

# The Valley Weekly

Volume 1, No. 13

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING EDITION November 27, 2014

FREE

*"We never reflect how pleasant it is to ask for nothing."*

- Seneca

## WHAT THANKSGIVING MEANS TO ME!

A memory of my youth is the competition between my Daddy and my Uncle to see who could raise the biggest Thanksgiving turkey. We ate one and the other went to the banker in town. I'm not sure who got the biggest--probably the banker! Nevertheless, the one we ate, big or little, was fantastic! This Thanksgiving season, I really am thankful for all the blessings we have received and am so reminded of the emigrants in our midst. Regardless of how they got here or whether they deserve to be allowed to stay, I cannot but help think of the terrible uncertainty with which they must live for themselves and their families. I trust they and their families will find something to be thankful for this season.



- Allie Swann  
Retired Auditor, NASA, Huntsville, Ala.

Thanksgiving is the holiday to enjoy with loved ones and show gratitude for all the blessings that I have received.



In addition to the obligatory feasting and merrymaking I also like to use this time to express my thanks and gratitude to family, friends and associates for their kindness and kind deeds.

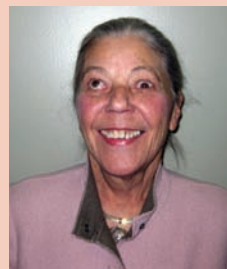
- Marshall England  
State Farm Agent, Huntsville, Ala.

Thanksgiving is sitting around the dinner table with your loved ones. It's when you realize, yet another year, that you are truly blessed.



- Katie Huston  
Graduate Student  
Starkville, Miss.

At Thanksgiving I always look forward to requesting everyone around the table share something they are thankful for. It can be a recent reason or a reason that happened long ago, and they just realized the situation was a blessing. But at the time they were too close to realize it. Just today, something wonderful happened in our lives that my husband and I had been praying for over 20 years. Every morning I thank God for another day, and I try to do good for someone. I love the little one sentence prayer of John Newton: Be patient enough to live one day at a time, letting yesterday go and leaving tomorrow till it arrives.



- Butch Damson  
Servant-Leader, Huntsville, Ala.

Think of how often in a day someone does something for you, however, small--how often do you say 'thank you.' Now, think of how often God helps us in a day. Think of all that God has given you. How often do we say thanks to HIM? Therefore, thanksgiving should be a celebration of the giver and the gift. Celebrate often.

Why should we give thanks to GOD? 1 Chronicle 16:34 says, "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good! His faithful love endures forever." (God is good, loving, and kind).

1 Corinthians 15:57: How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord! (For the victory He gives us in Christ).

For answered prayer and because thanksgiving keeps our mind on Christ.

How do we show we are thankful? Psalms 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless his name (Always praise and honor him).

When should we give thanks to the Lord? Psalms 92:2 It is good to proclaim your unending love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening. (Morning and evening)

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NO matter what happens always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (We should always maintain a spirit of constant gratitude.) That is what Thanksgiving is to me!!

- Virginia Gilchrist  
President/CEO, SDC Inc.  
Huntsville, Ala.



Thanksgiving to me took on an entirely different meaning 22 years ago (November 23, 1992) when my mother transitioned from this life for one where "every day will be Sunday and there is no more pain and suffering". Prior to that, I looked at Thanksgiving as a day to relax with family and friends, enjoy a great meal and watch football while the ladies strategized about their Black Friday escapades. However, that year things changed forever and I spent the 3 months leading to her transition (after she was diagnosed with cancer) being thankful to God for blessing me with a mother who gave unselfishly of herself to her family and friends and taught me that my worth is not defined by worldly possessions or accolades from others; but instead to present the "best me" and be a shining example of that which I want others to be. Today, Thanksgiving means being thankful for the many blessings that God has place in my life--my family, my friends and the opportunity to continue to discover the "best me".

- Van L. Strickland  
Strategic Planning/Development Manager  
Space Launch System Program, NASA/MSFC  
Huntsville, Ala.

Thanksgiving is the chance to give back to God for what He has done for us. It is time for love, peace, family, and just having a good time with each other.



- Cedric T. Etheridge  
Freshman, Prince George's  
Community College  
Clinton, Md.

