Vice President for the Southern Region and present Vice President of the National Primitive Baptist Convention, Inc.

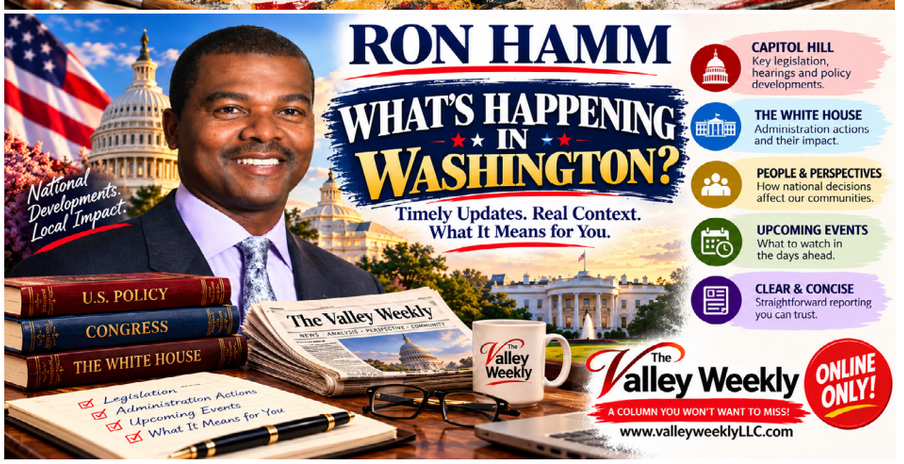
He is a member of numerous professional, civic, fraternal and honorary associations: Leadership Alabama Class X; Greater Huntsville Rotary Club; the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity, Beta Kappa Chi, and Sigma XI Honor Societies. He presently serves as a member of Leadership 100, Huntsville Leadership 2000, Huntsville Public Building Authority – Faith and Neighborhood Committee, Advisory Council for Huntsville Housing Authority and the School Foundation.

At the top of Pastor Montgomery's credits and accomplishments lies the love for his family, wife, Mother Alfredia Marshall Montgomery, and their four children, Paula Rodney (deceased), son-in-law Andrew Rodney; Renita Woodson (Eric); Christa, and Oscar Jr.; three grandsons, Langston Hunter Johnson, Alijah Lee Cruz and Royce Eric Woodson; and three granddaughters, Eden Grace Rodney, Montgomery Woodson and Nori Woodson.

"Honoring Our Elders" Rosetta James Foundation

"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.*









Tuskegee Holds Ribbon Cutting for Kellogg Center Reopening

With cellphones up and heads turning to take it all in, alumni, faculty, staff and students walked with purpose into the Tuskegee University Kellogg Center during the Homecoming soft open. After an exciting ribbon cutting of the partially restored iconic space, now on the road to a full restoration,

Dr. Mark A. Brown, president and CEO, gave his State of the University Address in the auditorium, keeping a promise to return alumni to a facility they have long loved.

The 168,000-square-foot meeting space, auditorium, ballroom and hotel served as the center of Tuskegee activities for decades. It was one of 11 Kellogg Conference Centers funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for education and hospitality and tourism training and the only such facility at an HBCU.

Through the generosity of alumni and other supporters, the Kellogg Center is well on its way to a rebirth and soon after the ribbon snapped, several hundred guests toured the renovated lounge, ballroom, auditorium and courtyard.

Confident that the university will continue to be "a global force," Dr. Brown also made it clear that welcoming an ever-increasing enrollment, increasing academic curriculum, and accelerating major infrastructure expansion, including more renovations to The Kellogg Center, will require robust financial support from alumni.

"We must show evidence that we believe in Tuskegee through our philanthropy," said Dr. Brown. The university is currently working The Campaign for Tuskegee University, a $300 million comprehensive initiative. "What is the state of the university? We are thriving," he said.

- Crystal Drake, TU OSC





Huntsville City 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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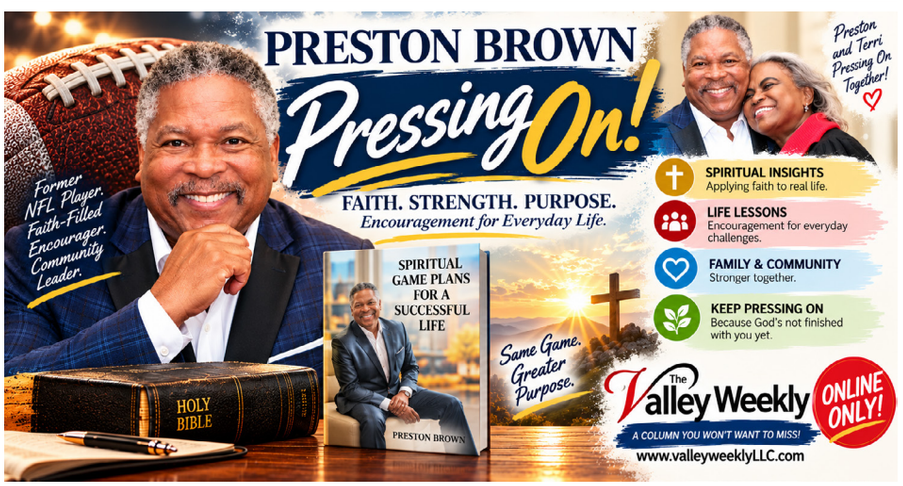
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Quarterly @ Cavalry: Jazzgiving Returns

