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PAID Franklin Free Press
113 Washington Ave. NW
Russellville, AL 35663

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12.26.18

Local Dems call for change in leadership at state level

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

If there's one thing most of the Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee agrees on, it's that Alabama Democratic Party state chairwoman Nancy Worley needs to go.

The local Democratic Executive Committee met for a Christmas dinner and its winter meeting December 17 at Doe's Eat Place in Russellville.

Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee chairman Eddie Britton, who lost his bid for the House District 18 seat in November, asked the group for ideas to start the process of rebuilding, and restrengthening, the party at the local level.

Republicans won all local contested races in the November 6 general election, with the exception of the Franklin County Board of Education District Five seat, in which independent candidate Kacey Hester Johnston

defeated Democrat Ralph Winchester. "I thank all of you for the hard work you've done this year," Britton told the committee. "While you didn't see it locally or in Alabama, the Democratic Party made some great strides nationally, by taking back the House by a significant amount."

"While you didn't see it locally or in Alabama, the Democratic Party made some great strides nationally, by taking back the House by a significant amount," Britton said. "Meanwhile, our state Democratic Party sat on more than \$800,000 and didn't help any candidates. There was no support from the state party, and that's turned into a big issue."

"Meanwhile, our state Democratic Party sat on more than \$800,000 and didn't help any candidates. There was no support from the state party, and that's turned into a big issue."

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HOSA officers share with RCS Board

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Officers from the Russellville High School Health Occupations Students of America gave a presentation to the Russellville City Board of Education at the board's December 17 meeting.

Along with faculty sponsor Dr. Stephanie Oliver, HOSA officers shared with the board their many accomplishments and the success of Russellville High School's Pre-Med and Health Care Academies.

HOSA officers include: Lauren Rogers, president; Priscila Bahena, vice-president; Melissa Sebastian, secretary; Kaitlin Weeks, treasurer;

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Along with faculty sponsor Dr. Stephanie Oliver, HOSA officers shared with the board their many accomplishments and the success of Russellville High School's Pre-Med and Health Care Academies.

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Shirley Jean Gladney, Russellville, age 80
Died Tuesday, December 18, 2018. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Sylas Labon Hardin, Spruce Pine, age 10
Died Monday, December 17, 2018. Graveside service held at Franklin Memory Gardens. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

James Odie Hines, Russellville, age 82
Died Monday, December 17, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Hickory Grove Cemetery.

Jessie Wayne Smith, Mt. Hope, age 81
Died Saturday, December 15, 2018. Memorial service held at Mt. Hope Baptist Church. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.



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

Merry Christmas

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Wishing you a Blessed Holiday Season and a Safe & Happy 2019!

Grimes: RCS scores improve on state report card

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although the official scores won't be released until early next year, Russellville City Schools superintendent of education Heath Grimes gave a preview of coming attractions at the RCS Board of Education's December 17 meeting.

Grimes said overall scores improved both at Russellville's individual schools as well as the system's overall grade.

"By comparison [to last year], our scores improved, and I'm pleased with that. For our demographics with the number of English Language Learners we have, our academic growth taking place is phenomenal," Grimes said.

The State of Alabama began grading public schools last year on a A-F report card with standard criteria used for all school systems. The criteria used by the Alabama Department of Education is based on the system's score in achievement, growth, graduation rate, college and career readiness and absenteeism.

Grimes has been critical of the criteria because he believes it does not consider the unique challenges of systems like Russellville City Schools. Those challenges, he said, include a large percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) students who have a language other than English as their primary language and poverty and local funding issues.

Last year, Russellville City Schools scored an overall B, with a numeric grade of 85. For high schools with a 12th grade, last year's criteria were: 20 percent academic achievement, 30 percent academic growth, 30 percent graduation rate, 10 percent college and career readiness and 10 per-

cent chronic absenteeism.

For schools without a 12th grade, the criteria included only three categories: 40 percent academic achievement, 50 percent academic growth and 10 percent chronic absenteeism.

Only schools with at least third grade or above were graded, so West Elementary School did not receive a score under the state system.

Last year, Russellville High School received an overall B, with a numeric score of 84. Russellville Middle School also received a B, with an 80. Russellville Elementary School received the system's lowest score, a C grade of 78.

"By comparison [to last year], our scores improved, and I'm pleased with that. For our demographics with the number of English Language Learners we have, our academic growth taking place is phenomenal," Grimes said.

Failing grades in academic achievement were received by all three schools a year ago, but the schools received outstanding grades in academic growth.

Grimes takes issue with the scoring criteria for academic achievement, as it is based on the amount of proficient students in the areas of reading and math utilizing assessments in tested grades.

Forty percent of Russellville City Schools' student enrollment is ELL, and more than 50 percent of this year's kindergarten class at West Elementary is classified as Hispanic.

"If you try to measure the effectiveness of a school by how it is scoring on a standardized test with a large number of non-English proficient students, that limits their abilities to succeed on a standardized test given in English," Grimes said

earlier this year.

This year's scoring criteria included one change that should benefit Russellville City Schools. Five percent of a system's score is based on the progress students who are learning English are making, although it only applies to students who have been in the system at least 85 percent of the school year.

In addition to hearing a report from Grimes on the upcoming report card at its December 17 meeting, the board also:

- Approved personnel moves including: Employment in Position for Paige Hargett, attendance clerk RHS and Alexa Knight, RES teacher; temporary employment for Monica Balding, Madalan Benford, Meredith Dorroh, Jacob Wallace and Emily Woods as 21st CCLC teachers; leaves of absence for Casey Guynn, RMS math teacher from Jan. 3-Feb. 15, 2019 and Olivia Barksdale, speech language pathology teacher at WES, from Jan. 22-March 22, 2019; volunteer Chris Moon for girls golf; resignation in position for Stacy Rackley, RMS teacher; retirement in position for Judy Burcham, WES pre-K teacher and transfer in position for Lisa Gann, from pre-K auxiliary teacher to pre-K teacher at WES, effective Feb. 1, 2019.

- Approved facility use requests for: West Elementary Gym Jan. 23-24, for RHS Cheerleaders mini cheer clinic; RMS on Jan. 5 for RMS Scholars' Bowl team to host RMS Invitational Tournament; RHS Auditorium for Addie's Flip, Tip and Tap annual Dance Recital on May 18, with practice dates May 14 and 17.

- Recognized board member Judy Pounders for receiving All-State Board member status at the recent AASB Winter Conference.

Local establishments receive satisfactory ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

All 14 of the Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of December 10-14 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 14 Franklin County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 90 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The highest score was 98, shared by Russellville Elementary School, 133 Chucky Mullins Drive, and Little Caesar's Pizza, 13655 Hwy. 43.

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

- Piggly Wiggley Deli #93, 518 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 90. (Grease spill out back).
- El Patron Tex Mex LLC, 13665 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 90. (Employee not washing and regloving before handling RTE after contaminating hands on soiled towels).
- West Elementary School, 1340 Clay Ave., Russellville, 91. (Heat Dish machine not reaching required temp of 160 degrees to sanitize).
- Quinn's Grocery, 9980 Hwy. 48, Russellville, 92. (Various foods exceeding time limit including boiled eggs, vinegar slaw, etc.)
- Pizza Hut #2938, 13450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 93. (Mold in ice machine).
- Dollar General #17373, 18625 Hwy. 24, Russellville, 94. (No food probe thermometer).
- Dollar General Market #13757, 212 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 95. (Hand washing sink blocked in produce area).
- 43 Grill, 15110 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 95. (Onion cube slicer dirty).
- Cardinal Drive-In, 602 4th St. W, Red Bay, 96.
- Jimmy's Fuel Co., 19460 Hwy. 43 N., Russellville, 96.
- Big Star of Russellville Deli, 314 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 96. (No paper towels at hand sink).
- Cedar Ridge Campstore, 140 Campground Road, Russellville, 97.