# The Voice of Thanksgiving

by Rev. Dr. O. Wendell Davis, Pastor  
Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

*That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. (Psalm 26:7)*

What would you do if you suddenly found out that this Thanksgiving Day would be the last one you would ever share with your family and friends? Would your plans for the day change? Would you spend the day watching parades on television? Would you spend it all cooking fine foods and fellowshiping with friends? Would you sleep all day?

The response to the question depends upon what purpose and distinction you place on Thanksgiving Day. If you view it as a day to relax, kick back, and eat fine foods, you might do a few things differently. If you view it as a day to sleep or watch football, you might change a few more things. However, if you view it as a day to praise the Lord, you will probably gather your family together under one roof and reflect upon a year of activity and give God praise and thanks for the good times. Your last Thanksgiving would be spent like all others, giving praise and thanks to God for his mercy and his goodness.

There are many who feel that life has given them a bum deal, and they have nothing for which to give thanks. When the pilgrims came to America, their first year was not all pumpkin pie. Many of them died of diseases and cold. They endured hardships and difficulties. But when the harvest came, they looked beyond their difficulties, saw all of the other ways God had blessed them, and gave Him thanks. That was the first Thanksgiving Day in America. As Christians, we have shared simi-

lar moments. We should always remember to give thanks to God for everything because He is the source of our blessings.

This Psalm focuses on David as he gives six characteristics that are unique to the righteous:

In verses 1-2, he notes that the righteous are usually open to examination. Before God their lives are open books.

In verse 3, obedience is highlighted. David says that he has tried to walk in the truths of the Lord consistently.

In verses 4-6, David reflects on his general victory over the efforts of the wicked to influence his life in favor of living the godly life.

In verses 9-10, he reiterates his desire not to be obstructed or frustrated by the wicked schemes of the ungodly.

In verses 11-12, he restates his desire to walk in the steps of the Lord with integrity.

Verses 7-8, in which David declares that God has been so good to the righteous that they should declare and publish his good works for everyone to see and hear of his greatness. Accordingly, he says that Christians should let the world know that they love the Lord and they love the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in their lives daily.

Every day should be a day of praise, thanksgiving and testimony. Those who are working in the kingdom know the importance of giving thanks to God everyday. That is what was unique about Jesus' practice. He offered thanks every time He broke bread. We, who follow His footsteps, do exactly the same thing. We thank God every day for every blessing we have received from Him.

While Thanksgiving is noted as a special day of thanks and reflection, those who know the Lord see it as a continuation of their own personal Christian habit.

We thank God for blessings. Certainly, nothing we have achieved and attained was because of our deserving character. We thank Him for blessing us, despite the fact that we do not deserve such blessings. We recognize some of the ways that we have been blessed immediately. We see material evidences such as homes, cars, and a reasonable portion of health and strength. We thank Him for those. We have been protected from unseen dangers and miraculously steered around them. We have no way of knowing all of the unseen dangers that we have been spared from, just this day alone.

*Every day the world should hear the voice of thanksgiving!*

Not only do we give God thanks for blessings, but we also give Him thanks for our burdens. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The word "everything" includes our burdens and problems. We thank God for everything, because we know that all things work to our good, if we are in Christ Jesus. So, we thank Him for everything. Even if it appears there is nothing for which to be thankful, thank Him anyway!

We should testify of God's goodness, and show thanks to God by telling the world about His goodness! Let others know that what He has done is too good to keep to ourselves.



Finally, the Psalmist writes, "O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon His name: make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD" (In Psalm 105:1-3).

When God has done something good for us, we should be willing to glorify Him and show our gratitude. We should tell it on our jobs! We should tell it in the songs we sing! We should tell it in the joy that bubbles in our soul!

Never back down from a chance to say to the world, 'I just want to thank God for being so good to me!

Your Humble Servant,  
O. Wendell Davis

*"I love wisdom, so I don't want to know just one color wisdom. I want to know about life and everybody's way of life."*

- J. California Cooper  
Mosaic interview

## Letter to the Editor

... I especially like your column about Mr. and Mrs., Yes, Sir, and Yes, Ma'am. I use these "handles" as you call them in my speech when I want to esteem and express high regard and respect for those who have been gifted with longevity of life. Equally important, I use them with some my age and some younger as an expression of kindness, respect and affirmation--just because I can, just because I choose to. I believe it elevates the "speakee" as well as the "speaker". And when used, people notice. Wouldn't it be nice to start a revolution of this regard? If so, let it begin with me.

