

The Valley Weekly

Volume 1, No. 24

Friday, February 20, 2015

FREE

“For the varieties of bigotry spring from a common root. To tolerate one form, either wittingly or not, is to accept all the rest.”
- Randall Robinson

Economic Development Meeting Focuses on North Huntsville



Councilman Richard Showers, Sr., District One, called an economic development meeting of the North Huntsville businesses on Friday, February 13, at City Hall.

The primary aim of the meeting was to earnestly discuss and to form a business association to address pressing business concerns.

Chief among these issues in North Huntsville were empty buildings, closed businesses, eye sores, new over-pass, dilapidation and the general lack of new busi-

ness in the area.

The gathering (pictured above) was attended by several business owners and property owners, along with elected officials and city representatives.

The next meeting will be held at the Lakewood Baptist Church, located at 2101 Mastin Lake Road, Huntsville, Ala., pastored by Rev. Terrell Boyd.

Call Councilman Richard Showers, Sr., (right) at (256) 427-5013 for more information.



Alzheimer's Caregiver Conference Set

It might take brief travel, but the Tennessee Valley community is invited to an important and pertinent conference next week.

The Alzheimer's Association and the Alabama Dementia Initiative will hold the 2015 Alzheimer's Caregiver Conference on the rescheduled date of February 24. The conference will be held

at the Gadsden Senior Activities Center, located at 623 Broad Street in Gadsden, Ala., from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Among the slated topics are the basics of Alzheimer's, legal planning and aspects of caregiving.

For additional information, call (800) 272-3900.



The Huntsville Botanical Garden is looking far beyond immediate spell of cold weather to a warm time budding with Spring!

“Huntsville Blooms” will run from Sunday, March 15, through Thursday, April 30. During this celebration of the season, beautiful outdoor spaces take center stage during March and April. Spring-blooming trees, shrubs, and perennials will be highlighted by colorful bulbs and special flowering displays.

Additionally, welcoming French Flower Market-inspired

displays include wooden flats of spring flowers, a bicycle, and baskets of blooms.

Garden enthusiasts are invited to their favorite spring events, such as “Night of 1000 Flowers,” “Spring Plant Sale” and “Bunny Bonanza.” Plant walks, classes for adults and children, home-school programs and (new for 2015) “Hikes for Tykes” will add to the fun.

For more information, contact the Huntsville Botanical Garden at (256) 830-4447.

Elton John Tour to Hit Rocket City

The legendary entertainer Elton John will be presented in concert in Huntsville, Ala., March 4 at the Von Braun Center Propst Arena at 8 p.m.

Ticket prices are: \$142, \$82 and \$42. Tickets are available

at the VBC Box Office, www.ticketmaster.com, by phone at (800) 745-3000 and all Ticketmaster outlets.



Remembering the Idol of "The King"

More than 30 years ago when I was just beginning my job as a staffer at Tuskegee University, I had the good fortune to be able to peruse the extensive home album collection of an older church member.

Not only was I allowed to go through them one by one, but I was afforded the chance to play whatever disc I desired. There were original LPs of Billie Holiday, Arthur Prysock, Joe Williams, Gloria Lynne, Nancy Wilson, Cannonball Adderly, Theolonius Monk and Miles Davis.

Going through his collection was like being given the unmitigated power to connect with not-so-distant ancestors and to have their spirits enter me through song. The recordings of these Neo-Nubians were so beautiful, so extensive and so rich that,



even after several visits, I still found so much more to discover.

I could not listen to Billy Eckstine completely because there was another LP of Dinah Washington. After Dinah, my homegirl from Tuscaloosa, there were hundreds more.

Then, on one visit, I discovered an album by Roy Hamilton. When I placed the needle on a random track, I thought a mistake had been made. *That sounds like Elvis*, I thought. Little did I know that Hamilton was Elvis' boyhood idol, and that, if anything, perhaps Elvis sounded like Roy!