Of the 14 inspections done in Colbert County from Dec. 10, 2018 through Dec. 14, 2018, all received scores falling in the range of satisfactory. The high score of 99 was shared by two businesses, including Dollar General #217, 207 W. 6th St., Tuscumbia.

Health ratings are available at www.foodscores.state.al.us and may be

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Honey Do: Pack it away

It happens every year. Weeks spent shopping, preparing, decorating and cooking and, all of a sudden, Christmas is over. The last of the dressing and pecan pie has been eaten, wrapping paper has made it to the trash and the company has returned home, leaving behind wonderful memories.

And stuff to store.

Ornaments may be the hardest to store away. They may be heirlooms, delicately made, or breakable glass, and you want to take care to see that they are protected until it's time to enjoy them again. One easy way is to buy clear plastic bins and repurpose them specifically to cradle fragile ornaments and keep them free from damage.

Holiday lights aren't designed to stay up for extended periods, so fight the temptation to leave them up until next year. Wind, weather, and ultraviolet sunlight will deteriorate the coating on the cords and break lights, possibly causing an electrical short.

You can do this by first cutting a piece of cardboard to place on the bottom of the bin. Then use a glue gun to attach paper cups to the cardboard. You can then wrap an

ornament in tissue paper and place one in each of the cups. Once the cups have been filled, close the lid on the bin and label it with sticker labels and a permanent marker so it's easy to find later.

You can make several layers with additional pieces of cardboard, provided your ornaments aren't too tall. Keep ornament styles grouped together for better organization. You can also purchase commercially available ornament storage boxes that are specifically designed to contain fragile ornaments. For really tiny ornaments, fill the compartments of an egg container and then store it inside a more sturdy plastic container.

It's very important to store lighting so that cords are not in a bind. Keep holiday light strands untangled by wrapping them around pieces of cardboard cut to fit inside plastic storage bins. Use scissors or a utility knife to make a small notch on opposite corners of the piece of cardboard. You can use these notches for the plugs on each end

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Doug Green



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Letters to the editor

The *Franklin Free Press* is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The *Franklin Free Press* reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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What if the money didn't matter?

QUESTION: I've had two or three jobs since graduating from college, and I haven't felt like any of them were what I'm supposed to be doing with my life. Do you have any advice to help someone find their true calling?

ANSWER: Believe it or not, many folks out there are in the same position. We all want to be fulfilled in our work, and when that doesn't happen we can feel confused, helpless or even trapped.

I believe thoughtful, detailed planning is an essential part of making every goal become reality. Writing these thoughts and desires down is also important. You can have all the passion in the world, but without a written plan—one that focuses on the steps necessary to make it happen—you'll fail miserably every time. Not only will you fail, but eventually it will destroy your confidence.

What is it you really want in life? What type of work do you want to do? Where do you want to live and do the work you love? Keep asking yourself these questions. Assess your answers ruthlessly. Repeat this a few times, and you may find that the answers will change. That's okay, because each time you'll gain clarity.

What is it you really want in life? What type of work do you want to do? Where do you want to live and do the work you love? Keep asking yourself these questions. Assess your answers ruthlessly. Repeat this a few times, and you may find that the answers will change. That's okay, because each time you'll gain clarity. And don't worry if the discovery process takes a while. These kinds of things rarely occur overnight.

"Do the honorable thing"

QUESTION: I want to transition from my current job to a new position with a different company. How should I approach my employer about taking time off for interviews?

ANSWER: My preference would be to use vacation time or, if possible, schedule any interviews during your lunch break. In a situation like this, the honorable thing is for you to make the sacrifice.

You don't have to tell an employer all your plans when you take time off, but you don't want to lie to them either. Just letting them know you have a personal matter to attend to, and you don't feel it's right to take care of it on company time, is enough.

**Ken Coleman is host of The Ken Coleman Show and the top-rated EntreLeadership Podcast, and author of One Question: Life-Changing Answers from Today's Leading Voices. An acclaimed interviewer and broadcaster, Coleman equips, encourages and entertains listeners through thought-provoking interviews, helping them grow their businesses, pursue their passions, and move toward a fulfilled purpose. You can follow him on Twitter at @KenColeman, on Instagram at @KenColemanShow, and online at kencolemanshow.com or facebook.com/KenColemanShow.*



Ken Coleman



Letters
to the
Editor

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That's a lot!

Dear Dave,
I'm on Baby Step 1 of your plan, and I work at a community college that takes a mandatory 20 percent from our pay for retirement. I know you say retirement contributions should be put on hold until all debt except for your home is paid off, so do you have any thoughts on this kind of system? It feels like it's hard to get traction with getting control of my money when so much is being taken out of every paycheck.

Kristi

Dear Kristi,
That is a lot to take out. I've heard of a few places that have a mandatory 12 percent contribution, but 20 percent? That's very unusual. And it's unusually high.
I'm not sure what to tell you. I mean, you took the job. It's what you signed up for. But if it becomes enough of an issue with your finances, you may have to decide at some point if you still want to work there. My recommendation is to begin setting aside 15 percent of your income for retirement *after* you've paid off all debt except your home, and you have an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses in the bank.
At least you're not *losing* the money, so it's not the end of the

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of the cord.

Label the bin with the type of light inside. You can also purchase cord reels designed for long strands of outdoor lighting to keep them untangled and easy to deploy. If your lights came on a reel, don't discard the reel; use it to wind up the lights and store them away.

Holiday lights aren't designed to stay up for extended periods, so fight the temptation to leave them up until next year. Wind, weather, and ultraviolet sunlight will deteriorate the coating on the cords and break lights, possibly causing an electrical short.

Before you know it, we'll be dragging them out again. Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

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world. It's *your* money that's going in there for *your* use some day. I don't know the exact structure of the retirement account, but it is going toward retirement savings of some kind—and that's important!

Dave

Return of premium?

Dear Dave,
I'm thinking about signing up for a return of premium life insurance policy. It costs more per month than other policies, but it allows you to get all your money back after 30 years, assuming you live that long. Is this too good to be true?

Tommy

Dear Tommy,
It's not too good to be true, but it *is* a rip off. *Never* buy a return of premium life insurance policy.

You said it costs more than other policies, right? Well, if you were to take that extra money you'd be paying and put it into a good mutual fund, you'd get all the cost of your policy back after 30 years 100 percent of the time. Return of premium policies are just a gimmick.

When it comes to life insurance, always go with a good, 15- to 20-year level term policy. And *always* stay away from that return of premium garbage!

**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](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).*

Best Wishes for a Great New Year from Hamilton Ministries!

Hamilton Ministries -
2018 Honors Program



Students from Shoals-area high schools are pictured above (along with Sheryl Hamilton) at the 2018 Hamilton Ministries Honors Day Program. Four scholarships were awarded from the Rev. C.D. Hamilton Memorial Scholarship Fund to Madison Hargett, Logan Jones, Xaria Hollingsworth and Cameron Vandiver. We would like to thank the many businesses and individuals who sponsor our ministry and allow these scholarships to be presented.

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Applications for this position will be accepted for this position until 3 PM on Friday 12/28/2018.



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 **R**ussellville FUMC will host a men's and a women's Step Study on Sundays from 3-5 pm. A step study guides you through a process of discovery and recovery over your hurts, hang-ups and habits. Everyone is welcome to attend.


