



Letters to the Editor

We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out online at franklinfreepress.net!

Due to Wednesday, Dec. 5 being declared a National Day of Mourning following the recent passing of former president George H.W. Bush, this week's *Free Press* will be delivered Thursday.

PRSR - STD US POSTAGE  
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Russellville, AL 35663

FranklinFreePress.net

12.05.18

# Local police, DHR discover unlicensed day care facility

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

In what could be the first of multiple cases, two Hispanic women were charged Monday with illegally operating a day care facility after the Russellville Police Department and the Franklin County Department of Human Resources responded to a home on East Franklin Street.

Eulalia Alonza Andres, 40, and Maria Francisco Tomas, 50, were charged with illegally operating an unlicensed day care facility and 13 counts of endangering the welfare of a child after Russellville City Schools school resources officers visited 608 East Franklin Street Monday to verify the residence of a student whose school file had that as the home address.

According to RPD chief Chris Hargett, when officers arrived, they couldn't get anyone to the door. One officer

See 'FACILITY,' Page 11



PHOTO BY BRADY PETREE

This home on East Franklin Street was being used to operate an illegal day care facility. Police and DHR officials discovered 13 children being kept in 'nasty, subpar' conditions at the facility on Monday.

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COURTESY PHOTO

One-year-old Tate Baker (seated with great-grandfather Ralton Baker) is the sixth generation of his family to get a haircut from James McCullar (standing).

# Russellville barber achieves rare first with Baker family

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After 57 years of cutting hair, there aren't many firsts left for Russellville barber James McCullar.

But last Friday provided a first when McCullar gave one-year-old Tate Baker his first haircut.

Baker, the great-grandson of Franklin County Board of Education member Ralton Baker, became the sixth generation of the Baker clan to have a McCullar haircut.

See 'BARBER,' Page 8

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**Grace Kimbrough Honeycutt**, Russellville, age 84  
Died Saturday, December 1, 2018. Visitation will be held from 1-2  
p.m. on Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at Spry Memorial Chapel, with  
the funeral service to follow at 2 p.m. Interment in Franklin Memory  
Gardens.

**Eugenia "Jean" McKinney Jenkins**, Russellville, age 93  
Died Sunday, November 25, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial  
Chapel. Interment in Belgreen Cemetery.

**Margie Tollison Putnam**, Russellville, age 72  
Died Wednesday, November 21, 2018. A private memorial service was  
to be held at a later date. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

**Jimmy Thomas Young**, Russellville, age 84  
Died Wednesday, November 28, 2018. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral  
Home. Interment in Liberty Hill Cemetery in Phil Campbell.

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# Kiel 'ready to go to work' for District 18

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Moments before he presided over the swearing-in ceremony for Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville), Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore reflected on how the political climate in Franklin County has changed in recent years.

"As far as I have researched, this is the first time a Republican has held the District 18 House Seat," Moore said. "This is a huge accomplishment for the Republican Party and a result of Representative Kiel's hard work and dedication, and that of his supporters."

"The Republican Party in Franklin County has sort of been the forgotten party for years. Years ago, you couldn't get elected as a Republican, but times have changed at the county, state and federal level. Representative Kiel is a bright young man who will make smart decisions. I'm honored to be here today and excited to be working with him. We can get a lot accomplished by working together."

Moments later, Kiel repeated the oath of office read by Moore in front of a crowd of family and supporters in the Franklin County Courthouse main courtroom.

"It's an honor to be up here, and a double-honor because you are here," Kiel told the crowd. "I see folks here we go way back with and folks we just met as we began this journey. A lot of you worked really hard. It does not escape me that I didn't get here by myself and that I'm going to need all of you as we go along."

Kiel's pastor, Neil Rogers of Tharptown Baptist Church, opened the ceremony with a prayer.

**"It does not escape me that I didn't get here by myself and that I'm going to need all of you as we go along," Kiel told the crowd of supporters gathered at his swearing-in ceremony. "It takes everyone to make this happen. The work is just beginning. I'm ready to go to work for the people of this district, and I hope and pray you'll be involved in this process."**

After Moore addressed the crowd, Red Bay mayor Charlene Fancher and Franklin County superintendent of education Greg Hamilton spoke, with both stressing the importance of teamwork in improving the quality of life in House District 18. Fancher discussed the importance of family when someone launches into political office.

"I'll offer you some words of assurance. Thank your family, because serving comes with sacrifice," Fancher said. "You can expect a lot of work to go on behind doors that nobody else sees."



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Newly elected District 18 representative Jamie Kiel is sworn in by Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore last week as Kiel's wife, Melissa, looks on.

"You can not succeed without teamwork. It's a time for all of us to roll up our sleeves and work together. We are linked together in House District 18. You have to go through point A to get point B. It's all about promoting each other."

Hamilton said [Kiel was part of the legislature that decides and approves school funding.

"They approve our budget every year, and our needs change year-to-year, so we need a great working relationship with our representatives," Hamilton said. "Right now in Franklin County, our most pressing need is capital improvements. I look forward to working together with Representative Kiel for a better Franklin County."

Kiel described his family's schedule as "being on turbo" the last two years since he launched his campaign.

"We did count the costs before beginning this process. It takes everyone to make this happen," Kiel said. "The work is just beginning. I'm ready to go to work for the people of this district, and I hope and pray you'll be involved in this process."

## County school board receives clean audit

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education received a clean bill of health when it comes to its finances after the State Examiner of Public Accounts presented its audit findings at the board's November 27 meeting.

Robin Lakey, State Examiner of Public Accounts, reviewed the state audit for the fiscal year 2016-2017, which found no errors or discrepancies in the board's finances.

Franklin County Schools superintendent Greg Hamilton expressed his appreciation to chief finance officer Carla Knight for the job she does handling the system's finances.

**"I want to thank Carla for her hard work on our finances. She does a great job for us," Hamilton said of Knight, the system's CFO. "I'm very happy with the result of the audit, with no suggestion of any issues, so that's great. Carla deserves much of the credit for that."**

"I want to thank Carla for her hard work on our finances. She does a great job for us," Hamilton said. "I'm very happy with the result of the audit, with no suggestion of any issues, so that's great. Carla deserves much of the credit for that."

Hamilton gave the board an update on the Tharptown cafeteria project. An above ceiling inspection was scheduled for for November 28, and the estimated completion date for the project is December 14, although Hamilton has his doubts about that. Through a series of complications, including problems with subcontractors, the project, which was awarded to First Team Construction, is well behind schedule.

"I'm optimistic about the inspection," Hamilton said. "If you're on-site, it doesn't look like they'll make the December 14 date, but they say they will,

so we're hopeful about that."

Hamilton said the Belgreen parking lot project was progressing with the lot having been cut out and the project entering the gravel phase.

In other action, the board:

- Approved the suspension of bus driver Riley Winstead for 20 days without pay, effective November 2, 2018, through December 7, 2018. Hamilton refused to discuss the reasons for the suspension, saying it was a personnel

See 'AUDIT,' Page 9

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# Honey Do: Porch pirates

I'm referring to those people who follow delivery trucks around neighborhoods and plot to steal delivered packages that have been left on porches and doorsteps. Home security is a big issue, especially at this time of year. Here are a few things to consider to make your home less vulnerable to these kind of folks.

**Landscaping.** Well maintained and trimmed shrubbery eliminate cover from anyone creeping around your home.

**Exterior lighting.** This can really boost your curb appeal, make your home safer for guests and eliminate dark corners and other hiding places. Now that it's getting dark so early, effective lighting has become even more important. Lights should be placed where they can be easily seen by anyone approaching your home.

**Security Cameras.** Cameras

should be seen, and a sign should be up stating that they are there. Their presence is the greatest deterrent to thieves. There are a lot of really inexpensive cameras on the market these days.



Doug Green

The absolute best security for your home is a trusted neighbor. People who are at home during the day may notice strange vehicles or people who visit your home. Get to know your neighbors, and work together to help each other.

These are just some ideas that cost very little and should help keep your property secure simply by putting a little doubt in the minds of would-be thieves. Stay safe, and remember that help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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# Five things to know about FAFSA

Parents, do you have a rising or current college student? Have you filled out this year's FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) yet?

You might be thinking, "Nope. We don't have time to fill out another form." But trust me, the potential savings are worth making time for.

Here are five things you need to know about the FAFSA:

•The FAFSA isn't as confusing as it sounds.

Still wondering what the FAFSA actually is or what it does? It's pretty simple. Schools use the FAFSA to decide how much money to offer your child for college through student loans and scholarships/grants. Which one of those do we want to avoid? That's right: Student loans!

There are a ton of scholarships and grants available. They can come from your child's school, the government—even local organizations. Every dollar will help your child steer clear of thousands of dollars in debt. The FAFSA is the key to unlocking all those possibilities, as well as the Federal Work Study Program (another great way for your child to earn money in college).