Born in Leesburg, Ga., in 1929, Hamilton moved "up North," where he received voice lessons and ultimately won amateur night at the Apollo Theater with his rendition of "You'll Never

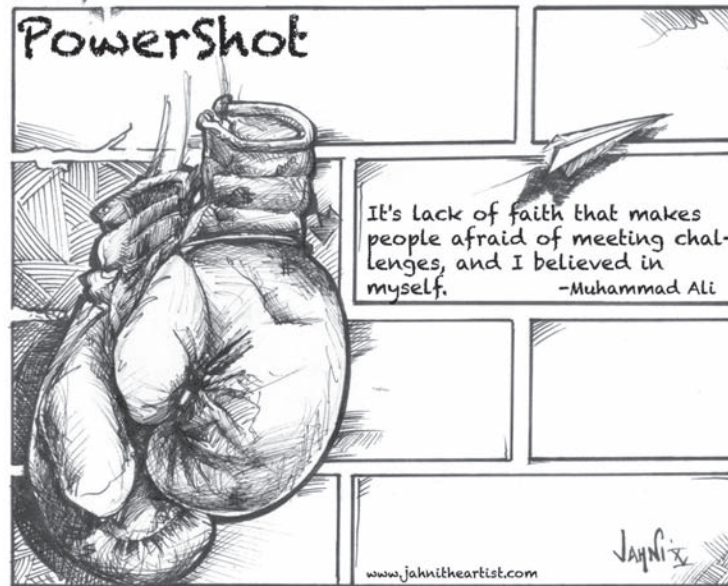
Walk Alone." By 1953, while Elvis was still a late teen, Hamilton was launching a string of hits on R&B and pop charts.

In 1956, he was considering retirement because of tuberculosis and exhaustion. When he died in 1969, he was only 40 years old. Nevertheless, his voice

and story, like so many of his African-American contemporaries, speak of golden triumph.

Take this opportunity to search the Internet or Youtube to hear one of the greatest, most regal voices of the past century. You'll truly be the richer for it.

by Jerome Saintjones



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The Valley Weekly

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From the Editor



Ah, matters of the heart! Growing up, we always had good music, with meaningful lyrics from Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Al Green, Ike and Tina Turner, The O'Jays, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Tyrone Davis, Brook Benton and all of the good ole Motown sounds. We would sing with the radio and 'slow drag' for hours as the disc jockeys fed our hearts.

Good music is fuel for the heart and soul. Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes wrote: *"Wake up everybody no more sleepin in bed, No more backward thinkin', Time for thinkin ahead, The world has changed so very much, From what it used to be, So there is so much hatred war an' poverty ... Wake up, all the teachers, Time to teach a new way, Maybe then they'll listen to whatcha have to say, Cause they're the ones who's coming up and the world is in their hands, When you teach the children, Teach 'em the very best you can. The world won't get no better, if we just let it be, The world won't get no better, We gotta change it yeah, just you and me."* Hey, we have to change it--you and me.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), "diseases of the heart are the No. 1 killer in America, and stroke is the No. 5 killer. The American Heart Association strongly believes that learning more about these diseases is the best way to reduce disability and death. That's why research is an association-wide priority." We are never too old or too young to take care of our hearts.

People who know me know that I enjoy walking. A key to preventing heart disease is physical activity. Until this week, we had had fairly decent weather in the local area. So, I got in some outside walking. Anything that makes you move your body and burns calories is considered physical activity. AHA suggests things like climbing stairs, playing sports, aerobic exercises, such as walking, jogging, swimming or biking, along with strength and stretching exercises, are best for overall stamina and flexibility. One of the simplest, easiest changes we can make to improve our heart health is to start walking. Walking can be enjoyable. It is free, easy, social, and provides great exercise. A walking program can be flexible and can produce high success rates, because you can stick with it. It's easy for walking to become a regular and satisfying part of life.

The only things that could ever keep me from walking are the weather or a health condition. A good walk will never take any more from you than it will give. So, wake up everybody. Let's get movin' toward healthier hearts. If you ate too many chocolates last week, you should try to squeeze in a 30-minute walk. Wake up, get up and let's get movin' to nourish our hearts. Ah, taking care of the heart! #heart#healthy#music#movin'

Until next week,

Dorothy

NACEE Helps Students Find Money for College

The North Alabama Center for Educational Excellence (NACEE) will help you find money for college. The months of February and March are designated as Financial Aid Awareness Months.

During these two months, NACEE centers will be open from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. on Saturdays in addition to Monday-Friday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. office hours.

NACEE wants to help students find money for college,



and its services are completely free. Please come into any of four locations (Huntsville, Athens, Cullman and Scottsboro) and let NACEE help you fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Go to www.nacee.net or call (256) 372-4600 for more information.

AAMU Professor Will Delve into "The Cost of Integration"



An Alabama A&M University professor will hold a seminar as part of Black History Month activities.

"Pyrrhic Victory: The Cost of Integrating" will be held February 26 at 5 p.m. in lecture room 117 of the College of Business and Public Affairs. The seminar will be facilitated by Dr. Daniel Upchurch and will examine materials from his upcoming book of the same name.

