

The Valley Weekly

"Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor."

- James Baldwin

FREE

Volume 2, No. 42

www.valleyweeklyllc.com

Friday, July 1, 2016

Businessman, Former A&M Trustee Dies

Last weekend, one of Alabama A&M University's "Brave and Loyal Sons" and former trustees died in Theodore, Ala.

Oliver Washington III has been described as a consummate husband, father, grandfather and friend, as well as the successful owner of Shore Acres Plant Farm in the Mobile area. The multi-million-dollar operation counted Wal-Mart and other retailers among its clients.



BBB Accepting Nominations for Torch Award

The Better Business Bureau of North Alabama's 2016 Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics are underway, and the organization is accepting nominations from worthy businesses and non-profits.

The BBB established this annual awards program more than 18 years ago to gain public recognition for local companies that hold solid commitment to conducting their business practices in an ethical fashion.

The Torch Award is designed to promote not only the importance of ethical business practices, but the willingness and efforts made by outstanding businesses to ensure that our

marketplace remains fair and honorable for all. Winners of the North Alabama Torch Awards are eligible to go on to compete at the national level for the Council of Better Business Bureaus' Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics.

The local award is open to all businesses in Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall and Morgan, Winston Counties in North Alabama. Companies may be nominated by businesses, organizations or individuals.

The deadline for nomination is July 31, 2016. For more information, contact risbell@northalabama.bbb.org

Bulldog-Themed Splash Park a Hit in NW Huntsville

The dog days of summer are no match for dozens of children enjoying the cool, jet fountains at the newly installed Splash Pad at the Dr. Richard Showers Sr. Recreation Center, 4600 Blue Spring Road.

The bulldog-themed Splash Park opened after a ribbon cutting today to the delight of families looking for ways to beat the heat. The 15,429 square foot park features three splash pads with 26 fixtures and spray patterns. An additional 15 jets may be interchanged to provide variety for the children. The park also includes 12 shaded picnic tables and bench seating throughout.

"We haven't met a child yet who doesn't love a splash pad, and we are proud to provide this

amenity for our North Huntsville families," said Mayor Tommy Battle.

The \$320,000 Splash Park is part of a \$1.2 million renovation to the Showers Center. Additional improvements include a refurbished locker room, restrooms and showers, new windows, painting, lighting, and pool deck. Al Azhar Temple #195 made a generous \$1,000 charitable donation to the construction of the Splash Pad.

"This center has more than 230,000 visitors every year, and we are working to add new programs and activities that meet the needs and interests of our citizens," said Dr. Richard Showers, District One Council Member.

The Showers Center is one of

the most active recreation centers operated by Huntsville's Parks & Recreation Department.

"These community centers become second homes to our families and we strive to provide the type of programming and environment that adds value to the neighborhoods," said Steve Ivey, Huntsville's Parks & Recreation Director.

The Showers Center offers year round fitness and swim classes, afterschool programs and summer camps, league activities, lectures, and more.

For more information, contact Kelly Cooper Schrimsher, director of communications, Office of the Mayor, (256) 427-5006 or e-mail kelly.schrimsher@huntsvilleal.gov.

Children's Advocacy Center Holding Forensic Interview Training

Forensic Interviewing of Children Training will be held July 18-22, according to National Children's Advocacy Center of Huntsville.

This training is specifically designed for child interviewers who have responsibility for initial forensic interviews of children. It is appropriate for professionals from the fields of child protective services, law

enforcement, and those affiliated with a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) with less than one year of full-time interviewing experience, or experienced interviewers who desire to learn the most current NCAC Child Forensic Interview structure.

The five-day training session will be held in Huntsville, Ala. Early registration fee is \$1149, and the standard registration fee

is \$1249. For more information, contact Ann Leith at aleith@nationalcac.org; call (256) 327-3746 or visit the website.