Council Member Michelle Watkins and Arts Huntsville are excited to announce the return of Quarterly @ Cavalry: Jazzgiving with Friends, a free community arts and entertainment event celebrating the power of music to bring people together. Returning for its second year, the event continues the Quarterly @ Cavalry series, which was established to activate the Cavalry Hill Community Center Theatre and provide dynamic, accessible arts programming in the heart of the Northwoods community.

Free and open to the public, Jazzgiving with Friends invites residents to gather just before the Thanksgiving holiday for an evening of live jazz, community fellowship, and celebration.

"Calvary Hill is a vital asset in District One, and I am proud to invite the Huntsville community to experience great arts programming in North Huntsville," said City Council Member Michelle Watkins. "Through our partnership with Arts Huntsville, we are creating opportunities for the Northwoods community as well as friends and neighbors from across the city to come together to experience the arts. Our second annual Jazzgiving with Friends is an exciting opportunity to celebrate local talent, strengthen community connections, and share the joy of music. I invite everyone to join us for this special celebration."

2026 Event Details

The second annual Jazzgiving with Friends will bring the community together for a special jazz celebration:

Performers: Saxophonist Alex Banks and Tommy "Sax Legend" Friend

Event: Quarterly @ Cavalry: Jazzgiving with Friends

Date: November 20, 2026

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Cavalry Hill Community Theater, 2800 Poplar Ave., Huntsville, AL 35816

Admission: FREE

"Arts Huntsville is committed to creating opportunities for everyone to experience the arts throughout our city," said Allison Dillon-Jauken, Executive Director of Arts Huntsville. "The return of Quarterly @ Cavalry: Jazzgiving with Friends for a second year reflects the value of bringing accessible, engaging arts experiences directly into our neighborhoods. We are proud to continue this partnership with Council Member Watkins and look forward to welcoming the community back to Cavalry Hill for another memorable evening of live music and connection."

Quarterly @ Cavalry is part of an ongoing effort to make arts and cultural programming more accessible to Huntsville residents while celebrating local artists and strengthening community connections. Additional details about upcoming events in the 2026/2027 series will be announced in the coming months.

For more information about Arts Huntsville's programs, visit www.artshuntsville.org or call (256) 519-ARTS (2787). Arts Huntsville can also be found on Facebook and Instagram at @ArtsHuntsville.

For current information about District One, visit the City of Huntsville website or call (256) 427-5011. District One can be found on Facebook at @DistrictOneHuntsville.

ADPH Reports Rise in Infant Mortality Rate

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) reports that the 2025 infant mortality rate, at 7.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, increased from the 2024 rate of 7.1. This reflects that out of the 57,192 live births in 2025, 422 infants died before their first birthday. Alabama's infant mortality rate has been relatively steady over the past few years. The provisional United States infant mortality rate for 2025 at 5.4 per 1,000 live births remains lower than Alabama's rate.

Among racial groups, the infant mortality rate for white infants increased to 5.5 (229 infant deaths) in 2025 up from 5.4 in 2024, and the infant mortality rate for Black infants increased to 13.1 (183 infant deaths) from 11.8 in 2024.

The three leading causes of infant deaths in 2025 were as follows:

Congenital malformations, deformations, and abnormalities

Disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight, not elsewhere classified

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Births to teenagers (ages 10 to 19) of all races reached historic lows in 2025, while the percentage of births to teenagers was a historic low of 5.4.

- alabamapublichealth.gov

Scenes from the Society of Professional Women - Blue Carpet Event

Saturday, November 14, 2026 | Robert "Bob" Harrison Senior Advocacy Center | 6 p.m.

(Photos by Anthony Gibson Photography; Background: visit www.sopw.org/about)










The Society of Professional Women (SOPW) began in 1958 at Alabama A&M College, Normal, Alabama.

The idea to organize the SOPW originated with a group of college teachers. They saw the need for more cultural activity in the community at an organizational level.

Tributes were paid to celebrated and honored women leaders, trailblazers, as well as community contributors from diverse fields including technology, healthcare, public service, and education.

Evangelist Elaine Tibbs Rice serves as SOPW president for the 2026-2028 term.


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