 **M**y Father's House Church will hold a New Year's Eve Watch Night service on Monday, December 31, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Speaker will be Bro. Johnny Smith. Church is located at 104 East Lawrence Street. Coming in the New Year with us!


 **F**or 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!


 **T**he next meeting for American Legion 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.


 **T**he 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.


 **I**f 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 February 7. 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.


 **T**he 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.

 **M**ountain 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.

 **N**ew 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.

 **V**illage Square Apartments in Russellville host George's Country Boys each Monday night from 6-8 p.m. for some Gospel and Country singing. Come join in the fun!

 **T**he Newburg Masonic Lodge #388 meets the first Thursday of every month. The Russellville Masonic Lodge #371 meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. The Franklin County Shrine Club meets the second Tuesday of every month. The Order of the Eastern Star Chapter 256 meets every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Russellville Masonic Lodge. Spruce Pine Masonic Lodge #608 meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge #880 meets the first and third Thursday of each month. Burleson Lodge #143 meets the second and fourth Monday of each month. Belgreen Lodge #428 meets the first and third Monday of each month. All meetings start at 7 p.m.

Have an event we can help publicize? Call us at 256-332-0255.

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Substitutes serving RCS to receive pay increase

Submitted to the FFP

We are excited to announce some great news for our substitute teachers at Russellville City Schools!

Effective January 1, 2019 substitutes serving RCS will receive a 10-13 percent pay increase. The pay increase is a result of the district's continued partnership with Spur.

In July 2016, the Russellville City School System Board of Education partnered with Spur (formerly Appleton) to provide substitute teachers and substitute support staff.

In October 2018, Spur announced new pricing for staffing services, which lowered costs for the district. The Russellville City School System Board of Education used the cost savings from the new pricing to increase pay rates for these valuable workers.

"We want substitutes serving our school district to know they are appreciated and valued. It's an important job and we are thankful for the individuals who choose to serve our district in this way," RCS Superintendent Heath Grimes said. "It's exciting for us to be able to use the cost savings to invest in people."

The new increase in pay rates will go into effect on January 1, 2019. All current Spur employees working in positions where the pay increase applies will receive a notification with details of their new increased hourly pay rate.

"Russellville City Schools is one of many school districts focused on investing in those serving their school district and helping us achieve our mission

of being the most worker-centric staffing company," said Glenn Clayton, Chief Executive Officer of Spur. "Beyond pay, we continue to research and evaluate ways to improve the lives of those working with Spur."

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"We want substitutes serving our school district to know they are appreciated and valued. It's an important job, and we are thankful for the individuals who choose to serve our district in this way," Grimes said. "It's exciting for us to be able to use the cost savings to invest in people."

For those who might be interested in joining Spur's team to be substitutes at RCS, Spur will be holding a Worker Engagement and Recruitment Event on Thursday, Jan. 3 from 1-5 p.m. at the RCS Board of Education Central Office. Those interested can download the Spur app to apply. Those who wish to join the team while at the event will need to bring two (2) forms of ID, and Spur representatives will be happy to assist them with onboarding.

Applicants must have a clear Alabama State Department of Education background check, a valid substitute teaching license (for relevant positions), and complete specified training in order to be eligible to pick up assignments within the district.

Applicants who wish to complete the substitute application process while on-site need to bring a credit card, cashier's check or money order in the amount of \$30.00 payable to the Alabama State Board of Education for the non-refundable application fee.

Applicants may also complete the background check onsite or at the website listed below. Payment information for the background check can be made online in the amount of \$46.90 and applicants may also pay at the fingerprint site with a money order or cashier check made payable to Gemalto Cogent.

To complete the background check, please visit the following website: https://www.aps.gemalto.com/al/index_adeNew.htm
The substitute application can also be found online at the following website: <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ec/Substitute/FORM%20SUB.pdf>



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Local officials take steps to curb drunk driving

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As Alabama finds itself near the top of yet another unwanted list, local law enforcement authorities are encouraging residents to be proactive in keeping safe on the roads this New Year's Eve.

A recently released report from SafeWise identifies Alabama as having the nation's fifth-highest rate of impaired driving fatalities. Analysis was used from the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to rank the states with the highest and lowest rates of impaired driving deaths.

Alabama's rate of 5.49 impaired driving deaths per 100,000 residents ranks fifth. Wyoming has

the nation's highest impaired driving death rate, with 7.59 residents per 100,000 dying in drunk driving incidents. Second is South Carolina, followed by North Dakota, New Mexico and Alabama. Four of those five states have no minimum jail sentence for first time DUI offenders, and no mandatory alcohol abuse assessment or treatment for those convicted of DUI.

With New Year's Eve a major night each year for alcohol consumption, Russellville Police chief Chris Hargett said an additional officer would be working traffic enforcement through the holidays.

Funding for this is made available through the North Alabama Highway Safety Office, with funds emanating at the federal level.

"Holiday season in general is where we see an

increase in drinking and driving," Hargett said. "Traffic is generally heavier during the holiday season, the days immediately before and after the holiday. This is one way to be proactive and hopefully avoid the potential for a fatality on our local roads."

For areas of Alabama with Lyft services available, SafeWise is providing a Safe Rides Home Initiative, which aims to provide safe, sober rides in high-risk states over major holiday weekends.

Free Lyft rides will be available for Alabama residents who sign up at <https://www.safewise.com/blog/safewise-for-safe-rides-home/>. A \$10 credit will be given to the first 100 people to sign up for the SafeWise for Safe Rides Home campaign page.

Council tables item to fill appointment on REB

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

After a brief executive session, the Russellville City Council tabled an agenda item to fill an appointment on the Russellville Electric Board at the council's December 17 meeting.

The board position to be appointed was the one presently filled by Darren Woodruff. After the executive session, city attorney Danny McDowell announced the council met in executive session to discuss the "good name and character of individu-

als" and that no votes or action was taken.

No nomination for the Electric Board seat, either for Woodruff or any other candidate, was made.

In other action, the council:

- Unanimously accepted a bid of \$26,151 by Greg Hovater for purchase of the partially collapsed building at 127 North Jackson Avenue. The city received three bids, from Hovater, Chris Wallace and Morgan Hovater, with Greg Hovater submitting the high bid. The council decided at its December 3 meeting to accept bids on the building, reversing a previous decision to move forward

with renovations at the city's expense.

- Approved a resolution honoring the Cotton Flats Cruisers for their many civic activities and contributions to the city's Helping Santa fund raiser.

- Approved the annual "Spend \$22 on December 22" resolution that encourages residents to shop at home. Statistics show that if each Russellville resident spent at least \$22 on that day, city revenue would increase by more than 60 percent.

- Agreed to a contract with InCare Technologies for backup support in the Administration Department.

'HOSA,' from page 1

Ally Oliver, historian; Alayna Fish, parliamentarian; Leticia J. Diego, reporter; and Victoria Shook and Madison Borden, project chairs.

In Russellville High School's Pre-Med and Health Care Academies, students choose three courses and can receive one of four certifications that allow them to be job-ready after high school or lay the groundwork for continued post-secondary education in health care.

Sixteen RHS students received their Certified Nurses Aide certification last year, and 24 are enrolled in the program this year.

In addition to helping prepare themselves for their professional careers, HOSA students take part throughout the year in various service projects, including fundraisers for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. HOSA also has donated to the National Pediatric Cancer Foundation and the Breast Cancer Foundation.

Several HOSA students were recognized this year as recipients of the

Barbare James Service Award for their many hours of volunteer and community service. Those students include Madison Borden, Victoria Shook, Simon Colburn, Ally Oliver, Alayna Fish and Bergie Villareal.

