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12.12.18

## Simmons wins top award

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As she listened to the presentation of the Foster Grandparent Program Volunteer of the Year for 2018, Olivia Simmons needed some prompting from friends and family to know who won.

"It's you, it's you," one family member told Simmons. And it was. Simmons, a 10-year volunteer in the Foster Grandparent Program, received the organization's top award at the 44th annual Foster Grandparent Program Awards Banquet held last Thursday at the A.W. Todd Centre.

Simmons volunteers at Sheffield Head Start, where she is considered an angel by her students. Simmons always has a smile on her face, and her personality and love for the children shine brightly.

Foster Grandparent Program director Jessica Latham said 15 nominations were received for this year's award. The Foster Grandparent Program includes Franklin, Colbert, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston counties.

Simmons is one of approximately 70 Foster  
See 'SIMMONS,' Page 9



Foster Grandparent Program director Jessica Latham (right) presents Olivia Simmons with the organization's 2018 Volunteer of the Year award.

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## Local church, Dream Center team up on special Christmas giveaway



This 2006 Pontiac G6 will be given away as part of 'A Christmas to Remember.' Dream Center director Shawn Reathford said the car was donated by Mayfield Auto owners Vic and Renee Mayfield.

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The congregation of Redemption Outreach Church and the Russellville Dream Center are combining to help make 2018 a "Christmas to Remember" for local families, and one blessed family will leave the December 15 event with a car.

The special event is free and open to the public, although registration for the car giveaway must be done prior to the day of the event. All activities will take place this Saturday, December 15 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the old Coca-Cola plant on Coffee Avenue next to the Dream Center.

Registration for the "Christmas to Remember" event,

See 'GIVEAWAY,' Page 9

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**Windell Ray Barnes**, Phil Campbell, age 62  
Died Sunday, November 25, 2018. Funeral held at Akins Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Oak Grove Cemetery.

**James Stanley Berryhill**, Phil Campbell, age 84  
Died Monday, December 10, 2018. A private burial was to be held for the family.

**Charles Lesley Jackson**, Russellville, age 81  
Died Wednesday, December 5, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

**Naomia Pounders Postell**, Douglasville, GA (formerly of Phil Campbell), age 95  
Died Friday, December 7, 2018. Visitation will be held from 12-2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at Pinkard Funeral Home in Haleyville, with funeral service to follow at 2 p.m. Interment will be in Winston Memorial Cemetery.

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# TES parent has issue with attendance policy

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

If there's one thing you can say about Junior Vinson, it's that he's not one to back down.

And when Vinson had an issue with his daughter being given unexcused absences at Tharptown Elementary School in what he believes was a violation of the Franklin County Board of Education policy, Vinson contacted officials at the school and at the central office until the matter was corrected.

The issue began last year when Vinson's five-year-old daughter was in kindergarten. Alabama law requires all children between ages six and 17 to attend school, but the law does not apply to five-year-olds.

Vinson's daughter missed a day of school on September 7, 2017, and he was sent a letter on Tharptown Elementary School letterhead titled "Notice of Unexcused Absences: (Warning Letter Only)."

That letter informed Vinson that his daughter's absence was unexcused, in violation of Alabama's Compulsory Attendance Laws.

"I went to the school to talk with Mr. [Kelby] Daniel, [Tharptown Elementary School principal]," Vinson said. "He would not change the absence from unexcused, so I met with superintendent Greg Hamilton. He said he would take care of it and call the school."

Vinson said the reason for her absence was that he had to appear in a court hearing, so, as a single parent, he kept his daughter out of school to be with him.

"Mr. Daniel told me the only way he would excuse her is if she was required to be in court," Vinson said. "Since this was marked as unexcused, I was sent a warning letter telling me about all the unpleasant things that were going to happen to me if these absences continued."

"The Code of Alabama does not require five-year-olds to attend school, and this was only one absence due to my having to be in court."

After speaking with Daniel, Vinson emailed Hamilton and each of the five members of the Franklin County Board of Education about the situation. Vinson said he spoke with his daughter's teacher, the school's assistant principal and principal and asked each of them who marked his daughter's absence as unexcused.

"I asked three employees the same question and got three different answers," Vinson said.

The absence issues began this school year on October 11, 2018, when Vinson withdrew his daughter from school 15 minutes early, around 2:30 p.m.

On October 22, 2018, Vinson emailed Daniel to get pre-approval for his daughter to miss school on October 30 for a Veterans Day field trip. Two days later, on November 1, he sent his daughter's teacher a text message notifying her she was sick and would not be at school that day.

Vinson said he regularly receives school information via text message about news and field trips, so he believed a text message was a sufficient way to notify the teacher about his daughter's illness.

It was after the November 1 absence that Vinson learned his daughter had

two unexcused absences for this school year, including the day he withdrew her 15 minutes early.

Board policy provides that parents may write a note twice per semester for absences. Vinson said he only did that once this school year.

"I found out when they sent her progress report home and it had four absences on it," Vinson said. "I knew she had missed two days, not four. The school office told me she was marked absent the day I withdrew her 15 minutes before school ended, and the other day was when she was sick. I called the school, the superintendent and I emailed the board members once again. When I did not receive a response, I went to the *Franklin Free Press*."

"I feel like the policy is wrong and that my child is being treated differently because I made the principal mad. I'm also frustrated that I didn't get a response from the superintendent and the board after making repeated efforts."

When contacted by the *Free Press*, Hamilton said he had spoken with Vinson several times, and he confirmed that his daughter had no unexcused absences.

Vinson called the school and said she still had two unexcused absences until Monday, when an employee at the school office told him there were no unexcused absences on her record for this year.

Hamilton said there is a board policy for attendance, but he allows his principals to have discretion on how they handle their schools.

"I talked with Mr. Daniel. The absences in question have been excused. That didn't all happen in one day, but all of them have been excused," Hamilton said.

Hamilton said each of his board members reached out to him about Vinson's email, and he told them he would handle the matter.

While acknowledging that the unexcused absences have now been corrected, Vinson wonders why it became such a drawn-out process.

"If a text message is sufficient for information about school activities, why isn't it good enough to report an absence?" Vinson asked. "The superintendent said it was perfectly fine. I don't think I should have to contact the superintendent each time my daughter has an absence to make sure the school follows its own policy."

# Council reverses decision on North Jackson building

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

In a reversal of action from its previous meeting, the Russellville City Council voted to declare the collapsed building at 127 North Jackson Avenue as surplus property and to accept sealed bids for its prospective sale.

The council unanimously approved the action at its December 3 meeting after voting November 19 to spend \$10,000 for structural engineering and architectural fees to design a plan to repair the collapsed front of the building.

The front of the building collapsed on October 24 while being repaired by then-owner Wayne Miller and New Beginnings Worship Center. Miller had no insurance on the property. Rather than face the large expense of repairs, Miller deeded the property to the City of Russellville on October 25.

City building inspector Bill Fuller had previously declared the building unsafe and in need of repair prior to its collapse. Originally known as the D.L. Daily Building, New Beginnings Worship Center held services in the building until a few months ago. The property also housed the church's youth center, the Eagle's Nest, at one time.


