

“Getting the Weeds Out” - p. 5



Friday
May 1, 2026
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ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Atty. Julian Butler

“As long as you live, keep learning how to live.” — Seneca

Parks & Rec Launches ‘Girls Garage’

Basic car care may sound simple but many people, especially women, are not taught how to handle it. That knowledge gap is exactly where a program like Girls Garage steps in.

Huntsville Parks & Recreation’s Girls Garage returned after its fall 2025 debut drew an outstanding response from residents. The program empowers

women and girls to build confidence in basic car care and maintenance. The free, hands-on workshops are open to ages 15 and older and teach practical skills such as checking oil levels, jump-starting a battery, changing a tire and more.

Girls Garage was created by Brahan Spring Recreation Center Supervisor Melissa Long, who

has been with Parks & Recreation for six years and has served as supervisor for nearly a year. A car enthusiast in her own time, Long works on vehicles outside of her professional role and is passionate about turning personal interests into hands-on learning opportunities for others.

There is one remaining spring session scheduled

for Saturday, May 16, from 9-10 a.m. and registration is open now.

Additional opportunities will be available through upcoming Parks & Recreation summer programs.

Residents can browse and register through Parks & Recreation’s online registration platform or call (256) 564-8026.

Latest BLM Employment Figures

Unemployment rates were higher in February in one state and stable in 49 states and the District of Columbia, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported last week.

Thirteen states and the District had jobless rate increases from a year earlier, 2 states had decreases, and 35 states had little change. The national unemployment rate, 4.4 percent, changed little over the month but was 0.2 percentage point higher than in February 2025.

In February 2026, nonfarm payroll employment decreased in 2 states, increased in 1 state, and was essentially unchanged in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

Sen. Britt Secures \$700K for Drake

U.S. Senator Katie Britt (R-Ala.), as a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, recently directly secured \$700,000 for Drake State Community and Technical College in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Act.

This funding will support workforce training. In total, Senator Britt di-



rectly secured more than \$5.74 million for the Alabama Community College System in FY26 appropriations funding.

“The \$700,000 in funding I was proud to directly secure for Drake State will

benefit not just the students, faculty, and staff on campus, but also Huntsville and the surrounding communities. This is exactly the investment federal taxpayer dollars should make—empowering our students and preparing the next generation of leaders,” said Sen. Britt. Drake President Patricia Sims called the investment “a powerful confirmation” of the role Drake plays in the regional economy.

Huntsvillian Winner of ‘Writers of the Future’ Contest

Huntsville, Alabama native Brenda Posey recently was honored as a winner in the Writers of the Future contest at the L. Ron Hubbard Achievement Awards Event in Hollywood, California, at the Taglyan Complex on April 16. She currently lives in Bessemer, Alabama.

While in Holly-

wood and as part of being a contest winner, Posey attended a week-long, master-class workshop with some of the top names in the industry, and her winning story, “Canary,” is published in L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 42, released on April 28.

Hubbard cre-



ated and endowed the Writers of the Future contest in

1983 and due to its success, the Illustrators of the Future contest was initiated in 1988.

The past winners of the Writing Contest have published 2,000 novels and nearly 6,300 short stories. They have produced 36 New York Times bestsellers, and their works have sold over 60 million copies.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

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

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week. The House will take up the 2026 Farm bill, an amended version of the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Section 702, which allows warrantless surveillance of non-Americans abroad, and the \$70 billion Reconciliation budget resolution — narrowly approved by the Senate in a 50-48 vote last week — to fund ICE and CBP for the next 3 years.

To satisfy critics in his own party who want more added to the current Reconciliation bill, Punchbowl News reports that House Speaker Mike Johnson will release details of a proposed

next Reconciliation bill (“Reconciliation 3.0”) this week. The Senate must also pass the FISA reauthorization, now set to expire on Thursday.

The House may also take up the Senate-passed FY2026 Homeland Security Appropriations bill to reopen the Homeland Security Department, which has been shuttered for 72 days. The House and Senate were scheduled to hold a Joint Meeting on Tuesday to receive an address from the U.K.’s King Charles III, who, with Queen Camilla, visited the U.S. with stops in DC, New York City, and Virginia from 27-30 April.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The alleged 31-year-old shooter at the Washington Hilton, who disrupted Saturday night’s White House Correspondents’ Dinner, with the

President, Vice President, and several Cabinet members in attendance, was expected to be arraigned in federal district court Monday on 2 preliminary charges of using a firearm during a crime of violence and assaulting a federal officer with a dangerous weapon.

