

# The Valley Weekly

"Don't let the same dog bite you twice."  
- Chuck Berry

FREE

Volume 3, No. 28

www.valleyweeklyllc.com

Friday, March 24, 2017

## Zetas to Present Blue Revue Luncheon

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Delta Omega Zeta Chapter, Huntsville, Ala., will present its 2017 Blue Revue Event Luncheon: "Showcasing Crowns and Talents - A Touch of Class." The event will be held at The Jackson Center, 6001 Moquin Drive, Huntsville, Ala., on April 8, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The activity will feature a tribute to Mr. W.C. Handy, Father of the Blues, the LeJeune House of Fashion and Design, and Showcasing Other Crowns and

Talents from the local community.

Attire for the event is dressy casual, along with one's favorite hat.

The Blue Revue is Zetas' annual scholarship fundraiser activity.

Scholarships are awarded to local high school seniors for their academic excellence, outstanding leadership and community services.

In 2014, Zetas added support to Elder Care and Children Initiatives consistent with National Partnerships and Collaborations.

With the administering the Z-HOPE (Zetas Helping Other People Excel) program or giving financial assistance through its National Educational Foundation, Zetas do so with the understanding that service to the community is the organization's greatest legacy.

For additional information and donations, contact any member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Delta Omega Zeta Chapter, or Dr. Harriett S. Littlepage, (256) 653-4223, hslittlepage@gmail.com.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c) 7 organization.

## City Engages Firm for Master Plan

The City of Huntsville selected Urban Design Associates (UDA) to lead its downtown update after reviewing proposals from a number of national firms.

The Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania based firm has had a depth of recent experience in Huntsville as lead designer on the Providence development, City Centre and Mid-City. They recognize the family-friendly characteristics of Huntsville and have come to know what the community values.

Recently, in tackling the downtown core, UDA offered the public a glimpse

at their assessment of what their research has discovered.

From a physical analysis, UDA reported that downtown has some big streets where cars rip through the core--quite popular in the 1970s but not considered an appropriate strategy today for a pedestrian friendly destination where people live, work and play. They pointed out a high number of flat surface parking lots - not the best use of parking density (think garages) or environmentally friendly (think heat). They cheered Big Spring

Park as an asset, serving as the public's living room, but noted few of the buildings surrounding the park physically interact with the grounds (think cafes like Pane Y Vino). Likewise, the unappealing frontage of the Monroe Street municipal parking garage doesn't entice Von Braun Center patrons to venture further into the downtown area. "You have 800,000 people coming to the VBC every year, and you want to capitalize on these visits," said Robinson.

Using data and public input, the updated plan will resolve these concerns.

## Valley Remembers Entrepreneur and Humanitarian Clyde Foster

The Tennessee Valley community is mourning the recent death of Clyde Foster, who died Monday, March 6.

Foster was born November 21, 1931, in Birmingham, Ala., to the late Jim and Effie Mae (White) Foster. He was the sixth of 12 children.

He received his early education in Birmingham, Ala., graduating from Parker High School in 1950. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and chemistry from Alabama A&M University in 1954. While at AAMU, he joined Omega Psi Phi Fraternity,

Inc., and he was a proud 65-year member of Omega Psi Phi, Xi Omicron Chapter.

After graduating, he was drafted into the United States Army September 17, 1954 with an honorable discharge on September 17, 1956.

Returning home to Alabama, he began his career teaching science in the Dallas County School System near Selma, Ala., until 1957. He then returned to the Huntsville area, accepting a position with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency as a mathematician technician.

Upon creation of NASA, he made a transfer to NASA at the Marshall Space Flight Center in 1960. As a mathematician and instructor in MSFC's Computation Laboratory, he not only honed his math and physics skills to calculate thrusts need to launch space rockets, he broke barriers of segregation to create NASA's first training program for African-Americans. In efforts by both NASA and Foster to continue to recruit African-Americans to the fast developing space programs, he was placed

on loan from NASA/MSFC from 1968-1970 to AAMU as the director of the Computer Science Department. There, he established a data processing laboratory and the first baccalaureate program in computer science in Alabama. When Clyde retired from NASA in 1987, he was the director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at MSFC.