I look forward to each edition. Keep them coming. Keep reminding us of our roots--the path that was paved for us (not so long ago). By all means, take us back to take us forward. Living away from home, interestingly enough, mother deceased due to breast cancer 17.5 years ago the 12th of this month, Grandmother passed away at the age of 94 on October 18th (six years ago), and no real "roots" here in "the Valley", it is voices like yours that I look to for wisdom, to follow, model and learn. Keep the papers coming. I'm waiting on the next edition.

- Carol Bell

Glad to hear the Valley Weekly is online now. I really like the articles you write.

- Genora Massey

A very interesting news publication.

- Dr. & Mrs. Lawrence Holland  
Sao Paulo, Brazil

Thanks for the info on The Valley Weekly and for showcasing our daughter's foundation in the paper. God Bless you!

- Edna Fails

I am so impressed with these newspapers.

- Linda Spalla

I want to congratulate you again for this Journal. Awesome.

- Koffi Konan  
Elizabeth City, N.C.

Very informative! - Dr. H. Littlepage

I like the Valley Weekly. - Alice Sams

Wow! Congratulations! This is impressive! - Dr. Helen T. McAlpine

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# From the Editor



Thanksgiving is everyday that we are granted another opportunity to make a difference. We have asked various individuals in the community to share with us thoughts about Thanksgiving. We hope to encourage intergenerational conversations in an effort to provide a bridge between wisdom and transformation. Thanks for your contributions this week to the VW. A special thanks to my pastor, Dr. O. Wendell Davis, for our Thanksgiving message. It wouldn't be Thanksgiving if we didn't allocate some space to feed our souls!

Ah, Thanksgiving. For me, Thanksgiving has always been a time of family gatherings, immediate and extended, for reflection, story-telling and bonding. With busy schedules, assorted priorities, and generational disconnects, it is becoming more challenging to assemble family members of different generations to worship, to give thanks, to share and to bond.

In my family's home of the past, Thanksgiving was part of the "harvest" season; food was bountiful. We could eat most of the day and into the night, without counting calories. Actually, we did not know what calories were because we burned them as quickly as we consumed them. The in-ground cell was filled with freshly harvested 'white' and 'yellow' sweet potatoes, the smokehouse had both salted and slowly-smoked shoulders and ham, while boxes of greens, roots, peanuts, persimmons, pecans, walnuts, apples and oranges surrounded the screened porch floors and kitchen counters. Cakes and pies of all flavors and textures layered the dining room buffet and table.



When the weather permitted, neighborhoods bustled with the sounds of babies crying, children playing, rolling stores, evangelists and traveling singing groups speaking and singing through mantel radios, the shots of deer-hunters and buddies later bragging about their prized game, records spinning Old School music in jukeboxes and car stereos. Didn't have time for TV. We saved that for Sunday afternoon or when 'company' came. Ah, *Thanksgiving!*

A word of caution, though, about consuming, cholesterol and calories. We shouldn't let "Black Friday" and fancy food deceive us. Let's choose those things we can afford and eat and drink those things that nourish our physical and spiritual bodies. We spend too much time inside, on the sofa or at the desk on our smart devices, gathering and storing little for the future and burning nothing but precious time. What would you do if you knew this was you last Thanksgiving?

We are near the end of this Harvest season. Winter is coming. We are giving coats to Second Chance Ministries for the children at Lakewood Elementary School. What are you sharing? Until next week, pray for me as I shall pray for you.

*... Let's choose those things we can afford and eat and drink those things that nourish our physical and spiritual souls.*

*Dorothy*

# Is There a Pet Waiting for You?

I was reading an article written by Phillip Moeller for the *U. S. News and World Report* entitled "10 Reasons Older People Need Pets." It jarred my memory for what would normally be just a typical daily encounter.

This week there was a gentleman in the parking lot walking his darling tricolor beagle (I can describe him as tricolor because I watch the Westminster Dog Show each year). The gentleman's silver hair and same colored mustache paralleled his companion, who was quite up in age by the greying of the fur around his muzzle, his waddle and the many times he stopped, not able to even move as fast as his owner.