The President and First Lady hosted private meetings and a military review with King Charles and Queen Camilla Monday at the White House, followed by a state dinner for them on Tuesday night. On Friday, the Justice Department announced it was dropping its criminal investigation into Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell, whose term as Chair expires on May 15. Sen. Thom Tillis, R-NC, had blocked the nomination of Kevin Warsh as the new Fed Chair until the administration dropped its Powell investigation — but announced on Sunday that he was voting to confirm Warsh, who was voted on by the Senate Banking Committee on Wednesday. On Wednesday, War Secre-

tary Pete Hegseth testified before the House Armed Services Committee in his first public appearance before Congress since the Iran conflict began.

3. SUPREME COURT. The Court will conclude its schedule of oral arguments for the 2025-26 term this week with cases addressing whether federal law supersedes state law in a Missouri case involving cancer warning labels on the popular weedkiller Roundup (Monsanto Company v. Durnell) and whether the administration may end Temporary Protected Status previously granted to Syrian and Haitian immigrants under a statutory program established

by Congress (Mullin v. Doe).

4. FEDERAL RESERVE. Chair Jerome Powell presided over his likely final Federal Open Market Committee meeting this Tuesday and Wednesday, during which the Fed was expected to leave the federal funds rate unchanged at the current range of 3.50% to 3.75%.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION. On April 23, the U.S. Senate passed S.Res. 686, formally recognizing the significance of Community College Month and reinforcing a joint proclamation by the Departments of Education and Labor designating April as

Community College Month. The resolution reflects growing congressional acknowledgment that the nation’s more than 1,000 community colleges are vital engines of economic mobility, workforce development, and community prosperity. For HCG clients such as Lansing Community College, this national recognition underscores the alignment between their institutional mission and federal priorities.

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The Valley Weekly

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Meet LINDA SPALLA: Making Impact and Building Community

This editorial is a continuation of my editorials about local s/heros who are making impact and building legacy in our community. I am not focusing on people who have excelled professionally in education, business or industry but those whose influence is measured not by titles or paychecks, but by the quiet, consistent ways they pour into others. Linda Spalla is one of those rare individuals whose life reminds us that service—freely given—is among the highest callings.

Born and raised in Alabama and educated at Jacksonville State University, where she graduated magna cum laude, Linda’s professional journey is impressive by any standard. From teaching high school English to rising through the ranks at WHNT-TV to become President and General Manager, she broke barriers as the first female GM in The New York Times Broadcast Group and among the first in the Southeast for CBS. Yet, as remarkable as her career is, it is not the centerpiece of her legacy—it is merely the foundation.

What truly defines Linda Spalla is what she chose to do with her time, her wisdom, and her heart—especially when no one was writing a check. For more than five decades in Huntsville, Linda has given herself generously to the life of the community. Her fingerprints can be found across organizations that shape the city’s cultural, educational, and human landscape. From her deep and abiding commitment to Burritt on the Mountain, where she continues to serve on both the Advisory Council and Foundation Board, to her work with United Way, Linda has consistently invested in institutions that uplift and serve others.



Her service has never been passive. She has led, mentored, organized, and inspired. Through her involvement with Christian Women’s Job Corps and Women’s Economic Development Council Foundation, she has helped open doors for women striving toward independence and stability. As a mentor in Rotary’s STRIVE program, she has offered guidance to young people standing at the threshold of their futures. And through her work with Trinity Place, she has shown compassion to those navigating the difficult journey of Alzheimer’s—an act of service that requires not just time, but tenderness.

In 2001, alongside a group of dedicated women, Linda helped launch the first Women Honoring Women celebration—an initiative rooted not in recognition for herself, but in lifting up the achievements and contributions of others. That spirit—celebrating others rather than seeking the spotlight—runs like a thread through every chapter of her life.