As a resident of Triana, a town that was literally in the shadows of MSFC and without a public works system, Foster and a group of other Triana citizens, in 1964, peti-

tioned the Madison County Probate Judge to reinstate the town's charter in order to apply for federal grants to establish a water system.

After retiring from NASA, he continued to have the ambition to provide employment opportunities and to expand industrial development. Hence, he started his own industrial business, Prep-Tech Inc.

For his numerous achievements beyond the confines of NASA to include numerous contributions to community, education, and business, AAMU named the



Clyde Foster Auditorium in the College of Business and Public Affairs in his honor.

## Where to Find Your FREE Copies of The Valley Weekly

AAMU Public Relations Office

Albert's Flowers

Alphonso Beckles, Attorney at Law

Big Oh's

Bob Harrison Senior Wellness Center

Books a Million - N. Parkway/University  
Drive

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Chris' Barber Shop

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St. Bartley PB Church

St. Luke Christian Church

Starbucks (Governors Drive, N. Parkway at

Mastin Lake Road/University Drive)

Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

## The Hamm Consulting Group



## Washington in a Minute

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

1. The House and Senate are in session this week. The House planned to vote on the GOP plan to replace Obamacare Thursday. According to Politico, a limited number of floor amendments will be allowed, including boosting tax credits for low-income and older people, allowing states to impose work requirements for able-bodied Medicaid recipients and allowing states to accept fixed block-grant dollars for Medicaid. GOP leaders cannot afford more than 21 defections in the House and, according to The Hill newspaper, there are currently 17 House Republicans who have announced they will vote against the bill, with 8 more in the "leaning no" category.

2. President Trump travelled to Louisville, Ky., to hold a health care rally with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). On Wednesday, he met with the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and participate in a "women in healthcare" roundtable hosted by newly-confirmed CMS Administrator Seema Verma.

3. Last Friday, the Justice Department filed papers to appeal a Maryland federal judge's preliminary injunction against President

Trump's revised travel ban. Last week, 2 federal judges in Maryland and Hawaii issued orders putting a hold on the ban finding that it likely violated the First Amendment by disfavoring a particular religion. The Justice Department will plead its case at the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, VA.

4. FBI Director James Comey was scheduled to testify before the House Intelligence Committee in his first appearance on Capitol Hill since the inauguration and was expected to answer questions pertaining to any investigation his agents are conducting over contacts between President Trump's associates and Russia and the President's claim of being wiretapped by President Obama. Admiral Michael Rogers, Director of the National Security Agency, has also been called to testify at today's hearing.

5. The Senate Judiciary Committee began a multi-day hearing on Judge Neil Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court, with opening statements by Senators and questions to Judge Gorsuch. A March 2 poll of Democratic congressional staffers published by the Roll Call newspaper on March 2 found that 91% of them believe Gorsuch will be confirmed.

6. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is announcing in the Federal Register that she is further delaying an Obama administration rule that requires the recipients of Education Department competitive grants to make the material they create using federal funding available for public use. The regulation, which was initially slated to take effect, would require most educational resources created with competitive department grants to carry an open license as opposed to copyright restrictions. The Trump administration said it is delaying the regulation until May 22 to allow for "additional consideration."

For more information, contact Ron Hamm at 202-596-8384 or rhamm@hammconsulting.com.

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## A&M Base of City-Wide Volunteer Initiative

More than 700 freshmen will put the Alabama A&M University "Service Is Sovereignty" motto into motion on Saturday, April 1, when AAMU joins First Baptist Church's "Serving the City as One" initiative.

First Baptist organized the event 13 years ago, bringing together over 2,000 Christians who represent more than 70 congregations and take on some 200 projects. Area churches have served as the Southern, Central and Madison Hubs. This year, however, Alabama A&M will serve as the first hub for north Huntsville.