But the truth is, only about 45 percent of high school seniors complete the FAFSA by graduation. This leaves piles of money unused. The U.S. Department of Education awards about \$150 billion to students every year. Take the money!

So, why don't more students complete their FAFSA? Well, there are plenty of myths about the form. Two of the biggest ones are:

"The FAFSA takes too much time to fill out." No, it doesn't. It takes less than 30 minutes!

"Not everyone needs to complete it." Everyone should fill out the FAFSA! There's no income cutoff to be eligible for aid, and you never know how

much you might qualify for unless you try.

•The FAFSA is easy to find.

All your child needs to do is go to [studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov), the official FAFSA website. You can find the actual form there, plus plenty of helpful info on different types of aid and how to avoid scams.

•The FAFSA has a deadline.

Teens shouldn't wait until they know where they're going to college before they fill out the form. The application period opened October 1, and it's smart to apply as soon as possible. Deadlines vary by state, so head to the FAFSA website to find out your state's exact requirements. Your child should also check for deadlines on their potential university's website.

•The FAFSA follow-up process is simple.

Once your teen has filled out the FAFSA, they'll receive an EFC (Expected Family Contribution). It's an estimate of how much money you and your child can afford to contribute to the college fund. The Federal Student Aid office then sends that number to schools to determine the student's financial need. Generally, the lower the dollar figure, the more aid the student is eligible for.

Next, the school(s) your child applies to will look at his or her FAFSA numbers and send an award letter with details about the aid they can get. Award letters can be tricky, because it's not always clear whether your child is being offered a scholarship, a grant or a loan. Read the fine print, and don't let them sign up for anything until you're sure they don't have to pay it back later.



Anthony O'Neal



**Do what's best for you**

Dear Dave,  
I'll be graduating from college with no debt in a couple of weeks, and I have a good job waiting for me in January. During the last few years, I've managed to save almost \$25,000 from my part-time jobs while in school. My car is pretty beaten up and old, so I've been shopping at a couple of car dealerships recently. Every time I talk to a salesperson, they tell me I should finance something new instead of paying cash for a used car. What should I do?

Ethan  
Dear Ethan,  
I hope you'll keep one very important thing in mind. This is *your* purchase, not theirs. The only reason they want you to finance something is so they'll make a lot more money off the deal.

Forget what *they* want. You need to do what's best for *you*.  
You've been a hard-working, smart guy over the last few years. The fact that you've been able to save nearly \$25,000 is proof of that. I don't think you want to throw a big chunk of your savings—or your new income—into something that's going to go down in value like a rock. New cars lose about 60 percent of their value during the first four years of ownership. That means a \$28,000 car would be worth around \$11,000 after that period. That's not a smart investment.

If I were you, I'd shop around and pay cash for a nice, slightly used \$10,000 car. You can get a great automobile for that kind of money, plus you'll still have the majority of

your savings.  
Congratulations, young man. You've done a great job!

Dave

**Retirement contributions**

Dear Dave,  
As part of your Baby Steps plan, you always advise people to put 15 percent of their income toward retirement. Would you explain the details of this, please?

Mallory

Dear Mallory,  
For starters, Baby Step 4 of my plan involves saving 15 percent of your gross annual pay for retirement. You don't have to be a complete nerd about this figure. I mean, you probably won't end up in the poor house if you set aside 12 to 14 percent. The bottom line is you should be able to save \$7,500 a year if you make \$50,000 annually. That's just a little over \$600 a month.

However, the only way you can do this is by giving up stupid things like credit cards and car payments. When you get out of debt, it's easy to set aside an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses—which is Baby Step 3—and start throwing 15 percent at retirement during Baby Step 4.

Did you know you can retire a millionaire if you save 15 percent of a \$50,000 a year income and invest it in good growth stock mutual funds starting at age 30? Sounds worth it to me!

Dave

*\*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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# What's Happening

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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

All locations of Bank Independent are now accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys for area children through December 14 as part of the Bank's eighth annual Toy Share drive. In 2017, the Bank's Toy Share drive provided more than 3,350 toys and more than \$1,125 in cash donations to partner organizations in time for distribution to local families for Christmas. Charitable organizations distributing Toy Share donations include the Angel Tree Program in partnership with Lexington High School; Christmas Charities Year Round of Madison County; Committee on Church Cooperation in Morgan County; Cornerstone Church in Lawrence County; Department of Human Resources in Franklin, Lawrence and Limestone counties; Lauderdale County Christian Children's Home; Rogersville Volunteer Fire Department; Safeplace of the Shoals; and William Porter Foundation of the Shoals. Toy Share is the last of four annual Share drives hosted by Bank Independent in 2018 to give back to the community as part of Bank Independent's Helping Hands initiative.

Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Christmas hams. Hams are \$30 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Saturday, December 22 from 8-10 a.m. at the Lodge on Coffee Street.

The Russellville Police Department will again be participating with the Russellville Fire Department in the SANTA ASSISTANCE Program. Applications can be picked up at Russellville Police Department from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The deadline to turn in applications for this year's assistance program is November 23, 2018. Pick-up dates for this year will be December 20-22.

There are still two Franklin County Christmas parades to come this Christmas season! Russellville's Christmas parade will be this Thursday, December 6, and Phil Campbell's will be next Thursday, December 13. Both parades begin at 6 p.m.

The Cultura Garden Club will hold its annual "Every Light a Prayer for Peace" ceremony this Thursday, December 6 at the Franklin County Courthouse from 4:30-5 p.m. Guest speaker will be Jim Poss, pastor at Branches Church. Entertainment will be presented by the RHS and RMS choruses and drama students, and the JROTC will present the colors. The public is invited to attend. Prior to this ceremony, a reception for veterans will be held in the Courthouse Conference Room from 3:30-4:15 p.m. The reception is co-sponsored by the Cultura Garden Club and Book Lovers Study Club. The Russellville Christmas Parade will follow these events at 6 p.m.

If you are interested in the study of the Civil War and have an ancestor who was in the Confederate Army, join the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month (except January and July) at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center. Next meeting will be December 6. The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, VA in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the period from 1861-1865 is preserved. Membership in the SCV is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate Armed Forces. Membership can be obtained through either direct or collateral family lines, and kinship to a veteran must be documented genealogically. Join us for the celebration of our heritage! The minimum age for membership is 12. Call 1-800-MYDIXIE or 256-324-2317.

The Franklin County Arts Council has stored the *Toyland* costumes and props for this year and is planning an outstanding show this Saturday evening, December 8 with the Kerry Gilbert Band and special guest Leroy Troy. Leroy Troy is a banjo player from Goodlettsville, Tennessee. His banjo style is the clawhammer or frailing style, distinct from more commonly found Scruggs-style banjo playing in modern bluegrass. He often performs humorous or comedy songs from the old-time music genre. He debuted on the Grand Ole Opry in 1988 and was the National Old-Time Banjo Champion in 1996. Troy is known as "The Tennessee Slicker" and plays with the Tennessee Mafia Jugband and Marty Stuart, appearing weekly on The Marty Stuart show on RFD-TV. Saturday's show begins at 7 p.m. Admission is \$10; children under six get in free.


Northwest-Shoals Community College's Music Department will hold a Christmas concert and show choir performance, *A Christmas Celebration!*, this Sunday, December 9 at 3 p.m. in the Lou B. Beville Center on the NW-SCC Phil Campbell Campus. The concert will feature two of the college's musical groups: The Northwest-Shoals Chorale, directed by Gene Anne Gifford, and The Northwest-Shoals Jazz Ensemble, directed by George Crummie. In addition to performances by the traditional NW-SCC music groups, the college is partnering with the Ritz School for Performing Arts in Sheffield to offer a show choir performance by NW-SCC and area high school students. Choreography of the show choir will be directed by Dennis Clark. Admission for the concert is FREE.


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# What's Happening


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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS


 The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay announces auditions for its next production, *The Seven Year Itch*, by George Axelrod. Auditions will be held Sunday, December 9 at 2 p.m. and Monday, December 10 at 7 p.m. at The Weatherford Centre in Red Bay. The cast consists of adult men and women, with older teens being able to play adult parts, and one young boy. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the book, with Mark Richardson directing. The play will be presented February 14-17, 2019, with tickets going on sale the week before. This play will offer dinner theatre before the play with tickets for the play and the dinner for \$25.00. Tickets for the dinner must be purchased in advance. For group sales, contact Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286.


 Russellville FUMC hosts a men's and a women's Step Study on Sundays from 3-5 p.m. A step study guides you through a process of discovery and recovery over your hurts, hang-ups and habits. Everyone is welcome!