The students will be recognized at the HOSA State Convention next year, and, if their service hours exceed 100, they will be recognized at the national convention.

RHS principal Jason Goodwin spoke about how effective the Health Care and Pre-Med Academies have been at preparing students for life after high school.

"What these students are doing is more about getting them ready for their professional lives than anything we're doing," Goodwin said. "They will leave Dr. Oliver's program and be immediately employed, if that's what they want. What they have been taught through HOSA will make them easily employable."

'DEMS,' from page 1

Committee member Yvonne Foster said new leadership is needed at the state level and that several legal challenges against Worley are pending in the court system.

"There are multiple cases that center on her failed leadership. I personally know the case in Marion County has credibility to it," Foster said.

That case was filed in Marion County Circuit Court by former Marion County Democratic Executive Committee chairperson Susan Cobb. Cobb alleges she was improperly removed as chair by Worley one week after the June 5 primary.

Cobb said Worley told her she was removed for allegedly failing to certify primary returns with the state party. Cobb maintains the Marion County Probate Judge certified the results to Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill's office and she was unaware of any need to personally certify results to the state party.

Cobb also alleges Worley had no authority to remove her from her local county chairperson position.

Worley was reelected by the Alabama Democratic Party Executive Committee earlier this year. Worley has been the subject of criticism from Democratic state and federal candidates, including Sen. Doug Jones, who alleges there is no organization at the party's state level as well as no support of candidates.

Britton met with Worley seeking financial support from the state party in his

bid to maintain HD 18 as a Democratic seat in the Alabama Legislature.

"She said the party was in debt and owed the national party \$500,000. I asked her why she hadn't paid the debt, but she didn't answer," Britton said.

Committee members expressed concern that with no contested Democratic Primary races locally, their candidates fell behind their Republican counterparts, several of whom faced opposition in the primaries.

Additionally, there was interest in a rotating column in the *Franklin Free Press* written by different committee members to inform readers about important issues and the truth about what Democrats stand for in Alabama.

Other plans for the new year for the Franklin County Democrats include more activity on the group's Facebook page and webpage, franklincounty-dems.wordpress.com.

There are eight elected Democrats holding office in Franklin County: Ralton Baker, Pat Cochran and Shannon Oliver on the Franklin County Board of Education; Paula McDowell, District Judge; Terry Dempsey, Circuit Judge; Shannon Oliver, Sheriff; Joey Rushing, District Attorney and Anita Scott, Circuit Clerk.

Jones, who was invited to the meeting, sent a video message to the group thanking members for their support in his 2017 campaign.

"We are making a difference in Alabama and you are making a difference for the people of Franklin County. Thank you for that and I look forward to seeing you in the future," Jones said.



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Picks and previews for every SEC bowl

The pre-Christmas portion of college football's postseason is in the books, and the SEC bowls are about to begin. Here's a preview and pick for all 11 of them. Enjoy the games!



Mike Self
Sports Editor

Thursday, December 27
Texas Bowl: Vanderbilt (6-6) vs. Baylor (6-6) – 8 p.m. on ESPN

Baylor's defense has been vulnerable to the big play all year, particularly on the ground, and Vandy has an explosive runner in Ke'Shawn Vaughn, who rushed for 1,001 yards and averaged just shy of 7.0 yards per carry. QB Kyle Shurmur finished the regular season on a roll, with 11 touchdown passes and just one pick over the last four games.

The Pick: Vanderbilt 34 Baylor 27
Friday, December 28

Music City Bowl: Auburn (7-5) vs. Purdue (6-6) – 12:30 p.m. on ESPN

Granted, it's just the Music City Bowl, but it sure feels like Auburn could use a win here. It's been a rough off-season already, with uncertainty surrounding the head coach, changes on the staff, and ill news on the transfer front. [Kelly Bryant chose not to come; Asa Martin chose not to stay, following a botching of his red-shirt status by the coaching staff.]

Meanwhile, Purdue is feeling the good vibes after head coach Jeff Brohm spurned an offer from Louisville to stick around. The Boilermakers can put up points with a prolific passing attack featuring QB David Blough and dynamic freshman receiver Rondale Moore, so Auburn needs Jarrett Stidham to go out on a high note in his final college game. Fortunately for Gus Malzahn (who is back in the role of play-caller for the bowl game) and the Tigers, Purdue's defense is nothing special.

The Pick: Auburn 31 Purdue 28
Saturday, December 29
Peach Bowl: Florida (9-3) vs. Michigan (10-2) – 11 a.m. on ESPN

Michigan certainly wanted to be playing on the 29th, but preferably in Miami or Texas, not Atlanta. It's worth wondering how the Wolverines will respond to blowing their shot at a playoff spot with a complete no-show against Ohio State.

Still, between an opening loss to Notre Dame and that closing disaster in Columbus, Michigan won 10 straight and looked pretty darn elite. Even without NFL-bound tackle Rashan Gary, the Michigan D should bounce back against a Florida offense that struggles to throw the ball and finish drives in the red zone.

The Pick: Michigan 24 Florida 17

See 'SEC,' Page 19

Back on track

A huge game from Lucas McNutt helped Russellville rebound from a loss and head into Christmas at 8-3

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

FLORENCE - Lucas McNutt shook off a brief shooting slump to score a career-high 33 points for Russellville last Tuesday, hitting a free throw with three seconds remaining to break a tie with Rogers and lift the Golden Tigers to a 62-61 win in consolation action at the *TimesDaily* Classic.

Coming off a 77-64 loss to Lauderdale County in the tournament's opening round, Russellville (8-3) started slowly on Tuesday against a Rogers team that entered the game with a 4-7 record. The Golden Tigers were sluggish on both ends of the floor, and their general lack of energy and mental focus resulted in their lowest-scoring first half of the season and a 31-21 deficit at the break.

"I think our guys expected to be playing in that 7:30 [winner's bracket] game," said head coach Patrick Odom, whose team came into Tuesday averaging 71.4 points per game on the year. "But we weren't, and that's on us. We didn't play well

See 'TRACK,' Page 14



FILE PHOTO

DEUCE WILD - McNutt (2) went berserk in the second half against Rogers, scoring 22 of his career-high 33 points after the break in the Golden Tigers' 62-61 win.

Message in a throttle: PC girls make statement with blowout



Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

CENTRAL HEIGHTS - At first blush, last Thursday's game between Phil Campbell's girls and Lexington in the consolation bracket of the *TimesDaily* Classic at Central High School didn't mean a whole lot.

But don't tell that to Craig Thomas.

Thomas, now in his fifth season as Phil Campbell's head coach, saw an opportunity on Thursday for the Lady Bobcats to send a message—one that could echo loudly all the way into February, when these same two teams could meet again in a far more meaningful setting with nothing less than the season on the line.

Phil Campbell, ranked No. 4 by the ASWA in the most recent Class 3A poll, is a virtual lock to win the Area 14 tournament title. [The Lady 'Cats have already beaten their only two area opponents, Colbert Heights and East Lawrence, by 18 and 33 points, respectively.] Lexington, meanwhile, is currently sitting second in the Area 16 standings behind Lauderdale County. If the Lady Golden Bears

FILE PHOTO
Thomas's team dominated the second and third quarters on its way to drilling Lexington (a fellow contender in Class 3A) by 28 points.

See 'MESSAGE,' Page 17

'TRACK,' from page 13

[Monday], and Lauderdale County did. This was a consolation game, and in the first half it definitely looked like we were consoling ourselves. We didn't play well at all. It was awful. It was terrible."