AAMU freshmen, student organizations, faculty and staff will gather on campus at 7:30 a.m. for a university-wide send-off. Campus buses will then drive them throughout the community to churches, organizations and neighborhoods that requested help.

Projects include:  
· Home Maintenance and Repair  
· Yard Work

· AGENCY Opportunities: Hope Place, National Children's Advocacy Center, 305 Eighth St., Manna House, Food Bank  
· Packing Goody Baskets  
· Lakewood School Projects  
· Sewing  
· Letter Writing  
· Empowered to Connect Conference  
· Prayer Walking the Neighborhood

"It's a wonderful way for students to see the need first-hand and the impact just a few hours of their time can make," says Monica Clarke, coordinator of AAMU's Service and Learning Communities and Volunteerism program.

"This is just a fantastic opportunity to involve churches, organizations and AAMU to help meet the needs of our city," said Mike Pearce, minister of missions at First Baptist Huntsville.

To volunteer or receive additional information, visit [www.servingthecity.org](http://www.servingthecity.org).

## Champion Game Plan for Life by Preston Brown

"We all need a sense of progress to continue doing whatever it is that we do to achieve our goals in life--whether it be our jobs, or our education, or "working out at the gym," or even in ministry.

It can be hard to show up again and again when something is not working. We all need to see some kind of progress. So, 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? Thus, we need effort to produce progress. But

remember: effort alone will not produce progress. We also need direction and to know that we are headed in the right direction. Whenever you find

yourself feeling frustrated, stressed and burned out, could it be that 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, it will keep you headed in the right direction.

In Philippians 3:14, Paul writes, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called heavenward in Christ Jesus." Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters.



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## The Valley Weekly

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# From the Editor

*Ahhh ... Spring Vacation!*

It's hard to predict the weather now-a-days. Even the people who spend time studying it often miss the unpredicted twists and turns associated with current day weather events. Many take vacations and travel south, hoping for warmth of the sun, an early splash in the pool or a walk on the beach.



A trip to Edgewater Beach in Daphne, Ala., was a very, very big treat for my family during my early years. My late aunt, Sarah Ann, owned property that actually bordered the Mobile Bay along the Gulf of Mexico. We could go just about anytime we could get there. I remember running through trails in the woods from her house out to the sand and it was next to being in heaven! It seems that the beach house was a wooden shack that had a jukebox in the corner, along with giant jars of pickled cucumbers and pig's feet on the counter. If memory serves me correctly, we could buy just about anything with a quarter or fifty cents. That was a lot of money. We would work all day for 50 cents--picking up pecans, sweeping yards, cleaning houses and baby sitting.

We were careful not to get our hair wet while playing in the water. That was a major challenge because we were on a schedule for getting our hair done. If we got it wet off schedule, we had to wait it out. That was during the era of straightening combs and hot plates. I was glad when afros became popular. We had some 'mean' afros. Afros were like the wash and wear fabrics that we wore. We could wash it, oil it, pick it and we were on our way with bell-bottom pants and mini skirts. I wish afros would truly return. Frankly, I would like to try that again ...

Each time I get close to the edge, I refuse to leap. I have never been a fashion trend-setter. I like to see the bright socks, skinny jeans, natural locks, and tennis shoes on others; however, I resort to the "traditional" when the time of transition occurs. I like big hair, Old School music, turnip and collard greens, sweet potatoes and a pot of beans or peas!

Speaking of mini-skirts, we were blessed with height and skinny legs, but we didn't know and understand the blessing. The tall girls with skinny legs were teased by the boys and girls. Many of the girls regretted being tall with skinny legs, including me. After college and beyond, we grew to appreciate those features. When the trend of tall and thin became fashionable, we were too conservative to enjoy the minis. Kinda like the natural hair: by the time we mature enough to appreciate it, we lag because we don't have the courage to set the trend. Many of my family, friends and associates have made the transition. I'm thinking about it but don't count on the mini-skirts. That's simply a missed opportunity. However, the sporting of an afro is very, very possible. For some reason, I find myself saying "very, very" a lot. I wonder why?