The public is invited.

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WELL WATER: Not My Real Name

The Psychological Effects of Racism on African-American Children

DANNY E. BLANCHARD

Well Water: Not My Real Name

The Psychological Effects of Racism on African-American Children. The Need to Understand Change

Danny E. Blanchard

Racial identity, or the significance and meaning that individuals attribute to race, is recognized as a key factor in how African Americans cope with racism experiences. Unfortunately, however, the few studies that have examined African Americans' responses to racist events have failed to account for differences across situations that African Americans experience, making it difficult to ascertain whether differences in coping are due to person variables, the situation, or both. In my book, I adopted a stress and coping approach to examine the relations among racial identity, racism-related stress appraisal, and coping with lifetime racism experiences.

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Tax Benefits for Taxpayers with Children

Here are several tax benefits that taxpayers with children should look for when they file their federal tax return:

- **Dependents.** In most cases, you can claim your child as a dependent. You can deduct \$3,950 for each dependent you are entitled to claim. You must reduce this amount if your income is above certain limits.

Phaseout of Exemptions. You lose at least part of the benefit of your exemptions if your adjusted gross income (AGI) is above a certain amount. For 2014, the phaseout begins at the following amounts.

Filing Status	AGI Level That Reduces Exemption Amount
Married filing separately	\$152,525
Single	254,200
Head of household	279,650
Married filing jointly	305,050
Qualifying widow(er)	305,050

See Publication 501 for additional information.

- **Child Tax Credit.** You may be able to claim the Child Tax Credit for each of your qualifying children under the age of 17. The



maximum credit is \$1,000 per child. If you get less than the full amount of the credit, you may be eligible for the Additional Child Tax Credit. See Schedule 8812 and Publication 972, both titled Child Tax Credit.

- **Child and Dependent Care Credit.** You may be able to claim this credit if you paid for the care of one or more qualifying persons. Dependent children under age 13 are among those who qualify. You must have paid for care so that you could work or could look for work. See Publication 503, Child and Dependent Care Expenses, for more on this credit.

- **Earned Income Tax Credit.** You may qualify for EITC if you worked but earned less than \$52,427 last year. You can get up to \$6,143 in EITC. See Publication 596, Earned Income Tax Credit, for more information.

- **Adoption Credit.** You may be able to claim a tax credit for certain costs you paid to adopt a child. For details see Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses.

- **Education tax credits** There are two credits that are available. The American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit may reduce the amount of tax you owe. You must complete Form 8863, Education Credits, and file a return to claim these credits. See Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education, for more information.

- **Student loan interest.** You may be able to deduct interest you paid on a qualified student loan. You can claim this benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions. For more information, see Publication 970.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate call me at (615) 218-5209 or e-mail me at deh_cei@comcast.net.

Submitted by
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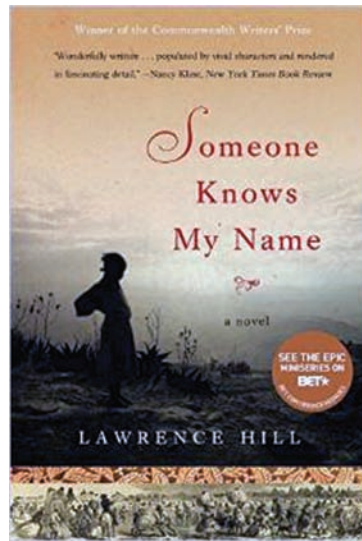
Huntsville Happenings

by Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

Huntsville's weather recently has been a mixed bag of hot and cold; with temperatures changing drastically in short time spans. The sunny and grey skies of various temperatures cannot compete with the recently released film adaptation of E.L. James' 2011 romance novel – "Fifty Shades of Grey." Woman and men around Huntsville flocked to local theaters as did many around the country to see the novel brought to life. Social media has been buzzing about the way the romance scenes are portrayed on the silver screen.

Both young adults and seasoned readers fell in love with the main characters Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey who are portrayed by actors Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan respectively. This book garnered so much attention that the author published the second and third volumes in 2012. If you have not heard of this series, you owe it to yourself to at least see the movie.

Another book that has taken a life form is "The Book of Negroes," by Canadian author Lawrence Hill. This book was published in the U.S. under the title, "Someone Knows my Name," due to its potentially controversial original title. BET will air this miniseries February 16-18th in celebration of African-American history month. Hill's novel about a young girl that was abducted from her village in Africa and



chronicles her life experience as a slave. The title is derived from the main event – the end of the American Revolutionary War. British naval officers kept a book with the names of negro slaves that requested permission to leave the United States for freedom. Make plans to adjust your schedule next week to watch this three-part series.