 For anyone with the courage to be honest about life's hurts, habits and hang-ups, First United Methodist Church of Russellville will host *Celebrate Recovery!* on Tuesday nights with supper at 6 p.m., large group at 6:30 and small groups at 7:30. Free childcare provided. Church is located at 311 North Jackson Avenue. Come and join us!

 The next meeting for American Legion Post 64 will be Thursday, December 13 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

 North Russellville Baptist Church will host "Breakfast with Santa" on Saturday, December 15 from 9-11 a.m. Cost is \$5 per person and includes breakfast and pictures with Santa! Come join us!

 On Sunday, December 16, the Second Missionary Baptist Church family invites one and all to its annual Christmas Program. Our theme again this year is "God's Gift of Love." Guest church will be St. Paul C.M.E. Church of Russellville and pastor Zethelyn R. Johnson. Lunch will be served at 2 p.m., and the program will begin at 3 p.m. Come join us so we can praise the Lord!!

 New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and for worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.



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in partnership with Food Bank of North Alabama 

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## 'BARBER' from page 1

Tate followed his dad Mack, his grandfather Galon, his great-grandfather Ralton, his great-great-grandfather Mack and his great-great-great-grandfather Charlie Newton Baker into a chair sitting before McCullar. The eldest Baker, Charlie, was born in 1898. Tate was born in 2017. McCullar has been around to cut six generations of Baker hair—a first for him.

"I'm pretty sure that's the first time for that," McCullar said. "It makes me feel good. I'm still hanging around to talk about it, so that's a good thing."

As for giving young children their first haircut, that's old hat for McCullar.

"Most kids are pretty jittery that first time, but that's understandable," he said. "It's a new experience, and I've learned how to deal with that. I try to make it a fun experience."

**"I'm pretty sure that's the first time for that," McCullar said of providing haircuts for six generations of Baker men. "It makes me feel good. I'm still hanging around to talk about it, so that's a good thing."**

McCullar's career began in 1961 when he went to work for Owen and Dewey Hendrix in their Russellville shop. Haircuts were 75 cents, or \$1 for flat-tops, and a shave cost you 35 cents, although McCullar stopped doing shaves after a few years.

"I had too many get to singing to the Lord, 'I'm coming home,' when I got to shaving them," McCullar said.

These days, McCullar only works on Fridays at his North Washington barber shop, leaving the rest of the week to the staff. Even though he's down to one day a week, McCullar still loves what he does.

"I just enjoy communicating with people and being around people," he said. "I've learned so many good things from people. It's been very rewarding to be able to say that, and I'm very thankful for it."

When Ralton carried his great-grandson Friday morning for his first haircut, it wasn't the first time he brought a Baker to McCullar for their first visit in the barber's chair.

"It was an awesome experience. I took Tate, his dad and my son Galon for their first haircuts," Baker said.

McCullar considers it an honor to have served six generations of Bakers. "Ralton and his family are good people," McCullar said. "It's been a joy to do business with them for six generations. I guess I'm doing something right."

"I wish everyone could say they enjoy their profession like I have. It's a joy to meet nice people, and the fellowship makes it all worth it. It's also been a great contributor to my ministry, too. I've learned more about human nature."

As for Ralton, when asked if he'll be around to take a seventh generation of his family for his or her first haircut, his answer was short and sweet.

"Hopefully," Baker said.

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# Rising local artist releases debut album

Brady Petree  
Franklin Free Press

Saying that Lucas Shepherd was born for a career in the music industry would be quite an understatement.

From an early point in his childhood, he knew that music would always be an integral part of his life moving forward. Music runs through the blood of Shepherd's family, mainly being centered around his uncle, Earl "Peanut" Montgomery, who wrote numerous No. 1 hits for country stars like George Jones and Tammy Wynette.

On Wednesday, November 28, a lifelong dream of Shepherd's was finally realized. At a party at FloBama in Florence, he released his debut album titled, *Richest Poor Folks*. According to Shepherd, the album was something he has always dreamed of, and the work to get here has been worth the while.

"We would put in 16-hour days most of the time, often times with little to no breaks. We wanted to make sure we got everything right," Shepherd said. "This whole process has been amazing. From the writing of the songs, to producing the music, to spending time in the studio, it is awesome to see it all finally come together."

The project is self-funded by Shepherd and is comprised of six songs, five of which were written by Shepherd himself with Coy Fulmer credited with writing the other song. Out of the songs on his debut album, Shepherd says that one song in particular stuck out to him.

**"We would put in 16-hour days most of the time, often times with little to no breaks. We wanted to make sure we got everything right," Shepherd said. "This whole process has been amazing. From the writing of the songs, to producing the music, to spending time in the studio, it is awesome to see it all finally come together."**

"The song 'Richest Poor Folk,' which is the title track for the album, quickly became my favorite," Shepherd said. "It's a true story and has a very deep meaning that goes all the way back to my childhood. When I was young I had a friend that would run around and play with me until the sun went down. That friend and I are still close today, and he's doing well and I hope that I am on the verge of doing really well. It holds a deep meaning to me, and it was the one that I have latched onto."

The one thing that Shepherd wanted to make sure that separated his album from other albums is the fact that he wanted it to be an album for everyone, not just some.

"I wanted to make an album that had at least one song on it that every person would like," Shepherd said. "People might not like the entire album, but I hope there's at least one song that they take to and can relate to."

When it came time for the release party, Shepherd, while optimistic, was not entirely sure how the event would turn out. According to Shepherd, as far as he could tell while on stage, there wasn't an empty seat in the house.

The reception that he received about his album was also overwhelmingly positive. and Shepard says that the support that he has received has been tremendous.

"I was really happy with the turnout, and the first thing I said when I went on stage was how thankful I was for everyone taking time out of their day to come out and support me," Shepherd said. "From what I could tell, everyone



COURTESY PHOTO

Lucas Shepherd performs at a release party held last week at FloBama in Florence for his debut album, *The Richest Poor Folks*.

was in a great mood and having a good time. After the show people actually stuck around and talked to me about the album, and I honestly feel like I talked to everyone there that night. I shook people's hands, took pictures with people, and got feedback from people about what they liked or maybe weren't too crazy about."

Shepherd says that none of this would have been possible without the outpouring of support he received from family and friends, as well as the people that help him put the album together. People like Evan Lane, Chase Rigley, Coy Fulmer, TJ Beasley, his father Paul Shepard and Donnie Gullett, who engineered the album.

For anyone wanting to purchase an album or listen to some of Shepherd's music, they can visit his Facebook page at "LA Shepherd" and send a message requesting a copy of the album, or visit his website at [www.lashepherd-music.com](http://www.lashepherd-music.com). Shepherd says that he hopes that by the end of the month of December, the album should be available for purchase on iTunes.

## 'AUDIT,' from page 3

matter that he could not comment about.

- Approved out-of-state trips including: Red Bay first grade to Malco Theater and Chuck E. Cheese in Tupelo on December 7, 2018; Tharptown grades 9-12 to Charleston, SC on April 25-28, 2019; Tharptown seniors to New York City on May 6-10, 2019; Vina High School softball team to Belmont, MS on February 23, 2019; Belgreen fifth and sixth grades to Chattanooga Aquarium, Ruby Falls and Incline Railway on May 10, 2019; Vina first-sixth grades to Tupelo Cinemark on December 17, 2018; and Belgreen High School Ambassadors to New Orleans on March 25-27, 2019.

- Adopted a resolution removing Juanita Martin from Plan Administrator/Sponsor and appointing Elonda Cox as Plan Administrator/Sponsor for Franklin County Board of Education 457 Retirement Savings Plan through Security Benefits.

- Rejected the low bid of \$1,012,000 from Burton Builders for the Vina High School Science Lab/Band Hall project. The budget for the project is \$750,000, so Hamilton said they would rebid it.

"That's the budget we have to stick to," he said. "I'm confident we can get it done for that. It's a 4,000-square-foot building, and that should be enough money to construct it."

- Approved the addition of a \$1,200 supplement for three Spanish Interpreter/Translator positions for Linda Massey, Josie Dugan and Bryan Jimenez. The interpreter services are available for both students and non-English speaking parents of students.

- Approved compensation paying Debbie Rambo, Special Education Aide at East Franklin Junior High, \$900 for taking care of concessions for the 2018-19 school year, per recommendation from East Franklin principal Jonathan King, and approved compensation paying Sherry Leigh Smith, Yearbook Sponsor at East Franklin, \$900 for the 2018-19 school year. East Franklin Junior High will reimburse the Franklin County Board of Education for both expenses.