*Blessings until next week ...*



*Dorothy*

## Federal Budget Cuts Could Impact Area's Public Radio Stations

Enjoying the programming on your local National Public Radio affiliates WJAB-FM 90.9 at Alabama A&M University (jazz and blues) and WLRH-FM 89.3 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (classical)?

Then there might be some changes ahead.

Under President Donald Trump's recent budget proposals, major domestic programs could sustain major funding blows.

National Public Radio reported late last week that the proposed budget cuts funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcast-

ing to zero, and entirely eliminates the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, adding



that this is "the first time any president has proposed such a measure."

In a statement, CPB President and CEO Patricia Harrison said, "There is no

viable substitute for federal funding that ensures Americans have universal access to public media's education and informational programming and services." She called public media "one of America's best investments," costing "approximately \$1.35 per citizen per year."

Most CPB funds go directly to local radio and TV stations, say NPR officials. NPR's funding sources include the program fees those stations pay, and the network receives less than 2 percent of its budget directly from CPB.

## Concert on the Dock Series Begins

The Concert on the Docks Series at Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment, 2211 Seminole Drive, Huntsville, Ala., will begin Friday, April 12, and will continue each week through Friday, June 9, from 6-9 p.m..

The concert series will kickoff with Mojo Flo on



April 12. Subsequent dates and artists include April 21, Lamont Landers; May 5, Harlequin Jazz Band;

May 12, AJ Ghent; May 19, Arts Fishing Club; May 26, Startlingly Fresh Showcase; June 2, Cigar Box Guitar Festival; and June 9, 2nd Annual Bon-nawho?

Suggested parking/donation is \$5. For more information, visit [lowemill.net/cotd](http://lowemill.net/cotd).

## The Garden to Feature Eric Essix

The Huntsville Botanical Garden will hold its 2nd Annual Jazz in the Garden event on Saturday, April 29, 6-10 p.m.

The program will feature the Eric Essix MOVE> Trio, with a guest vocalist. Essix is a widely known artist and Birmingham native.

While Essix may be the at the head of MOVE> as its leader and composer,

the heartbeat of the group is drummer, James "PJ" Sprag-gins. MOVE's Grammy nominated producer and multi-instrumentalist, Kelvin Wooten is truly its soul. Kelvin plays electric bass guitar and keyboards onstage and in the studio with MOVE>.



General admission tickets (\$30) are available online at [www.jazz-in-the-garden.EventBrite.com](http://www.jazz-in-the-garden.EventBrite.com).

## FBI Could Increase Presence in Valley

If all things go in its favor, the Tennessee Valley, and Redstone Arsenal, in particular, could be the site of what could ultimately be thousands of jobs from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Even though nothing is set in concrete, that did not stop a front-page story in The Huntsville Times, in which Mayor

Tommy Battle reportedly credit U.S. Senator Richard Shelby for his role in pushing the Huntsville vicinity

to the forefront as the FBI looks for alternatives to its aging headquarters in the Washington, D.C., area.



## Time Changes Can Have Dark Consequences

Still haven't quite gotten into the groove of the whole "spring forward" thing? Those monumental time changes could have more of a negative impact than you've thought, noted BlackDoctor.org.

The popular African-American health website shares a U.S. study conducted three years ago in which heart attacks appear linked to disrupted sleep cycles. This could explain the decreased risk of heart attack and stroke after the clocks turn back, since individuals find more time to kick up their feet and rest, noted study author Amneet Sandhu, a cardiology fellow at the University of Colorado in Denver, in his report to Reuters.

"With daylight saving time, all of this is compounded by one less hour of sleep," stated Sandhu,

who presented his findings at the annual scientific sessions of the American College of Cardiology in Washington.