While it was first thought the building would have to be razed, a structural

See 'COUNCIL,' Page 10



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# Honey Do: Pipe insulation

This article may be a little bit late. We've already had some freezing weather, but the hard freeze hasn't hit us yet. If you haven't insulated your pipes, don't wait any longer.

You should be concerned about any water pipe that is located in an area that is not heated, may be located near an uninsulated wall or may be subject to cold, winter wind.

The first plan of action would be to protect the pipes from wind or drafts. Close foundation vents, seal around foundation access doors and check underpinning on mobile homes for holes and cracks where the wind might blow through. Many homes have automatic foundation vents, but you should still check them to be sure they are closed.

There are several options for insulating your pipe. One of the quickest and easiest products to use is foam tubing. This tubing comes in five- to six-foot lengths and is split down the side so that it can be slipped over pipes. Some will come with adhesive strips already installed, while some must be taped. Buy the proper size to fit your pipe, and don't leave any gaps that might freeze.

Elbows and tees are very challenging when using this insulation, but now you can purchase pre-

formed pieces to fit these difficult areas.

The old standard for insulating pipes is rolls of insulation strips, usually four to six inches wide and installed by wrapping around the pipe. Be sure to overlap the insulation so you will achieve the proper protection and, again, will not leave any gaps. Some of this insulation requires a layer of plastic wrap over it, while others have an aluminum foil covering already made on the outside.

If any of the pipes are outside and can't be drained, you might consider thermostat-controlled heat cable. This cable is designed to run along the length of the pipe and automatically comes on when a certain temperature is reached. An electrical supply is required, as the product runs on 110v. Be very careful and read all instructions with this tape.

Don't forget any hose bibbs around the foundation or in the yard. Foam cups are easily and quickly installed on wall-mounted spigots, using a plastic strip to hold them tight.

Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



**Doug Green**



## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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## My take Age is just a number... on this... except in cold weather

Hi friends!

It's been a while since I've written an article, but since you know that, I'll just get on with this.

The cold and windy weather we've had lately got me thinking about the many comparisons between being years younger versus being in your 60's or 70's.

I remember, as a child, how I couldn't wait to get outside in the snow and make shoeprints in the snow or have snowball fights. We can't leave out the "all-time famous" snowman.

Not anymore! I dread having to go outside in the cold. It's kind of strange, considering all ages have the same concept of skin stretched over a skeletal frame.

**My favorite thing to do in the cold, windy weather is to stay inside my warm home and think about my childhood memories while watching the young folks in the cold and snowy weather making their own memories.**

We still both dress warm with our heavy coats, gloves or mittens, etc, but it feels like our clothes in older years are full of holes.

Of course, instead of plastic bags wrapped around our shoes and covering part of our lower legs and being taped on top, most of us now own a pair of warm boots. My boots still look brand new. Even though I've had them for a few years, I only wear them to the place us older folks go to the most.

Of course, that is to the doctor's office.

With that in mind, the comparisons between young and old are very small. Our bones now ache in the cold weather. Whether it's caused from arthritis or from the broken bones which were the results of our childhood falls or adventures, the pain is still the same.

Oh, and our body temperature. What happened to that? As young children and teenagers, most of us could walk around in the cold wearing shorts and a hoodie. Those days are long gone. We seem to shatter like an earthquake in motion even though we have layers of clothes and coats on.

My favorite thing to do in the cold, windy weather is to stay inside my warm home and think about my childhood memories while watching the young folks in the cold and snowy weather making their own memories.

Whatever decisions you make, please remember to bundle up in the cold, stay safe and have fun. Whatever else you do, I know for a fact that we will be dressed in the warmth that tells our ages. Ha!

Until next time.....



**Gail Motes**



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!



Dave  
**Keep your emergency fund simple**  
Dear Dave,  
One of my friends suggested that I put my emergency fund money into bonds. What do you think of this idea?

**Short term planning**  
Dear Dave,  
My husband and I are completely debt-free, and we're saving up for our first house. We currently have about \$90,000 in savings, and we'd like to buy a home with cash in the next few years. Where should we put our money, so it will work for us while we save more?

Renee  
Dear Renee,  
Never put your emergency fund into things where volatility and risk are a concern. An emergency fund isn't an investment; it's three to six months of expenses set aside to help protect you from the unexpected things life will throw at you. My advice is to keep your emergency fund in something simple—like a money market account where there's no penalty for early withdrawal and check-writing privileges for easy access.

Aimee  
Dear Aimee,  
It's a great feeling when you don't have any debt hanging over your head, isn't it? With the path you're on now, just imagine how incredible it will be in a few years to have a new home and still be debt-free!  
If I were in your shoes, and maybe looking at a three-to-five-year window, I'd just park the cash in a good market account. You won't make a lot off it, but your money will be safe. Besides, all you're looking for is a wise place to stash it for a little while.

Bond values and prices go down when long-term interest rates rise. Right now, long-term interest rates—a good example would be mortgage rates—are ticking up. So, as this happens, the value of bonds goes down.  
We're not looking to make money with an emergency fund, Renee. Think of it as a type of insurance. Just let it sit there, safe and sound, until it's needed!

When it comes to long-term investing, I'm a big fan of growth stock mutual funds. The problem with that in your situation would be the volatility of the market. By the time you've saved up more money and spent time deciding on a house, the market may be down.  
It sounds like you two are doing a fantastic job with your finances. Congratulations!

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](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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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.

The Phil Campbell Christmas Parade will be held this Thursday, December 13 at 6 p.m. Come join us! Merry Christmas!

Because of preparations and events for Christmas, the American Legion meeting for December is canceled. The next meeting for Post 64 will be on Thursday, January 10 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m.

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

There will be a benefit singing this Saturday, December 15 at 6 p.m. at Lawler Chapel Church. The church is located on Gravel Hill Road/Co. Road 16 in the Gravel Hill community. Singers will be Family Tradition and Paul Mishue with Church Group. The singing is to help with funeral expenses for Jason Rollins. All donations will be appreciated.

This 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!!

The NACOLG SenioRx Medication Assistance Program supplies free and low-cost medications for anyone in Alabama with a disability or a chronic illness, regardless of age, that requires daily medication. Medicare recipients may also be eligible. For more information, contact NACOLG SenioRx today. There is no charge for this service. Call 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) or 256-389-0530. This program is in partnership with the state of Alabama and Alabama Department of Senior Services.

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!

**CR** 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 Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre in Russellville on Saturday, January 12 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Call 256-335-4356. The KGB will be the featured act at a show sponsored by the Franklin County Arts Council at the Roxy on the second Saturday of each month.

Mountain Valley Hee Haw features live music every Saturday night. Show time is 6 p.m. Free admission. No alcohol or drugs. From Russellville, take 243 to Hwy. 79, turn right, go 1/4 mile, third building on left. For more information, please call 256-332-5479 or 256-810-4840.

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.

