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02.13.19

Local students probe potential careers on Job Shadowing Day

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Punxsutawney Phil may not have seen his shadow this year, but a host of Franklin County professionals saw theirs last Tuesday as 47 high school students took part in the annual "Job Shadowing Day," sponsored by the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.

The students, each of whom is part of the chamber's Junior Leadership Program, spent the morning of February 5 shadowing various businesses and professionals across the county.

Franklin County Chamber executive director Cassie Medley said students chose three possible careers they are interested in and ranked them according to their preference.

Chamber assistant director Susan Hall worked with local businesses and professionals to place the students

See 'JOB,' Page 3



From left: RPD Lt. Jake Tompkins, Alivia Clemmons, Julianna Wallace, Carley Briles and Lt. Mike Miller.



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U.S. Navy Band set to perform free concert at Tharptown High

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The United States Navy Band will include a stop in Franklin County as part of its 18-city, nine-state tour with a concert at Tharptown High School.

The U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters is the official chorus of America's Navy. The Sea Chanters' music ranges from traditional choral, including sea chanteys and patriotic music, to opera, Broadway and contemporary music, according to the U.S. Navy Office of Community Outreach.

The free concert is set for Saturday, March 16, at 7 p.m. at the Tharptown High School gymnasium. THS principal Barry Laster said the event is for the community, and school officials are hoping for a large turnout.

"We want to encourage not only our community but all communities in our county and neighboring counties to come out," Laster said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the U.S. Navy Band to be in our area and to put on a free concert."

Volunteers will man the concession stand and have refreshments for sale, Laster said, but there is no admission to the concert.

The Sea Chanters chorus has performed for the President, Vice-President and numerous Congressional, military and foreign dignitaries.

Through their annual tour, the Sea Chanters seek to reach out to audiences in areas of the country that would not otherwise have the opportunity to hear the Navy's premier musical ensemble.

See 'BAND,' Page 9

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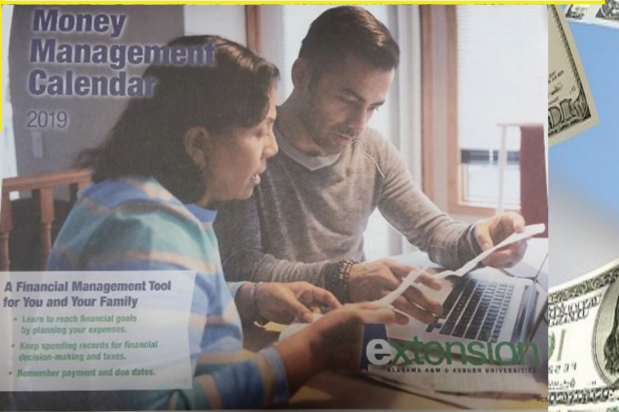
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Come by the Franklin County Extension office (Courthouse Basement; Room 1) to pick up your FREE Calendar! Calendars cannot be mailed.

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"In Memory of our loved ones..." brought to you by Atkins Marble and Granite Works and Franklin Memory Gardens

Rosaline Hand "Tot" Allen, Russellville, age 76
 Died Saturday, February 9, 2019. Funeral held at Bethlehem Baptist Church. Interment in the adjoining cemetery. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

Dorothy Ann Groce, Russellville, age 76
 Died Tuesday, February 5, 2019. Funeral held at Friendly Temple Church of God in Christ, Russellville. Interment in Fairview Cemetery in Russellville. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

George David Harris, Russellville, age 68
 Died Thursday, February 7, 2019. Funeral mass held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church. Interment in Oak Grove Cemetery.

Janice Kay Ledlow Killian, Russellville, age 65
 Died Saturday, February 9, 2019. Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at Spry Memorial Chapel, with the service following at noon in the chapel. Interment will be in Phil Campbell City Cemetery.

Helen Jean Mitchell, Phil Campbell, age 80
 Died Monday, February 4, 2019. Graveside services held at Liberty Hill Cemetery in Phil Campbell. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.

Jason Poore, Russellville, age 38
 Died Monday, February 4, 2019. Funeral arrangements had not been announced at press time. Pinkard Funeral Home was assisting the family.

Jack Leon Watson, Russellville, age 76
 Died Friday, February 1, 2019. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Gravel Hill Cemetery.

Sale good February 13 through February 19



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Council approves purchase of monument

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council approved the purchase of a monument to be erected at Sloss Lake as part of the city's recognition of its bicentennial.

The \$2,000 monument will be constructed by Atkins Marble & Granite of Russellville, and will feature Major William Russell, whom the town is named for.

Franklin County Archives director Chris Ozbirn said she hoped to place the monument on the east side of Sloss Lake at the entrance.

Russellville was founded on November 27, 1819, and the first settlement was at the Sloss Lake location, Ozbirn explained.

"We want to put a monument there, as it is one of the most historic sites in Russellville," Ozbirn told the council. "It was the original site of Russellville. We think people need to know that, and we will use the erection of the monument as a kickoff for the city's bicentennial celebration."

Ozbirn said tentative plans call for the monument to be unveiled on March 1, 2019, as part of the official Russellville Bicentennial kickoff.

In other action, the council:

- Approved and authorized the submission of the annual Foster Grandparent Program grant application for the period of April 1, 2019, through March 31, 2020. The annual budget for the program is \$397,000, of which \$331,000 comes from federal funding.

- Renewed a \$500,000 line of credit with CB&S Bank and authorized the mayor and city clerk to sign the necessary line of credit documents on behalf of the city. The interest rate, according to mayor David Grissom, is one point below prime.