"Our study suggests that sudden, even small changes



in sleep could have detrimental effects," he said.

In addition to heart health, motor skills may take a big hit. During a 2009 study, researchers examined over 500,000 mining injuries from 1983 to 2006. They found that injuries shot up by 5.7

percent on the Monday following the time change. The injuries also appeared to be more severe, leading to a 68 percent increase in the number of work days missed.

You may also see several AAA trucks making their rounds as research has noted a surge in car crashes as well, following daylight saving. In a study published in the American Economic Journal, Austin Smith, an economics professor at Miami University's Farmer School of Business in Miami, Ohio, explained, "Many Americans are sleep deprived and when starting with chronically low levels of sleep, even a small reduction can have serious consequences."

There's a reported 6 percent rise in crashes after clocks reset.

# Valley Calendar of Events

**March 23-25**  
American Association of Blacks in Higher Education Annual Conference  
Raleigh, N.C.

*Sponsor:* Valley Conservatory  
5650 Sanderson Street, Ste. B  
5-8 p.m. \$5

**March 25**  
Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr. and Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford Scholarship Foundation Inc Friends of the Bradfords Inaugural Gala

**April 1**  
Serving the City as One  
Alabama A&M University  
The Quad  
www.servingthecity.org,  
7 a.m.

Von Braun Center North Hall; Ads & Sponsorship:  
Mrs. Veronica Winston - (256) 509-4894  
Ticket & Donations:  
Mrs. Patricia Ward at (256) 350-9054, 5 p.m.

April 8  
2017 Blue Revue Luncheon  
"Showcasing Crowns and Talents - A Touch of Class"  
*Sponsor:* Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Delta Omega Zeta Chapter  
The Jackson Center  
6001 Moquin Drive  
Huntsville, Ala.  
11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Inaugural Scholarship Gala  
*Sponsor:* Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Psi Alpha Zeta Chapter  
Holiday Inn Research Park  
7 p.m.

Xi Omicron Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.  
Sons of Royalty Mentoring Program: A Royal Experience III Gala  
Intergraph Corporation, 305

Intergraph Way, Madison, Ala.  
6 p.m. \$30 Semi-Formal  
For tickets and ads contact:  
Frederick Windham at (205) 246-2031 or Jason Boddie at (256) 714-9099 or sonsofroyalty1911@gmail.com

**April 13**  
39th Annual United Negro College Fund Gala  
Guest Artist: Jonathan Butler  
Special Award: Tom Joyner  
VBC-North Hall  
7 p.m.

**April 20**  
Huntsville: The Future and Beyond Symposium  
Von Braun Center  
www.futureandbeyondhsv.com, 9 a.m.

**April 27**  
Harris Home for Children Charity Concert  
Featuring: Kool and The Gang  
Von Braun Center Arena \$25  
8 p.m.

## City Council Meetings



Huntsville City Council Meetings  
City Council 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.

City Council work sessions also held in the City Council 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.

## VC Jam Session Sunday

The Valley Conservatory will be hosting its monthly Jazz Jam Session Sunday, March 26, 5-8 p.m. at the Valley Conservatory studio, located at 5650 Sanderson Street, Ste. B, in Huntsville.

The session will feature The Devere Pride Trio and other local jazz artists playing standard jazz tunes and more.

The public is invited to bring their instruments and jam or just come and listen to great music. There is an admission fee of \$5.

The event is sponsored in part by First Bank Mortgage, Pam Rhodes Mort-

VC Jam Session 2017

Come to listen or bring your instrument to JAM! Every 4th Sunday of the month from 5pm to 8pm.  
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Huntsville, AL 35805  
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## Alabamian Makes Festival Debut



Paper Nolasnaym, a musician based in Birmingham, made his festival debut on March 16 at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Tex. The 32-year-old was one of 12 performers to grace the Peckerheads' stage and open for the show's headlining artists.

Dubbed the Sound Release, the show's featured talent included Beanie Sigel, Freeway, Misty Cain and Kris J. Given only nine minutes to impress the audience, the former Miles College ballplayer was greeted with astounding applause.