- Approved personnel moves including:

- Employment of Elizabeth Moore, pre-K teacher at Vina; Sonny Glasgow, temporary tobacco grant coordinator at Red Bay; and Christopher Hargett, temporary prevention educator for tobacco grant at Red Bay; volunteers Kristi Vandiver as volunteer softball coach at Tharptown; and Dave Fischer as volunteer assistant softball coach at Tharptown; TRACKS Afterschool Program Retroactive Hirings including Brooke Shotts, teacher aide and Micah Jackson, certified teacher.



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## 'FAFSA,' from page 4

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*About Anthony ONeal*  
Since 2003, Anthony ONeal has helped thousands of students make good decisions with their money, relationships and education to live a well-

balanced life. He's the National Best-Selling Author of *Graduate Survival Guide: 5 Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make in College*, and he travels the country spreading his encouraging message to help teens and young adults transition into the real world. His latest book and video kit, *Teen Entrepreneur Toolbox*, released in April 2018. You can follow Anthony on Twitter and Instagram @AnthonyONeal and online at [anthonyoneal.com](http://anthonyoneal.com) or [facebook.com/aoneal](http://facebook.com/aoneal).

# Eight local establishments earn satisfactory ratings

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

All seven of the Colbert County establishments that received health ratings during the week of November 19-23 had scores that fall into the "satisfactory compliance" range.

Health ratings are required to be prominently posted in all food/lodging establishments. Scores are graded by the Alabama Department of Public Health inspectors on a 100-point scale.

Establishments with scores of 85 to 100 are considered to be in "satisfactory compliance" and are routinely inspected. Establishments scoring between 70 and 84 will be inspected again in 60 days, and those scoring between 60 and 69 will have another follow-up within 48 hours. Any establishment scoring below 60 will be immediately closed.

Areas of inspection by ADPH include management and personnel; food storage, preparation and service; equipment; utensils; linen cleanliness; plumbing and waste; poisonous or toxic material storage; and an inspection of the physical facility or property.

The seven Colbert County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 88 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The highest score was 99, received by Rollin Bones Smoke Shack, 417 Mt. Pleasant Road, Muscle Shoals.

Inspections of Colbert County businesses, with critical item violations noted, resulted in the following scores:

- Fiesta Mexicana, 117 B Hwy. 72 East, Tuscumbia, 88. (Cube slicer dirty).
- N&F No. 3, Inc., 412 Hwy. 43 South,

Tuscumbia, 88. (No paper towels at hand sink, mold in mist twist fountain head).

•Foodland Plus Deli/Bakery #130, 104 Town Plaza Shopping Center, Sheffield, 90. (Cracked food containers).

•Zaxby's, 2017 East Avalon Ave., Muscle Shoals, 94. (No adequate hot water at all sinks).

•Subway Salads and Sandwiches, 901 Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals, 94. (No towels at rear handsink).

•Melrose, Inc., 6340 Woodmont Drive, Tuscumbia, 96.

Of the one inspection done in Franklin County from November 19-23, Kelly's Kitchen, 17901 Hwy. 43, Russellville, scored a 95. (Melted food bowls).

Health ratings are available at [www.foodscores.state.al.us](http://www.foodscores.state.al.us) and may be viewed by city or county.

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## 'FACILITY', from page 1

looked in a window and observed a number of young children on the floor inside the residence. Several of the children were still sitting in car seats hours after they were dropped off at the residence.

The children ranged in age from infants to two years old, Hargett said. Officers contacted the Franklin County Department of Human Resources and, when they went inside the residence, found "nasty" conditions, according to Hargett, including dirty floors, cold temperatures and children either in car seats or placed on the floor.

According to RPD's investigation, the two women were charging \$10 per day per child for the day care services that were being carried out in unacceptable conditions at an unlicensed location.

Alabama Code Sec. 38-7-16, which makes operating an unlicensed day care facility illegal, states as follows:

Any person, group of persons, association or corporation who:

- (1) Conducts, operates or acts as a child-care facility without a license, or a six-month permit or an approval to do so in violation of the provisions of this chapter;
- (2) Makes materially false statements in order to obtain a license or permit;
- (3) Fails to keep the records and make the reports provided under this chapter;
- (4) Advertises any service not authorized by the license or permit held;
- (5) Publishes any advertisement in violation of this chapter;
- (6) Receives within this state any child in violation of Section 38-7-15;
- (7) Violates any other provision of this chapter or any reasonable rule or regulation adopted and published by the department for the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be

fined not less than \$100.00 nor more than \$1,000.00 or be imprisoned in the county jail not longer than one year, or both, and, in case of an association or corporation, imprisonment may be imposed upon its officers who knowingly participated in the violation.

In a prosecution under this chapter, a defendant who relies upon the relationship of any child to himself has the burden of proof as to that relationship.

Additionally, the women were charged with 13 counts, one for each child found at the residence, of endangering the welfare of a child.

All 14 charges are misdemeanors that call for up to a one-year jail term. The defendants are being held on \$14,000 bond, Hargett said.

While Hargett said the unlicensed day care case is the first of its kind for RPD, he believes there are additional illegal day cares operating in the area, and his department's investigation, along with that of DHR, will continue.

"We are investigating other allegations of unlicensed day cares in Russellville," Hargett said. "Maybe this will serve as a deterrent for those who are operating illegal day cares."



We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out online at franklinfreepress.net!

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## SEC Bowl Schedule



**Mike Self**  
Sports Editor

The bowl lineup is set, and the first of 11 games involving SEC teams is due to kick off two weeks from Thursday. SEC opponents by conference break down like this: Four from the Big 10, four from the Big 12, two from the ACC and one from the AAC. Of the 11 SEC teams playing in a bowl, only two (Florida and Kentucky) are betting underdogs. Alabama (-14 vs. Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl national semifinal) is the biggest betting favorite, followed by Georgia (-10.5 vs. Texas in the Sugar Bowl).

Here's a sneak peek at the full SEC bowl slate, with pertinent info now and predictions to come later.

- Thursday, December 27**  
**Texas Bowl: Baylor (6-6) vs. Vanderbilt (6-6)**  
Kickoff: 8 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Vanderbilt -5.5
- Friday, December 28**  
**Music City Bowl: Purdue (6-6) vs. Auburn (7-5)**  
Kickoff: 12:30 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Auburn -5
- Saturday, December 29**  
**Belk Bowl: South Carolina (7-5) vs. Virginia (7-5)**  
Kickoff: 11 a.m. on ABC  
Favorite: South Carolina -6
- Peach Bowl: Florida (9-3) vs. Michigan (10-2)**  
Kickoff: 11 a.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Michigan -7
- Orange Bowl: Oklahoma (12-1) vs. Alabama (13-0)**  
Kickoff: 7 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Alabama -14
- Monday, December 31**  
**Liberty Bowl: Missouri (8-4) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6)**  
Kickoff 2:45 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Missouri -10
- Taxslayer Bowl: Texas A&M (8-4) vs. N.C. State (9-3)**  
Kickoff: 6:30 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Texas A&M -4.5
- Tuesday, January 1**  
**Outback Bowl: Mississippi State (8-4) vs. Iowa (8-4)**  
Kickoff: 11 a.m. on ESPN2  
Favorite: Mississippi State -5.5
- Citrus Bowl: Kentucky (9-3) vs. Penn State (9-3)**  
Kickoff: 12 p.m. on ABC  
Favorite: Penn State -4.5
- Fiesta Bowl: LSU (9-3) vs. UCF (12-0)**  
Kickoff: 12 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: LSU -7.5
- Sugar Bowl: Georgia (11-2) vs. Texas (9-4)**  
Kickoff: 7:45 p.m. on ESPN  
Favorite: Georgia -10.5

# Charged up

When her prolific career at Phil Campbell comes to a close (with a state title, she hopes), Abby Davis looks forward to continuing her basketball journey at UAH

*Mike Self*  
*Franklin Free Press*

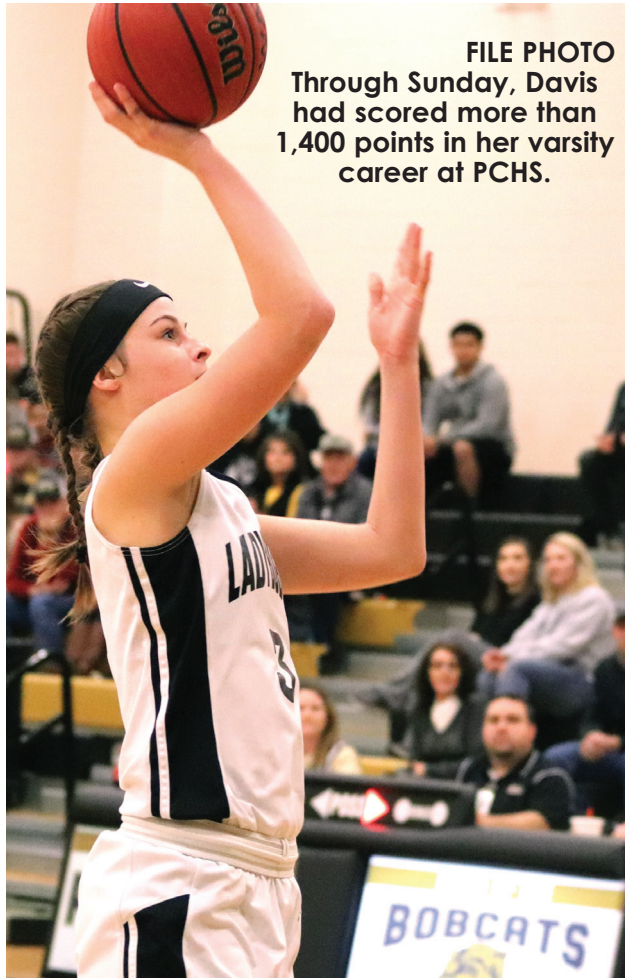
PHIL CAMPBELL - As far as Craig Thomas is concerned, Abby Davis's most glaring weakness as a player is obvious and, unfortunately, impossible to address.

