TAX Time Cometh: Don't Procrastinate - p. 7







Mrs. Gladys Branch

"A Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home ..." - Ida B. Wells-Barnett

March Brings 'Soulful' Yoga

It's not too late to make a final salute to Black History Month and to do so with a "soul rejuvenating" experience.

Miyoga Studio and Robyn Moore will host "Black on the Mat - Soulful Yoga" on Sunday, March 3, at 7495 Wall Triana Hwy. in Madison, Ala., at 3 p.m.

The 90-minute soulful yoga session will include instructions by various local yoga instructors on mindful movements (asanas), melodic music from different black artists and genres, guided meditation and breath work.

A class for all levels is scheduled for March 7 at 7 p.m.

Summer Art Camp Set

Heart 4 Art, LLC will sponsor its Summer Art Camp from May 30-June 22 at the Academy for Academics and Arts from 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (\$15)

Designed for students ages 5-14, the Summer Art Camp will offer painting, fun, games, drawing, sculpting, new friendships and much more. The cost is just \$80 per student.

For additional information, contact

Tracie Bradford, camp facilitator, at llcheart4art@gmail. com.

Seats are limited, so be sure to complete registrations as soon as possible.

Register: **HERE**

Sundays at The Market

Take advantage of the fresh produce each Sunday at The Market at Mid City at the Camp from 12-4 p.m.

The Camp's offerings will continue through November 10 and will include farmers, artisans, musicians, growers, makers and other creative people. "Come for the Produce, Stay for the Party!"



WELCOMING DLC's Cohort XVII! The Diversity Leadership Colloquium has started its 17th cohort. Pictured (l-r) are: Vanessa Weatherly, Emil Johnson, Shavonne Lee, Allen Malone, Doetiletia Sims, Kevin Chandler and LeVentria Sims. Not Shown: Marquasha Carter. [Photo: Jerome Saintijones]

Ukrainian Bake and Craft Charity Scheduled

alley Weekly

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The Fellowship of the Rolling Pin will hold Ukranian Bake/Craft Charity Events at local churches in Huntsville and Madison beginning March 2 and ending May 11, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.. Proceeds will assist volunteers in Ukraine.

The event will be held Saturdays, March 2 and 30, at Madison Christian Church, 1400 Hughes Road, Madison, Ala. On Saturday, April 20, Monte Sano United Methodist Church, 600 Monte Sano Boulevard (Huntsville), will host the charity event.

St. Matthew's, 786 Hughes Road, Madison, will host the last Ukrainian bake and craft activity on Saturday, May 11. Event organizers "will happily share yummy treats and unique craft items in exchange for donations."



Chef Competition June 21

The Renewed Mind in Christ Conference will feature a Chef Competition on June 21 at Four Point by Sheraton (Airport), allowing 25 people to showcase their culinary skills. Prizes range from \$250 to \$4,000. Entry fee: \$250. For more info, visit www.ferventlyevents.com.

Valley Weekly

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Here is what's happening in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, this week:

KEY EVENTS THIS WEEK: Federal government faces 1st shutdown deadline this Friday; Senate trial of DHS Secretary Mayorkas' impeachment may be delayed; and President Biden to host Congressional Big Four at the White House.

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week, although there were no votes in the House until Wednesday. The House was expected to vote to extend the current short-term FAA Reauthorization extension from the current expiration date of March 8 through May 10, 2024 (earlier this month, the Senate Commerce Committee added 5 slots for long-distance flights to Reagan National Airport in its version of the bill). Although the text of some of the as yet unenacted FY2024 appropriations bills were due to be released on Sunday night for consideration this week before a Friday deadline, House and Senate leaders were unable to reach agreement on outstanding policy issues. Therefore, there may be a partial government shutdown when temporary funding measures for the MilCon/VA, Transportation/HUD, Agriculture, and Energy & Water appropriations bills expire on March 1. The newest Member of the House, Rep.-elect Tom Suozzi (D-NY), was sworn in on Wednesday, resetting the House party breakdown to 219 Republicans and 213 Democrats with 3 vacancies. The Senate is waiting for the House to send it the two impeachment articles (for willful and systemic refusal to comply with the law and breach of public trust) against **Homeland Security Secretary**

Alejandro Mayorkas that will trigger a Senate trial – but Punchbowl News is reporting

this morning that the House may delay sending until after this week's budget showdown. On Feb. 20, 13 GOP Senators led by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) wrote a letter to Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) urging him to press for a full trial.