For those who remember when "Roots" by Alex Haley aired on ABC in 1977 over eight consecutive nights, with a multi-ethnic and multi-generational viewing audience of 130 million Americans watching, hopefully this miniseries will draw the same level of interest as an aspect of African-American history is shared.

Public Art Projects to Observe Educational Milestones

Twickenham Square, downtown Huntsville's newest mixed use development, will welcome an original, site-specific piece of public art in fall 2015 and the public has the opportunity to assist with the creation of the art work from February 27 thru March 8.

This public art project was conceived in 2012 in conjunction with Huntsville Housing Authority's sale of 6 acres of land associated with the former Councill Courts public housing development. The lead developer, Bristol Development Group, agreed to incorporate a public art commission as part of its mixed-use project on the former HHA land adjacent to Huntsville Hospital. In fall 2012, the project partners contacted artist Angelica Pozo to work on the project. Pozo, a tile artist from Cleveland, Ohio, was first introduced to the community as a speaker at the 2009 Alabama Clay Conference hosted in Huntsville, and her work largely focuses enlisting community involvement in the creation of public art projects.

Bristol Development Group, Huntsville Housing Authority, the City of Huntsville and The Arts Council, Inc., are now working in partnership to bring the project to fruition in 2015. It is the goal of the project partners to create a permanent public art installation to serve as an artistic focal point in the heart of Twickenham Square that memorializes the history of African American education in Huntsville and celebrates the community's future educational hopes and aspirations.

As the project manager of the SPACES Sculpture Trail and coordinator of the drafting of Huntsville's first Public Art Master Plan, The Arts Council is coordinating community outreach and engagement during the artist's residence in Huntsville

this winter to create the work. In preparing for the sale of the former Councill Courts property, Huntsville Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners discussed the value of public art and the potential to use it to celebrate Huntsville's history and accomplishments.

"This piece of art will not only serve as an aesthetic anchor in Twickenham Square, it will also honor nearby historical sites associated with the former Councill Court property," said Michael Lundy, Executive Director of the Huntsville Housing Authority. "The significance of the Fifth Avenue School and Councill High School speak to important milestones in education in Huntsville. Ms. Pozo – together with the community – will create a gathering place to remember these landmarks."

Both former school sites are geographically close to the Twickenham Square development. The artwork will specifically honor the contributions of Dr. William Hooper Councill and Dr. Sonnie Hereford III to education in the area at these two landmarks. In the 1860s, Dr. Councill was a pioneer in education for African American students in Huntsville and served as the first principal of The State Colored Normal School which trained African American teachers and grew into Alabama A&M University. In 1963, Dr. Hereford made more education history on the day he enrolled his son, Sonnie the IV in Fifth Avenue School as the first African American student to attend a white public school in Alabama.

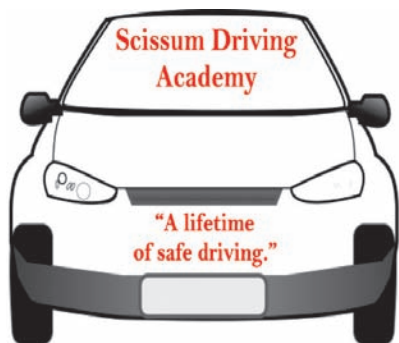
"I like to incorporate ... the opportunity for varying levels of perception," says Pozo of public art. "I like the piece to have a strong visual impact from a distance or from perhaps a more harried experience of the space, but I also like to incorporate

elements in the piece that can be experienced from a closer and more relaxed viewing."

The piece, titled "We Stand Here to Honor," has the overall perception of a tiled bench in the shape of a giant sunflower with a tree planted at its core, providing an opportunity to gather and socialize as people have in the neighborhood for generations. A closer look at the top of the bench petals will reveal details honoring Drs. Councill and Hereford.

As the petals 'unfold' down the sides of the bench, the close observer will realize that the artist used footprints to incorporate community involvement and symbolize leaving one's mark on the future. The artist's method for creating and visually shaping the petals will be footprints of all sizes. This process has the potential to offer all participants the powerfully cathartic experience to be able to say they literally left their mark on the site, just as their ancestors and the experiences they have had on this site have left a mark on them. The foot prints will be collected during an artist residency in Huntsville from February 27 – March 8, 2015.