**T**OPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) weight loss support group meets each Monday evening at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Recreation Center. Weigh-ins begin at 5:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to drop in for a free meeting visit. Call 256-446-5962 or 256-412-2855 for more information.

# BOB SELLERS

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Bob is a former member of the Kingsmen Quartet and he will become a member of the Old Time Preachers Quartet in 2019. Come join us for a time of worship and music, and bring a friend! Call 256-332-5730 for more information.

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## 'SIMMONS,' from page 1

Grandparents who work in day care facilities, schools, afterschool programs and Head Start.

The program is based in Russellville, with its office at Westside Apartments. Members work an average of 15-40 hours each week and receive a small, non-taxed stipend twice a month for their time.

There are special cookbooks, with recipes submitted by Foster Grandparents, available for purchase for \$10. They are available at the Foster Grandparent office, or by calling 256-332-6800.

Latham said she is always looking for additional men and women to get involved as Foster Grandparents.

"Our numbers are a little down this year, and we

can always use more people. Just call us to find out more about the program," Latham said.

This year's banquet theme was *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, inspired by the cartoon story about the sad little tree that turned into a beautiful Christmas centerpiece.

**"Our volunteers, like in the story [of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*], give children love every day," Latham said, "and in return those kids grow love, they receive a better education, and they turn into beautiful people."**

"Our volunteers, like in the story, give children love every day," Latham said, "and in return those kids grow love, they receive a better education,

and they turn into beautiful people."

Latham expressed her appreciation to Whole Hog Express, Sam's Club, Walmart, Buffalo Rock and Sam's Florist for their donations and services for this year's banquet.

Other award recipients at this year's banquet included:

- Fundraising Award: Regina Eastland. Second place went to JoAnn Dillard.

- Most Service Hours Award: Constance Hooks, Touch of Love Daycare.

- Rookie Service Award: Jacqueline Parker, West Elementary School.

- Inspiration Award: Mary Dyer, Red Bay Elementary.

## 'GIVEAWAY,' from page 1

which will include distribution of food boxes, clothing and toys for the kids, begins at 11 a.m. Car registration is ongoing at the Russellville Dream Center, 116 Coffee Avenue in Russellville, on Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Rules for eligibility for that giveaway state you must not own a vehicle; must be able to provide insurance and a valid tag for the vehicle; agree not to sell, trade or pawn the vehicle for at least 90 days; provide proof of residency in Franklin County; and have at least one child under the age of 18.

A 2006 Pontiac G6 will be given away. Dream Center director Shawn Reathford said the car was donated by Mayfield Auto Sales' owners Vic and Renee Mayfield.

"This has always been a dream of ours to give away a car and/or a house. We've just never been able to work with anyone to do the house," Reathford said. "This year we worked hard to figure out a way to do this. Vic Mayfield and his wife Renee are supporters of the Dream Center. He took a local trade on the car, and they donated it so we could have this give away."

**"We want this ministry to be a blessing to our local community. We invite all local families to come and participate," Reathford said of Saturday's event.**

The Russellville Dream Center currently has 19 residents and nine staff members, Reathford said. The center offers a Christian-based drug and alco-

hol recovery program for addicts.

Dream Center officials work with the North Alabama Food Bank for food donations, and Reathford expressed his appreciation to Russellville Walmart and attorney Jeff Bowling for their support in making the "Christmas to Remember" happen.

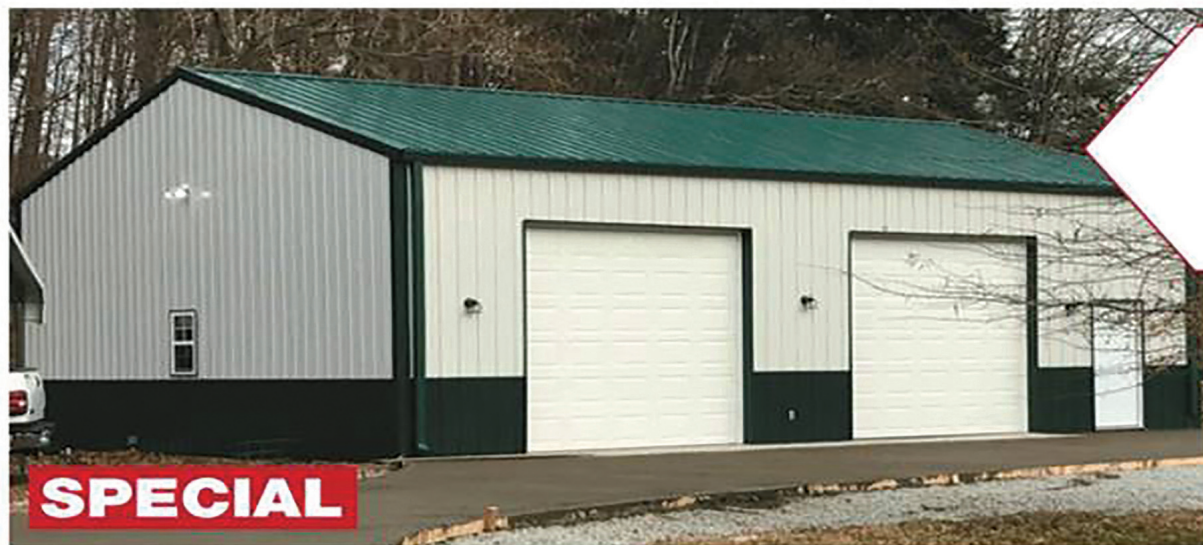
In case of inclement weather, the event will be moved inside the old Coke plant at the same location.

"We want this ministry to be a blessing to our local community. We invite all local families to come and participate," Reathford said.

For more information on the "Christmas to Remember," call the Dream Center at 256-332-4732.

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## 'COUNCIL,' from page 3

engineering study showed that repair would actually be the most cost-effective option.

At mayor David Grissom's request, the council voted to accept sealed bids on the property until 12 p.m. on December 17, 2018. The bids will be opened at the council meeting set for that day.

All bids are subject to being rejected by the council, and bids must start at \$20,000. The successful bidder will have ten days from the day he or she submits an architectural/engineering plan to furnish proof to the City of Russellville of a performance bond of at least \$50,000.

Additional requirements are for the new owner to complete repair work on the building's front within six months.

Structural engineer Richard Edmonds, P.E., with the Florence firm of White, Lynn, Collins and Associates, P.C., and an architect were set to

begin their review of the property last Monday, but at Grissom's request they waited to see what action, if any, would be taken by the council. Grissom was absent from the meeting where the council approved the \$10,000 expense.

"This has turned into a lot of work and money for the city to move forward, and we've not gotten a lot done to this point," Grissom said. "If we get someone to give a fair amount of money for the property, it would be wise to turn it over to them."

"I think it's worth looking at as an option. There are several people interested in purchasing the building, and I think it's a good move for the city."

City attorney Danny McDowell said the performance bond would be there to make sure the prospective purchaser moves forward quickly on the project and so that an eyesore won't be "sitting there a year or more," McDowell said.

McDowell said there would not be a deed signed until plans have been approved and the performance bond is issued.