2. THE WHITE HOUSE. Last Wednesday, President Biden announced that he was zeroing out loan balances for nearly 153,000 student loan borrowers, who borrowed \$12,000 or less, have been paying their student loans for at least 10 years, and enrolled in the Biden Administration's "Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE)" repayment plan. On Monday, the President travelled to New York City for a campaign event and on Tuesday he hosted a meeting at the White House with Speaker Johnson, House Democratic Leader Jeffries, Senate Majority Leader Schumer, and Senate GOP Leader McConnell to discuss the FY2024 appropriations impasse and funding for Ukraine and Israel. On Friday. he will meet with Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni at the White House. Next week, he will give his State of the Union Address on March 7.

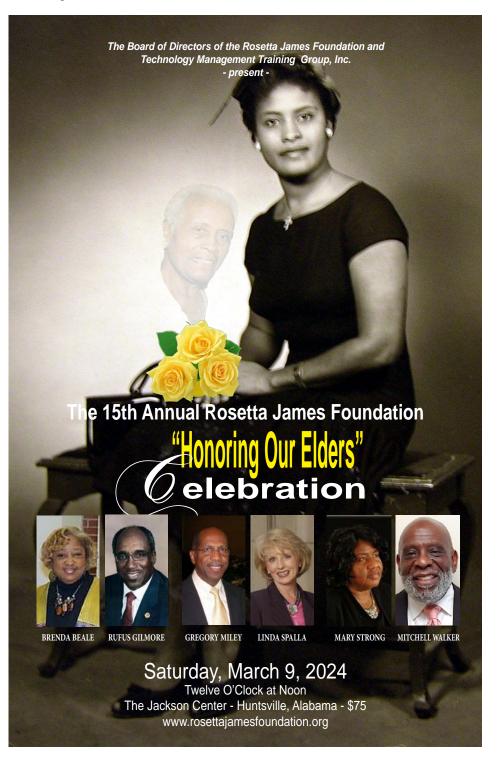
"Religion
without humanity
is very poor
human stuff."
- Sojourner Truth

3. SUPREME COURT. On Monday, the Supreme Court heard arguments in a pair of cases to consider the constitutionality of controversial laws in Texas and Florida that would regulate how large social media companies like Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) control content posted on their sites. The legislatures in Texas and Florida passed the laws in 2021 in response to a belief

that social media companies were censoring their users, especially those with conservative views. As they are drafted, the laws do not apply to conservative social media platforms like Parler, Gab, and Truth Social. The cases are NetChoice v. Paxton and Moody v. NetChoice.

4. SPRING COVID SHOT/ CDC. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices met Wednesday to decide whether to recommend a spring COVID booster for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

Hamm Consulting Group 300 New Jersey Ave, NW Ste. 900 Washington D.C. 20001 T: 202-596-8384 rhamm@hammconsulting.com www.hammconsulting.com



VALLEY DEATHS



SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral service for MS. DUTCHESS NICHO-LAS (b. 1952) was Saturday, February 24, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.



Funeral service for MR. KEITH
"ANTONIO" JACKSON (b.
1988) was Saturday, February 24, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral service for MR. ERSKINE E. PATTON (b. 1954) will be Saturday, March 2, at 11 a.m. at the Consolidated Flint River and Running Water Primitive Baptist Memorial Tabernacle (2131 Highway 72E, Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Gregory Miller officiating.