Training methods include lecture and audience discussion, child interview practicum, review of recorded forensic interviews, experiential skill-building exercises, and participation in mock court.

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Sam and Greg's Pizza

Sav-A-Lot

Sneed's Cleaners

St. Bartley PB Church

St. Luke Christian Church

Starbucks (Governors Drive, N. Parkway at

Maxtin Lake Road/University Drive)

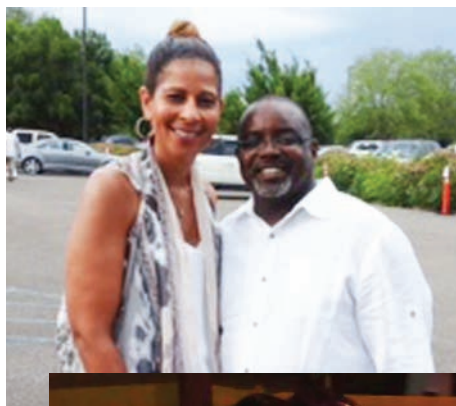
Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

Inaugural "Jazz in the Garden"

Huntsville Botanical Garden

Presented by the Delta Theta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Saturday, June 25, 2016



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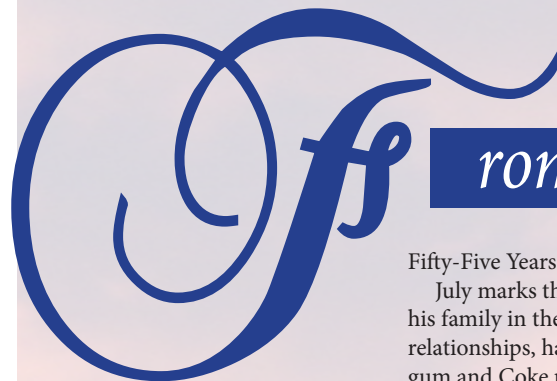
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The Valley Weekly

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From the Editor

Fifty-Five Years of Satisfaction ...

July marks the 55th Anniversary for local entrepreneur Jerry Damsom and his family in the automotive business. Jerry has a unique story of old-fashioned relationships, hard work and inspiration. As an 8-year-old boy, he sold chewing gum and Coke products in his neighborhood. He bought the products, marked them up and sold them--the definition of a for-profit business. Unlike non-profits, for-profit businesses exists primarily to generate a profit; that is, to make more money than it spends.

At an early age, Damson understood "business." The little blond-headed boy's Coke business was so successful, he paid some of his friends who had bicycles to help distribute the products to his customers. Legend has it that the Coke delivery truck would deliver to his door, just as they delivered to local grocery stores and other distribution points weekly.

Jerry began selling used cars for Arthur Cole in 1960 and stayed there for about a year and a half until he talked his father into giving him \$20,000 to start his own used-car business. His dad, Harry Damson, was a local clothing dealer and owned the Damson Boston Store. Being an only child, it didn't take much to convince his dad of the gift; plus, Jerry had already demonstrated his ability to sell.

In July 1961, Jerry opened his used-car business at the corner of Meridian Street and Abington Avenue, just across from Lincoln School. He operated there for over 13 years and relocated the business to North Memorial Parkway, at the corner of Cook Avenue. The used cars he sold, were "high end" and the move to the Memorial Parkway gave him high visibility and location advantage. According to Jerry, he was always "transparent and stood by his cars." This was his way of securing his future in the car business. If a customer had a problem with one of his cars, he fixed it and make it right, in favor of the customer. This is still the Damson way today.

Jerry bought Phillip Bentley's half out of Lee Bentley's Chrysler, Plymouth, GMC and Honda in 1979, making way for Lee Damson Automotive. Four years later in 1983, he bought Louis Lee out and re-branded the business as Jerry Damson Honda. In 1985, Jerry opened a Honda Dealership in Decatur and later bought Foote Honda in Florence as part of his new brand. Business was good so he kept buying and growing, acquiring Foote Oldsmobile and Cadillac of Florence in the mid 90s. He consolidated each of these purchases into Jerry Damson Honda, selling the Oldsmobile and Cadillac arm to Nelda Stevenson Chevrolet in Florence.