In other action, the council: •Heard an update from Grissom thanking the Russellville Street Department and Cultura Garden Club for decorating downtown for Christmas.

"I believe downtown looks as good as ever. The Russellville High School Art Department students made ornaments and decorated our tree in the City Hall foyer," Grissom said.

•Approved a resolution commending the Russellville City Schools Youth Leadership Academy and the students in the inaugural class. The program is sponsored by Natalie Bendall and includes RHS students Gabe Amick, Brayden Bendall, Madeline Cooper, Joseph Franklin, Sydney Medley, Melvin Moreno, Elizabeth Pierce, Gracie Pounders, Lily Pounders, Addie Scruggs, Lauren Mae Sturdivant and Caroline Touchstone.

"We appreciate what you are doing. Youth civic involvement is at an all-time low, so you are to be commended for getting involved in this program," councilman David Palmer said.

•Vacated the public street entering into Brightwood Estates subdivision next to Good Shepherd Catholic Church. The property is owned by councilman Gary Cummings, who abstained from the vote.

•Declared a 2005 Crown Victoria surplus property in the Russellville Police Department and authorized the sale thereof.

•Contracted with RPD chaplain Bobby Brown for a 12-month contract at a rate of \$1,000 per month.

•Approved waiving the rental fee for the A.W. Todd Centre for RMS volleyball to hold a banquet on January 10, 2019, and on January 24, 2019 for the RHS football team banquet.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

The city council approved a resolution commending the Russellville City Schools Youth Leadership Academy and the students (pictured above) in the inaugural class.

The next meeting of the Russellville City Council is set for Monday, December 17, with work session at 6 p.m. and meeting to follow.

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## Golden Tigers hand Hamilton first loss in OT

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Russellville got a career-high 24 points from Will Bonner and a clutch tie-breaking three from Devin Buckhalter in overtime last Friday night, surviving a big comeback by Hamilton to hand the Aggies their first loss of the season, 77-72 in front of a packed house at the RMS gym.

"We might do that three times—that's how good we are, and that's how good they are," said RHS coach Patrick Odom, looking ahead to at least one and perhaps two more meetings with Hamilton later this season. "I'm proud of our guys. This was a real character win. We had some opportunities in regulation to put it away. We kind of led the whole game, but we didn't finish. We've gotta make free throws. If we had been a little cleaner at the line, we probably win in regulation. But when we had to have it the most, our guys stepped up.

"When we had those winning moments, our guys stepped up and made plays. I'm proud of them."

**"We might do that three times—that's how good we are, and that's how good they are," said RHS coach Patrick Odom, looking ahead to at least one and perhaps two more meetings with Hamilton later this season. "I'm proud of our guys. This was a real character win. When we had those winning moments, our guys stepped up and made plays."**

The most pivotal of those winning moments came midway through the overtime period, with Hamilton (7-1, 2-1 in Class 5A, Area 14) leading by two. A floater in the lane by Buckhalter rolled off the rim, but 6'2 sophomore Jeb Bishop grabbed the offensive rebound and scored the tying basket on a putback while being fouled.

Bishop missed the free throw, but senior guard Lucas McNutt chased down a loose ball and got it to Buckhalter, who drilled his only three-pointer of the night from the left corner to cap off a five-point possession and give the Golden Tigers (4-2 overall through Sunday, 2-0 in area play) a 71-68 lead.

"That was the difference in the overtime period," said Odom, whose team struggled from beyond the arc for much of the night. "I knew Devin or Lucas was gonna make a big shot at some point. I've coached them too long. This was that type of game. Give [Hamilton] credit. Their guys defended our guys really well, and our guys defended their guys really well. Everybody was doing their job defensively on both sides. That's the reason other guys were getting into the paint, because everyone was

See 'LOSS,' Page 15

# Tigers on Top

PHOTOS BY  
KYLE GLASGOW

Weatherford (15) and Bays (right) helped Red Bay bottle up Belgreen with the kind of tight defense Torisky (below) demands.



## Red Bay's boys finally got over the hump against their nemesis Belgreen, asserting themselves as the new team to beat in Franklin County

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - Red Bay senior post player Gath Weatherford was nearly perfect Saturday against Belgreen, attempting a total of 12 shots (four free throws and eight field goals) and making all but one of them.

The Tigers were pretty close to flawless on the other end of the floor as well, stifling the high-scoring Bulldogs and holding off a late rally to earn their sixth straight win, 60-47.

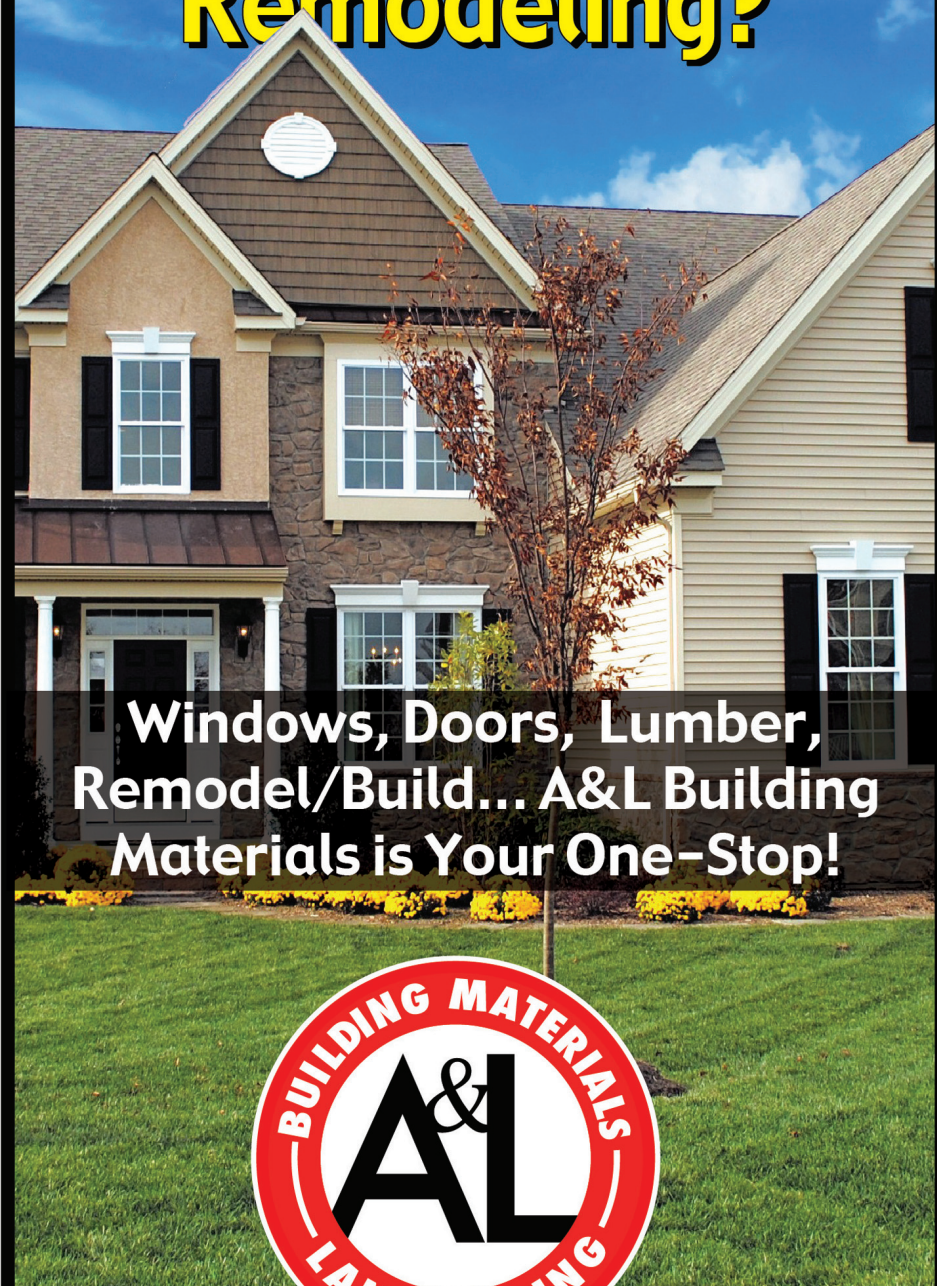
Weatherford finished with a season-high 22 points on 7-for-8 shooting from the floor and 4-for-4 from the line, but Red Bay's stellar work on the defensive end was perhaps even more impressive. The Tigers (6-1 through Sunday) closed off driving lanes, crowded shooters and controlled the glass on both ends, out-rebounding the Bulldogs 32-19 and holding them 30 points below their average of 77.6 points per game on the season coming in.