Funeral service was Friday, February 23, for MRS. LINDA FAYE TOWNSEND (b. 1949) at Taylor's Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, 3100 Stringfield, Road, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for DR. PRINCE PREYER, JR. (b. 1934) was Monday, February 19, at First Missionary Baptist Church with the The Rev. Dr. Don Darius Butler officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

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

The memorial service for MR. JOY MCCRACKEN, JR. was Wednesday, February 28, at the New Life Seventhday Adventist Church (3912 Pulaski Pike NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Jason McCracken as eulogist and Dr. Michael Smith and Pastor Nelson B. Stokes officiating.

The funeral service for MRS. MARY JEAN FORD (b. 1939) was Saturday, February 24, at the Apostolic True Temple Church of God in Christ (3000 Stringfield Rd NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Bishop Jerry Townsend officiating.

The funeral service for SFC (RET) DOUGLASS HOLD-EN (b. 1965) was Saturday, February 24, at Big Shiloh P.B. Church with Pastor Jeff Jefferson officiating.

The funeral service for MS. BARBARA HUGHES MC-CRARY (b. 1950) was Thursday, February 22, at Center Grove United Methodist Church (185 Plummer Road, Huntsville, Ala.) with Elder Waymond Smith officiating.

Spiritual Preston Brown's Plan

"Know Your Why Before Your What"

In Philippians 3:14, Paul says, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Iesus"

We all need a sense of progress to continue achieving our goals in life-whether it be our jobs, our education, our exercise at the gym, or even our ministry. It can be hard to show up again

> 2505 University Dr. NW Huntsville, Alabama 35816

> > (256) 539, 9693

and again when something is not working. We all need to see some kind of progress.

Therefore, if progress is essential to our mental and spiritual growth, how do we make progress?

Most of us would say that effort produces progress. For example, how do you expect to pass a test that you never study for?

We need to apply effort to produce progress. But remember-effort alone will not produce progress. We also need direction. We need to know if we are headed in the right direction.

Whenever you find yourself feeling frustrated, stressed,

and burned out, perhaps you have been pointing your efforts in the wrong direction. I have found that the best way to point your efforts in the right direction, is to discover your "why".

When you begin to realize why you are doing what you are doing, you will remain headed in the right direction. When you know your why" it will fuel your desire to stay passionate about whatever it is

A New Generation Of Service



that God has called you to do.

Prayer: Gracious Father, give us the faith to continue on our spiritual journey, even when it looks as though we are not making any progress.

Question: Do you know why you make the choices that you make in your life?

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

NEXT WEEK:

"More Than Enough"

"WE CANNOT ERASE THE STING OF DEATH, BUT WE CAN MAKE IT EASIER"



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"No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people."

- Marian Anderson



HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

February 29-March 2

Baron Weather Training North Hall Salons 1, 2 & 3 Von Braun Center

March 1

14th Annual Black and White Charity Ball Saturn Ballroom 1 & 2 Von Braun Center

March 3

Bus Trip to Bloody Sunday Madison County Chapter of the Alabama New South Coalition Madison County District 6 Office Hi-Lo Circle (Near Drake State) Huntsville, Ala. 8 a.m.-9 p.m.

March 9

Rosetta James Foundation "Honoring Our Elders" Celebration/Day Gala The Jackson Center Huntsville, Ala. 12 noon Spelman College Glee Club Church Street Cumberland Presbyterian Church 228 Church Street Downtown Huntsville

Concert Lawrence Brownlee *Host:* Huntsville Chamber Music Guild Huntsville, Ala.

March 11-15

4 p.m.

Cove Martial Arts Academy
K-5th Grades (\$250)
Owens Cross Roads, Ala.
9 a.m.-1 p.m.

March 22-24

The 4th Annual Women's Expo Huntsville Von Braun Center Huntsville, Ala.

March 29

Teacher Professional De-

velopment Huntsville Museum of Art Downtown Huntsville 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

March 30

Rocket City Comedy Festival Mark C. Smith Concert Hall Von Braun Center 8 p.m.

April 6

Lynyrd Skynyrd & ZZ Top Propst Arena Von Braun Center 7 p.m.

April 12-14

Monster Jam Propst Arena Von Braun Center

May 4

Donate Life Alabama Donor Dash for Life 5K Veterans Park Hoover, Ala.