- Declared a vacancy for the position of assistant superintendent with the Russellville Street Department and agreed to promote from within the Classified Service list. Also, the council declared a vacancy for laborer in the Russellville Street Department and authorized advertisement to solicit job applications.

'JOB' from page 1

in areas that reflected their various career interests.

"We tried to place each student the best we can and focused on staying in Franklin County for all job shadowing," Medley said. "Our businesses in Franklin County have always been very kind to let someone shadow them and participate. This is the seventh year I've been involved in the Job Shadowing Day, and the response from the local community grows each year."

Medley said she's seen former Junior Leadership students make career choices, and change career plans, based on their experience on Job Shadowing Day.

"Their experience often solidifies what they want to do with their careers, one way or the other," Medley said. "We may have a student who says he or she wants to be a veterinarian, and when they shadow a vet they realize it's not at all like they expected so they change their minds about

what they want to do.

"And some say, 'Oh my gosh, I love this, and I want to go to school to become a vet or a chiropractor or a physical therapist.'"

Students were placed in areas that reflected their various career interests.

"We tried to place each student the best we can and focused on staying in Franklin County for all job shadowing," Medley said. "Our businesses in Franklin County have always been very kind to let someone shadow them and participate. This is the seventh year I've been involved in the Job Shadowing Day, and the response from the local community grows each year."

Three juniors, Carley Briles, Julianna Wallace and Alivia Clemmons from Russellville High School, shadowed the Russellville Police Department.

"We always welcome these students on Job Shadowing Day," said RPD chief Chris Hargett. "We are always looking for local students to enter law enforcement and stay at home. This gives them a taste of what happens on a day-to-day basis."

Among the 25 businesses and professionals to host students were Russellville Hospital, Dr. Brett Bowen, DDS, Green's Dependable Hardware and Davis Realty.

Medley will soon begin her annual speaking tour to all Franklin County 10th-graders to introduce them to the Junior Leadership Program and encourage them to apply.

"I'll speak to each tenth-grade class later this month and tell them about Junior Leadership. Applications will be due in the spring before they get out of school," Medley said. "After the interview process, we'll make our selections and announce the new Junior Leaders by late June."

Russellville City Schools team up with Toyota

Submitted to the FFP

RUSSELLVILLE — February is Career Technical Education Month, and the Russellville City Schools Career and Technical Education Department couldn't be more excited about the great things happening in their program, including their most recent partnership with Toyota.

RCS CTE director Natalie Bendall has been working with Russellville mayor David Grissom and David Fernandes, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama, Inc. in Huntsville, to secure equipment for the Automotive Technology Program that will greatly enhance students' learning and training.

Thanks to the cooperation of Fernandes and his willingness to train up the next generation of automotive workers, Toyota is donating four engines that students in the Automotive Technology Program will be able to use to receive hands-on training, which is an invaluable experience.

This recent partnership with Toyota is just one example of the impact the community can have when they partner with RCS to improve students' educational experience.

And thanks to Toyota's generosity, RCS CTE will also be receiving a Toyota Corolla for training and learning. Students will be able to get the full experience of working on a vehicle, and as a result, will be better prepared to enter the workforce or receive further training after graduation.

This recent partnership with Toyota is just one example of the impact the community can have when they partner with RCS to improve students' educational experience. Community involvement is a wonderful way for students to receive support and know they have people outside the school system who are rooting for them to succeed.

RCS is thankful for Toyota and their willingness to contribute to the next generation.



COURTESY PHOTO

RCS CTE director Natalie Bendall has been working with Russellville mayor David Grissom and David Fernandes, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama, Inc. in Huntsville, to secure equipment for the Automotive Technology Program that will greatly enhance students' learning and training.

This week's Honey Do List: Love is on the list

Valentine's Day is February 14th, and there are many ways to show your love to that special someone.

There are chocolates, flowers, cards--generally just doing something for that person.

Who's your Valentine? Just look at your "Honey do List."

The list means there are chores. Be thankful for that wall to paint, that lawn to cut or that plumbing to fix.

HONEY. If you have someone in your life who calls you honey, sugar, sweetheart, darling or some similar term of endearment, you are blessed with a Valentine--husband, wife, son, daughter, mom, dad, friend, whomever it may be.

DO. We should all be thankful for

the knowledge, ability and willingness to take care of things that need to be done. If we are not able, we should be very thankful for those who help us, for they are our Valentine.



Doug Green

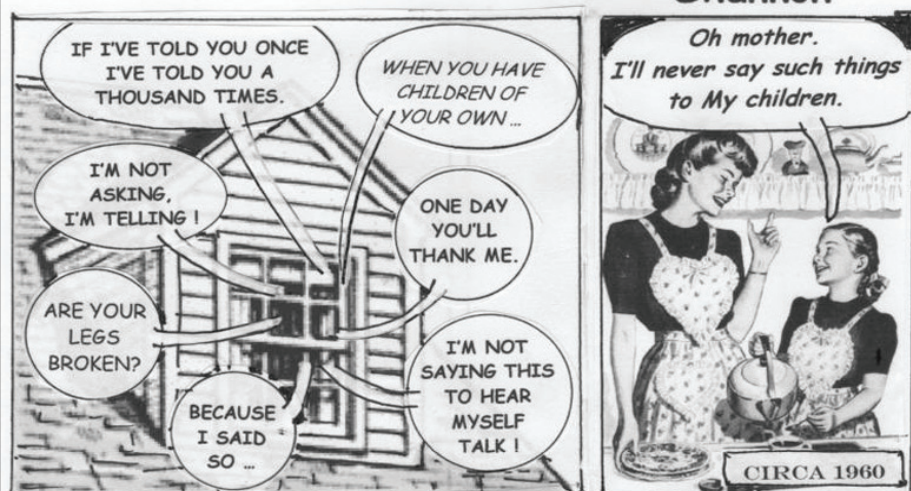
LIST. The list means there are chores to do. Be thankful for that wall to paint, that lawn to cut or that plumbing to fix. And don't forget to be thankful for that person, your Valentine, who cares enough about things to make the list in the first place, even if it's you yourself.