Even in retirement, Linda did not retreat from service; she reimagined it. Through her writing, speaking, and daily blog, she continues to encourage, reflect, and connect. Her book *Catch Your Breath*, a meditation for caregivers, is yet another extension of her desire to support those who so often give of themselves without pause.

At the heart of Linda Spalla’s life is a simple but powerful belief: “Character matters.” It is a belief she has not only spoken, but lived—through decades of volunteerism, mentorship, and faithful presence in her church, Trinity United Methodist Church, and the broader community. She is an honored elder in the Rosetta James Foundation, demonstrating passionately in the importance of wisdom in a flailing world.

And perhaps that is her greatest gift to Huntsville: not just what she has done, but how she has done it. With grace. With perseverance. With a quiet determination to never give up.

In a world often captivated by recognition and reward, Linda Spalla stands as a gentle but firm reminder that the most enduring legacy is built in the unseen moments—in the meetings attended, the hands held, the lives encouraged, and the causes advanced simply because they matter. Her life is not just a story of success. It is a story of service. And because of that, her impact will continue to echo for generations to come. Until next week ...

Dorothy

MAY 1 - VICTORIA MONET - Victoria Monét McCants is an American singer and songwriter. She became involved in performing arts at a young age, singing in the youth choir at her church and performing in a city dance team. She soon took to writing and began working with producer Rodney Jerkins (aka Darkchild). Previously signed to Atlantic Records, In 2014, Monét released her debut EP *Nightmares & Lullabies: Act 1* and the following year released her follow-up EP *Nightmares & Lullabies: Act 2*. She has also written songs for artists such as Ariana Grande, Fifth Harmony, Nas, T.I., GOOD Music, Lupe Fiasco, Chrisette Michele, Coco Jones, Chris Brown, Diddy Dirty Money, Janelle Monáe, and Jasmine V..



- Blackcelebritybirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

THE VALLEY WEEKLY
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:

"Getting the Weeds Out"

Matthew 13:27-28 says, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from? 'An enemy did this,' he replied."

The other day I was pulling up weeds that had grown in my yard and my plant bed. The reason that they had grown up was that I neglected them and allowed them to grow. You see, I didn't do what I needed to do on a daily basis or weekly basis to keep them out. When you are dealing with weeds, you have to stay on top of things or they will get out of control.

The same can be said about our spiritual growth. When we allow the enemy to plant weeds in our lives, they will "choke out our growth." When we allow worrying, bitterness, complaining, and unwholesome talk to be planted in our lives, they act like weeds that need to be pulled up and eliminated from our lives. If we don't, we won't have the beauty that God wants us to have. Since I've pulled

the weeds out of my plant bed, everything is beautiful. Everything is the way that God wants it. You see, by getting the weeds out of your life, you can bring God the glory that He is worthy of.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to be aware of the weeds that are in our lives so that we can eliminate them.

Question: What weeds are you allowing to grow in your life that you need to uproot before it becomes an "eyesore" for



everyone to see?

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.

NEXT WEEK:
"Good Fruit"



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Funeral services for **MRS. IRENE STEPTER** (b. 1935); **MRS. SANDRA NORMAN WEAVER** (b. 1954); **MS. JO ANN MIMS** (b. 1947); **MR. JAHZIER IRBY** (b. 2005); **MISS KIRIYANAH HARRIS** (b. 2006); and **MR. RALPH LOGAN** (b. 1955) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. JULIET BISHARM SOBRYAN** was Sunday, April 26, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. WENDOLYN B. READUS MOORE** (b. 1952) was Saturday, April 25, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Dr. Timothy Rainey officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. MYRTLE GARNER JOLLY** (b. 1949) was Friday, April 24, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Association Tabernacle with Elder Terrence Stewart, pastor of Meridianville Primitive Baptist Church, officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. CLARICE SMITH WINTON** (b. 1945) was Friday, April 24, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Pastor Larry Davidson, Jr., officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. BOBBIE SALES** (b. 1956) was Saturday, April 18, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. THEODORE A. BREACH, JR.**, (b. 1966) was Saturday, April 18, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral services for **MS. CASSANDRA FORD** (b. 1964) and **MR. QUINCY LADELL FORD** (b. 1985) were Saturday, April 18, at St. Mark Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MS. CAROLYN BOND** (b. 1943) was Friday, April 17, at Grady Madison AME Church with Rev. William C. Slade officiating.