ON THIS DAY

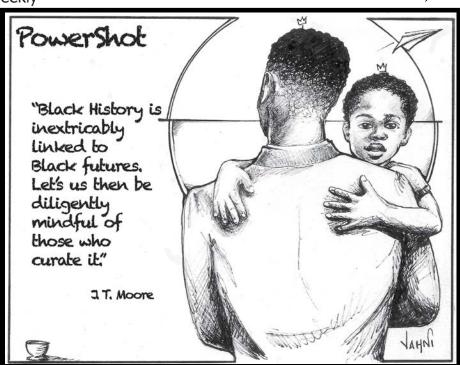
Civil Rights Bill was enacted by Congress on March 1, 1875, giving Blacks the right to equal treatment in inns, public conveyances, theaters and other places of public amusement. It was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1883.

"In politics, there are no friends."
- Marian Wright Edelman

MARCH 1 - Harry Belafonte - Harry Belafonte (born Harold George Bellanfanti Jr.) is an American singer, songwriter, activist, and actor. Belafonte has won three Grammy Awards, including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, an Emmy Award, and a Tony Award. In 1989, he received the Kennedy Center Honors. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1994. In 2014, he received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award at the Academy's 6th Annual Governors Awards. In March 2014, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music in Boston.



- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



"Good management has helped me find much of the success I've got."

- Sarah Vaughn





Intentionality ...



Seeking ...

In your daily rising, what are your first thoughts? What does your mind go to as you awaken each day? Are you grateful to see another day? Do you just roll along with your regular morning routine of preparation for the day?

What is it you're seeking? What is the mark, the goal, the target? Do you even know? Or, are you just allowing life to happen, one moment at a time?

My word, for that past three (3) years, has been intentionality.

I want to be deliberate in every move, every relationship, my time, and trying to obtain, does it help others? Does it pour into anything other than myself? What legacy does it leave? Can whatever I begin still exist when I'm gone? If not, what is it that I'm seeking?? Do you want temporary happiness, love, friendships, gains? Or, are you seeking after things that have long-term effects on those around you ...

where I place my attention.

I want to be intentional

with what I'm seeking.

Whatever I am

and those to come? Do you even question what it is you're seeking? ... and in that ... are you including God?

Even if you're seeking things ... the word says, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' (Matthew 6:33)

Maybe you need to take a moment, and really think about what you're pursuing. Think about why. Ask God, "What the purpose is in this? Ask, "is this even something I'm suppose to be doing?"

We have one life ... time is limited, and days are passing by with no guarantee of how many of "those" we have left. Seek things that matter. Ask Him what

those are!

May your eyes be open to the wonderment God has for you. May you seek Him first in your decisions, your moves, your daily life.

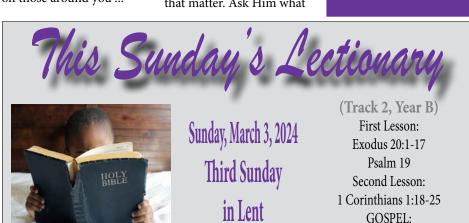
May you find everlasting joy in what you are pursuing. May your search lead you to something miracu-

God loves you, and so do I.

He gave you a gift. Open

"When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time"

- Maya Angelou



Huntsville Council Meetings



Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

Council work sessions are also held in the Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information, call (256) 427-5011.



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Bravo, the "Boston Celtics Soul Train"!

"Whatsoever things are true, ... honest, ... just, ... pure, ... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." - 1 John 1:9

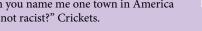
As we just completed the first half of the NBA regular season, as well as the first half of Black History Month, the Boston Celtics are this season's winningest NBA team with a 43-12 record.

The reason I am overlapping these two milestones is that the Celtics showcase excellence in both arenas.

Whenever I mention (especially in the neighborhood barbershop) that I'm from the greater Boston area, immediate taunts and jeers would rise, defaming Boston as such a racist town.

Then, I ask those naysayers a question they cannot answer, and follow it up with a recitation of the facts.