Happy Valentine's Day, and remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.

Letters to the Editor

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

OUR HOUSE by Ree Shannon



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Let's take better care of our Veterans

Since the recent campaigns are over and we are now in a non-political year, I want us to consider some of the subjects concerning what people really need and what they want their elected officials to do in those regards.

This article represents my own personal opinions and is not in any way a reflection on either of our political parties. In an effort to give full disclosure, I currently serve as chairman of the Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee. I also ran an unsuccessful campaign for the Alabama House of Representatives.

Any comments in this article or any future articles have no reflection on my opponent and should not be so construed. This article is intended to point out areas that need addressing.

It is common knowledge that almost all political figures talk about helping our Veterans, especially in the area of medical care. And, I believe, most of our citizens have a genuine desire to have our veterans treated with the utmost respect and have the best medical care possible provided for them and their families. But this is obviously not the current state of affairs.

What follows is real. It has actually happened and is still happening. My nephew recently retired from our armed forces with over 21 years of service in the United States Air Force. He had six (6) deployments abroad, including four to the Middle East during his career. He served in Iraq, Korea, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

While stationed in Pakistan he contracted a parasite that caused a stomach infection, which turned into stomach ulcers that still bother him today. I am extremely proud of him (and all that have served), as are most Alabamians, for how

he has served us all. And the toll on his wife is probably grossly unappreciated.

But here is the problem. In spite of my nephew's dedicated service of over 21 years, the low-cost insurance afforded to him, TRICARE (a registered trademark of the Department of Defense) is not what it should be. They only approve a small number of physicians, and even fewer physicians actually accept their coverage. Often, when my nephew or a member of his family needs medical attention, they must travel a significant distance to either find an approved doctor or one that accepts TRICARE Insurance.

It is common knowledge that almost all political figures talk about helping our Veterans, especially in the area of medical care. And, I believe, most of our citizens have a genuine desire to have our veterans treated with the utmost respect and have the best medical care possible provided for them and their families. But this is obviously not the current state of affairs.

When I asked one physician, who accepts the veteran's insurance, why many did not accept it, the response was that while TRICARE paid well when the bills were finally approved, it took an extreme amount of paperwork and navigating of red tape to get to that point.

There are currently three Veterans Administration (VA) Hospitals located in Alabama: Birmingham, Tuscaloosa and Central Alabama (which has a campus in Tuskegee and one in Montgomery). There are several VA Clinics



Eddie Britton



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by Dave Ramsey

A teachable moment

Dear Dave,
My mom is single, and she co-signed on my student loans for college. Would it affect her credit if I couldn't or didn't make the payments?

Terri

Dear Terri,
Yes, it would. The truth is, your mom shouldn't have co-signed for you in the first place. There's only one reason lenders want a co-signer, and that's because they're afraid the person taking out the loan won't be able to pay back what's owed.

You'll be trashing your *and* your mom's credit if you don't pay the bills on time. If she co-signed for you, and you don't do the right thing and pay back the loans, she'll start getting phone calls looking for the money, too. I don't think you want to subject your mom to the stress and hassle of collector calls or bad marks on her credit, do you?

Believe me, I understand what happened. Your mom loves you, and she wants the best for you. She's willing to do whatever it takes to help her daughter succeed. What I want you both to understand going

'VETERANS,' from page 4

throughout the state with three in our area: Huntsville, Sheffield and Jasper. These clinics are only designed to accommodate the veterans themselves and not family members. And the meds that my nephew's VA doctor prescribes are not the same as what he was given while on active duty.

Why can't our Health Care System be improved so that our Veterans—our real American Heroes—and their families can get treated locally by the doctors they choose?

So, the question becomes: Why can't our Health Care System be improved so that our Veterans—our real American Heroes—and their families can get treated locally by the doctors they choose? It seems to me that they should be allowed to go to the doctor of their choice and that all physicians should be required to accept their insurance.

We all want the best medical care possible (and other needs as well) for our veterans. They deserve it. We should demand they get it.

If you believe this is one area that needs improving, please help begin the conversation by sharing your thoughts with others. We can make a difference.

My email is ebritton2018@gmail.com if you would like to contact me.

forward is that the idea that you have to borrow money to attend college—or do anything else, really—is a myth. There are many ways to get a great education and find excellent career opportunities without borrowing a dime. Scholarships and grants are everywhere these days. There's absolutely nothing wrong with working before *and* during college to help cash-flow an education, or you can begin your studies at a community college where the costs are much less.

In addition to four-year schools and community colleges, anyone looking to further their education shouldn't ignore the possibility of trade or technical schools. At these institutions, you can get valuable training that's highly marketable. Not to mention completing a trade or technical school program usually takes less time *and* is cheaper than a bachelor's degree.

My goal here isn't to fuss at you or beat you up, Terri. It's just very important you understand what's at stake—now and in the future. My hope is to give you and your mom some good information that will help each of you make smarter, more informed financial decisions down the road!

Dave

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

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

Congratulations from!