Participants will be working directly with Ms. Pozo using their feet to place footprints directly onto the tile using non-toxic glaze. Those wishing to participate must make an appointment to visit Ms. Pozo's temporary studio at the Academy for Academics and Arts February 27 through March 8, 2015. Each person should allocate an hour of his/her time and must be willing to be barefoot for the process, which is non-toxic and water washable. Appointments should be made by calling The Arts Council at 256-519-2787, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays starting on February 9, 2015.



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MARCH

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12
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Fellowship of Faith to Host Wind Ensemble



The Fellowship of Faith Christian Church, located at 3703 North Memorial Parkway in Huntsville, Ala., will serve as the host site for a musical evening designed for the entire family.

Pastored by Rev. Troy Garner, the Fellowship of Faith Christian Church will host the Alabama A&M University Wind Ensemble, directed by Carlton J. Wright, director of bands.

The performance will be held in the Church's sanctuary on Sunday, March 8, at 6 p.m. The entire Tennessee Valley is invited to attend and support this program.

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Special February Memories

The A.G. Gaston Motel

by Barbara Anthony

An article in the Sunday *Huntsville Times*, January 18, 2015, about the A. G. Gaston Motel brought back very special memories. Built in 1954 by a mogul who became a millionaire with his many business ventures, it was the only one open to my race in Birmingham prior to the 1960s. Dr. Gaston, as he was dubbed in later life for his many honorary degrees, was grandfather to Arthur "Jean" Gaston, a freshman friend at A&M (then college) with me in 1955.

Because of our friendship, I was fortunate enough to be among several students, A&M administrators and their families invited to a party that her grandparents held at the Gaston mansion in Birmingham in August of 1958. Some of the adults and children attending from the A&M family were the Carters, the Lees, the Chambers, and Glenda Gill, who still has a picture taken by Dr. V. M. Chambers depicting some of the younger people.

I almost did not attend because of my trip to Tuscaloosa to meet my landlady for my first job. The problem was: "How would I get from Tuscaloosa back to my home in Guntersville after attending the party in Birmingham with the limited bus schedule that late at night?"

A week earlier I had been invited to celebrate my graduation with my cousin James Earl and his wife "Ettu" in Oneonta,



Alabama. Because they wanted it to be a special treat for me, we were going to the Cabin Club out near the area in Birmingham where the Gastons lived. They asked Ettu's brother, Jack, to go with us, a very innocent gesture at the time. He was to attend A&M in the fall after two years at Miles College. They thought it would be a good opportunity for me to tell him about life on "The Hill". When they mentioned that A.G. Gaston lived in the area, I told them about my dilemma

in attending the party the next week. Both my cousin and Jack offered to pick me up after the party and bring me to Oneonta where I could spend the night with Aunt Edna and catch the bus to Guntersville the next day. Jack won the toss. It sounded like a great idea, and upon calling Jean to tell her that I would be able to attend and for details on getting to her grandparents' home from the bus station and dressing for the party, she suggested that my friend should come to the party, also. We had a great time, and I was proud to introduce Jack to Jean, her family and other guests. That was the first special memory concerning

A.G. Gaston.

The second memory came six months later when my Landlady awakened me around 11:30 p.m. on Friday night, February 20, 1959, to tell me that I had two male visitors. I couldn't believe it! Jack and his cousin J.C. did come. I had given up on the plans we made Christmas vacation for what was to happen that weekend. After finally gathering myself and dressed, picked up my already-packed bag, and told my house mate and friend Effylenette what I was about to do (to her dismay and non-approval), Jack, J.C. and I were on our way to Tipton, Georgia.

Arriving very early in the

morning, the Justice of the Peace had to be awakened. Ironically, he was also a Presbyterian Minister, the denomination that we were to choose later in life. After a trip to Chattanooga for breakfast, J.C. chauffeured us back to Birmingham, where Jack and I spent our first night as man and wife---the only honeymoon we ever had--- at the A.G. Gaston Motel! Late that Saturday night or early Sunday morning I was slowly awakened to the smooth, sultry voice of Nina Simone singing "I Love You, Porgy", words that lingered in my heart and mind for almost 36 years.

As I write this tonight, February 9, 2015, a memory of Jack's sudden death twenty-one years ago is heavy on my heart. But come Saturday, February 21, 2015, which falls exactly on the day of the week of our elopement, I will again relive the memory of traveling from Alabama to Georgia and Tennessee and that special night in Birmingham at the A.G. Gaston Motel!



A.G. Gaston