Jerry retired from actively running the business in 2000 and his son Deke Damson and son-in-law Bruce Park took over the day-to-day management and operations. They continued Jerry's style of growth when they purchased the Nissan Dealership in Muscle Shoals and moved it to Florence. They built two buildings on Cox Creek Parkway in Florence, one to house the Nissan dealership and one to house the Honda dealership. Last year, they sold both dealerships in Florence in order to focus on their original "Satisfaction" guarantee by which they continue to operate each day.

The Acura business emerged in the early 90s via a purchase of locally operated King Acura on University Drive. They moved that business to its current location on Lemman Ferry Road upon acquisition. One's first questions might be: "How does one go from selling chewing gum and Coke products to selling cars?" Back and forth between home and college, Jerry didn't have a lot of interest in finishing college; therefore, he relied on his selling skills to earn a living. While home from college once, a "dear" friend, Bill Fowler at Bill's Menswear offered him a job and he worked there for about 6 months. During that time, Bill told Jerry that he needed to come up with something better than his name to put on the logo on the back of his cars. Bill was creative and understood merchandising and branding. So when Jerry moved the dealership from Meridian Street to the Parkway, he took Bill's recommendation and branded what is now Jerry Damson Automotive Group by adding the word "Satisfaction" to the logo that appears on each car sold.

Today, the family-owned business operates three dealerships in Huntsville and Decatur. With over 250 capable employees in their sales and service departments, they are an award-winning dealership with many loyal customers--like us. Our family has purchased five cars from Damson Automotive Group, including three Hondas and two Acuras. The Damsons are consummate servant leaders, philanthropists and excellent corporate citizens in the Huntsville community, supporting quality of life venues, our schools, local charities and civic events. Every community needs a Jerry Damson, with a wife like Butch Damson, also an only child, who is spoiled to the point of not knowing how to say "no." Happy Anniversary to a wonderful family and to the entire Damson Automotive Group TEAM. Enough said, my friends!

Until next week ...




Jerry Damson

Dorothy

PowerShot

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

-Harriet Tubman



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On This Day

Friday, July 1, 2016 - WALTER F. WHITE - Former Executive Director of the NAACP, Born in Atlanta, Georgia.

- BlackInTime.info

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Valley Deaths

Funeral service for **Mr. Ronald G. Childress, Jr.** (better known as "Hershey"), was held Saturday, June 25, at Union Chapel M. B. Church with Pastor Troy Garner officiating. Family visitation was Friday, June 24, at Fellowship of Faith Church (3703 Memorial Parkway North- Huntsville, AL).

Funeral service for **Mr. Anthony Lamar McClain** was held Friday, June 24,

at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.

Funeral service for **Mr. Robert "Bob" Thomas Chastine** was held Thursday, June 23, at Redstone Arsenal Bicentennial Chapel (376 Goss Road SW. - Redstone Arsenal, AL) with CH (LTC) James Boulware officiating.

Funeral service for **Ms. Jessie M. Brazelton** was held Thursday, June 23, at Acklin

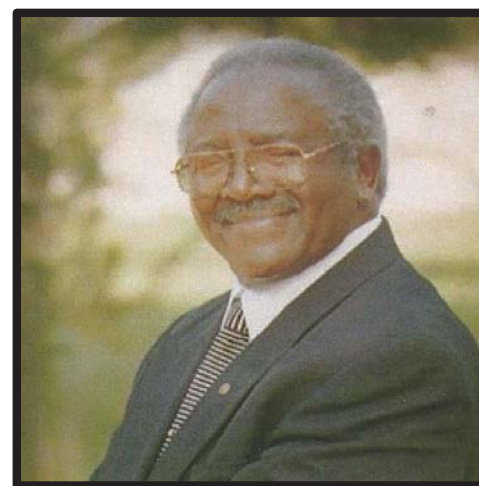
C. M. E. Church.