Odom challenged his players at halftime ["There might have been some paint getting peeled off the locker room walls," he joked afterwards. "I may owe Florence some money.,"] and they responded. Devin Buckhalter, the team's leading scorer coming in at 17.2 points per game, opened the third quarter with a bank shot from the left elbow. Freshman point guard Will Bonner followed with two free throws and a layup, and then sophomore reserve Brooks Scott scored on a putback.

Buckhalter came up with a steal and found Scott for another layup, and then McNutt drilled back-to-back threes to cap off a 16-5 run and give the Golden Tigers a 37-36 lead with 4:00 left in the third.

The Pirates steadied the ship a bit and recovered to take a 49-48 lead on a driving layup by Cole Childress just before the third-quarter buzzer. Clay Crafton opened the fourth quarter with a bucket to put Rogers up by three, but then McNutt took over. The 6'1 senior scored the next eight points for Russellville and later drove for back-to-back layups inside the two-minute mark to give the Golden Tigers a 61-57 lead.

McNutt, who had missed nine of his 13 three-point attempts in last Monday's loss before starting slowly from the perimeter again on Tuesday, turned things around by attacking the basket more aggressively off the dribble and getting into the lane and to the foul line.

"I've coached a lot of great shooters over the years, and he's one of them," Odom said of McNutt, who leads all Franklin County players this season with 38 threes made. "A lot of times, when a shooter is struggling with their shot, just getting into attack mode and getting to the free throw line and seeing the ball go through the net can really make a difference. We talked about that, and Lucas did a great job today of attacking the basket. Once he started

doing that, you started to see that jump shot get back in a rhythm in the second half."

McNutt hit three third-quarter threes on Tuesday, and his 22 second-half points appeared to have Russellville on the verge of a comeback win. The Golden Tigers had possession and a four-point lead with roughly a minute to go, but back-to-back turnovers (one by Buckhalter, the other by McNutt) allowed Rogers to score two late buckets and pull even.

"We were in position to go ahead and put it away and probably win by six or seven," Odom said, "but we had two very uncharacteristic turnovers there from our two most experienced guys, and that allowed them to get back in it."

"I've coached a lot of great shooters over the years, and he's one of them," Odom said of McNutt, who leads all Franklin County players this season with 38 threes made. "A lot of times, when a shooter is struggling with their shot, just getting into attack mode and getting to the free throw line and seeing the ball go through the net can really make a difference. We talked about that, and Lucas did a great job today of attacking the basket. Once he started doing that, you started to see that jump shot get back in a rhythm in the second half."

After a steal and layup by Rogers' Nick Canfield tied the game 61-61, Odom called timeout with 10.1 seconds remaining and drew up a final play. The Golden Tigers got the ball to McNutt, who dribbled toward the right wing and faked a dribble hand-off to Buckhalter before turning the corner and attacking the basket yet again. He was fouled on a shot attempt with 3.0 seconds on the clock and went to the line with a chance to put Russellville back in front.

"We did a really good job of executing a play there at the end," Odom said. "We got exactly what we wanted, which was a two-man game with Lucas and Devin, and Lucas did a good job of attacking and getting to the rim and drawing the foul."

McNutt, who shot free throws at better than an 80-percent clip as a junior but had attempted only nine foul shots this season prior to last Tuesday, went to the line and made the first, giving Russellville a 62-61 lead. He missed the second, but Buckhalter snatched the long rebound and dribbled out the final seconds, sealing the deal and ensuring that the Golden Tigers would not suffer back-to-back losses for the first time this season.

McNutt made four threes on the afternoon and shot 3-for-5 from the line. He also made nine two-point field goals (eight of which came in the paint) en route to eclipsing his previous career-high of 29 points. He finished with 33, raising his season average to 15.8 per game and leaving him just 21 points shy of 800 for his varsity career.

McNutt's big game notwithstanding, it was Scott whose energy and activity on the boards and around the basket helped turn the tide in the second half. The 6'1, broad-shouldered post player had three big baskets in the third quarter and worked the glass aggressively on both ends.

"I told him after the game, 'We need that from you every night,'" Odom said of Scott, who finished with seven points after starting in place of injured sophomore Chandler Dyas for the second straight day. "He played physical and really gave us a strong presence in the paint. He's capable of doing that more often. When we made that run in the third quarter to get back in it and take the lead, Brooks was a big part of that."

Buckhalter and Will Bonner also scored seven points apiece on Tuesday. Collin Bonner had six off the bench, and Jeb Bishop scored two.

The Golden Tigers made five threes as a team and shot 9-for-15 from the foul line.

Canfield led Rogers (4-8) with 18 points, and Crafton and Harris Anerton added 12 apiece. The Pirates made five threes and shot 4-for-5 from the foul line. They did not attempt a free throw in the second half.

Russellville is scheduled to return to action this Wednesday in the Bracy Invitational at Deshler High School. The Golden Tigers will get a first-round bye before playing at 4:45 p.m. against the winner of the day's first game between R.A. Hubbard and Mars Hill. [That game is set to tip at 11:30 a.m.]

Other first-round games at the Bracy today will be Lawrence County vs. Central at 12:45 p.m., Lauderdale County vs. West Morgan at 2 p.m. and South Lamar vs. Colbert Heights at 3:15 p.m.

After the Golden Tigers play either Hubbard or Mars Hill at 4:45 in the first quarterfinal matchup, Belgreen's boys will take on the Central/Lawrence County winner at 6 p.m. Covenant Christian will face the West Morgan/Lauderdale County winner at 7:15 p.m., and host Deshler will play the last quarterfinal game tonight against the South Lamar/Colbert Heights winner at 8:30 p.m.

Tournament action will continue on Thursday, with the two seminal games set for 7:15 and 8:30 p.m. The championship game is set to tip off at 8:30 p.m. Friday night.

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Reppin' The Bay



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

TEAM EFFORT - Vinson (0) was one of nine different Tigers to score in last Friday's 53-36 win at Winston County, Red Bay's 11th in a row.

Red Bay rolling

Second-ranked Tigers press their way to 11th straight W

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

DOUBLE SPRINGS - Perhaps the key difference between a good defensive team and a truly elite one is this: A good defensive team makes it difficult for opponents to make shots, while an elite defensive team makes it difficult for opponents to even *take* shots.

Red Bay's boys have long since established themselves as a good defensive squad, one capable of stifling foes in the half-court with tenacity and toughness. Last Friday night in Double Springs, however, the Tigers—ranked No. 2 by the ASWA in the most recent Class 2A poll—weren't just good defensively; they were *elite*.

The key? Full-court pressure.

"I was really happy with our defensive intensity," said Torisky, whose team hounded and harassed the Yellow Jackets into 21 turnovers and consequently limited them to a paltry 28 shot attempts in a 53-36 win—Red Bay's 11th in a row. "Our press is starting to come together. We really did a good job tonight of getting a lot of traps. The goal of our press is just to trap in certain situations, but more than anything it's just to slow the ball up. I thought we did a really good job of that."

"I was really happy with our defensive intensity," said head coach John Torisky, whose team hounded and harassed the Yellow Jackets into 21 turnovers and consequently limited them to a paltry 28 shot attempts in a 53-36 win—Red Bay's 11th in a row. "Our press is starting to come together. We really did a good job tonight of getting a lot of traps. The goal of our press is just to trap in certain situations, but more than anything it's just to slow the ball up. I thought we did a really good job of that."

"We gave up one basket off the press, but we probably caused fifteen turnovers. That was by far the best thing we did tonight."