“Leadership Moonwalking”: Going Backward to Move Forward

On Friday, April 24, the new biopic *Michael* reminded us why Michael Jackson remains one of the greatest entertainers of all time. Say his name and we think of the music, the glove—and that unforgettable moonwalk.

Now, here’s the truth: he didn’t invent every move he made famous. But he perfected them. And maybe that’s what genius really is—not always creating something new, but refining something until the world can’t ignore it.

That’s Where the Leadership Lesson Begins, . . .

I believe emerging leaders need to practice a kind of “moonwalk” every day.

Not on stage. Not for applause. But in the quiet discipline of stretching the mind beyond its normal habits.

Research shows that when we challenge our brains with unfamiliar activities, we activate new pathways. Something as simple as handwriting instead of typing engages deeper learning processes. Using your non-dominant hand for everyday tasks forces coordination and focus. Even backward walking—yes, literally walking backward—requires different muscle engagement and heightened awareness.

No, these practices won’t make you a genius overnight. Let’s be clear about that.

But they will do something just as important: they disrupt autopilot.

Disrupting Autopilot

. . . And leadership suffers when we live on autopilot.

Too many leaders are moving forward fast—but thinking the same old thoughts, using the same old approaches, and wondering why nothing changes.

Maybe growth isn’t always about doing more. Maybe it’s about doing some things differently:

- Write it by hand.
- Use the other hand.
- Slow your pace.
- Take a few careful steps backward.



It may feel awkward. Good.

Awkwardness is often the birthplace of growth.

That’s what I’m calling leadership moonwalking—the intentional choice to disrupt routine in order to expand capacity.

Moonwalk like Michael Jackson, but, . . .

No, I’ll never moonwalk like Michael Jackson.

But can I become sharper, more adaptable, and more disciplined by stretching my mind daily?

I believe I can.

And maybe you can too.

Because sometimes, the best way to move forward . . . is to take a few steps backward on purpose.

@highlight Leadership Moonwalking:

Why Emerging Leaders Need to Go Backward to Go Forward



Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, “Leading from the Middle”
 Contact: (256) 212-0949 - <https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>
 Email Address: leadingfromthemiddle.tim@gmail.com
 Website: www.timallston.com

Join us Mondays through Fridays for *Tim Allston’s Leadership Nuggets: Educating, Equipping, and Empowering Emerging Leaders to Manage Ego Problems in 60 Seconds* (7am, 1pm, and 7pm), as well as for *The Tim Commandments of Leadership* (4pm), all Central Time and all available on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

“You Aren’t Tired ..”

You keep saying you’re tired, but let’s be honest—are you really tired, or are you just lacking discipline?

There’s a difference. Being tired means your body needs rest. Lacking discipline means you keep talking yourself out of what you already said you were going to do. Your alarm goes off, and you hit snooze—not because you can’t get up, but because you don’t feel like it. That’s a decision. You said you were going to work out, eat better, stay focused, and do what needs to be done. But when the moment comes, you hesitate. Then you call it exhaustion.

What if you stopped checking in with your



feelings and started honoring your decisions? What if you moved when you said you would, regardless of how you felt? Because your life doesn’t change when you feel better—it changes when you move differently. Discipline isn’t about motivation; it’s about doing what needs to be done when you don’t feel like doing

it. That’s where the shift happens.

So, the next time you say you’re tired, pause and ask yourself why. Is your body tired, or is your discipline weak? Be honest with yourself—and then move accordingly.

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

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

- May 1**
AAMU Alumni White Party
Huntsville Country Club
2601 Oakwood Avenue NW
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.
- Concert
Ty Myers
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.
- May 2**
AAMU Alumni Awards Luncheon
Ernest L. Knight Center
Alabama A&M University
12 noon-2 p.m.
- Ethel Cain
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
8 p.m.
- May 5-10**
"Water for Elephants"
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall/Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
- May 9**
Hosta and Companion Plant Sale
1022 Cook Avenue NW
Huntsville, Ala.
8 a.m.
- Huntsville Classic:
Rob Thomas
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.
- May 10**
- Mother's Day
- May 15-16**
Ms. Pat
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374
- May 16**
Concert
Sam Barber
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.
- Concert
Fantasia and Anthony Hamilton
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
8 p.m.
- May 22**
Concert
Hardy
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.
- May 23**
Old School and Blues Festival 2026
Featuring: The Zapp Band, Cherrelle, F.P.J, Jazz McKenzie, Project Pat, Yoshiana, Urban Mystic
www.jde.live
502 Quarter Mountain Road
Harvest, Ala.
11 a.m.
- Concert
Godsmack, Stone Temple