Belgreen (4-2) shot just 2-for-13 in the first quarter and finished the night at just 32 percent (15-for-47). Seniors Brant Bragwell (17 points on 5-for-13 shooting) and Mason Bragwell (16 points on 7-

See 'KINGS,' Page 17



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## Dempsey helps Belgreen girls hold off Lady Tigers

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - Patience is undoubtedly a virtue, and Chad Green's patience with young post player Emma Dempsey is starting to pay off.

Dempsey, a 6'1 sophomore already in her fourth season of varsity basketball at Belgreen, has shown flashes in the past of becoming the type of offensive force her head coach has long believed she could be. There were three outings of 20-plus points two seasons ago as an eighth-grader, including a career-high 26 in a win at Vina on January 10, 2017; there was an 18-point effort this past February as a freshman in a sub-regional win at Marion County.

But Green, who has taken the Lady Bulldogs to Hanceville twice in his first three seasons, maintains that Dempsey has only been scratching the surface of her offensive potential.

Until now.

Dempsey put on a clinic Saturday afternoon at Red Bay, gashing the Lady Tigers with drives to the basket, pull-up jumpers in the paint and even a smooth 16-footer on her way to scoring a season-high 22 points on 9-for-15 shooting from the floor and 4-for-6 from the foul line.

When Red Bay rallied from a 17-point first-half deficit to pull even late in the third quarter on Lila Blackburn's fourth three of the game, it was Dempsey who answered with a three-point play and back-to-back jumpers to spark a 13-2 run that quickly restored the lead to double-digits.

"Emma just puts in a lot of extra time," said Green, whose team rode Dempsey's dominance to a 70-59 win on Saturday. "I think that's a big key. She's long, she's athletic, and the extra time she's put in here recently is showing great dividends right now."

"Emma just puts in a lot of extra time," said Green, whose team rode Dempsey's dominance to a 70-59 win on Saturday. "I think that's a big key. She's long, she's athletic, and the extra time she's put in here recently is showing great dividends right now."

Much of that extra time has been spent working one-on-one with Green, who has helped Dempsey develop her footwork, face-up game and shooting touch. She's already an accomplished passer, as evidenced by her team-high five assists on Saturday (to go along with eight rebounds and four blocked shots).

"I think, on the offensive side, the best thing she does is draw those double-teams," Green said of Dempsey, who was averaging a career-high 11.8 points per game through Sunday. "She does a great job of kicking it out when she gets double-teamed. As far as scoring-wise, she can put the ball on the floor and get to the goal, she can shoot that one-dribble pull-up, or she can hit that little fifteen-foot shot."

The Lady Bulldogs (5-1 through Sunday) often prefer to get the ball to Dempsey in the high post, rather than on the low block, so she can face up and use her athleticism and quickness to take opposing post players off the dribble.

"She's athletic enough to do both," Green said. "The thing about her is, she can catch lobbs over the top right at the basket. Or she can catch it on the

See 'DEMPSEY,' page 19



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## 'LOSS', from page 13

paying attention to the scouting reports so much during the game.

"That little flurry started with Jeb doing what he does—getting a rebound. Lucas finds a way to make a play and then finds the next guy who knows how to make a play. Once we got the lead, I felt like we kind of controlled the rest of the game. Then I could finally breathe. We just had character guys making big plays in big moments. That's not the last time we'll see that this year."

Down by three after Buckhalter's big shot, the Aggies came up empty on their next trip. They then fouled Bonner, a freshman point guard who had scored 20 points in regulation despite shooting just 4-for-11 from the foul line. Bonner stepped to the line and made two big ones, pushing the lead to five at 73-68. Later, with the lead back down to two in the final seconds, Bonner hit two more clutch free throws to make it a 76-72 game and seal the deal.

**"Both teams are gonna be tough outs," Odom said, "just because of who they have and their experience. The atmosphere in the gym tonight was great. I credit our community and our student section and our kids. It was a lot of fun to coach and play basketball in here tonight. Coach [Ethan] Lawler and I were talking before the game, and it's like I told him, that's the fun part of what we do. After the game, he said the same thing. He said, 'I know we got beat, but this was great. Your guys played their tails off, and mine did, too.' And I said, 'Absolutely, Coach. It was fun.'"**

"How about our freshman point guard?" Odom said of Bonner, who topped the 20-point mark for the second time in as many games and also had seven steals on Friday night. "He went through a stretch where he was struggling at the free throw line. I told him at one point there late in the game, 'I don't care what you've done to this point. You're gonna make the rest of them.' And he did."

For most of the night, Bonner got the better of his matchup with Hamilton's excellent senior point guard, Ethan Brumley. The freshman was aggressive from the opening tip, scoring nine points in the first quarter, creating havoc on defense and helping the Golden Tigers get off to a great start. Brumley, meanwhile, headed to the bench late in the first quarter after picking up an early second foul on a three-point play by Buckhalter.

"I told you—I like my guy," Odom said of Bonner. "I'll take him. No disrespect to anybody else. He's just built to play this game. He makes us look good, because he's so instinctive and he does things you just can't coach kids to do. He just finds the ball."

"I've coached a handful of guys in twenty years, but not many, who have that instinctive ability—their hands always find the ball. He's just that guy. He was the motor tonight. He's still gotta grow. He went through some free throw struggles, but even tonight he worked himself past that. That's just a player growing."