"Can you name me one town in America that's not racist?" Crickets.



The Boston Celtics "Soul Train"

In their uncomfortable silence, I then school them on "The Boston Celtics Soul Train" from chapter 5 of my latest leadership book, Where Jump Shots Meet Jesus. This book intersects winning NBA championship dynasties with best practices from the Bible.

Since the Bible uses the number "3" to symbolize wholeness, completion, and perfection, I list for these barbershop naysayers three indisputable facts:

1. The Celtics selected Chuck Cooper on April 25, 1950, as the NBA's first Black drafted player. When the NBA decided in its 2021-22 season to honor Black NBA pioneers, its Pacific Division champions received the Chuck Cooper Trophy;

The Celtics' post-Christmas Gift to the NBA and American **Sports**

- 2. Seeing all-Black starting teams in professional sports no longer raises eyebrows. But on December 26, 1964, coach Red Auerbach replaced the injured starter Tommy Heinsohn with Willie Naulls. By adding him to Tom Sanders, Sam and K.C. Jones, and Bill Russell the Celtics created the first all-Black starting lineup in American professional sports; and
- 3. On April 16, 1966, following their 8th straight NBA championship, the Celtics named Bill Russell its new playercoach; this made him the first black manager in American professional sports.

At that point, I dropped the Mic, as there's a value in knowing the facts, to dispel the misformation.

In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week, the forerunner of today's Black History Month. This sought to correct misinformation about and give appropriate credit to the contributions of Negroes to America.

In celebrating his contribution, let's begin now to focus more on celebrating the facts while also discounting the naysaying.

Tim Allston

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



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

Mrs. Gladys Branch

When Gladys L. Branch received her diploma as a Top 20 student at Birmingham's Hooper City High School in 1964, she knew that there were still plenty of opportunities during a turbulent time in America during the 1960s. She entered historic Alabama A&M University, where she received the Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and general science in 1968. She returned to obtain her Master of Science degree in guidance and counseling in 1974.

Over the years, Mrs. Branch has developed an impressive career that has spanned more than 40 years. For some five years, beginning in 1969, Branch was an elementary and middle school teacher for the Athens (Ala.) City School System, where she prepared and carried out lesson plans for second graders and later for math and science students at the middle school level.

In 1974, she served one year as a counselor for the Huntsville Sickle Cell Center before returning for a final year of mathematics, teaching at Westlawn Middle School. She remained at Westlawn for an additional 20 years as a general counselor and then as a vocational counselor until 1996.

In August 1996, Branch



decided to use Westlawn as a base for a position in administration and served as Westlawn's assistant principal for four years. She was acting principal for a year at McDonnell Elementary School before culminating her career as principal of Rolling Hills Elementary School.

Branch has been affiliated with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., for over 50 years and is a past president of the Huntsville Alumnae Chapter. Currently, she serves as the co-chair of the Protocol Committee for Huntsville Alumnae and is a member of the State Protocol Committee. She is also president of the Association of Ladies for

Agape of North Alabama; member and past secretary, Madison County Retired Educators Association; member, Northwest Church of Christ, where her husband serves as the Pulpit Minister; and she works on various committees and teaches ladies and children Bible classes. Moreover, the retired educator also serves as vice chair of the board of Diverse Educational Life Training Activities, Inc. (DELTA, Inc.).

She and her husband, Elder John Branch, have two children and three grandchildren, along with another couple of adopted children, who also have three children of their own.

"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 250word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.

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Why You Shouldn't Procrastinate This Tax Season

(BPT) - Whether this year will be your first time filing or you've been doing your taxes for years, it's never too early to prepare for tax season. By knowing ahead of time what documents you'll need, you'll be more likely to make tax prep easier and more efficient - helping reduce the stress that can come from waiting until the last minute.

Advance preparation can also help you file early to get your refund earlier if you're entitled to one. With an average of 3 out of 4 taxpayers receiving a tax refund, don't wait till tax day.