One of the nation's largest entertainment conglomerates, SWSW has become a mecca for television, film and music. This year's festivities boasted performances from Lil Wayne, Betty Who, Jidenna, Garth Brooks and recent Grammy Award-winner Solange Knowles.

Like most festivals, the growing seven-day phenomenon is a perfect platform for upcoming musicians.

Hailing from Ensley, the father of 2 cites Miles Davis, Jay Z and Curtis Mayfield as musical influences.

An artist on the rise, Nolasnaym recently opened for celebrated wordsmith Curren\$y at the popular Zydeco Lounge in Birmingham. Additionally, the lyricist has collaborated with fellow Alabama native and The Voice Alum Wade Brown.

by Reggie D. Allen

*Maybe the words  
that I say is just  
another way to pray.*

- Curtis Mayfield



## Comic Book Convention Turns 2

The Huntsville Comics and Pop Culture Expo celebrated their sophomore season in the Von Braun Center's North Hall. The weekend-long convention ran from March 18-19.

This year's theme was "Level Up," a subtle nod

to the convention's growth. The brainchild of Jeremy Long, the expo made its debut last March at the Jaycee Community Center.

The move to the VBC was meant to accommodate the growing attendance rate.

This year's featured

guests were former NYSNC member Joey Fatone, Power Ranger alumni David Yost, and famed comic book contributors Chris Claremont and Mike Grell.

by Reggie D. Allen



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# Valley Deaths

Funeral service will be announced at a later date for **Infant Serenity Ivey** (b. 2016).

Funeral service for **Mrs. Elizabeth Sloan Ragland** (b. 1952) is today, Friday, March 24, at Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church with Dr. Mitchell Walker officiating.

Funeral service for **Mrs. Barbara K. Harris** was held Wednesday, March 22, at Greater St. Paul Church in St. Louis, Mo.

Funeral service for **Mr. Lucas T. Payne** (b. 1983) was held Saturday, March 18, at Dudley Memorial Cemetery with Dudley Funeral Home Chapel assisting the family in Dublin, Ga.

Funeral service for **Mr. Willie B. Battle** (b. 1952; a.k.a. "Butch Coleman") was held March 11, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Johnny Hughes officiating.

Funeral service for **Flora M. Davis** (b. 1950) was Saturday, March 11, at New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Ricky Sykes officiating.

Funeral service for **Mrs. Leavis J. Ashby** (b. 1943) was held Wednesday, March 8, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church in New Market, Ala.

Funeral service for **Mr. Christopher McGowen** of Washington, D.C., was held Tuesday, March 7, at Calvert Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

-Nelms Memorial Funeral Home

## Disaster Prep Expo Saturday

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit will hold its first Urban Living Expo (ULE) Saturday, March 25, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Alabama A&M University Agribition Center, located at 4925 Moores Mill Road in Huntsville, Ala.

The theme is "Plan, Prepare, Practice: Don't Get Caught Off-Guard When Disasters Occur."

The event aims to engage the public through a series of interactive displays and to provide a variety of Extension information about disasters to individuals, families, local businesses and organizations.

Organizers says the Expo will be of special importance to community leaders, first responders, educators, students, emergency and health officials, waste management authorities, senior citizens, as well as to public and private organizations and the general public.

While admission is free, planners are prepared to accept donations of non-perishable food items. Registration is required for all participants and exhibitors.

For additional information, contact Dr. Karnita Garner at (256) 372-8331, Dr. Robert Spencer at (256) 372-4983 or visit [www.aces.edu/urban](http://www.aces.edu/urban).

## A Good Read

by Jerome Saintjones

### Richard Wright's "Black Boy"

According to Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia (5th ed.), Richard Wright's "Black Boy" is an autobiography that traces Wright's childhood in Jackson, Miss., and Nashville, Tenn., until his move at age 19 to Chicago.