Winning entries received, with the remaining winners running in our February 20 edition. FRANKLINFREEPRESS.NET



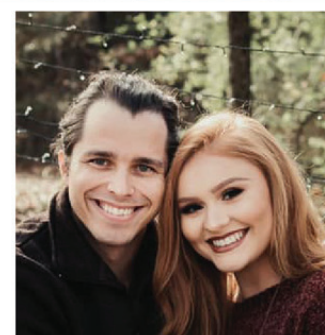
Dale Frederick, nominated by Kimberly Frederick. My husband Dale and I... We've been together 21 years! He's the rock in our family! Recently he has been diagnosed with

Cancer that has spread to his lungs but he never gives up! I pray this Valentine's Day is the best he's ever had!



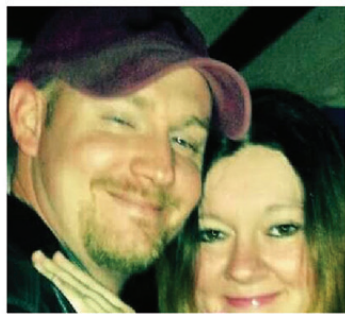
Daryl Garrison, nominated by Valerie McLemore Garrison. My husband Daryl Garrison and I have been together for 7 years and married for 4.. He is a true gift from God! He loves me unconditionally, believes in me,

supports me, encourages me and helps me be a better person! I'm so blessed to get to do life with my husband the love of my life!!



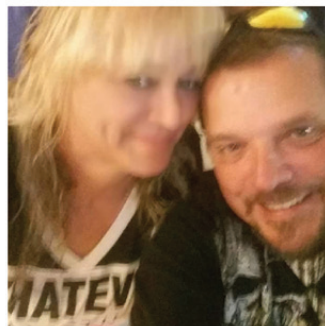
Abby Swinney, nominated by John Derek Sweeney. The sweetie of all sweeties, Abby Swinney! How we met was such a God thing. We've been an official couple for over a year now and each

day with her has been such a blessing. She's so special because of her relationship with Christ. She shows me Jesus each and every day no matter the situation. She's such a spiritual encouragement to me! I really can't put into words all she does for me. She's all I ever prayed for. And so so much more ☑



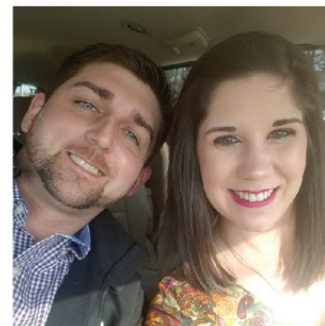
This is my sweetheart (Shane Riddle) and myself (Maggie Riddle) . We have known each other since 1998, we were childhood friends and much later sweethearts.

September will be 15 years we have been married. We've had our ups and our downs but through everything good and bad we are still happily together. He is such a wonderful man who works hard for his family. A amazing and fun dad of our 3 girls and a wonderful husband. He's always there for me, my shoulder, my rock, my friend. He makes me smile and laugh when I'm sad, and takes on the extra weight when I'm sick. I am so blessed to have him in my life and a very lucky girl to have him look my way all those years ago. He's the love of my life



Dennis Williams is my husband and he is so special to me. We first met when I was 13 years old, dated for 2 years and we split up and I often wondered how he was and what he was doing. And now after 30 years we

found each other and we both believe that God had a hand in it. I couldn't imagine not being with him. He is everything to me without him I would be lost. As of August 4th of 2018 I am now his wife....My name is Pamela Williams .



My husband (Brandon Wilson) and I (Jessica Wilson) are newly weds but have been together for 5 years before marriage. He has been the best thing in my life. We never really did anything for ourselves for

valentines day. We always went to the schools and did gifts for our kids. If there is one thing we both agree on is our kids are first. Would be great to start off our marriage right by doing or winning something for ourselves or even him.



Nominated by Chrissy Williams Cooper. Not me but my sister Denise Gray and her husband Buddy Gray. He was diagnosed with stage 4 mesothelioma three years ago and given weeks to live. My sister

would not accept this! She prayed. She fought. She did everything humanly possible, including quitting her job to be his caregiver. After numerous, regular trips to MD Anderson in Texas, and the prayers of thousands, he is in remission. Sweetest love story of unconditional love I've ever heard of.



Nominated by Lisa Hallman. My husband is Bill Hallman. This guy is truly my best friend!! We have been together 9 years married for 3 and have two beautiful boys!! Both are disabled and he's truly my rock and my

shoulder to lean on. God made him just for me and i couldn't love him more!!



Nominated by Joey Wingo. My wife LaShanda Gresham Wingo. She is special to me because of 5 reasons: #1 she's the best Mother to our three boys. #2 She's a God fearing woman. #3 She puts up with me which is a

super power in itself. #4 She's my best friend. #5 This is the biggie but words cannot describe nor be said about how much I love her.



BIG STAR



Sweets for My Sweetie

Some winners received a gift basket and some will receive one dozen chocolate covered strawberries from Big Star



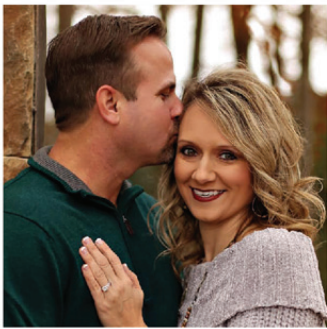
Nominated by Dianna Benford Lowery. Michael Lowery is my sweetheart. I'm fully convinced that God chose him just for me. He loves God. He works hard at his job and at home. He is kind, lovable and shows me that he loves me by his actions. We've been married for 3 years and known each other for 4. I love that he is the very same man 24/7 ever since the first time I met him. He is genuine.