Pilots & Dorothy
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

May 25
Memorial Day

May 29-30
Kam Patterson
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

May 30
Elite Wrestling
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

May 31
Pop Culture & Wrestling Expo
"Dream On" (\$12)
Stovehouse Event Center
3414 Governors Drive SW
Huntsville, Ala

June 11-13
"Rock the South"
The Biggest Party in the South!
Jason Aldean, Riley Green, Zach Top and Dozens More!
The Raised Rowdy Stage
The Fields at Decatur
Decatur, Ala.

June 12-14
Marlon Wayans
Huntsville Levity Live
Comedy Club
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.

June 14
Flag Day

June 18-21
Alabama Taxidermist Association 50th Annual Convention & Competition
Lake Guntersville State Park

Guntersville, Ala.

June 19
Juneteenth

June 20
Black Jacket Symphony
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

June 21
Father's Day

June 27
10th Annual JuneFest Car & Bike Show
2160 Airport Road SW
Huntsville, Ala.
1-9 p.m.

July 4
Independence Day

July 22
Concert
Creed
The Orion Amphitheater

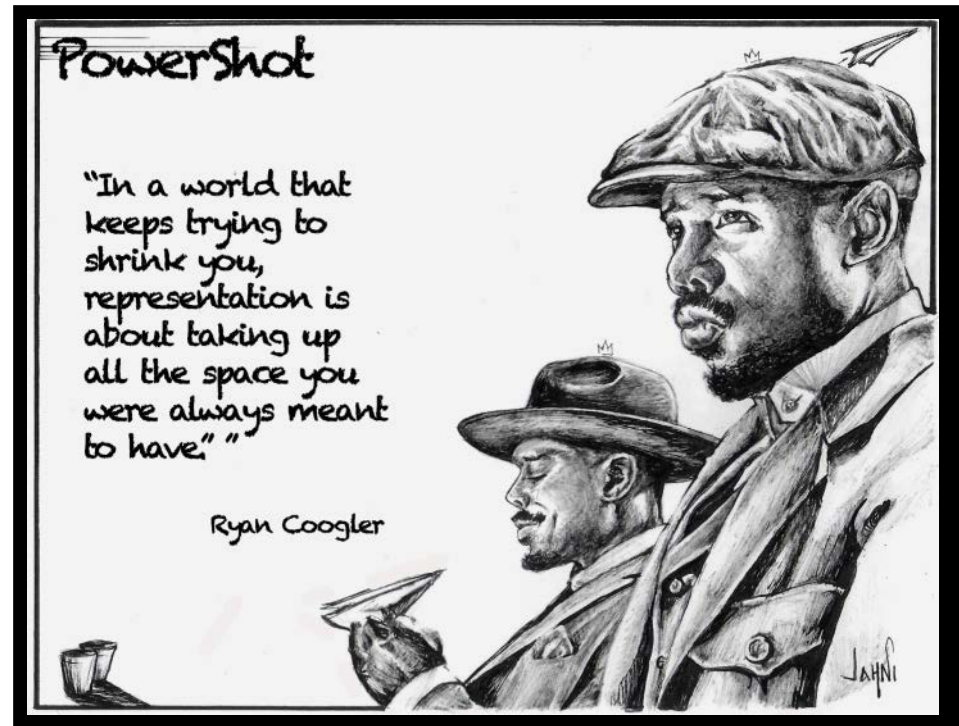
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

July 31
Concert
Lord Huron
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
8 p.m.