The effect of Red Bay's pressure defense, both in the full-court and the half-court, was evident early and often. When the Yellow Jackets called timeout at the 6:12 mark of the first quarter, they had already committed

See 'ROLLING,' Page 18

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Winston Nolen

Sophomore Guard, Tharptown

Nolen scored a career-high 29 points last Wednesday afternoon, leading the Wildcats to a 72-62 victory over county rival Vina. The 6'0 sophomore scored 14 points in the first quarter and finished the game 13-for-23 from the field, including a pair of threes. He also pulled down eight rebounds and had four steals, helping Tharptown snap a three-game losing streak.

The Wildcats are 2-1 this season when Nolen tops the 20-point mark. [He scored 20 points in a win over Cherokee on December 3 and 22 in a loss at Hatton the following day.]



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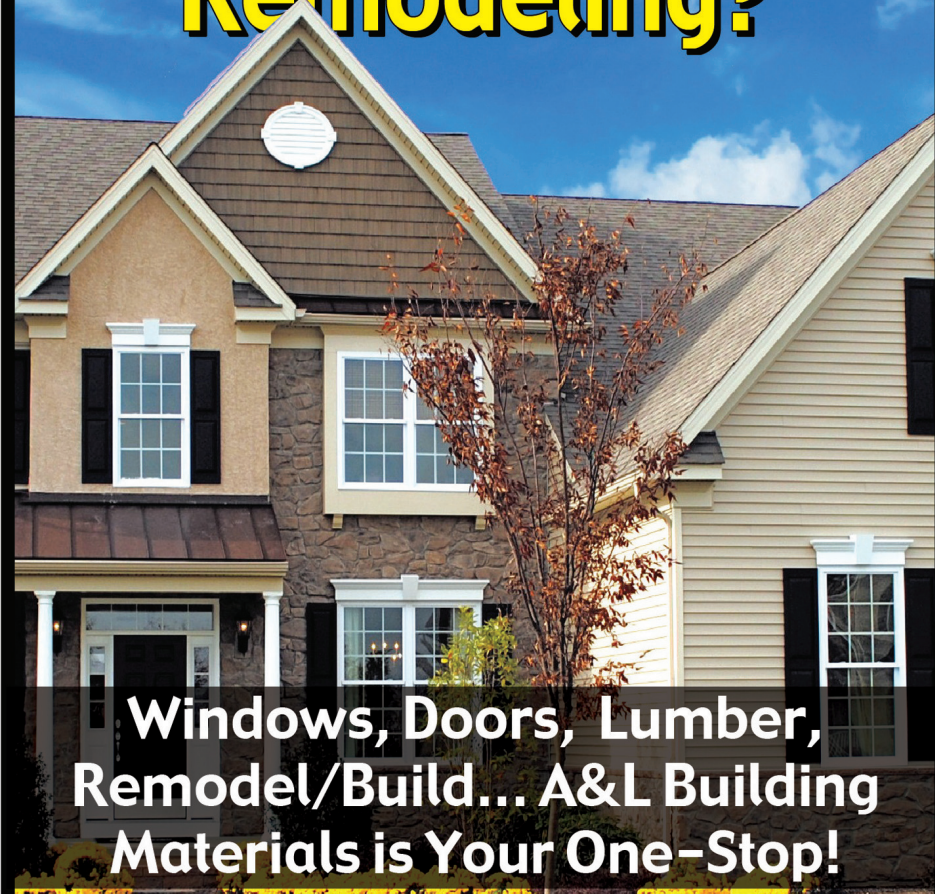
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HWY 43 • Littleville

Red Bay girls remain unbeaten in area play

Staff reports

DOUBLE SPRINGS - Reagan Kuykendall scored 13 of her team-high 18 points in the second half last Friday night, helping Red Bay's girls pull away for a 56-44 win over area rival Winston County.

Leading by just two at the end of one, the Lady Tigers (5-7 overall, 3-0 in Class 2A, Area 13) got nine second-quarter points from senior guard Mallori Miller to out-score Winston County 17-13 and take a 25-19 lead into the locker room.

Kuykendall, a senior post player, got things going in the third quarter, scoring 11 points to help Red Bay push the lead into double-digits at 42-32 heading to the fourth. Lila Blackburn made a pair of buckets early in the final period as the lead swelled to 15 at 48-33, and the Lady Tigers were never seriously threatened the rest of the way.

Kuykendall finished 8-for-12 from the foul line. Miller scored all 11 of her points in the first half. Blackburn scored six of her eight points in the fourth quarter, and Macy Faulkner



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASWORTH

Kuykendall scored 13 of her team-high 18 points in the second half to help the Lady Tigers pull away from Winston County.

made two threes and also finished with eight points. Destiny McCollister scored seven, and Kaylee Markham and Cassidy Kuykendall added two apiece.

Red Bay made three threes and shot 15-for-29 from the foul line.

Saige Blanton led Winston County with 22 points.

Lady Bulldogs knock off No. 9 Decatur Heritage

Staff reports

Emma Dempsey scored 18 points for Belgreen last Thursday, helping the Lady Bulldogs snap No. 9 Decatur Heritage's six-game win streak with a 46-39 victory at Tom Drake Coliseum on the campus of Wallace-Hanceville.

Dempsey, a 6'1 sophomore, had eight points in the second quarter as Belgreen (9-2) out-scored the Lady Eagles 18-9 to turn a two-point deficit into a 23-16 halftime lead. Junior guard Gracie Dempsey hit a pair of threes for the Lady Bulldogs in the big second quarter, and junior post player Ansley Tate added four points.

Leading by eight at 34-26 going into the fourth quarter, Belgreen got six points from Emma Dempsey down the stretch to hold on and win this battle between Class 1A contenders.

Emma Dempsey finished 4-for-4 from the foul line, helping the Lady Bulldogs go 8-for-12 as a team. Gracie Dempsey made three of Belgreen's four three-pointers on the night and finished with 10 points. Autumn Bragwell added five points, and Tate and Gabbie Moore each finished with four. Katie Dempsey scored three, and Emma Willingham had two.

Lauren Jones led Decatur Heritage (8-5) with 18 points.

In previous action:

Belgreen 62 Marion County 37

Belgreen's girls overcame a slow start with hot shooting last Wednesday at Tom Drake Coliseum on the campus of Wallace-Hanceville, rallying from an early deficit to rout Marion County 62-37.

Trailing 11-9 at the end of one, the Lady Bulldogs proceeded to out-score Marion County 37-17 over the next two quarters to take control. Belgreen knocked down eight three-pointers (including three each by Autumn Bragwell and Emma Willingham) on the day and also shot 14-for-18 from the foul line.

Willingham hit two threes in the second quarter, and Emma Dempsey also had six points as the Lady Bulldogs out-scored Marion County 19-8.

Bragwell finished with 18 points, going 7-for-9 from the foul line. Emma Dempsey added 12 points, and Willingham had 11. Katie Dempsey was 4-for-4 from the line and scored eight points. Gracie Dempsey had six points, and Moore finished with five. Megan Smith chipped in with two.



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‘MESSAGE,’ from page 13

finish runners-up, they'll be headed to Phil Campbell for a do-or-die, winner-goes-to-Hanceville, loser-goes-home sub-regional game roughly seven weeks from now.

With that in mind, Thomas wanted his team to make a statement last Thursday afternoon in the final game of their pre-Christmas schedule.

"We talked about it a little bit," Thomas said. "We wanted to play well today, to see how we matched up with them."

Mismatch was more like it.

The Lady Bobcats put on a clinic in the second and third quarters, shooting 63 percent from the field and out-scoring Lexington 46-17 on their way to a resounding 61-33 win.