Nominated by Kelsey Brooke Quisenberry. John Kalmbach is special to me because after almost a year of serving together over seas he still comes home and makes me fall in love all over again. He has blessed me with an amazing bonus daughter and we will be welcoming our daughter this June.

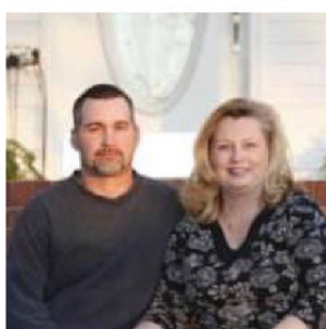


Nominated by Renae Cochran. Josh Cochran is my sweetie of 13 years. Josh works a full time job, a part time job, runs his own seasonal business, as well as coaches my son's travel baseball team. He works so hard to make sure we are taken care of. He always puts everyone else first and not once does he complain. He's the best husband and daddy in the entire world!



Nominated by Julie Owens Pannell Scroggins. My sweetie is Jason Shotts. We've had to take the broken road for years to find each other. He's truly my soulmate, best friend and now fiancé. I can't believe how

much we have in common and to know I get the spend the rest of my life with someone so special. He's a hard worker, a great Mr. Fix it and a single dad who's a great Mr. Mom. He loves me, my kids and my dog which makes my heart happy.



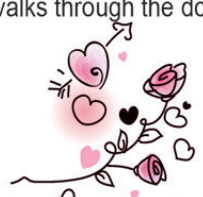
Nominated by Lynn Fleming Landers. Jason Landers is my sweetie! We met while canoeing at the Bear Creek Canoe Run. He works long hours to help provide. We enjoy taking trips together and seeing new places. I knew

he was special when I met him but even more so when I found out he was raising 3 beautiful kid. We combined our families and created our own "Brady Bunch!"



Nominated by Tara Wilson Vincent. My sweetie is Cliff Vincent.

We have been together for 20 years this Valentine Day (married for 16 years). He works harder than anyone I know to provide for us. He is my rock and I definitely could do my life without him, since I have literally spent more than half my life with him. He was my ninth grade sweetie and he still makes me smile Every time he walks through the door!



Nominated by LeAnn Patterson McKinney. Marvin McKinney Jr. is my sweetheart. After being divorced for 19 years and knowing I never intended to ever

Marry again he comes along and sweeps me off my feet. After much patience and persuasion. We will celebrate our 1st date on Valentines Day for the 5th time(he started trying to me to go out with him in October.) He is my true love and I am so blessed to have him. We Celebrated our 1st Wedding Anniversary this past October 14 and looking forward to many more



Nominated by Tina Jones King. This is a photo of me and my sweetie, Scott King! We have been happily married 15 years. Scott was my very first date, my very first kiss and my first love. After being separated for 18

years we found each other again. We are truly soul mates.



Nominated by Alisyn Pinkard Gravitt. Me and my sweetie, Daniel Scott Gravitt!

We have been happily married 15 years. Scott was my very first date, my very first kiss and my first love. After being separated for 18 years we found each other again. We are truly soul mates.



Belgreen first in state to get interactive playground

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

Throughout the halls of Belgreen Elementary School, a mixture of sounds can be heard. Music playing inside a classroom. The sound of rubber balls ricocheting off the walls. Children yelling answers to their classmates. However, there is no party going on, no game of dodge ball is being played, and there is no cheating happening.

What is happening, however, is a revolutionary way of education that combines exercise with learning.

Belgreen is the first school in the state of Alabama to be equipped with a Lu Interactive Playground, and the program was unveiled during a ribbon cutting ceremony last Friday morning. The Lu Interactive Playground was developed in Canada and is made available to schools across the United States and Canada, as well as 13 other countries worldwide.

The playground works by using an interactive projected screen that is hanging from the ceiling. Not only does the playground involve the interactive screen, but it also includes lights, music and more than 20 different types of applications for teachers and students to choose from.

While the playground is located in a recreational room inside of the school, the students will have more than enough room to interact with the program and their classmates.

"I wish every school in our system had something like this," Hamilton said. "It's a different way of teaching our kids, and the fact that we are the first ones statewide to have something like this is awesome. I think the students will benefit greatly from this."

One of the attendees for the ribbon cutting ceremony was Franklin County superintendent Greg Hamilton. Hamilton was at the forefront in bringing this idea to fruition and said he is thrilled to see this kind of technology make its way into Franklin County.

"I first heard about the Lu programs at a superintendents' meeting, and when I heard about them I shared that with our principals at one of our principal meetings," Hamilton said. "I wish every school in our system had something like this. It's a different way of teaching our kids, and the fact that we are the first ones statewide to have something like this is awesome. I think the students will benefit greatly from this."

One of the principals at the meeting Hamilton mentioned was Belgreen's own Ann Scott. After hearing about the program from Hamilton, Scott said she was very intrigued and did not shy away from her enthusiasm about the program.

"When Mr. Hamilton showed me the program and asked me what I thought about it," Scott said, "I said, 'I want it,' and I asked him, 'How can I get it?' I was just so excited at the thought of our students having this wonderful opportunity."

Scott also believes that the program will help students use skills both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as reaching out to students who might learn better in an unconventional way of teaching.

"I just think it's great for our students to be able to incorporate the skills they are learning inside of the classroom along with the skills they learn through physical education as well," Scott said. "This will also benefit those students that might learn more from a different type of teaching....this will hopefully make them want to learn even more beyond the Lu program."

"I just think it's great for our students to be able to incorporate the skills they are learning inside of the classroom along with the skills they learn through physical education as well," Scott said. "This will also benefit those students that might learn more from a different type of teaching. Sometimes they don't realize they are really learning when they are working with the Lu, and so that makes it more enjoyable for them and will hopefully make them want to learn even more beyond the Lu program."