The gentleman smiled and spoke because as a dog lover I could not help but acknowledge the dog. This looked like a daily routine, as they were not getting into a car but continued down the sidewalk. I wondered about how many years that relationship had existed. If the circumstances are appropriate, here are some of the reasons offered by Mr. Moeller that older adults need a pet:

**Companionship.** Loneliness can become an unwelcome companion

as we get older and can lead to depression as well as physical problems.

Dogs mold their schedule and personality to you. (The gentleman I encountered clothing was brown, black and white, that tricolor thing). They are never unavailable or off duty. Smaller dogs, in particular, can easily travel with you wherever you go. There are many shelters with animals waiting to be adopted. Animals also alert to illnesses like an oncoming seizure, diabetic attack, etc.

**Stress.** Older adults with pets exhibit less stress than their pet-less counterparts. Maybe it's those regular walks or the sense that you have a friend to share life's challenges. Or maybe it's that tail wagging every day when you wake up.

**Getting Out.** Having a pet, and particularly one that requires regular outdoor activity, helps you stay connected to life. There's the vet. The place you have your dog groomed and washed. You need to be involved in social activities. Having a pet is a good way to stay involved.

**New Interests.** Having a pet

can expose you to a lot of new interests and activities. Maybe it's cleaning up the neighborhood park where you walk your dog. (Now that I look back I can see that the man and his dog were headed to the dog park off of Cleveland a few blocks over). Some hospitals seek pet owners who will volunteer to bring in their pets to spend time with patients. Maybe your four legged friend could be a therapy dog.

Sure, you need your pet. But your pet needs you, too. The desire to be useful and of value doesn't magically disappear when your career ends or your kids grow up and build their own independent lives. It is very satisfying to take care of another living thing. <http://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/slideshows/10-reasons-older-people->

*Submitted by Linda Burruss*



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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.



# Reconnecting with the Season of My Soul's Awakening

It was in the spring of that year. The winter had been colder than usual. In those years spring was the favorite time of year because it was closer to summer vacation. Don't get me wrong: I didn't mind school. As a fifth grader I was a stick of a kid, but even then loved a challenge and could hang with the big guys physically. I especially loved science, reading and P.E. Some of my fondest memories of school are of that library, a cathedral of books and color. Oh, and every few weeks, heaven came down in the form of an art teacher who came around with her art supplies on a cart.

One Friday evening at church, our children's choir director announced that we were getting new robes. Instantly, anxiety rolled over me. No way could my parents afford a new choir robe. Although I had no idea what a robe would cost, I knew we couldn't afford it. I was the oldest boy in the family of five children. We lived in a modest three-bedroom house. My parents worked hard and long. During my childhood I thought vacation meant time off one job to work another one. Even as much as they worked, we were still among the "working poor." Although the money was scarce--provision and care was staple in our home. My parents kept us in church. It seemed as though every time the church doors swung open, we were there.

With the announcement about the robes, my mind set off frantically trying to figure out how I could afford one. In the next instant, my prayer was answered. The choir director announced that we would sell candy to raise money for the robes. It was on! If I couldn't do anything else, I could sell. I loved selling. Once my mom had bought this bubblegum that was hard and

dry. None of us liked it. This stuff sat on the kitchen counter for weeks. One day when some friends were over, I had a bright idea. In a short time all the gum was sold. Yes I sold it. Told my friends it was jaw strengthening gum and sold every single piece. I even had other neighborhood kids come over to ask about the gum. That was the jumpstart of my first, and very successful, entrepreneurial expedition. Now, there I was standing tall in that choir stand knowing that I'd have that new robe, no doubt. Within the next few weeks I sold candy like crazy. I sold at school, at church, in the neighborhood, at family events. I even sold to salesmen who came to our house to sell us stuff. After I'd sold my candy, I got more and more. When there was no more, I sold what my friends hadn't sold. I was a stone cold selling machine. At that point I was not so much driven by the reward of the robe or even the dollars and change coming in but the victorious feeling of seeing the bottom of another empty box. That represented an accomplishment of my set goal.

As part of the venture the choir was also going to Disneyworld. I didn't give that any thought. I couldn't even conceive of a trip like this. In my mind, it was beyond my realm of possibilities. I just saw it as somewhere they were going. Things other people did.