"I thought we matched up with them well," said Thomas, whose team out-rebounded Lexington 34-20 and held the Lady Bears to just 21 percent shooting (8-for-38) from the field. "We were a little more physical than they were. We've still gotta work on some finer things. We're not dropping back off on the help-side on our back-side defense very good. But we'll fix that.

"It was good for our girls just to know that we should have a good cross-area matchup [in the sub-regional round]."

Senior post player Abby Davis dominated the first quarter for Phil Campbell (10-2), scoring 11 points on 5-for-7 shooting, grabbing four rebounds and blocking four shots. Sophomore forward Katie Thomas knocked down an early three, and the Lady Bobcats led 14-9 at the end of one after holding Lexington to just 2-for-11 shooting and owning the glass to the tune of a 15-6 advantage.

The offense picked up in the second quarter, when Phil Campbell shot 8-for-15 from the field (with four threes) and 7-for-10 from the foul line en route to out-scoring Lexington 27-10. Thomas and fellow sophomore Caitlynn Mills each connected from beyond the arc to cap off a 10-0 run early in the quarter, and Thomas later assisted on another three by Mills that made it 29-13 around the 4:00 mark.

Davis scored five straight Phil Campbell points to make it 34-17, and freshman Kenner Scott added a pair of free throws. Reserve guard Kaci Harris knocked down the team's sixth three-pointer of the first half, and then a jumper by sophomore Trinity Vandiver sent the Lady Bobcats into the locker room with a 41-19 lead.

The onslaught continued in the third quarter as Phil Campbell shot 9-for-12 from the floor and forced six turnovers to out-score Lexington 19-7 and blow the game wide open. The Lady Bobcats got seven points from Mills and six from junior guard Kallie Allen in the third, capping off their best sustained stretch of offensive basketball in weeks.

"Yes it was," said Thomas, whose team had scored a season-low 33 points in Monday's tournament loss to Summertown (TN). "[Lexington] didn't play as tough a defense as we've seen the last few games, and we made some shots we hadn't been making. Maybe this will turn things around a little bit and give us some confidence.

"Getting out in transition was big for us. We've been trying to work on our transition game a little bit, and we upped it some today in that second and third quarter. We got some transition buckets, and we were shooting the ball better today."

"I thought we matched up with them well," said Thomas, whose team out-rebounded Lexington 34-20 and held the Lady Bears to just 21 percent shooting from the field. "We were a little more physical than they were....It was good for our girls just to know that we should have a good cross-area matchup [in the sub-regional round]."

The Lady Bobcats finished the game shooting 51 percent (23-for-45) from the floor and made seven threes, their most since hitting 10 back on November 19 in a 71-65 win over Wilson. Davis, a 5'11 forward who has signed with UAH, scored 16 first-half points on Thursday and finished with 18 on 7-for-12 shooting from the field and 3-for-5 from the line. She also pulled down seven rebounds and had those four tone-setting blocks early in the game.

2018 Keith Davis Varsity Girls Lower Division Christmas Tournament (at Lauderdale County High School)

First-Round Games (Wednesday, Dec. 26)

*All games will be played in new gym unless otherwise noted

3:30 - Giles County (TN) vs. Hatton

5:00 - Phil Campbell vs. Mars Hill

7:30 - Susan Moore vs. Central-Florence (Old Gym)

8:00 - Lauderdale County vs. Tharptown

"Abby is doing a good job of not trying to do too much," Thomas said of Davis, who is now averaging a career-high 16.9 points per game on the season. "She's going to be our leading scorer most

nights, but she's not forcing a lot of things right now. She's starting to see the open people. Most of our offense is gonna revolve around her, and when she plays within the offense, that's when we're at our best."

Mills made three threes on Thursday and finished with 13 points on 5-for-9 shooting. She also had four rebounds, three assists and two steals. Allen scored 10 points, leaving her just three shy of 1,000 for her varsity career. She also led the Lady Bobcats on Thursday with nine rebounds and four steals.

Katie Thomas battled foul trouble all afternoon but still finished with eight points, eight boards and two assists. Vandiver scored five points, Scott had four and Harris added three.

Phil Campbell will return to action this Wednesday with a first-round game against Mars Hill at 5 p.m. in the Keith Davis Memorial Tournament at Lauderdale County High School. If the Lady Bobcats win, a Thursday showdown with Susan Moore (ranked right ahead of Phil Campbell at No. 3 in Class 3A) could be waiting in round two.

"The competition over there is always good," Thomas said. "Win or lose, that's what you go for. It's more about getting better than it is about winning."

Speaking of winning, the Lady Bobcats have now done that in 26 of their last 29 games dating back to last season. They are 10-0 this season against in-state competition, with their only two losses coming to Belmont (MS) and Summertown (TN).

Still, Thomas believes his team has a long way to go if they hope to be back in Birmingham again for the Final Four.

"Lot of improvements to make," he said on Thursday. "Defensively, we've been playing pretty good. Offensively, we're not quite settled in. We struggle at times when the defense gets turned up on us. We've gotta get better offensively."

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'ROLLING,' from page 15

three turnovers and had yet to attempt a shot. Early in the third quarter, following a basket by Tiger sophomore Braden Ray, the Jackets made so little progress in getting the ball up the floor that they were forced to burn another timeout just to avoid getting slapped with a ten-second violation.

Eight different Red Bay players recorded at least one steal, and the Tigers (11-1 overall, 3-0 in Area 13) finished the night with 11 steals as a team. Many of those takeaways led to transition buckets, helping Red Bay shoot a solid 49 percent (19-for-39) from the field.

"The kids like it," Torisky said of his team's full-court press. "Last year, we did it a couple of times when we needed to get back in a game, and it seemed to bring energy. We just didn't have the depth. We couldn't do it for a full game. Now that I've got ten kids, they really enjoy the press, because it leads to easy baskets. They look forward to it. Like I said, it feeds the defensive pressure and intensity a lot when we can jump right into that press off a make.

"But our half-court defense was solid, too. They made some shots, but they've got some kids that can shoot it. We knew they'd make some shots. But, for the most part, they got one shot, and almost all of them were contested. We can live with that."

Winston County (5-7, 0-3) actually shot a more than respectable 46 percent from the floor on Friday, but 13 made baskets (roughly one every two-and-a-half minutes) just isn't going to get it done. Far too many of the Yellow Jackets' possessions ultimately led to quality shots for Red Bay, rather than for themselves.

Leading by seven early in the second quarter, the Tigers got a corner three from senior guard Colton Corum to make it 21-11. Ray came up with a steal that Red Bay failed to cash in, but then reserve guard Tanner Hamilton swiped a Winston County pass and raced to the other end for a three-point play to make it 24-11 with 4:31 left in the first half.

Torisky virtually always plays his second unit major minutes, but Hamilton got even more run on Friday night due to some early foul trouble for starting point guard Clay Allison. Hamilton came off the bench less than two minutes into the game and promptly assisted on Red Bay's first two buckets, a layup by Ray and a straight-on three by 6'3 senior Gath Weatherford.

Hamilton later rebounded a miss by fellow reserve Alex Kennedy and put it back in, stretching the Tigers' early lead to 12-3.

"Tanner is really good with the ball," Torisky said.



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

BLOCK PARTY - Thanks to defense like this from Corum (12) and others, the Tigers have held 10 of 12 opponents to less than 50 points.

"He's improved a lot from last year. He handles the ball well, and he gets to the basket well because he's so long. When Clay goes out, sure, it hurts, because he's such a great defensive player for us, but it lessens the blow because we've got a guy like Tanner who's comfortable running the point.