According to Scott, the program will initially be used for grades K-6, but will she hopes to see the program expanded to K-12 in the coming months or years. The Lu Interactive Playground program in Belgreen will also be used as a demonstration site for further implementations of the program across the state of Alabama.

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

And don't forget to check us out online at www.franklinfreepress.net!

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Eight local eateries receive satisfactory health ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

All eight of the Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of January 28-February 1 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.

Each of the eight Franklin County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The highest score was 98, received by Speedy Pig, 13670 Highway 43, Russellville.

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

- Kentucky Fried Chicken, 15045 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 87. (Mold in fountain heads, dented cans).

- Captain D's #3737, 15434 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 89. (Dirty dishes stacked with clean dishes, wires broken and frayed on sifter).

- Waffle House #2186, 14005 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 89. (Food foil wrap sheets stored on shelf with various toxic items, hot water not reaching required 100 degrees at handsink in ladies' restroom).

- Doe's Eat Place, 114 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 92. (Not enough hot water).

- Pupuseria y Taqueria Las 3 Fronteras, 519 St. Clair St., Russellville, 94. (No hot water in restrooms).

- Daily Bread BBQ, 305 South Jackson Ave., Russellville, 96.

- The Grind Cafe and Coffee Shop, 13760 Hwy. 43, Ste. 1, Russellville, 97.

Of the 94 inspections done in Colbert County from January 21, 2019, through February 1, 2019, all received scores falling in the range of satisfactory. The high score of 100 was received by Littleville Senior Center, 1400 Jackson Highway, Russellville.

Health ratings are available at www.foodscores.state.al.us and may be viewed by city or county.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

PROJECT: 2019 DISTRIBUTION LINE ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENT
RUSSELLVILLE ELECTRIC BOARD RUSSELLVILLE, ALABAMA

Separate sealed bids for labor, transportation, and equipment for the construction of 2019 Distribution Line Additions and Improvements will be received at Stewart Engineering, 300 E 7th Street, Anniston, Alabama 36207 (PO Box 2233, Anniston, AL 36202), on or before March 12, 2019 at 2:00 P.M., at which time and place they will be opened and read aloud.

The project will consist of Labor for construction of 2019 Distribution Line Additions and Improvements:

Additions and improvements to approximately 4.7 miles of 12 KV distribution line (approximately 165 poles).

The materials that will be furnished by the Owner are described in attached Specifications and Drawings.

NOTE: Owner will furnish all materials.

Drawings, Specifications and Contract Documents may be examined at the office of the Owner or at the office of the Engineer. Copies may be obtained from Stewart Engineering, Inc., Electrical Consultants, P. O. Box 2233, Anniston, AL 36202, upon payment of \$150.00 for each set, none of which will be refunded. Three copies of Drawings and Specifications will be furnished to the successful bidder for construction purposes, without charge and additional Drawings and Specifications will be available to the successful bidder at their cost of reproduction.

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities or to reject any or all bids.

No bidder may withdraw his bid within 60 days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

Each bidder must be licensed as a contractor under the laws of the State of Alabama and will be required to advertise completion of the contract in accordance with Alabama State Law.

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'BAND,' from page 1

"For many years, Navy bands have been where it matters, when it matters, just like the rest of our Navy," said Capt. Kenneth Collins, U.S. Navy Band Commanding Officer. "Today, we have sailors performing around the world, improving relations with our allies abroad as well as telling the Navy story here at home."

Laster said he received a phone call from Navy officials who were interested in scheduling a March concert.

"They asked if we were willing to do a concert at our school, and we were more than happy to do that," Laster said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for both our students and our community."

There are 11 Navy bands located around the world, with the U.S. Navy Band as the flagship musical organization of the Navy. The Sea Chanters' 2019 tour will cover 18 cities and more than 3,000 miles of travel.

In addition to the Sea Chanters, performing ensembles in the Navy Band include the Concert Band, Ceremonial Band, Commodores jazz ensemble, Country Current country/bluegrass ensemble and the Cruisers popular music group. Most of the Sea Chanters are full-time profes-



COURTESY PHOTO

There are 11 Navy bands located around the world, with the U.S. Navy Band as the flagship musical organization of the Navy. The Sea Chanters' 2019 tour will cover 18 cities and more than 3,000 miles of travel.

sional musicians who hold undergraduate degrees in music, with many of them having earned graduate degrees as well.

For more information on the U.S. Navy Sea Chanters, log onto https://www.navyband.navy.mil/sea_chanters.html.



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35653. 3 BR, 2.5 BA, finished basement, oversized 2-car garage and storage building. \$95,500. Call 256-332-9772. Leave message. (1)

3 BR brick ranch in Hester Heights, Russellville. 2 full BA, remodeled kitchen, 2-car attached garage, 2 1/2 car detached garage, large stormhouse, and large lot. Asking \$149,000. Call 256-263-8589. (1)

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The Franklin County TRACKS Program is currently seeking nurses to work in our afterschool centers, which are open Monday-Friday from 3:15 p.m. until 5:30 pm. We are looking for

LPN's, RN's, or any other higher nursing degree. Please call 256-331-0005 if interested or if you have any questions regarding the job. (4)

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I'm looking to buy a Rocking Horse for a toddler. Please call 256-324-2917.