On the day they were preparing to leave for Disney World, it was sunny with that slight spring chill on the ground. I was sitting on my bike outside my friend's house as they carried multicolored luggage from the house to the car. I just sat there perched on my bike watching and watching. No thoughts went through my head. I just watched. My friend's mother's voice cut

through my trance. She was calling my name. My mom was on the phone. Was I in trouble for something? Immediately my mind started the search through my day's activities. There was nothing I could find that I'd done or not done.

I picked up the phone. She asked with excitement in her voice, if I still wanted to go on the trip. Did I want to go on the trip? Was she crazy or had I just lost my mind. "Huh?" was all I could get out. She repeated the question with a little more gusto. This time my good sense kicked in, although I still didn't know what was going on. Of course my answer was *yes*. She told me to hurry up and come home to pack. I tore out of there on my bike like I'd been called by God or chased by the devil. On my way home my mind raced faster than I could travel. This was a dream come true. This was a dream come true. This was a dream.

While I packed as fast as I could my mother explained to me how the choir director called at the last hour. Turns out that I had sold so much candy and impressed so many people, I was able to go on the trip for free. Driven by the desire to keep my parents from having to worry about that choir robe and the sheer rush of the sell, I had secured a trip to Disneyworld. My feet still hadn't touched the ground yet. To a child who loved everything Disney, this was beyond belief.

My mother gave me a \$10 bill and words of instruction and I was out the door. Little did I know, my enthusiasm had netted me more than a trip to Disney World. It opened up my world that would never again contain boundaries, or mountains too high to climb, or waters too wide to cross, or any wilderness too

complex to navigate. From that point on, even when I walked through my neighborhood, I knew then it wasn't big enough to contain me. When I sat in the classroom my triggered imagination took me beyond the walls, beyond the words because my world was bigger than that. In the lean times, when my clothes were too small or I was laughed at or shunned for not fitting in, I was ok because my world was bigger than all of that. I knew in my soul that I could do anything I wanted and beyond. My state of being, I knew, was temporary. That trip ignited my drive to suc-

ceed and exceed the status quo on all levels. I didn't need to be told to study or practice anything I wanted to excel in. When I saw the bottom of that first box of candy, I didn't realize the climate change had begun. I was driven by something inside that had been awakened and would not be still. Something that became my north star, the dawn of a new season. I'd found my lane. That trip to Disney World was so much more than a church trip or reward for my efforts. It was my passport to possibility.

- John T. Moore

## Huntsville Utilities and Thanksgiving

For this Thanksgiving, the employees at Huntsville Utilities challenged each other to buy bicycles to support WZYP's Bikes or Bust Campaign with Toys for Tots. The volunteer council donated six bikes and then several departments within the organization challenged each other to see which unit could get the most bikes. In the end, 89 bikes were donated and delivered. A bucket truck delivered the bikes to Mojo from WZYP. He is spending 104 hours on an air lift to encourage folks to bring bikes for kids.

Huntsville Utilities serves everyone. There are few businesses that can say they have 100% market coverage. It's the model followed and it is critical that its employees remember that it serves everyone in Madison County and that the Utilities manages costs to support everyone.

The Holiday Season is particularly interesting, because Huntsville Utilities' services are so essential to the community. This



is apparent on Thanksgiving, a time for celebration and remembrance, for family, and for loved ones who have gone on.

Whether you spend your time cooking or eating, playing football or watching football, entertaining or resting, Huntsville Utilities is there. It provides the water, gas and electricity that are foundational to everything else that goes on in Huntsville and Madison County. The employees support the community through volunteering and giving bikes away, and they support the community by adding value as a provider of efficient and reliable utility services.

May each of you has a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season.

by Jay Stowe

**What does Thanksgiving mean to me?** When I think of Thanksgiving, I think of fall, food and family/friends. But more importantly, I think of the opportunity to pause and give thanks for these things.

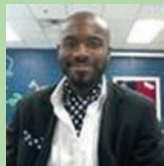
We are blessed to live in a world full of natural beauty and majesty. Oftentimes, it is very easy to get caught in the whirlwind of life and responsibilities, and we forget to stop and enjoy the world around us. Thanksgiving brings trees

and leaves of different colors, along with beautiful, crisp mornings. I am thankful that I am able to enjoy the beautiful creation of our planet and the Creator who made it.