She's a senior. Which means that her days in a Phil Campbell uniform are numbered, and there is nothing Thomas can do about it.

"If there is any way to get her another year," he said with a grin, "I'd like to have it. I hate to lose her."

Davis's career with the Lady Bobcats (during which she has scored 1,406 points at the varsity level, through Sunday, while playing in three regional tournaments and a Final Four) may be winding down, but her basketball journey will continue. The 5'11 forward has signed an offer to play

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**FILE PHOTO**  
Through Sunday, Davis had scored more than 1,400 points in her varsity career at PCHS.

## RHS boys pass early test with clutch win at Jasper

*Mike Self*  
*Franklin Free Press*

JASPER - On the heels of last Monday night's 54-point obliteration of an overmatched Wilson team, last Tuesday's tight contest on the road against a talented Jasper squad was exactly the kind of early-season test Russellville's boys needed.

And the Golden Tigers passed—and shot—with flying colors, knocking down 12 three-pointers and making 17-of-21 free throws on their way to earning a 67-63 victory over the Vikings.

"This was an early-season test where there was a lot of adversity we had to face," said head coach Patrick Odom, now in his fourth season at Russellville. "We had to manage some foul trouble. I told our guys, I feel like we can play a lot better. I thought we were sluggish on the back-to-back. As a team, we're still playing our way into shape. But we did what we had to do to win, and

that's a great characteristic for a team to have. "We like this team. We passed test number one. We're a long way from where we need to be, but we're where we should be at this point. Now we've just gotta continue to grow."

**"This was an early-season test where there was a lot of adversity we had to face," said Odom, now in his fourth season at RHS. "We passed test number one. We're a long way from where we need to be, but we're where we should be at this point. Now we've just gotta continue to grow."**

Russellville got a career-high seven threes last Tuesday from senior guard Lucas McNutt, 20 points and a bunch of clutch free throws from senior guard Devin Buckhalter, a big second half from sophomore wing Chandler Dyas and a key defensive play in the final half-minute from freshman point guard Will Bonner to hold off the Vikings (2-2) and hand them their second close loss in as

See 'TEST,' Page 17

# Bulldogs battle but suffer first loss at Sheffield

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

SHEFFIELD - After breezing to blowout wins over Tharptown and Shoals Christian to open the season, Belgreen coach Clint Isbell was anxious to see how his players—particularly the ones still getting their feet wet at the varsity level—would fare against quality competition in a hostile environment.

Sheffield provided both last Thursday night, and Isbell got some answers.

The Bulldogs played well at times, leading by as many as seven points in the first half and rallying from seven down to tie the game in the fourth quarter, but they were ultimately undone by too many missed free throws (12 of them, in 26 attempts), too many turnovers (18) and a deficit on the glass (where Sheffield held a 33-27 advantage). The end result was a 68-64 loss, Belgreen's first of the season.

"This was our first real battle," said Isbell, who has three new starters and basically a brand-new bench in his third season at Belgreen. "Again, we have three guys [Mason Bragwell and fellow seniors Brant Bragwell and Gaven Taylor] who have stepped on the court and played varsity before. For our guys to battle like this in a four-point game, I'm proud of them. We did a lot of things wrong, but we did a lot of things good."

"With us not being too deep, we haven't been pressing, so I take the blame for that. We're in a situation where we need to press, but we don't really have the numbers to press, and we haven't been over it enough. I take the fall on that one. But our guys played hard and got after it. The intensity was up. We just didn't make enough plays."

Trailing by seven after a three-pointer by Sheffield junior Khorri Bowling early in the fourth quarter, the Bulldogs (2-1 through Sunday) rallied. Sophomore Isac Willingham—who would finish with a game-high 12 rebounds—scored on a put-back to spark a 7-0 run. Scout Bragwell, another sophomore, assisted on a layup by Mason Bragwell and then stroked a three to tie the game 55-55 with just less than six minutes remaining.

Sheffield answered with three straight buckets (including two by big freshman Devin Doss) to go up 61-55, but Belgreen wouldn't go away. Taylor and Mason Bragwell each made a pair of free throws to cut into the lead, and after Willingham grabbed another offensive rebound and kicked it out to Scout Bragwell for his third three of the

night, the visiting Bulldogs trailed by just one at 63-62 with less than a minute to go.

Sheffield missed the front end of a one-and-one, but Doss grabbed the biggest rebound of the night and stuck it back in to make it 65-62. Mason Bragwell—who would finish with a season-high 24 points—was fouled with 26.9 seconds left, but the big man missed both free throws. Jakurius Hogan scored on the other end for Sheffield to make it 67-62 with 10 seconds remaining.

Brant Bragwell hit a pair of free throws with 7.5 seconds left to make it a one-possession game, but Doss was fouled and made 1-of-2 at the line with 6.7 seconds remaining to seal the deal.

**"This was our first real battle," said Isbell, who has three new starters and basically a brand-new bench in his third season at Belgreen. "Again, we have three guys [Mason Bragwell and fellow seniors Brant Bragwell and Gaven Taylor] who have stepped on the court and played varsity before. For our guys to battle like this in a four-point game, I'm proud of them. We did a lot of things wrong, but we did a lot of things good. Our guys played hard and got after it. The intensity was up. We just didn't make enough plays."**

"Couple of plays here and there," said Isbell, whose team shot a respectable 41 percent (22-for-54) from the floor on the night but allowed Sheffield (28-for-64) to have 10 more attempts. "We gave them too many second opportunities on the defensive end. Offensively, we crashed the boards really hard, but we didn't crash with the same intensity on the defensive end. We gave them too many opportunities, too many putbacks. That was one of the main things that put us in a tough spot."

Belgreen got on an and-one roll early, getting three consecutive three-point plays (one by Mason Bragwell and two by Brant Bragwell) to open up an early 10-7 lead. Mason Bragwell nailed a three from the top of the key and then went 1-for-2 at the line, stretching the margin to seven at 16-9 with 1:27 left in the first quarter.

Sheffield rallied to within two on a three by Bowling, but Tanner Warhurst made a free throw and David Plott found Koby Collins for a transition layup at the buzzer to stretch Belgreen's lead to 19-14 at the end of one.

A layup by Mason Bragwell to open the second quarter made it 21-14, but the Bulldogs shot just 4-for-16 over the rest of the half. Sheffield, mean-

while, shot 9-for-15 in the second quarter and took a 35-33 lead into the locker room when Daxavier Smith banked in a long jumper at the buzzer.

Hogan opened the second half with a bucket and a three, pushing the lead out to seven. Sheffield never trailed in the second half.

"I felt like they took their intensity up, and we started forcing a lot and getting out of the offense," Isbell said. "We shot some quick threes that weren't there, with nobody down the court. We went away from our offense and tried to create too much. We have plays that allow us to create, and we also have set plays. When we called those sets tonight, we didn't really run them. We forced too much, and that allowed them to get back in the game."

"We kind of played right into what they wanted. They wanted us to force some shots, and we did. The inexperience plays into a little bit of that. As a whole group, we forced some shots in that second quarter that gave them some momentum going into halftime."

Mason Bragwell shot 9-for-18 from the floor on Thursday with two threes and went 4-for-9 from the foul line, topping the 20-point mark for the 21st time since the start of his sophomore season. Brant Bragwell finished with 14 points on 4-for-8 shooting from the field and 5-for-6 from the line. Scout Bragwell added 12 points, three rebounds, three assists and two steals.

Taylor scored six points, and Kostner Bryant had three. Collins and Willingham scored two apiece, and Warhurst had one.

Bowling led Sheffield with 12 points. Smith added 11 points, and Doss finished with 10.