Another one of Russellville's young guns, sophomore sniper Chandler Dyas, opened the game with the first of his three threes on the night and finished with seven first-quarter points as Russellville raced out to an early 23-8 lead and appeared on the verge of running Hamilton right out of the gym.

Odom knew better.

"I can't say I would have thought about overtime, but I knew they were too good for the game to continue like that," Odom said. "We started out really well, but they're really good. They were undefeated for a reason. They believe they're gonna win. I knew they were gonna make a run. I felt like there were a couple of stretches in the second half where we almost took back control of the game, but they did some things to stay in it. Some of that was our mistakes."

"I knew it was gonna be a game, though. They're too good for it not to be."

True to form, the Aggies started getting on track in the second quarter. Brumley played through the foul trouble to score six points, and reserves Caleb Weeks and Josh McDaniel combined for nine as Hamilton out-scored Russellville 23-16 in the second to cut the lead to 39-34 by halftime.

The Golden Tigers endured their worst offensive quarter in the third, going 0-for-9 from beyond the arc and making just four shots from the field (three by Bonner). The Aggies, meanwhile, kept coming, out-scoring Russellville 16-10 to take a 50-49 lead into the fourth.

Trailing by two, the Golden Tigers got back-to-back threes from Dyas and senior Caden Parker to surge back in front 55-51. Hamilton rallied again, and the game went back-and-forth down the stretch until Brumley tied it 63-63 on a free throw with 10.4 seconds remaining.

With 1.1 seconds left in regulation, Russellville executed a perfect inbound pass, with Dyas rolling to the rim off a back-pick and catching a pinpoint lob pass from Parker. Dyas's shot bounced off the rim, however, and the game went to overtime.

The Aggies scored first to go in front 65-63, but then McNutt drilled a three from the right wing to put the Golden Tigers on top. Hamilton see-sawed back in front by two at 68-66 before Bishop's offensive board and McNutt's hustle triggered the five-point possession that proved so pivotal for Russellville.

McNutt, who entered the night averaging 14.8 points per game with a team-high 14 threes made on the year, struggled to find the range and finished with just eight points on Friday. His impact on the game, however, was sizeable—particularly on the defensive end, where he was primarily responsible for holding senior guard Justin Webb (Hamilton's top shooter and an AAU teammate of McNutt's during the summer) to just five points—none after the first quarter.

"Lucas does what we preach—just keep playing," Odom said. "Find ways to impact the game. Some folks will leave here tonight and say, 'Lucas didn't shoot the ball well.' He guarded *Webb* all night. He did a tremendous job there. Sometimes, as a shooter, when you have to expend so much energy and focus on one end of the floor, it affects the other end. But, again, his three, when he made it [in overtime], was huge—big moment, big time."

"Everyone talks about offense, but the little things matter so much in games like this. We found ways to do the little things tonight in big moments, and that was the difference."

Dyas finished with 17 points, knocking down three threes and going 6-for-7 from the foul line. Buckhalter shot 5-for-7 from the line and scored 16 points. McNutt and Parker each added eight, and Bishop had four. Russellville made seven threes as a team and shot 22-for-35 from the line.

Brumley and senior post player Peyton Williams led Hamilton with 13 points apiece. Weeks and Chaston McCarley each scored 10. The Aggies made just three threes and missed 11 free throws, shooting 13-for-24 from the line.

The two teams will meet again in January at Hamilton, and perhaps again in February with an area championship on the line. After Friday's thriller, Odom expects more of the same down the road.

"Both teams are gonna be tough outs," he said, "just because of who they have and their experience. The atmosphere in the gym tonight was great. I credit our community and our student section and our kids. It was a lot of fun to coach and play basketball in here tonight. Coach [Ethan] Lawler and I were talking before the game, and it's like I told him, that's the fun part of what we do."

"After the game, he said the same thing. He said, 'I know we got beat, but this was great. Your guys played their tails off, and mine did, too.' And I said, 'Absolutely, Coach. It was fun.'"

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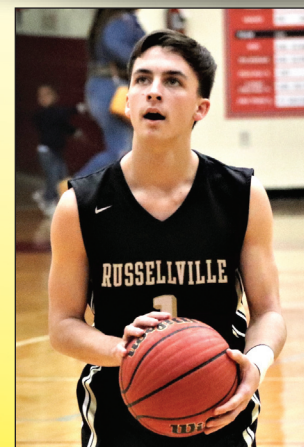
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### Will Bonner

Freshman Guard, Russellville

In Russellville's first two area games of the season last week, Bonner delivered the first two 20-point outings of his varsity career. The pint-size point guard came up large last Tuesday at Lawrence County, scoring a game-high 20 points as the Golden Tigers routed the Red Devils 83-43. Bonner was even better on Friday against unbeaten Hamilton, scoring 24 points (including four clutch free throws in OT) and recording seven steals to spark a 77-72 win.

Through Sunday, Bonner was averaging 12.0 points per game on the year.



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# Tharptown girls shut out Sheffield in first quarter en route to big area win

Staff reports

Tharptown's girls out-scored Sheffield 19-0 in the first quarter last Friday night, improving to 4-4 overall and 2-2 in Class 2A, Area 16 with a 51-12 win.

The Lady Wildcats got six points from Shaylee Wietng and four apiece from Gracie Montgomery and Catie Dawson in the big first quarter. Brooke Daily had five points in the second quarter, and Aly Vandiver added four as Tharptown out-scored Sheffield 17-3 to take a 36-3 lead into the locker room.

Adriana Borden finished with 14 points to lead Tharptown. Daily added 13, and Wieting scored nine. Vandiver had five points, and Montgomery and Dawson each finished with four. Macy Petree added two. The Lady Wildcats shot 11-for-16 from the foul line.

In other recent action:

#### Varsity boys

#### Belgreen 90 Phillips 67

Scout Bragwell set new career-highs with six threes and 27 points for Belgreen last Tuesday night, helping the Bulldogs improve to 2-0 in area play with a win over Phillips in Bear Creek.

Bragwell, a sophomore guard, got rolling early, knocking down a pair of threes and scoring 10 first-quarter points as Belgreen jumped out to a 19-9 lead after one. Bragwell heated up even more in the second quarter, drilling three more threes and scoring 11 points to give him 21 at the half. Senior guard Brant Bragwell also had 11 points in the second quarter, helping the Bulldogs out-score Phillips 29-21 to take a 48-30 lead into the locker room.

Belgreen got eight points from reserve post player Tanner Warhurst and seven from 6'6 senior Mason Bragwell in the third quarter, out-scoring Phillips 20-17 to extend the lead to 68-47. Brandon Green scored 10 of his game-high 32 points for the Bears in the fourth quarter, but Belgreen cruised to its second area win in as many nights.

Mason Bragwell finished with 17 points. Brant Bragwell had 16, knocking down two of the Bulldogs' 11 threes and shooting 4-for-5 from the foul line. Warhurst added a season-high 10 points, and senior guard Gaven Taylor scored nine. Isac Willingham finished with five, Jonathan Gonzalez had three, Will Donahoe scored two and Koby Collins added one. Belgreen was 9-for-17 from the foul line.