The book delves into the abandonment by his father, his mother's severe illness, Wright's own childhood alcoholism, an uncle's lynching, unparalleled racism, and his refuge through writing.

Although he was primarily self-educated, Wright was a big reader who took particular interest in those writers

who took America to task for falling short on its potential to be truly great.

Among his favorite authors were Theodore Dreiser, H.L. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis.

Benet's notes that "Black Boy" was originally part of a longer autobiographical work entitled "American Hunger," the second half of which was published 40 years ago.

## Juxtapose: Notes of a Neighbor's Son

I'm sure I was around the age of a junior high school student when I overheard my mom talking on the phone one night about an incident that had occurred a block up the street.

I had looked up from my homework and strained to listen (as I often did in those days) for those things that adults did simply because of the world in which they lived.

The call and imagery formed by my young mind was frightful, as my mother told a story from the point of view that only a mother could share with another mother.

Someone's son had come home from Vietnam not

quite the same. He had rigged up a shotgun between some patio chairs in the backyard and had shot his brains out.

I did not know anything about how Vietnam was France's screw up at colonialism or what the U.S. had to gain by awarding black men a temporary cloak of patriotism without true citizenship.

But I *did* think of this neighbor's son and of all the sad instances in which black males seem to top lists no one wants to top, as I ran across *other* stats.

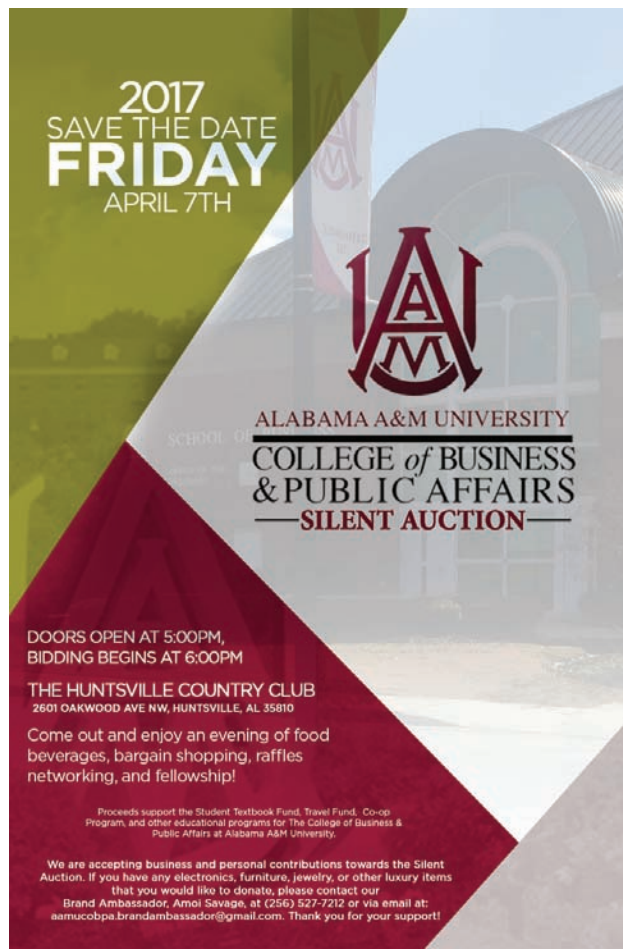
According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), in 2015, the highest United States suicide rate (15.1)

was among whites and the next highest rate (12.6) was among American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Among the groups recorded in the research, African Americans (5.6) were still the least likely to throw in the towel on life. Other lower rates were found among Hispanics (5.8) and Asians and Pacific Islanders (6.4).

AFSP's 2015 research also found that white males accounted for seven out of every 10 suicides in the U.S., with suicide especially higher among the middle aged. Half of all suicides were committed by firearm.

by Jerome Saintjones



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## School Policies Adversely Impact Black Girls

A new study conducted by scholars at Michigan State University concludes that zero-tolerance discipline policies in the country's schools unfairly punish black girls.