Belgreen was set to open play in Class 1A, Area 12 this week with games Monday at home against Brilliant and Tuesday at Phillips. Isbell said last Thursday's game was valuable to his team, even though the final result didn't go their way.

"It's great to play in a game like this," he said. "Obviously we'd like to win it, but just the experience for our guys to be in this type of environment and this atmosphere and to play in an intense game shows them that this is a different level than they're used to. We've gotta prepare for that. We're gonna work on that and get better."

"I thought our younger guys did a good job. It was loud and chaotic, and they may have been a little overwhelmed at times, but for us to battle back and forth with a good team like Sheffield and then drop it here in the last few minutes, that's pretty good for our first test."

# Balanced attack helps Belgreen girls get to 3-0

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

SHEFFIELD - Belgreen's girls shot 58 percent from the field and put six players in double-figures last Thursday night, improving to 3-0 with a 78-18 rout of Sheffield.

Junior Katie Dempsey led Belgreen's balanced scoring attack with 14 points on 5-for-7 shooting from the floor and 3-for-3 from the foul line. She also had five rebounds, helping the Lady Bulldogs hold a 30-19 edge on the glass.

Junior post player Ansley Tate finished with a double-double, scoring 13 points on 6-for-8 shooting and grabbing 10 rebounds. She also had three of Belgreen's 15 steals. Senior point guard Gabbie Moore chipped in with 12 points, six assists and four steals, and junior Autumn Bragwell also scored 12 points on 4-for-6 shooting from the field and 3-for-5 from the line.

Sophomore post player Emma Dempsey shot 5-for-8 from the field and scored 11 points, and junior guard Gracie Dempsey added 10 points on 5-for-9 shooting.

Tate dominated the first quarter, scoring 11 points and pulling down seven rebounds to help the Lady Bulldogs build an early 20-2 lead. Katie Dempsey capped the first quarter with a layup at the buzzer, and Belgreen then scored the first 12 points of the second to finish off a 31-0 run that made it 32-2 with 4:26 left in the first half.

Bragwell scored 10 second-quarter points, Katie Dempsey had seven and Emma Dempsey added six, helping the Lady Bulldogs take a 47-5 lead into the locker room.

Gracie Dempsey (eight points) and Moore (six points) led the way in the third quarter as Belgreen continued to pour it on, out-scoring Sheffield 21-5 to open up a 68-10 lead at the end of three.

Emma Willingham finished with four points for Belgreen, and Megan Smith added two points and six rebounds. The Lady Bulldogs shot 34-for-59 from the floor and 8-for-13 from the foul line.

Sheffield shot just 15 percent (7-for-47) from the field and turned the ball over 24 times.

Belgreen was scheduled to return to action this week with area games at home against Brilliant on Monday and at Phillips on Tuesday.



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# Vina girls open area play with back-to-back wins

Staff reports

Rayleigh Guin and Emma Humphres each posted a double-double for Vina last Friday, helping the Lady Red Devils pick up their second area win in as many nights with a 64-29 rout of Brilliant.

Guin, a freshman, scored 20 points and handed out 11 assists for Vina (5-1 overall, 2-0 in Class 1A, Area 12). Humphres, a senior post player, finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds.

The Lady Devils, who had hammered Hackleburg in their Area 12 opener the previous

day, got 12 points from Guin and four from Abbie Petree in Friday's first quarter, racing out to an early 20-9 lead.

Vina got two threes from junior guard Kaitlyn King and one from Humphres in the second quarter, out-scoring Brilliant 20-7 to take a 40-16 lead into the locker room.

Junior Sarah Johnson led the way in the third quarter with five points, helping the Lady Devils push the lead out to 32 at 53-21.

Johnson finished with 13 points and six rebounds. King scored eight points, and Petree

added six. Sara Scott grabbed 10 rebounds to go along with her three points, and Anna Belle Humphres and Kaitlyn Athey each scored two.

Vina was scheduled to return to action on Monday night at Shoals Christian.

The junior high Lady Red Devils also picked up two wins last week (their ninth and tenth victories of the season), beating Hackleburg 40-13 on Thursday and Brilliant 34-5 on Friday. LaDava Davis scored in double-figures for Vina in both games, and Kassidie Gesler reached double-figures in the win over Hackleburg.

## 'TEST', from page 13

many nights. [Jasper lost 55-53 at West Point last Monday.]

"We knew they were gonna play really tough, really physical," said Odom, whose team trailed by one at halftime. "They did a good job of bumping us and knocking us early. We didn't shoot it real well in the first half, and we were kind of out of rhythm. That's the first time we've been challenged that way. I thought our guys did a good job of settling in.

"We really emphasized ball movement at the half. The ball moved better in the second half, and when our guys get open looks...we may miss some, but we're gonna make a lot, too. We had some guys make big shots, and Devin down the stretch hit some big free throws. Lucas and Devin [having big games], that's a pretty good formula for us being successful."

McNutt came out firing, beating the first-quarter buzzer with his third three of the night to give the Golden Tigers a 16-15 lead at the end of one. He and Buckhalter, the team's top two returning scorers from last season, combined to make five early threes on their way to scoring the team's first 19 points of the game.

The Vikings, however got 10 first-half points from point guard John David Harrell and a pair of second-quarter threes from Jase Barrentine and Ryan Childers, rallying to take a 31-30 lead into the break.

"I thought we played a little hurried in the first half," Odom said. "We tell our guys all the time, there's a fine line between playing fast but never hurried. We played with a big lead [Monday] night, and everything was carefree. All of a sudden, tonight it's tight, and you're trying to force and press a little bit. We've just gotta trust what we do, and as the game went along I think you saw that."

The Golden Tigers started the third quarter with a 14-6 spurt, getting two threes apiece from Dyas and McNutt and a layup from Bonner to open up a 44-37 lead at the 4:31 mark. Jasper trimmed the lead to 48-44 by the end of the third and then opened the fourth with back-to-back buckets by Antoine Harris to pull even.

Bonner assisted on a corner three by Dyas to make it 51-48 with 6:54 remaining, and McNutt buried his sixth and seventh threes of the night moments later to push the lead out to 59-52. The Vikings, to their credit, rallied again, slicing the lead to two before Dyas found Bonner for a back-door layup to make it 62-58.

Jasper got two free throws from Trinity Epps to get back within two, but Buckhalter answered with a pair of makes at the line to make it 64-60 with 31.2 seconds remaining. That's when Bonner delivered the defensive play of the night to help seal the win.

Harrell, who would finish with a game-high 24 points, beat his man off the dribble and drove the lane before attempting to dish the ball to an open shooter in the right corner. Bonner feigned as if he was going to help on Harrell's drive and then faded toward the corner, stealing the pass and snuffing out what might have been the Vikings' most critical possession of the night.

"If you watched that play, he felt the play happen before it happened," Odom said of Bonner, a first-year starter at the point. "It was a tremendous play. You've gotta make those game-changing plays when you have the chance. We found some ways to do that, and we hit some big shots. I'm very

proud of the free throw work we had down the stretch. All those little things definitely added up."

Bonner missed the front end of a one-and-one right after his key steal, but Jasper missed a three on its ensuing possession. Bonner chased down the rebound and got fouled again, this time splitting a pair at the line to make it 65-60.

Harrell banked in a desperation three to cut the lead to two with 4.8 seconds remaining. Russellville then inbounded the ball to Buckhalter, who was fouled and calmly sank two free throws to make it a four-point game and seal the deal.

Buckhalter, who shot 74 percent from the line as a sophomore before slumping to 61 percent last season as a junior, was a perfect 10-for-10 from the stripe last Tuesday. He led the Golden Tigers with 14 first-half points and then shot 6-for-6 from the line in the second half, reaching the 20-point mark for the 12th time in his varsity career.

McNutt led Russellville with 21 points (all from beyond the arc) last Tuesday, topping the 20-point mark for the 10th time in his career. Dyas stepped up with three second-half threes and scored 11 of his 15 points after the break. Bonner added six points, and senior Caden Parker finished with five.

Jasper made 19 two-point field goals on the night to just seven for Russellville, out-scoring the Golden Tigers 38-14 inside the arc. Russellville countered, though, by doubling up Jasper's three-point output (12 to six) and hitting 17 free throws to the Vikings' seven.

The Golden Tigers' shot distribution last Tuesday reminded Odom of his Belgreen team from 2013-14 that rode the prolific three-point shooting of Chase Landers and company to 28 wins and a regional final appearance.

"That team had a lot of shot charts that looked that way," said Odom, whose current team opened the season with 26 threes made through two games. "I learned a long time ago that you can't force an identity. You've gotta be who you are. That's not the last time you're gonna see that. I felt like we took good shots tonight. That is who we are.