"Hunter Bays [a senior guard who dished out a team-high three assists last Friday] can do it, too, because he had to do it as a sophomore. We're pretty blessed to have three kids who can handle

the ball pretty well."

Aside from failing to convert a handful of opportunities around the rim, Red Bay was very efficient on offense Friday night, turning the ball over just eight times and shooting 11-for-14 from the foul line. Ray finished with 15 points on 5-for-8 shooting from the field and 5-for-7 from the line. Corum scored seven points in the second quarter and finished with nine on 4-for-5 shooting.

Weatherford and 6'5 sophomore Lane Shewbart each scored seven points, and Hamilton finished with five. Allison had four points (on 2-for-2 shooting) and three steals, and Kennedy, Noah Brewer and Jalen Vinson added two points apiece.

Cade Taylor led Winston County with 18 points on 7-for-16 shooting, with three threes.

It has now been 39 days since Red Bay's season-opening loss to Class 1A No. 1 Decatur Heritage, a stretch during which the Tigers have gone 11-0 while holding eight opponents to 43 points or less. They've also won three area games by an average margin of 33 points.

Torisky was asked on Friday to put his finger on the defining characteristic that has helped carry his team through this month-long win streak.

"I would say our toughness. These last two games have been area games, Addison [an 89-36 rout on December 15] and here, and we've just really buckled down on defense and grinded it out," Torisky said. "Offensively, we can score if we want to, but in a game like this, we're just trying to get through the win and keep kids from getting hurt. So we slowed down in the last quarter, but offensively we were pretty sharp tonight for three quarters, other than a couple of easy misses early.

"As far as execution, we've been really executing well on offense, too. We average a lot of assists a game, which is a good thing. Most of our baskets, we're getting assists on. These guys are unselfish. They like to give the ball up and pass and find the open man."

The Tigers will take their 11-game win streak up north this week to play in the 58th annual Mater Dei Christmas Tournament in Illinois, Torisky's home state. Red Bay will open play on Wednesday, December 26 with a game against the host school, Mater Dei.

"There will be a lot of really good teams there," Torisky said. "I'm excited about it. I've watched a couple of them on film and seen one of them live. They're all real high-quality teams. They don't make many mistakes. They're basically what we strive to be like. That's where I grew up, so that's what I know. We're gonna get challenged, but we need that right now."

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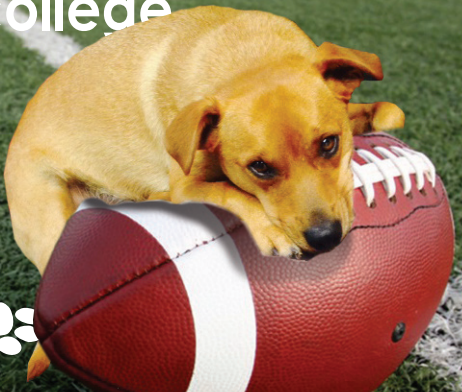




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‘SEC’, from page 13

Belk Bowl: South Carolina (7-5) vs. Virginia (7-5) – 11 a.m. on ABC
Virginia started 6-2 but then crumbled down the stretch, allowing 200-plus rush yards in each of its last four games while going 1-3. South Carolina QB Jake Bentley, on the other hand, closed on a hot streak, throwing 20 TD passes and just six picks over the final seven games. If the Gamecocks can support Bentley with enough of a running game to balance the offense just a bit, they should pick up their sixth bowl win in the last seven tries.
The Pick: South Carolina 34 Virginia 24

Orange Bowl: Alabama (13-0) vs. Oklahoma (12-1) – 7 p.m. on ESPN
Tua Tagovailoa is reportedly ahead of schedule in his recovery from ankle surgery and will be playing with a chip on his shoulder after getting edged out by Kyler Murray for the Heisman Trophy. Murray is a phenomenal playmaker, but he'll be facing an angry Alabama defense determined to send a message. Tua, meanwhile, and the Tide offense will be facing an Oklahoma D that gave up 40-plus points five times this year and allows an average of 6.0 yards per play (102nd in the nation).
The Pick: Alabama 51 Oklahoma 31 Monday, December 31

Liberty Bowl: Missouri (8-4) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6) – 2:45 p.m. on ESPN
The Cowboys' record is a bit deceiving, given that they beat quality opponents in Boise State, Texas and West Virginia while losing to Oklahoma by one point. Then again, they also lost to Baylor, to Kansas State by 19 and to Texas Tech by 24. Missouri has a productive ground game to complement Drew Lock, and that balanced offense

should have a field day against an OSU defense that yielded a 24/5 TD/INT ratio while also ranking last in the Big 12 against the run.
The Pick: Missouri 45 Oklahoma State 38

Taxslayer Bowl: Texas A&M (8-4) vs. N.C. State (9-3) – 6:30 on ESPN
The Aggies were 8-0 on the field as betting favorites this year, generally only losing to teams they were supposed to lose to (Clemson, Alabama, Auburn, Mississippi State). N.C. State, meanwhile, feasted on a weak ACC and got clobbered by Clemson, which barely escaped College Station with a win. Both teams excel at stopping the run, but Kellen Mond's dual-threat ability could be the difference for an A&M team that certainly seems to be on an upward trajectory heading into 2019.
The Pick: Texas A&M 28 N.C. State 24 Tuesday, January 1

Outback Bowl: Miss. State (8-4) vs. Iowa (8-4) – 11 a.m. on ESPN2
Both defenses should have the upper hand, so don't expect a ton of points. But State's defense—which leads the country in fewest points allowed and ranks second in yards allowed per play—is better, and Nick Fitzgerald found a groove over the final five games with 11 TD passes and zero interceptions.
The Pick: Miss. State 20 Iowa 14

Citrus Bowl: Kentucky (9-3) vs. Penn State (9-3) – 12 p.m. on ABC
A 10-win season capped off by a New Year's Day bowl win would be as good as it gets for Kentucky, but the Wildcats' inability to throw the football with any consistency makes them one-dimensional on offense and much easier to prepare for. When the 'Cats rushed for at least 100 yards this season, they were 8-0. When they did-

n't, they were 1-3. Meanwhile, the dual-threat abilities of Trace McSorley should help Penn State put up just enough points against a very good Kentucky D.
The Pick: Penn State 17 Kentucky 16

Fiesta Bowl: LSU (9-3) vs. UCF (12-0) – 12 p.m. on ESPN
UCF is in position to do what it did a year ago—beat a high-profile team from the powerful SEC West in a big-time bowl game to cap off an unbeaten run and validate a perfect season. Unfortunately for the Knights, they're not as good as they were a year ago, particularly without injured QB McKenzie Milton. The prospect of ending UCF's 25-game win streak and silencing all the bogus talk about back-to-back national championships should serve as ample motivation for LSU.
The Pick: LSU 34 UCF 28

Sugar Bowl: Georgia (11-2) vs. Texas (9-4) – 7:45 p.m. on ESPN
Texas is good. Georgia is great. Provided the Bulldogs use their playoff snub as motivation, they should out-class the Longhorns in this one. Texas has big-time receivers in Lil'Jordan Humphrey and Collin Johnson, but we saw what Georgia's defense did to the Alabama passing attack in the SEC title game. The Texas D, meanwhile, will have its hands full trying to slow down a Georgia ground game featuring three tailbacks averaging better than 6.0 yards per carry. Jake Fromm, who has 27 touchdown passes and just five interceptions this season, has quietly cemented himself among the nation's elite quarterbacks. Only Tua and Kyler Murray finished the regular season with a higher passer rating.
The Pick: Georgia 37 Texas 24

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