Funeral service for **Ms. Olivia Watts** was Wednesday, June 29, at 12 p.m. at Douglas Tabernacle Church with Elder Richmond Malone Eulogist and Elder Robert Rogers, Sr., officiating.

Funeral arrangements for **Mr. Mufansta Beatfield** are incomplete and will be announced later.

- Nelms Memorial Funeral Home

RE-ELECT COUNCILMAN RICHARD SHOWERS, SR.



VOTE

**Tuesday
August 23rd**

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Scenes from
**The Martinson and Beason PC
Annual Putt-Putt Party**
Thursday, June 23, 2016



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- Moderators -

Andrew M. Sieja - Attorney, Martinson & Beason, PC
Samuel T. Greene, II - President/CEO, Greene Consulting



Tuesday, July 26, 2016

Fellowship of Faith Church
Fellowship Hall

3703 Memorial Parkway, NW
Huntsville, Alabama - 6-8 PM

All candidates are invited to participate and should RSVP by July 15th at
info@diversityleadershipcolloquium.com or 256-651-9028

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Scenes from the

75th Anniversary of Redstone Arsenal Reception

Hosted by the Commanding General, United States Army Materiel Command, and Mrs. Dennis L. Via



No Weapon Shall Prosper

After the many horrendous shootings that have taken place in our country, gun control has become a large topic of conversation. Those in the government such as senators, legislators, the President, and more can not come to an agreement on handling gun control. Although it makes complete and total sense to make guns harder to get in the wrong hands, there are many who oppose to any sort of gun regulations.

Although everyone is entitled to their views and opinions, I don't get how there has to be a licensing/registering process that no one has a problem with, but some people have an issue with a background check. I do agree that a background check won't completely solve the problem because someone who has a clean record could still snap one day. If you ask me, half of the cops, shouldn't have guns because they too are known for killing innocent, unarmed individuals. Regulation is a tough task, because it comes down to someone's "better" judgement, which may not always be right.

I also agree everyone has a right to protect themselves, however we do owe it to anyone who has lost their life to gun violence to do

something to protect others from this awful act. The conversation on gun control will continue to be a tough topic, and in my opinion no matter how much you regulate, control, create laws, etc, people are going to do what they want and be who they want to be.

Instead of focusing so much on the hands that hold these guns, the problem is the guns themselves. Guns are here because of our 5th amendment rights, and there

isn't anything we can do about it, but as we move forward we should shift our focus to create things that enhance people's lives and not take people lives. Some people wake up with the mission to sow good seeds in the ground, and some wake up with the mission to sow negative seeds.

An inventor/entrepreneur created the gun, and that product has caused more problems and more problems. We should strive to become a business person whose goal is to help people through their products/services and not harm, therefore this world will be a better and safer place.

by Amoi Savage
#PrayforOrlando

(Photo cred: www.majyckradio.com)



Rosetta James Scholarship Foundation

#94612

The Rosetta James Scholarship Foundation provides financial scholarship to undergraduate students who demonstrate sound academic principles; commitment to community volunteerism, civic engagement and unselfishness to assist others in Huntsville/Madison County.

The Rosetta James Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization with a 0% Administrative and Fundraising Rate (AFR). For additional information, contact (256) 536-9717 or write P.O. Box 17452, Huntsville, AL 35810.



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GE Aviation Breaks Ground in Huntsville

GE Aviation broke ground in Huntsville recently on two adjacent factories to mass-produce silicon carbide (SiC) materials used to manufacture ceramic matrix composite components (CMCs) for jet engines and land-based gas turbines for electric power.