"Chase Landers used to tell me all the time, 'Threes count more than two's, Coach.' He was pretty good at that math. I think Lucas counts by threes, too."

In other recent action:

### Winfield 60 Russellville 54

Russellville made eight threes last Friday at Winfield, but the Pirates held a big edge at the foul line and handed the Golden Tigers their first loss.

Winfield hit just two threes on the night but shot 24-for-33 from the foul line. Russellville (2-1 through Sunday) finished just 12-for-20 at the line.

The Golden Tigers trailed 27-25 at the half and 41-39 at the end of three quarters. Winfield went 13-for-15 from the line in the fourth quarter and out-scored Russellville 19-15 to earn the win.

Devin Buckhalter and Chandler Dyas each scored 17 points to lead the Golden Tigers. Buckhalter made three threes and was 4-for-5 from the line. Dyas also hit three threes and went 4-for-6 at the line. Lucas McNutt knocked down a pair of threes and finished with 10 points.

Will Bonner, Caden Parker, Jeb Bishop, Brooks Scott and Jamal Hubbard each added two points.

# Getting defensive: Lady 'Cats lock down Phillips

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Phil Campbell coach Craig Thomas believes his team is already better offensively than a year ago, when the Lady Bobcats won 26 games on their way to the Final Four.

When that offense misfired last Thursday afternoon against rival Phillips, however, Phil Campbell's girls showed they can still play a little defense, too.

The Lady Bobcats held Phillips to just 30 percent shooting (including 3-for-13 in the decisive fourth quarter) and avenged their only home loss from last season, remaining unbeaten with an ugly—albeit satisfying—41-37 win.

"It's a really big win," said senior post player Abby Davis, who led the way for Phil Campbell with 16 points, 10 rebounds, four blocks and four steals. "They're No. 1 in the state in 1A, and they're right here next to us. It's kind of a bitter rivalry. They beat us here last year.

"It's bittersweet, knowing I'll never get to play them again here at home, but we won."

The Lady Bobcats won—for the 20th time in 21 games dating back to last season—largely because of their performance on the defensive end, where junior Kallie Allen and sophomore Caitlynn Mills denied dribble penetration by Phillips guards Gracie Hallman and Lexie Dishner and sophomore Katie Thomas made 6'1 junior Ally McCollum work for every one of her 15 points.

"Kallie Allen is a lock-down defender, and Mills is very close behind her," said Craig Thomas, whose team would improve to 5-0 the following night with an overtime win at Rogers. "Both of them did an excellent job on their guards tonight. Katie Thomas pretty much shut down McCollum. Defensively, I thought it was outstanding. We fought through screens. We didn't get screened that much.

"Our goal was to slow down McCollum and Hallman, and both Allen and Katie did an excellent job on them."

McCollum shot a solid 7-for-13 from the floor and had 14 rebounds to go along with her 15 points, but Thomas—making just her fourth career start at the varsity level—battled her in the low post all day and finished with five points, eight boards and two steals. Thomas's defensive work on McCollum allowed the 5'11 Davis to stay out of foul trouble

and provide much-needed consistency on the offensive end. [The UAH signee made two field goals and scored exactly four points in all four quarters on Thursday.]

"Katie is nearly as tall as Abby anyway, so we decided to go with Katie [on McCollum]," Thomas said. "We had to have Abby offensively. It wouldn't have done her any good to get three fouls early in the game."

**"I told them if we held them under forty, I would buy them lunch one day," Thomas joked after his team's 41-37 win. "I guess I owe them two or three dinners now."**

Meanwhile, Allen focused her considerable defensive skills on slowing down the speedy Hallman, who excels at slicing and dicing her way to the basket with left-hand drives. On Thursday, Hallman didn't make her first field goal until the 2:00 mark of the third quarter and finished with eight points on 3-for-11 shooting.

Phillips (2-3) failed to score more than 13 points in any quarter and struggled mightily in both the second (3-for-16 shooting, eight turnovers) and the fourth (3-for-13 shooting, seven points). As a result of his team's defensive effort, Thomas's smile was a little broader—but his wallet might be getting a little lighter.

"I told them if we held them under forty, I would buy them lunch one day," he joked after the game. "I guess owe them two or three dinners now."

Thomas may owe Phillips a debt of gratitude as well for some questionable execution defensively in the final minute. With his team leading by just two at 39-37 after a steal and layup by Hallman at the 1:00 mark, Thomas called timeout with 55 seconds remaining. The Lady Bobcats inbounded the ball and proceeded to run 40 seconds off the clock as the She-Bears tried in vain first to force a turnover and then to foul either Thomas or fellow sophomore Olivia Taylor when the ball found its way to them.

Phillips clearly did not want to put Allen on the line and eventually had to settle for fouling Davis with 15.9 seconds remaining. She missed the front end of a one-and-one, but Katie Thomas chased down the long rebound in the right corner, and Craig Thomas called another timeout. Mills was fouled with nine seconds remaining and calmly sank two free throws, making it a two-possession game and essentially sealing the deal.

"I was really surprised they let that much time run off the clock," Craig Thomas said of his team's 45-second possession in the final minute. "To me, the last girl [Mills] on the line is probably our best free throw shooter anyway. I'm really proud of the way we kept our composure at the end of the game. Our tenth-graders are not getting rattled very much. Allen and Davis are settling them down.

"Allen keeps everything going. When we need somebody to handle the basketball at the end of the game, we go to her. Allen took over this game right there in the last 1:20. She ran off about fifty seconds."

For much of last Thursday's first half, it seemed unlikely that the game would come down to the final minute. With Phillips leading by two at 11-9 late in the first quarter, Mills found Thomas all alone on the left wing for a transition three to put Phil Campbell in front and spark a 13-2 run. Mills also connected from beyond the arc during the spurt, and Allen capped it off with a coast-to-coast layup and then a three-point play on a putback to make it 22-13 with 4:52 left in the first half.

The margin grew to 11 on a basket by Davis, and the Lady Bobcats took a nine-point lead into the locker room. They endured their worst shooting quarter (3-for-13) in the third, however, and Phillips got six points from McCollum and four from Hallman to go on a 13-5 run that cut the lead to one.

Davis answered with a key basket down low in the final seconds, stemming the tide a bit and sending Phil Campbell into the final quarter with a 33-30 lead.

"I thought we kept our poise very well," Thomas said. "We did have a few turnovers where we shouldn't have. We lobbed a few passes, and they ran and got them. But overall I thought we kept our poise pretty well.

"Tenth-graders are gonna make mistakes. We're gonna have to hope we can overcome them. Abby got going in the middle. We started finding her, and she stepped up the way a senior is supposed to."

Phillips drew back within one on a layup by Hallman midway through the fourth, but Davis answered with a baseline jumper to make it 37-34 at the 3:30 mark. Baylee Bishop made 1-of-2 at the line to cut the lead to two, but a layup by Davis

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## 'DAVIS,' from page 13

college hoops for the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

"I just felt like I fit in there," said Davis, who played in the North-South All-Star game this past summer after earning second-team All-State honors in Class 2A from the ASWA as a junior, when she averaged 13.8 points and 6.9 rebounds for a Phil Campbell team that went 26-6 and lost to Samson in the state semifinals. "Coach [Andrea] Lemmond, she took me in as one of her own. I felt like that's where I needed to be, like God was telling me I needed to go there. I love the campus. Everything is right there together, and it's so pretty with all their new buildings. Being in Huntsville is gonna be a real big change from Phil Campbell, but I'm looking forward to it."

Davis had received interest and/or offers from several schools at the JUCO level, including Snead State, Shelton State and Wallace-Hanceville, but she was drawn to UAH right from the opening tip, as it were.

"When I went on my official visit, I got to meet all their players, and they were just like me," Davis said last Thursday afternoon, just moments after putting up 16 points, 10 rebounds, four steals and four blocks to lead the Lady Bobcats past rival Phillips 41-37 for their fourth win in as many games to start the season. "We fit really well together, They're all really sweet. I watched them play a scrimmage game against each other, and they play just like we play—up and down, up and down. I feel like I fit there."

Thomas, who has coached Davis in all five of her seasons playing varsity basketball at Phil Campbell, agrees.

"She'll fit in with their program," he said. "They like to run a little bit. She's tall and lanky, and she'll play good defense over there. Abby is very talented. She doesn't know how talented she can be, and she won't 'til she gets over there. They'll work her twice as hard as I have."

"Abby has been in our program since the eighth grade, varsity-wise, and I couldn't have asked for anything better than what she's given us. She's come in every day with a good attitude and good effort."

Davis says her love affair with basketball began "when I first started playing, in kindergarten," but she started to seriously pursue her goal of playing at the college level when she hooked up with the Alabama Southern Starz, a travel team based out of Huntsville, in the summer before her ninth-grade year.