According to researchers, such policies call for a student's removal from school for any infraction relating to policies ranging from dress code violations to truancy to fighting.

The authors of the research note that black girls have a higher rate of suspensions than girls from any other racial or ethnic group and have a higher rate of suspension than for boys, except for African Americans and American Indians.

Dorinda Carter Andrews, an associate professor of teacher education at Michigan State University,

and a co-author of the study, reports that the research indicates that instructors and other adults likely give a pass to certain students for the ways in which they talk back.

However, teachers may view some girls, especially African-American girls, as attitudinal or aggressive, even though the girls could be using the same talk-back language as white female students.

Dr. Carter Andrews adds that "zero tolerance constructs these young girls as criminals. It's a criminalization of their childhood, and it's a very prison-type mentality for schools to take," according to the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*.

A graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Dr. Carter Andrews

holds a master's degree in elementary education from Vanderbilt University and a second master's degree and an educational doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The paper, "The Effects of Zero Tolerance Policies on Black Girls: Using Critical Race Feminism and Figured Worlds to Examine School Discipline," was published on the website of the journal *Urban Education*. It may be accessed here.

The co-author of the study, Dorothy Hines-Datiri, is an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas. She received the Ph.D. in educational policy at Michigan State University in 2014.

## Huntsville Could Expand Transit System

Some of the things that prompt us to most proudly pat ourselves on the back as a community can, ironically, also be a challenge for aspects of the City of Huntsville.

Short commute times? *Check*. Low population density? *Check*. Abundance of free or inexpensive parking? *Check*. Good street system? *Check*.

"All those things are wonderful for quality of life," says Tommy Brown, Director of Parking and Transportation for the City of Huntsville. "But they're challenges to an effective public transit system."

Those aspects mean that Huntsville's public transportation system is not the preferred option for most of the city's commuters. With relatively short trips to work – an average of 18 minutes – most choose to drive their own cars.

Thus, the transit system has a sharp focus elsewhere.

"What we've done is try to target our transit resources to the folks that need the service," Brown says. "That's primarily senior citizens, the disabled community, people who have lower and moderate income and who are working service jobs. We've tried to target our transpor-

tation resources to meet the needs of those that transportation is a struggle for."

Huntsville's public transportation serves some 4,000 passengers a day with its two different services.

Huntsville Shuttle has 12 traditional bus routes. Two of those routes run every 30 minutes, the other every hour. Passengers transfer route-to-route at the sta-



tion at Church Street and Cleveland Avenue. The fare is \$1 for one-way, but just 50 cents for those 65 and older, disabled citizens, students and children under age six.

The routes are strategically designed, with stops at grocery stores, big-box stores, the medical district and areas where many passengers work or shop. The on-time performance is "upwards of 90 to 95 percent," Brown says.

Handi-Ride, with 17 smaller buses dedicated to serving the elderly and disabled, is the second part of the transportation department. Riders must call the

transit office in advance to request transportation, with \$2 one-way fares.

"The majority of those are dialysis, doctor's appointments, life-sustaining things that are critical," Brown says.

Huntsville Shuttle runs from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. (the last route leaves at 6 p.m.) on weekdays. Brown hears requests for extended hours – many riders work service jobs in stores and restaurants on which they work until 9 p.m. or later – and weekends. That's just not financially feasible right now, Brown says.

"Mayor Battle and the City Council and our department are in agreement there are things we need to do to improve the system," Brown says. "The issue is the funding to do it."

As Huntsville grows and attracts people moving from larger cities where they were accustomed to public transportation, Brown sees a demand to expand routes and services for the more traditional commuter.

Huntsville's public transportation system's role is to best serve now the people who need it the most – and to envision a future where most people will need it.

- Excerpted from [huntsvilleal.gov](http://huntsvilleal.gov)

**On This Day - Friday, March 24 - Dorothy Height - A noted educator, administrator and civil rights icon and activist. She was a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004.**

- [BlackinTime.info](http://BlackinTime.info)

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