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Fender Banjo for sale. \$200. Call 256-324-0179. (1)

Browning Bar .30-06 Rifle For Sale. Includes new scope and strap. Gun like new. \$750 OBO. Call 256-436-6602. (2)

12 Kewpie dolls for sale. Various sizes. Call 256-332-1341. (3)

2 new stainless turkey fryers, \$15 each. 1 green, 1 blue. Kerosene lamp. Call 256-332-1341. (5)

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JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Franklin County Commission will accept applications for the following: Human Resources Director/Payroll Clerk for the Franklin County Commission Office until 12 p.m., on Thursday, February 14, 2019.

This position requires the applicant to possess a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources. An application and job description may be picked up at the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 North Jackson Ave., Russellville, AL., 35653, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Franklin County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in the employment or the provision of services.

Bay Tree Council's *The Seven Year Itch* set for this weekend

Submitted to the FFP

The Bay Tree Council in Red Bay announces its second production of the 2018-2019 season, *The Seven Year Itch*, by George Axelrod and directed by Mark Richardson. Performances will take place February 14-16 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, February 17 at 2 p.m. at The Weatherford Centre.

Tickets are on sale at The Weatherford Centre for \$8 each (play only) and \$25 (play and dinner). Dinner MUST be reserved in advance. Go by The Weatherford Centre or call 256-356-9829 to reserve or purchase your tickets between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m. weekdays. For group sales, you may contact Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286. Richard Sherman roams restlessly around his

empty apartment, bemoaning the fact that his wife of seven years, and their son, have just walked out on him. Then, without warning, a gigantic flower pot tumbles down from an overhead balcony, nearly putting him permanently out of his misery.

The jarring event has a strange effect on Richard. He now sees his marriage as wasted time and feels it necessary to exercise his libido as quickly as possible. Suddenly reborn, he invites the delectable doll who lives on the floor above down for an evening of temptation.

The night doesn't quite go the way he thought it would, as morality and guilt sneak into his head. In his conscience—literally following him about the apartment—a soul-struggle of heroic and hilarious proportions ensues.

What's Happening

256.332.0255

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

The Foster Grandparent Program is seeking volunteers ages 55 and older to help tutor and mentor children in day care, head start and schools. Volunteers will receive a tax-free stipend and travel reimbursement. They can call 256-332-6800 for an application.

AARP Tax-Aide will be providing FREE income tax preparation at the Department of Human Resources in Russellville on Thursdays through April 11. You do not have to be a member of AARP, retired or a certain age to use this service. Call Ben at 256-332-0252 for an appointment, which is required.

Franklin County Schools Pre-K registration is NOW open for the 2019-20 school year. Pre-registration is open online at <https://alprek.asap-connected.com> through March 22. Random selection will be held on March 22 in the Pre-K classroom. These dates are for all six Franklin County Pre-K programs. Some classrooms still have space for THIS school year for students who will be attending kindergarten next school year. Enrollment is open to all children four years of age on or before 9/1/19 who are residents of the state of Alabama. Children who are eligible for kindergarten are ineligible for this program. Enrollees must provide copy of child's birth certificate, proof of residence (utility bill or lease or copy of mortgage). There is no registration fee for this program. Upon enrollment, child's immunization record must be provided.

The Shoals Chapter of the Order of St. Luke will meet in the Sheffield Room at Park Place, 501 N. Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield, on Thursday, February 14 at 2:30 p.m. Wendy Sellers will teach on "Living the Abundant Life." We believe that God heals spiritually, physically and emotionally. All are welcome.

The Bay Tree Council in Red Bay announces its second production of the 2018-2019 season, *The Seven Year Itch*, by George Axelrod and directed by Mark Richardson. Performances will take place February 14-16 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, February 17 at 2 p.m. at The Weatherford Centre in Red Bay. Tickets for the play are on sale now at The Weatherford Centre and are \$8.00 each for play only and \$25.00 for play and dinner, but dinner MUST be reserved in advance. You may go by The Weatherford Centre or call 256-356-9829 to reserve or purchase your tickets between the hours of 2-4 p.m. weekdays. For group sales you may contact Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286.

The St. Paul CME Church family invites you to their Seven Seals of Revelation Program this Sunday, February 17, 2019 at 3 p.m. The following pastors are scheduled to participate: Rev. Dr. Willie Owens, Lesley Temple CMC Church, Tuscumbia - Revelation 6:1-2; Rev. Christy Gill, Antioch CME Church, Russellville - Revelation 6:3-4; Rev. Dr. Shirley Fletcher, Jackson Chapel CME Church, Courtland - Revelation 6:5-6; Rev. James Coffey, Brown Temple CME Church, Sheffield - Revelation 6:7-8; Rev. Tina Swan-Branch, Armstead Chapel CME Church, Florence - Revelation 6:9-11; Rev. Charlie J. Johnson, Jr., Oak Grove CMC Church, Athens - Revelation 6:12-14; Rev. Stephen Davis, Cherokee CMC Church, Cherokee - Revelation 8:1. Refreshments will be served after the program. Pastor Rev. Zethelyn R. Johnson and the St. Paul CME Church congregation invite you to join them for a blessed time in the Lord as they are enlightened regarding end-times judgments of God. For more information, call 256-332-6177.

The book *Motherwit: An Alabama Midwife's Story* by Onnie Lee Logan will be discussed at the February 20 10 a.m. meeting of The Readers of the Lost Ark Book Club. The club meets at Coldwater Books, 105 West Sixth Street, Tuscumbia. For more info, email nancy537481@yahoo.com or visit the following link: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/174022.Motherwit>.

To avoid a conflict with Valentine's Day, the next meeting for American Legion Post 64 will be on Thursday, February 21 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Spruce Pine Historical Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Spruce Pine Community Center in Spruce Pine. Next meeting will be March 5. All members and friends are urged to attend.