GE Aviation is investing more than \$200 million to construct two factories on 100 acres in Huntsville. When the factories are fully operational later this decade, they are expected

to employ up to 300 people. The plants are expected to be completed by the first half of 2018. Production begins in 2018. GE expects to begin hiring the hourly workforce later this year.

"GE Aviation is creating a fully integrated supply chain for producing CMC components in large volume, which is unique to the United States," said Sanjay Correa, vice president who leads the industrialization of advanced technologies at GE Aviation. "The new

factories in Alabama are vital to this strategy. We are deeply gratified by the tremendous local, state, and national support for this effort."

While meeting critical U.S. needs for CMC materials for commercial and government-funded programs, the new plants will support GE and its international partners in selling and supporting jet engines and gas turbines worldwide.

Ronald "Hershey" Childress, Jr. Homegoing Celebration

Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

Saturday, June 25, 2016 (Photos by Anthony Gibson)



A memorial fund in honor of Ronald G. Childress, Jr. has been established at his alma mater, Alabama A&M University. For more information, please visit <http://www.aamu.edu/giving>

Valley Conservatory Jam Session Set

The Valley Conservatory will be hosting its monthly Jazz Jam Session Sunday, July 31, 5-8 p.m. at the Valley Conservatory studio, located at 5650 Sanderson St. 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 C&A Catering, Healing Heaven and Pampered Chef. For more information, visit valley-

conservatory.com or call (256) 534-3131.

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Champion Game Plan for Life

by Preston Brown

You know, it's really unfortunate when Christians stay mad and angry all the time, because it hurts our witness. We can't afford to be like the world and compromise our religious beliefs.

You see, the world is watching us and listening

to us when we face trials of any kind, just to see how we will react. Now, we all get angry from time to time, but it's what we do and how we behave that is important.

Also, we as Christians need to avoid complaining all the time. Once again, it

affects our witness because you never know when someone may be watching and listening to you who may be in the process of becoming a new believer ...

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters.



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Calendar of Events

July 4

City Concerts in the Park
Huntsville Concert Band
Huntsville's in the Mood
Big Swing Band
Big Spring International
Park, 6:30-8 p.m.

July 11

City Concerts in the Park
Blue City and Emily Joseph
Band
Big Spring International
Park, 6:30-8 p.m.

July 15

Food Truck Street Festival
Sponsor: Jerry Damson
Honda Acura
Downtown Huntsville
The Lumberyard Parking
Lot, 108 Cleveland Avenue
5-9 p.m.

DCI North Alabama
Drum Corps International
Sponsor: US Army Bands

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Boston Crusaders - Boston, MA
The Cadets - Allentown, PA
Crossmen - San Antonio, TX
Jersey Surf - Mount Holly, NJ
Legends - Portage, MI
Louisiana Stars - Lafayette, LA
Music City - Nashville, TN
Southwind - Mobile, AL
Spirit of Atlanta - Atlanta, GA
DCI Box Office at (317)
275-1212

Tickets: \$20-\$30

Louis Crews Stadium
Alabama A&M University
7 p.m.

July 23

AshaKiran's Annual Ray of
Hope Event and 10th An-
niversary Celebration

July 24

Valley Conservatory Jam
Session

July 25

2nd Annual Caribbean

Heritage Gala

The Cooper House, 405
Randolph Ave., Huntsville
Caribbean Association of
North Alabama
\$40 individual (\$300 Table
of 8)
(256) 653-4751
www.canaonline.com
7-11 p.m.

July 28

Boys and Girls Club Lead-
ers & Legends Dinner

Guest: Evander Holyfield

VIP Reception: 5 p.m.
Von Braun Center-North
Hall, 6 p.m.

August 12-13

AshaKiran's 2-Day Lan-
guage Advocacy Workshop


August 19

Food Truck Street Festival
Sponsor: Jerry Damson
Honda Acura
Downtown Huntsville

July 11-15, 2016
PERCUSSION CAMP
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