August 6
Concert
Tape B & Levity
The Orion Amphitheater

ON THIS DAY

On **May 1, 1865**, thousands of newly freed Black Americans in Charleston, South Carolina, held the first Memorial Day, honoring Union soldiers buried at a former Confederate prison camp. Other significant events include the first students entering Howard University (1867) and Alexis Herman becoming the first Black U.S. Secretary of Labor (1997). - Blackfacts.com



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

Atty. Julian Butler

Atty. Julian Butler received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Alabama, where he was president of the student body. He served as an assistant to U. S. Senator Lister Hill and to Congressman Carl Elliott and as law clerk to U. S. District Judge Seybourn H. Lynne.

Butler has been in the private practice of law in Huntsville since 1966. He is a partner in the statewide law firm of Dentons Sirote. Butler served as county attorney for Madison County for thirty-five years. He served as president of the National Association of County Civil Attorneys and as a special assistant attorney general for the State of Alabama.

Butler is listed in The Best Lawyers in America and Mid-South Super Lawyers. He is a member of the Huntsville-Madison County Bar Association, the Alabama State Bar, and the American Bar Association. He is a fellow of the Alabama Law Foundation. Butler was awarded the 2005 and the 2012 Community Service Awards by

the Huntsville-Madison County Bar Association.

Butler was a founding member and the first chairman of the Center for Public Law and Service at the University of Alabama. He was a founding member and the second chairman of the Environmental Law Section of the Alabama State Bar. Butler previously served as president of the Arts Council (now Arts Huntsville), vice president of the General Joe Wheeler Home Foundation, and president of the Huntsville-Madison County Chapter of the University of Alabama Alumni Association. Butler twice served as chairman of the Creek District of the Boy Scouts of America. From 2017 to 2019, he served as chairman of the Huntsville-Madison County Bicentennial Committee.

Butler currently serves on the board of trustees of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, the board of directors of the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and the University of Alabama Library Leadership Board. He is vice president for Alabama of the Eleventh Circuit Historical Society and is a life member of the Council of the Alabama Law Institute. Active in political affairs



on the local, state, and national levels, Butler has chaired statewide Democratic campaigns and has served as the attorney for the Alabama Democratic Party.

Butler was chairman of Class V of Leadership Huntsville-Madison County. An award given to a non-Leadership graduate who has contributed significantly to the success of Leadership Huntsville-Madison County is named in Butler's honor. Butler was the first recipient of the award.

Butler received the 2018 Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Award and was honored as a Pioneer by the Rosetta James Foundation. He is a senior member of the Carl A. Elliott Society at the University of Alabama.

Julian and his wife, Betty, have three children and five grandchildren.

"POWERSHOTS"
John 'Jahni' Moore
TRUTH 2 POWER

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What have YOU been missing?

PowerShot
"It is not impossible, you just haven't found a way yet!"
- J. Moore

PowerShot
"Dream more than others think practical. Expect more than others think possible. Care more than others think wise."
- Howard Schultz

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What Have You Been Missing?

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THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

They're Not Like Tim!

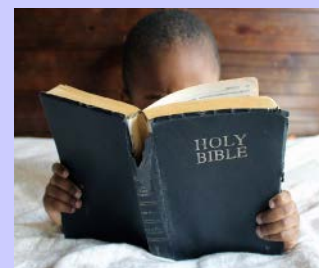
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, May 3, 2026
Fifth Sunday
of Easter



(Track 2, Year A)
First Lesson:
Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Second Lesson:
1 Peter 2:2-10
GOSPEL:
John 14:1-14



"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.

WJAB-FM 35th Annual Fundraiser Continues Through May 3

Alabama A&M University's WJAB 90.9 FM is calling on the community to step forward as it prepares for its 35th annual Jazz-A-Thon Fundraiser and Membership Drive, set for April 25 through May 3, at a time when listener support is more important than ever.



The fundraiser comes in the wake of the dissolution of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which previously served as a primary steward of federal investment in public radio.

The loss of that funding has significantly impacted WJAB's operating

budget and its ability to sustain daily programming.

"WJAB is committed to being your No. 1 source for jazz, blues and gospel," said Elvin Jenkins, director of WJAB. "Now, more than ever, we are depending on

the community we serve to help us continue that mission."

As a listener-supported station, WJAB relies on contributions from its audience to maintain the quality programming that has defined it for decades. Funds raised during the

Jazz-A-Thon will support expansion of the station's music library, upgrades to technology and continued delivery of local programming, news and public affairs content.