Here are important tips to help when preparing to file:

Make a checklist

To get started, create a checklist so you'll know what documents to watch for and collect. Most tax documents like W-2s are made available by employers and other institutions online, although they may also be mailed. You can check with your employer's HR department to find out how

and when tax documents are likely to be delivered.

If you've been a gig worker - even part time - or are entirely self-employed, you'll need to gather documents like 1099-Ks, plus all the receipts and records of your self-employment income and expenses throughout the year, including quarterly estimated tax payments you may have already made.

For anyone who has filed before, take out last year's taxes for an idea of what you'll likely need this year. Information and documents you'll need depend on your unique situation, and they include but are not limited

- * Your Social Security number (as well as your spouse's and children's, if applicable)
- * Records of income received, including interest income
- * Mortgage interest statements
- * Payments for tuition (1098-T) or student loan interest (1098-E)
- * Health care and childcare expenses
- * Vehicle or home purchase documents
- * Charitable contribution receipts
 - "By preparing early, you'll



have more time to gather documents, review your tax return and speak with your Tax Pro, helping you feel more confident and less stressed," said Mark Steber, chief tax information officer. Jackson Hewitt Tax Services. "By waiting until the April deadline, you could make a mistake, requiring the filing of an amended tax return or subjecting yourself to avoidable penalties and interest."

Decide how you'll file

Taxes can be confusing, no matter your circumstances, so it's a good idea to consider how you'd like to file this year. It can help to have someone on your side who understands recent changes in tax laws, how to file ac-

the most of applicable deductions. You can get expert help filing vour taxes. Choosing a professional tax service

can take the

worry out of figuring out your taxes, no matter your circumstances.

Make sure you and your tax professional electronically file your tax return. It's not only the fastest way to make sure the IRS receives your return, but it's the safest way. This keeps paper from getting stolen out of your mailbox or getting lost in the

Also, electronically deposit your tax refund. Having your refund directly deposit into your bank ac-

count or on a prepaid bank card is the safest option. This avoids the possibility of your check getting stolen or getting marked as "undeliverable" if sent to the wrong mailbox.

"These two bonus tips alone can cut days and weeks off your tax return refund timing and better safeguard your information and money," said Steber.

The chance to double your refund

With Jackson Hewitt's second annual Double Your Refund Sweepstakes, you could win a prize equal to your federal tax refund. The 15-week sweepstakes starts the first week of January and goes through April 15. Each week there will be two grand prize winners who will win a prize equal to their federal tax refund (a

maximum match of \$10,000 and minimum of \$1,500), plus 20 runner-up winners each week who will win \$200. In addition, there will be a season-long drawing where there will be two additional grand prize winners and 20 runner-up winners randomly drawn.

"As we launch the 2024 tax season, the second annual Double Your Refund sweepstakes will allow hundreds of clients the chance to win extra money during tax time - with the chance to potentially double the size of their tax refund - which we know will be financially beneficial," said Kim Hudson, SVP and chief marketing officer at Jackson Hewitt Tax Services.

How to enter: For the season-long drawing, enter at JacksonHewitt.com.

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"I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else's whim or to someone else's ignorance." - bell hooks



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AshaKiran, Huntsville Sponsor Annual Kite Event

AshaKiran and the City of Huntsville are jointly sponsoring the annual Community Kite Festival on Saturday, March 2, at John Hunt Park from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The free and public event celebrates the diversity of the Tennessee Valley area and provides yet another opportunity for attendees to enjoy kite flying, food vendors, kid activities and much more!

The kite activity fosters inclusiveness, diversity, equity, and harmony across all ethnic and social backgrounds by bringing people together through kite flying



and family-friendly activities, organizer say.

This is a free event with an entertaining array of activities to enjoy if the winds die down, such as free art projects, clowns, music, and more. Attendees are welcome to bring their own kite, purchase one at the event, or simply show up and enjoy the celebration as kites and gliders soar across the sky.

AshaKiran's mission is to address crises such as domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking in the foreign-born and other underserved communities, by offering culturally sensitive services and providing education to enhance understanding of

cultural barriers.
For more information, visit www.ashakiranonline. org.