"I really set my mind to it when I picked up with the Starz," said Davis, who made her varsity debut at Phil Campbell as an eighth-grader and helped the Lady Bobcats advance to Hanceville after a late-season call-up. "I've always wanted to play in college, but that's when I really started thinking about it. All these college coaches were looking at us and seeing us play."

That included Lemmond and her staff, who came to Starz games primarily to scout Abbi Holley, an AAU teammate of Davis and a senior at Deshler High School. The UAH coaches liked what they saw from Davis and wound up signing both her and Holley for the Class of 2019.

Davis has played primarily in the post for the Lady Bobcats [she averaged a career-high 15.2 points and 10.2 rebounds per game with 50 blocked shots as a sophomore in 2016-17], but her perimeter game and guard skills have been expanding each year. [She'll likely shuffle between the three and the four spots at UAH.] After making just four threes that sophomore season, Davis knocked down 16 a year ago while also ranking third on the team in assists and recording 48 steals.

Davis made two threes in each of Phil Campbell's first two games this season and was averaging 14.4 points per game through Sunday.

"Coach Lemmond said she wants a guard who is comfortable playing with her back to the goal," said Davis, who scored 21 points in the season open-

er at Tharptown, topping the 20-point mark for the 22nd time in her varsity career. "That's my game."

Before she heads to UAH next fall, Davis has some unfinished business to attend to at Phil Campbell—namely, making sure the Lady Bobcats get back to Birmingham for a second straight year and, this time, bring home a Blue Map.

"Everybody wants to finish with a bang," Davis said. "I really want us to win state. If we can't (which we should be able to, with the way everything is lining up for us), I definitely want to win another county championship, another area championship and go to the regional again. But I really want to go out with a state championship."

"I'd also like to see good teams keep coming here at Phil Campbell and see us keep having a great girls basketball program."

Davis has certainly done her part to establish the Lady Bobcats as perennial contenders at the state level. With her collegiate future on lock, she's free to pursue the happy ending at Phil Campbell that she so desires.

"It's good to have everything out there and to know that's where I'm gonna go," she said of signing with UAH. "It's just a relief off my shoulders."

## 'LOCK,' from page 16

shooter was getting the rebound. There's no way the shooter should get the ball [on a rebound] when we're playing man-to-man. We think we can jump with anybody until we run up against Phillips. Phillips can out-jump us by far.

"We're gonna work on that next week. We'll have to straighten the ship on that. There's no excuse for it."

Mills hit a pair of first-half threes on Thursday and finished with 10 points and five rebounds. Allen had seven rebounds and five assists to go along with her six points. Taylor added four points and six boards.

Bishop had eight points, eight rebounds and four blocks for Phillips. Dishner scored six points.

The Lady Bobcats (who also own a 71-65 win over Wilson) traveled to Greenhill last Friday and picked up their third marquee win of November when they beat a very good Rogers team 40-39 in

overtime.

Phil Campbell (5-0 through Sunday) trailed by two with less than 1:00 left in regulation when Davis rebounded a miss by Allen and put it back in to tie the game 34-34. Rogers was fouled on its final possession but missed the front end of a one-and-one, and Katie Thomas secured the rebound to send the game into OT.

With the Lady Bobcats up three late in overtime, Thomas went 1-for-2 at the foul line to make it a four-point game. Madie Krieger hit a last-second three for Rogers to provide the final margin.

Caitlynn Mills went 8-for-8 from the foul line and finished with 15 points to lead Phil Campbell. Davis added 11 points and nine rebounds, and Allen scored nine points. Thomas added four, and Kaci Harris had one.

Gloria Pounders led Rogers with 16 points, and Krieger had 14. The Lady Pirates hit eight threes



## Gath Weatherford

Senior Forward, Red Bay

Weatherford continued his hot start to the season last Thursday night, hitting six threes (five of which came in the third quarter) and scoring 20 points to lead the Tigers to their third straight win, 53-41 over Haleyville.

Four games into the season, Weatherford had already topped the 20-point mark three times. Through Sunday, the 6'3 senior was averaging a career-high 17.0 points per game and had already knocked down 16 threes, an average of right at four per game. He was also a perfect 6-for-6 from the foul line on the year.



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# Weatherford, Tigers stay hot against Haleyville

## Staff reports

Gath Weatherford drilled five threes in the third quarter for Red Bay last Thursday night, helping the Tigers pull away from Haleyville for a 53-41 win, their third in a row.

Red Bay (3-1 through Sunday) came out hot, knocking down five first-quarter threes (two by senior Noah Brewer and one each by Weatherford, Clay Allison and Braden Ray) to race out to an early 19-7 lead. The Tigers cooled off in the second quarter, however, scoring just five points and taking a 24-15 lead into the break.

Weatherford, a 6'3 senior, caught fire in the third, nailing five treys and pouring in 15 of his game-high 20 points as Red Bay out-scored Haleyville 19-11 to open up a 43-26 advantage.

The Tigers matched their season-high with 11

threes on the night and also shot 10-for-13 from the foul line (including 7-for-9 in the fourth quarter). Ray went 5-for-6 from the line and finished with eight points, and Arden Hamilton also had eight (all in the first half). Allison hit a pair of threes and scored seven points.

Brewer finished with six points, and sophomore Jalen Vinson chipped in with four.

Ben Lowman led the Lions with 12 points, and Clay Blanton added 10.

### Varsity girls

#### Red Bay 45 Haleyville 44 - OT

Reagan Kuykendall scored four of her team-high 17 points in overtime, helping the Lady Tigers (2-2 through Sunday) edge visiting Haleyville.

Junior forward Ali Temple led the Lady Lions with 23 points but shot just 9-for-20 from the foul line. Both teams struggled from the line, with Haleyville

shooting 14-for-30 and Red Bay finishing just 8-for-18.

Trailing 10-7 at the end of one quarter, the Lady Tigers got seven points in the second quarter from Kuykendall and out-scored Haleyville 14-9 to take a 21-19 lead into the break. The margin grew to five by the end of the third quarter, but the Lady Lions out-scored Red Bay 14-9 in the fourth to send the game to overtime.

Kuykendall had all four of Red Bay's points in the extra period, and Haleyville managed to score just three.

Mallori Miller hit three threes for the Lady Tigers and finished with 13 points (eight of which came in the first half). Destiny McCollister added eight points, and Cassidy Kuykendall scored four. Kaylee Markham chipped in with two points, and Macy Faulkner had one.

# Big first half propels Bobcats to rout of Bears

## Staff reports

PHIL CAMPBELL - Phil Campbell's boys made eight first-half threes last Thursday afternoon and led by 36 points at the break on their way to snapping a two-game losing skid with a 69-31 rout of visiting Phillips.

Sophomore guard Luke Garrison came out hot, hitting three early threes and scoring all 11 of his points in the first quarter. Junior guard Ben Williams scored six first-quarter points, senior Nate Owens added five and sophomore guard Brett Saint nailed a three, helping the Bobcats (4-3 through Thursday) race out to a 27-5 lead at the end of one.

The hot shooting continued in the second quarter as senior Isaac Riddle and sophomores Austen Baker and Ridge Raper all connected from beyond

the arc, helping Phil Campbell out-score the Bears 20-6 to take a 47-11 lead into the locker room.

Riddle drained two more threes in the second half, giving the Bobcats 10 makes from distance on the day. Riddle, Garrison and Williams each finished with 11 points, and Saint and Raper had nine apiece. Owens and Baker each scored five, and Easton Cummings and Seth Baker both chipped in with four.

In other action:

#### Colbert County 57 Tharptown 38

The Indians out-scored Tharptown 35-10 in the second and third quarters last Friday to turn an early three-point deficit into a runaway win.

Winston Nolen led the Wildcats (1-4, 0-2 in Class 2A, Area 16) with 18 points. Edward Lopez added 10 points and eight rebounds.

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“Beat Brady” is back for bowl season! Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and phone number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. All entries must be received by 11 a.m. on Thursday, December 28! Only one entry per person, please. The winner of the “Beat Brady” bowl contest will receive \$50 cash! Everyone is eligible to participate!

# Franklin Free Press Football Picks Contest

Bowl Season	Brady's Pick	Your Pick
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Florida vs. Michigan	Florida	_____
Notre Dame vs. Clemson	Clemson	_____
Oklahoma vs. Alabama	Alabama	_____
Texas A&M vs. N.C. State	Texas A&M	_____
Mississippi St. vs. Iowa	Iowa	_____
Kentucky vs. Penn State	Penn State	_____
LSU vs. Central Florida	Central Florida	_____
Washington vs. Ohio State	Ohio State	_____
Georgia vs. Texas	Georgia	_____
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