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## 'KINGS,' from page 13

for-16 shooting) found ways to get the ball in the hole, but the rest of the Bulldogs combined for just 14 points while collectively shooting 3-for-18 from the field.

"For us, our checklist tonight was like it has been the last couple of games," said Red Bay coach John Torisky, whose team lost all three meetings with Belgreen last season—two by three points and another in double-overtime. "We want to wear people down. We want to get after them on defense, win the rebound battle and run. And tonight we really did a good job on the defensive end.

"Brant and Mason played really good games, but they're really good players. We knew our group as a whole was stronger than their group. That's kind of what happened tonight—we just wore them down. They're not as deep as they have been the last couple of years, and that was our advantage tonight."

The Bulldogs came in averaging nearly eight made threes per game, but they hit just five on Saturday (three by Brant Bragwell and two by the 6'6 Mason Bragwell). Red Bay, meanwhile, nailed 10 threes (including four by the 6'3 Weatherford and two each by senior guard Noah Brewer and sophomore forward Braden Ray), posting double-figure makes from beyond the arc for the fourth time in seven games this season.

"Our goal is no open threes," said Torisky, whose team was holding opponents to just 45.9 points per game on the year through Sunday. "Tonight, Mason hit a couple where we were probably a step away, but if our hands aren't up he can shoot over us. We still were too easy on him, but Gath did a better job in the second half of getting right under him. Brant hit a couple from thirty feet, maybe twenty-eight feet. If he's gonna do that, I can live with that. That's just a good player making shots. But as far as wide-open threes, that's what we judge. We can't give up wide-open threes. We've gotta run them off the three-point line, and we did a really good job of that tonight.

"I don't think they had many shots where they were just catch-and-shoot, nice and easy, and that's our defensive philosophy."

Belgreen's previous season-low in points prior to Saturday had been 64 in a loss to Sheffield on November 29. The Bulldogs had scored at least 75 points in each of their other four games, including one with 84 and another with 90.

"They've been scoring more than us," said Torisky, whose team was averaging a modest 59.9 points per game through Sunday. "A lot of teams play them in a zone, and we're not a zone team. That's one of the ways we can counter high-scoring teams. Our goal...I don't set anything in stone as far as how many points we want to give up, because sometimes you just can't help shots.

"We want to contest shots—that's it. Just contest shots, and we'll live with the consequences."

Trailing 7-5 in the early going, Red Bay got a three from Brewer and a putback by Lane Shewbart to take a 10-7 lead at the end of one.

Weatherford, who didn't attempt a shot in the

first quarter, missed his first look in the second quarter and then proceeded to make his final seven shots of the night. His three-pointer just inside the 6:00 mark made it 16-10, and Red Bay's lead swelled to nine at 27-18 on another three by Brewer with 1:25 left in the first half.

Mason Bragwell answered with a three, and the Bulldogs went into the locker room trailing by six at 27-21.

Weatherford got rolling in the third quarter, scoring 10 points on 4-for-4 shooting to help the Tigers stretch the lead out to nine at 44-35. It was 45-38 midway through the fourth quarter when Weatherford found Ray open at the top of the key for the first of two back-breaking threes by Red Bay down the stretch. The second came at the 2:45 mark, when Weatherford connected from beyond the arc to quell a 5-0 spurt by the Bulldogs and push the lead back out to eight at 51-43.

Junior guard Clay Allison made two throws on the Tigers' next trip, extending the lead to 53-43 and essentially sealing the deal. Red Bay shot 10-for-12 from the foul line in the fourth quarter and finished the game with more three-point field goals (10) than two-point field goals (nine).

"That's the way we play," Torisky said. "Luckily we've got four or five guys out there who can shoot the three for us. We stress good ball movement, and we find the open man. Our goal is to get the best shot we can get. That's nothing new to those guys. If we have good ball movement and find the open man, we've got guys who can knock down shots."

Weatherford had six rebounds and three assists to go along with his fourth 20-point game of the season. Ray finished with 11 points and eight rebounds, and Brewer scored eight points on 3-for-4 shooting. Allison shot 4-for-4 from the line and had seven points, and senior guard Colton Corum chipped in with six points, five boards and three assists.

Shewbart, Hunter Bays and Arden Hamilton added two points apiece.

"It definitely wasn't a piece of cake," Torisky said. "We knew it was gonna be a battle. It's just one of those things. You've got two teams that aren't gonna give in. Luckily, tonight we made enough plays to get them. We've gotta go to their place, and it could be the opposite. And that's okay. We just wanted to play good competition where our kids have to play and get better. That was our goal, and I thought we got better tonight."

Scout Bragwell finished with eight points and three steals for Belgreen, shooting 4-for-4 from the foul line. Mason Bragwell and Brant Bragwell each had five rebounds.

The Bulldogs were set to host Vina on Tuesday night in search of their third area win of the season in as many tries. Red Bay, meanwhile, was poised to play four more games this week after winning three in three nights last Thursday (at Phil Campbell), Friday (at Hatton) and Saturday.

"I don't know if we'll make it through next week," Torisky joked on Saturday night. "But we're gonna try."



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

**CAN'T MISS** - Weatherford took 12 shots on Saturday (eight from the field, four from the foul line) and made 11 of them, finishing with a season-high 22 points. He also had six rebounds and three assists in the 60-47 win.

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# Lady Bobcats bounce back against Red Bay

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Prior to last Tuesday's loss at Belmont (MS), the last time Phil Campbell's girls had dropped a game was in late February to Samson at the Class 2A Final Four.

That loss, of course, was a season-ender, so the Lady Bobcats—who started this season 6-0 and had won 22 of their previous 23 games before last week's trip across the state line—needed to do something last Thursday night against Red Bay that they hadn't done in roughly 11 months. Bounce back from getting beat.

According to head coach Craig Thomas, the results were mixed. "Sluggish," said Thomas, sitting in his office just moments after his team had pulled away with a big fourth quarter to bury the Lady Tigers 62-28. "We started a little slow tonight. We were sluggish. We didn't execute real well in the first quarter, and when you don't execute, you bring hard times on yourself. We missed several, several layups tonight. We've had a rough go the last two weeks, and we've gotta get back on track."

To Thomas's point, after topping the 70-point mark in their first two games of the season, the Lady Bobcats (7-1 through Sunday) had averaged a modest 47.8 points in their last five games heading into Thursday. They still managed to win four of them (posting impressive victories over high-caliber opponents Phillips and Rogers along the way), but things had not been running smoothly on the offensive end of the floor.

"We're not shooting it as well, I will say that," Thomas said on Thursday. "We're not shooting it as well right now as we did early in the year. Shooting comes and goes, but defense is there every night. We're holding people under forty [points] most of the time. We won that Rogers game with defense. We won tonight, basically, with defense. Yeah, we scored sixty-two, but our defense held them to twenty-eight."