Equally critical to the effort is volunteer support. WJAB is seeking volunteers to assist daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in at least two-hour shifts.

Volunteers will help answer phones and may have opportunities to join on-air personalities during live fundraising segments.

The station is encouraging participation from

businesses, civic and community organizations, fraternities and sororities, as well as Alabama A&M faculty, staff and students. University departments are also urged to take part in the effort.

Founded in 1991, WJAB is Alabama's first 100,000-watt public radio station based on a college campus and the Tennessee Valley's only full-time jazz station.

Broadcasting 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the station reaches listeners across Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi.

Listeners can make donations online or by mailing contributions to WJAB, 132 Morrison Building, Normal, AL 35762. Donors may choose to make their gift fully tax-deductible or receive a premium item based on their level of giving.

Supporters can also give through WJAB's Vehicle Donation Program, which accepts cars, trucks and other vehicles nationwide to benefit the station.

For more information or to volunteer, email Elvin Jenkins at elvin.jenkins@aamu.edu.

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Should You Start Taking Social Security at 62, 67 or 70?

You can claim Social Security (SS) as soon as age 62 and take a permanent reduction of about 30% from your calculated Full Retirement Age amount (FRA).



Sixty-seven (67) is the FRA for individuals born in 1960 or later. At this age, you will receive 100% of your benefit. You can delay starting your benefit until age 70 which would maximize your monthly benefit. This maximum benefit will be approximately 24% larger than the calculated FRA amount.

The Key Considerations for claiming early at age 62:

1. You are in poor health and don't expect the sur-

viving spouse to make it to average life expectancy. In addition, your family history does not support longevity (i.e., parents/grandparents).

2. You are no longer working, and you have a limited savings and can't pay the bills to support your retirement needs.

3. You continue to work while claiming at 62. Your benefits may be temporarily reduced. In 2026, Social Security Administration (SSA), deducts \$1 for every \$2 you earn above \$24,480.

4. Up to 85% of Social Security benefits can be taxable. The taxable amount will depend upon your total taxable income.

5. You need to consider health care. You may not be eligible for Medicare until age 65. This means you may have to pay for private health insurance.

should carefully be considered before making this critical decision to begin taking SS at age 62 or as late as age 70.

Once SS benefits begin, each key factor may affect a single or married couple differently, resulting in different long-term impacts.

It's basically a sliding scale in which there is no one optimum age for starting SS for everyone. The right claiming age is influenced by all these key factors that are working together.

One final point, SS is facing a solvency shortfall that is projected to occur in the early 2030s and if nothing is done benefits are expected to



be reduced (Not Eliminated) by 23-25%. As of this writing, there are no proposals to eliminate SS!



by Stephen Hendricks

SUMMARY

These key factors

'The Hill' Plans Biennial Summer Conference

The 2026 Biennial Summer Conference will take place June 4-7 in Montgomery, Ala.

The Montgomery Area Alumni Chapter has planned an "exceptional lineup" of events designed to inspire, connect, and celebrate our vibrant alumni community, say conference organizers. From engaging workshops and thought-provoking panel discussions to signature social events and community service opportunities, the conference experience will reflect the excellence



and pride that define our Bulldog family.

The conference will be hosted at the Elevation Convening Center & Hotel, a new cultural landmark developed by Brian Ste-

vens, the developer of the Montgomery Legacy Museum. The facility is more than a hotel. It is a tribute to African-American heritage and an extension of the Legacy Museum, which includes several features

that attendees will enjoy.

Whether reconnecting with classmates, expanding professional network, or experiencing Montgomery's rich cultural heritage, the conference promises something meaningful for all participants.

For additional information, contact Sandra.Stubbs@aamu.edu.

AAMU Founder's Weekend Events

White Party

Friday, May 1, 2026

Ticket Price: \$50.00

Huntsville Country Club

Kick off the celebration in style at our Alumni White Party! Come dressed in your best all-white attire and enjoy an evening of music, dancing, and reconnecting with fellow Bulldogs.

Alumni Awards Luncheon

Saturday, May 2, 2026

Ticket Price: \$60.00

Ernest Knight Center
Alabama A&M University

Join us as we honor outstanding alumni who have made significant contributions to our community and alma mater. This special luncheon is a highlight of the weekend you won't want to miss.



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