Thanksgiving also provides a great time to partake in delicious food. It is tradition to eat turkey, stuffing, and an assortment of side dishes and desserts. However, not everyone has the ability to enjoy such delectable items. Some people will not be able to enjoy a warm Thanksgiving meal. I believe that we are not only to be thankful for our Thanksgiving meals; we should remember and pray for those who are less fortunate.

Lastly, Thanksgiving allows me to reflect on my family and friends. I am truly blessed to have wonderful, caring, loving people who support me in my dreams. They challenge me to be the best person I can be, and I am thankful that I have the opportunity to honor them with my words and actions. Thanksgiving is an opportunity to show appreciation. Let us all make the most of it.

- Henry Bradford  
Math Teacher  
Brick Church College Prep  
Nashville, Tenn.



The Annual Homeless Dinner was hosted by Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church. The worthwhile event was held in conjunction with Huntsville City Councilman Will Culver.



## Support for Rose of Sharon Soup Kitchen & Thrift Store

The Rose of Sharon Soup Kitchen and Thrift Store needs coats (especially for men), scarves, gloves, blankets, socks and other items for homeless individuals.

It is also accepting turkeys and other food items for Thanksgiving--as well as Christmas gifts for homeless children and adults.

Please wrap toys and other items and bring them to the Rose of Sharon by December 15. This very well-operated ministry is on the North Parkway access road (east side--north of Oakwood). Go to: [www.roseofsharonsoup-kitchen.org](http://www.roseofsharonsoup-kitchen.org) (for operating hours, etc.).

Coats may also be dropped off at the First Missionary Baptist Church office during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

WJAB is partnering with The Rose Of Sharon Soup Kitchen and Thrift Store on North Memorial Parkway. We need your donations of Men's Winter Coats, scarves, gloves and hats.

Please bring your NEW or clean, gently used Men's Winter Coats to the WJAB studios. Please come by 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, please call Erica Fox at (256) 372-4068. Thank you for helping us keep others warm these cold days!



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# Huntsville Happenings!

## Black Friday 2014

In this era of "gotta have it now," I "can't wait" and "need this ASAP." Thanksgiving, formerly a family tradition to spend time with loved-ones and friends, has taken a back seat to the *real* holiday of November – Black Friday.

Less than 20 years ago, Black Friday was the "something to do" activity post-Thanksgiving to jump-start the Christmas Shopping season. Now it has virtually consumed Turkey Day.

This year, many retailers have announced that they will open earlier than they did last year --most at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving. While sales, deals, specials and discounts are great, spending time with family is even better. Although many families do Black Friday shopping together, don't we already have enough hustle and bustle in our daily lives? Take time to rest, relax and enjoy the holiday.

Now, if you must exercise your urge to shop and get out with the Black Friday crowds, either Thursday evening or Friday, here are some items to consider. First, remember to treat other shoppers with courtesy and respect. There are only so many items in inventory at various stores, so pushing and trampling someone else to get to an item isn't worth the headache.

Most stores have organized lines for certain hot items and will issue tickets for the quantity that they know they have in stock. If you are looking for something particular, do your research to find out which store is going to have the best sale and what their Black Friday procedures will be so that you can be prepared.

Second, and most important, please be kind to the store employees. Most store employees would rather be home with their families on Thanksgiving Day and Black Friday instead of being at work. Although it is their job, please exhibit an extra jolt of kindness. Just pretend it were you working instead of them.

Finally, while shopping, be safe. Please be aware of your surroundings and guard your payment methods well. *Enjoy Huntsville Black Friday 2014!*

by Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

# Planning the Perfect Holiday Gathering

As we prepare for the Holiday season, many of us will host an array of social gatherings for the purpose of mingling and mixing with family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Sometimes planning such events can be hectic if you do not know where to start. To help you plan your holiday gathering, follow these helpful steps.

**1) Decide what type of event you want to have.** This is the most important step in the event planning process. Give careful thought to the purpose of the event; determine the number of guests that you desire to attend and brand your event if you want it to attract guests.

**2) Select a date and location.** Try to avoid conflicts with other events in the community. Check

your community calendar of events and other organizations' calendars. Select and reserve a location that will be able to accommodate your guests comfortably.