"We're not shooting it as well, I will say that," Thomas said on Thursday. "We're not shooting it as well right now as we did early in the year. Shooting comes and goes, but defense is there every night. We're holding people under forty [points] most of the time. We won that Rogers game with defense. We won tonight, basically, with defense. Yeah, we scored sixty-two, but our defense held them to twenty-eight."

Phil Campbell got 23 points from senior forward Abby Davis—her third game last week with at least that many—and 16 from sophomore guard Caitlynn Mills, but most of the first three quarters were a struggle offensively for both teams. The Lady Bobcats shot just 3-for-15 in the first quarter; Red Bay was even worse at 2-for-14 and trailed 10-5 after one.

A basket by Reagan Kuykendall and two free throws from Mallori Miller brought the Lady Tigers within three early in the second quarter, but Phil Campbell responded by clamping down on the defensive end. The Lady Bobcats held Red Bay to one field goal over the next five minutes and forced six turnovers, slowly and methodically turning a close game into a rout. Davis scored nine points and Mills had eight in a 19-2 run that left Phil Campbell leading 31-11 with 1:00 remaining in the first half.

Thomas was pleased to see his team grind it out and play with more toughness amidst Thursday's early struggles than they did in the loss at Belmont, where the Lady Cardinals jumped out to a 23-6 lead after one quarter and then coasted to a 65-54 win.

"The Belmont game will help us. It'll make us more mature," Thomas said. "We've gotta learn to fight through some adversity, and we didn't fight through it very well over there. We wanted to blame everything on everybody else. Playing basketball, you've gotta take care of your business and let everybody else take care of theirs."

Red Bay got a layup from Kuykendall and a three from Miller to close out Thursday's first half, cutting the lead to 31-16. The third quarter, much like the first, was ugly, with the two teams combining to shoot just 5-for-28 from the field with 10 turnovers.

Leading 39-22 at the end of three, the Lady Bobcats put together their best offensive quarter in quite a while in the fourth, shooting 8-for-12 from the floor and 6-for-9 from the foul line to out-score Red Bay 23-6 and put the game out of reach.

Thomas actually credited a defensive adjustment with providing the spark for his team's late-game push.

"We went into a half-court trap in the fourth quarter and got our guards out running," Thomas said. "With us playing man-to-man, it's so hard to get our guards out running like that. [In the half-court trap], we're already out far

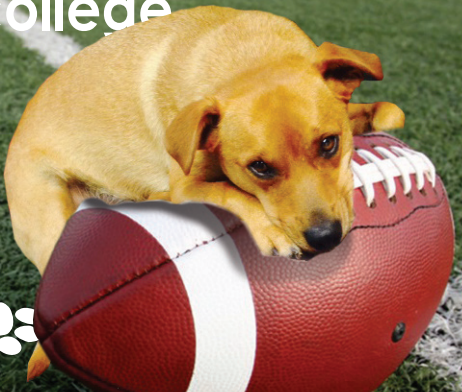
See 'BOUNCE,' page 19

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**‘BOUNCE’, from page 18**

enough to get a head start on people. So a lot of what we were getting in that fourth quarter was coming off our half-court trap.” Davis, coming off back-to-back 25-point outings against Colbert Heights and Belmont earlier in the week, scored eight in Thursday’s fourth quarter to finish with 23 on 7-for-15 shooting from the field and 7-for-9 from the line. She also had six rebounds, four blocks and two steals. Mills, like Davis, knocked down a pair of threes, finishing with 16 points, five rebounds and four steals.

Junior guard Kallie Allen scored seven of her nine points in the fourth quarter and also finished with 10 rebounds, four assists and two steals. Sophomore Katie Thomas had nine points, seven boards, three assists and two steals. Kenner Scott added three points, and Olivia Taylor had two. Phil Campbell finished the night shooting 39 percent (21-for-54) from the field and 15-for-29 from the foul line. Red Bay shot just 23 percent (11-for-47) from the field and committed 21 turnovers. Lila Blackburn led the Lady Tigers with seven

points. Kuykendall had six points, six rebounds and three blocks, and Destiny McCollister put up six points and 10 rebounds. Miller scored five points, and Cassidy Kuykendall added four points and nine boards. Back in the win column, Phil Campbell was scheduled to return to action on Tuesday with an area game at East Lawrence. “It does feel good to get a win,” Thomas said. “We never like to lose. I wish I could win them all, but it just doesn’t work like that.”

**‘DEMPSEY’, from page 14**

block, and with her being six feet or better, she can jump over the top of the defense and shoot that short jumper. “That’s been the main thing for her—developing that jump shot.” Dempsey was quiet early on Saturday, scoring just two first-quarter points, but her teammates more than picked up the slack. The Lady Bulldogs got five points apiece from Ansley Tate and Gracie Dempsey, plus four from Katie Dempsey, on their way to opening up a 20-10 lead at the end of one. Emma Dempsey started to heat up in the second quarter, scoring seven points to help Belgreen open up a 33-16 lead with less than two minutes remaining in the first half. Red Bay (2-5 through Sunday) responded with a 7-0 run, cutting the lead back down to 10 by the break. The Lady Tigers kept coming in the third quarter, getting three threes from Blackburn and five points from senior Reagan Kuykendall in a 17-7 run that tied the game 40-40. “Give Red Bay credit,” Green said. “Coach [Holly] Kuykendall and her girls did a good job of

continuing to fight and not giving up. They hit some shots out of the corner. Our defensive pressure went down some, and we got real relaxed on rebounding the basketball.” After Blackburn buried back-to-back threes in a 30-second span to pull Red Bay even, Dempsey went to work. She converted a three-point play and nailed a short jumper, sending Belgreen into the fourth quarter with a 45-42 lead. She opened the final period with another jumper, and then a driving three-point play by junior guard Autumn Bragwell stretched the lead to 50-42. Emma Dempsey then found Gracie Dempsey [her older sister, and Katie’s twin] for a three to cap off the 13-2 run and make it 53-42 with 6:25 remaining. “Offensively and defensively both, our intensity turned up,” Green said. “We pushed the basketball up the floor and did a good job of getting into the lane to create stuff. And we started rebounding the ball better.” The Lady Tigers made one final push, getting back-to-back buckets from Kuykendall and later a

three from Mallori Miller to cut the lead to 53-51 with 3:30 remaining. The Lady Bulldogs held off this final charge at the foul line, hitting 15-of-18 free throws over the final three-plus minutes to secure the win. Belgreen shot 22-for-29 from the line for the game and 23-for-58 from the field. Red Bay shot just 31 percent (18-for-59) from the floor and 14-for-25 from the line. The Lady Bulldogs held a slim edge, 36-33, on the boards, and each team had 15 turnovers. Katie Dempsey finished with 11 points and seven rebounds, and Gracie Dempsey added 10 points, five boards and three steals. Gabbie Moore had nine points, five rebounds and four steals, and Bragwell also scored nine points while handing out three assists. Tate had seven points and five rebounds, and Emma Willingham added two points and four boards. Kuykendall led Red Bay with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Blackburn made a season-high five threes and scored 16 points. Miller hit four threes and finished with 15 points.

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