**3) Develop a budget.** Create an estimated budget that will include all of the expenses that you foresee for the event, such as rent for the location, food and beverage, entertainment, invitations, postage, decorations, etc. Determining a range of prices for each expense in advance will keep you on track and utilize the funds efficiently.

**4) Develop a Things to Do List/ Checklist with Timelines.** Manage your time effectively. Work with the items that require the most time on your list and write "completed" by them when done. Remember, delegate tasks when you can.

**5) Submit a Banquet Event Order (BEO).** Work with the caterer to select your food and other things

needed for the event. To ensure that you cover all areas, prepare a BEO and submit to the caterer at least two (2) weeks prior to the event.

**6) Review Checklist.** Double check and double check your checklist to ensure that everything has been done a week before the event and all details are confirmed

**7) Execute Your Plan.** On the day of the event execute your plan. Arrive at the location a few hours earlier and make sure everything is set-up according to your BEO.

**8) Start on Time.** Don't be labeled as a late starter. Start the event on time. It is unfair to guests to have them waiting ten (10) minutes or more for an event when you have stated the start time in the correspondence. Should extreme circumstances exist, announce to the guests why the event is being delayed.

by Georgia S. Valrie

100 Black Men of America, Inc.  
Greater Huntsville Chapter  
Proudly Presents  
**2014 Annual Holiday Gala**  
"Building Tomorrow's Dreams Today"  
Von Braun Center – North Hall  
Saturday, December 20, 2014  
7:00PM  
(Reception 6:00PM - 7:00PM)  
**Ticket Price: \$62.50**  
After Dec 5<sup>th</sup> \$75.00

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# DLC Tennessee Valley Diversity Leadership Colloquium

**Vision:**

The Diversity Leadership Colloquium (DLC) advances leadership excellence by advocating and progressing the affirmation and inclusion of diversity in strategic markets and communities of interest for competitive intelligence.

**Mission:**

DLC's mission is to become a premier provider of diversity training for inspiring and experienced leaders throughout the lifecycle.

**Values:**

Our values are: Collaboration for Excellence; Appreciation with Insight; Respect for Understanding; and Empathy for all ... **C.A.R.E.**

DLC offers aspiring and experienced leaders with opportunities to benefit from qualified and seasoned trainers, scholars, and business professionals who share and discuss research and best practices regarding obtaining excellence through diversity.

DLC is designed for individuals interested in gaining access to networks, mentors, and sponsors that have traditionally not been available to diverse members of the broader community. Enrollees will be exposed to topics such as: Understanding and Embracing Diversity, Organizational Culture and Structural Reform, Racial and Gender Intelligence, Social Justice and Equality, Networking and Mentoring, Politics, Heroes and Holidays, Critical Thinking and Self-Affirmation and Living the CARE Values.

Individuals and companies are making sincere efforts in verbalizing a commitment to diversity excellence. However, we must be trained to build the next generation of leaders who have the skill sets, tools and commitment to execute.

**Training Schedule**

DLC will run four quarterly, eight week colloquia. The sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. Participant cannot miss more than 2 sessions.

Location: 415-A Church Street - Downtown Huntsville

Enrollment limited to: 16 - **Tuition:** \$795

**2015 Schedule**

- Winter** Jan 13 – Mar 3 - Deadline to register (Dec 13, 2014)
- Spring** April 7 – May 26 - Deadline to register (March 7, 2015)
- Summer** July 7 – August 25 - Deadline to register (June 7, 2015)
- Fall** Oct 6 – Nov 24 - Deadline to register (Sep 6, 2015)



**To Apply**

- Application Form
- 3 References
- Resume
- Photo
- Tuition Payable upon Acceptance

**APPLICATION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. Unit # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Citizen?  Yes  No Enrolling Quarter \_\_\_\_\_

**Education**

High School Completion? Yes  No

Highest Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Field \_\_\_\_\_

**References**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail application info to:** 415A Church Street-Ste. 100, Huntsville, AL 35801 - (256) 651-9028; visit us at [www.diversityleadershipcolloquium.com](http://www.diversityleadershipcolloquium.com); or e-mail [info@diversityleadershipcolloquium.com](mailto:info@diversityleadershipcolloquium.com).