If you are interested in the study of the Civil War and have an ancestor who was in the Confederate Army, join the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month (except January and July) at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center. Next meeting will be March 7. The minimum age for membership is 12. Call 1-800-MYDIXIE or 256-324-2317.

The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre in Russellville on Saturday, March 9 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. 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. Call 256-335-4356.

Ronnie McDowell and his band will return to Russellville on Saturday, March 16 at 7 p.m. for another benefit for the historic Roxy Theater. Franklin County's own Joseph Baldwin will be the opening act. For ticket information, please call 256-415-3270 or 256-460-8988. Reservations are going fast! Floor tickets are \$20 to \$30, and general admission balcony tickets are \$15.

Russellville 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!

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Golden Tigers win third area championship in four years

Mike Self
 Franklin Free Press

HAMILTON - Russellville coach Patrick Odom had a very pointed message for his team prior to last Friday night's Class 5A, Area 14 final against Hamilton.

The central theme of that message can be summed up in one word.

Attack.

"One thing I really messaged to our guys was, I thought we really felt the game out the last time we were here," Odom said. "I told them, 'Forget that. Let's just go play. Let's go be us. Let's go do what we do, and let's see where we wind up. Let's attack from the tip.'"

See 'THIRD,' Page 14



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

The Golden Tigers survived some hot first-half shooting by West Point's Sapp (1) in the semifinals, then got 21 points from McNutt (2) in a title-clinching win over Hamilton.

Tough enough

Phil Campbell's girls rose to the occasion against an ultra-physical Lexington team, earning another Hanceville berth

Mike Self
 Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Lexington's girls arrived at Phil Campbell High School on Monday night seemingly intent on putting the home team's toughness to the test. Whether or not the Lady Bears *beat* the Lady Bobcats, they were clearly bound and determined to *beat them up*.

They grabbed. They clutched. They nudged. Three times in the game's final three minutes, they flat-out shoved (earning three intentional fouls). They sent Phil Campbell players to the floor on numerous occasions and to the foul line even more (31 times, to be exact).

But the Lady Bobcats didn't blink. They made 22 of those free throw attempts and withstood the physical pounding, surviving a shaky third quarter to dominate the fourth and pull away for a hard-earned 60-46 win.

The Lady 'Cats were bruised. They were battered. But they were not beaten. And now, for the fourth time in five seasons under head coach Craig Thomas, they're headed to Hanceville.

Nobody said it would be easy. "I guess it was really rough," said senior forward Abby Davis, who shot 8-for-10 from the foul line and finished with a game-high 22 points. "But we're strong enough. We had to put up with it. We just kept our composure and stayed with it."

"It was really rough," added junior guard Kallie Allen, who scored 21 points on 7-for-11 shooting from the field while also



PHOTO/KG
 Davis (3) and Thomas (background, far right) will each be making their fourth regional appearance on Saturday.

grabbing nine rebounds and coming up with six steals. "They were just upset because they were losing. It was rough the first time we played them, but this time it was way worse. But we handled it really well. We kept our cool."

"I guess it was really rough," said senior forward Abby Davis, who shot 8-for-10 from the foul line and finished with a game-high 22 points. "But we're strong enough. We had to put up with it. We just kept our composure and stayed with it."

Phil Campbell (24-4) had no trouble with the Lady Bears back in December, smoking them 61-33 in a consolation game at the *TimesDaily* Classic. Lexington (16-13) had steadily improved since Christmas, however, in large part due to the return of 6'0 sophomore center Kamden Kirk, a force to be reckoned with in the paint. Thomas warned his players that Monday's rematch would be no walk in the park.

"Coach told us they had that bigger girl coming back," said Davis, who had four rebounds, four steals and two blocks on Monday in addition to topping the 20-point mark for the ninth time this season. "She was out

at the beginning of the season. He told us she's really strong down low, and we were gonna have to work harder and shoot more outside shots and work to get around her. I was expecting it to be a closer game, so for us to win by as many as we did is awesome."

Thomas was correct in his assessment, however—Monday's game was every bit the battle he anticipated.

"They have improved a ton," Thomas said of the Lady Bears, who were coming off a one-point loss at the buzzer to arch-rival Lauderdale County in last week's Class 3A, Area 16 title game. "We went and watched them and Lauderdale County in the area finals. They have improved a lot. The big girl [Kirk] makes a difference."

Kirk did grab a game-high 11 rebounds Monday but struggled to put the ball in the basket, scoring just five points on 1-for-7 shooting from the floor and 3-for-12 from the foul line. Lexington found another way to rally from a 13-point second-half deficit, however, using full-court pressure to force nine Phil Campbell turnovers in the third

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'THIRD,' from page 13

The last time the Golden Tigers were at Hamilton High School was January 14. On that Monday night, they failed to put up at least 50 points for the first—and only—time all season, going the final six-plus minutes of the game without a field goal and letting a four-point fourth-quarter lead slip away in a 58-49 loss that cost them the chance to host the area tournament.

Russellville responded to that defeat with the kind of toughness and competitive character Odom has come to expect from a veteran-led, battle-tested group that has been through its share of ups and downs in his four seasons as head coach. [The first two of those seasons resulted in area tournament titles; the third netted only seven wins and an early postseason exit.]

Entering last Friday's final, the Golden Tigers hadn't dropped another game since that mid-January loss at Hamilton, ripping off seven straight wins (including a 71-66 comeback thriller over West Point in last Tuesday's area semifinal) and earning themselves another shot at the Aggies.

Hamilton came in even hotter, having won ten straight to get to 25-4 overall, and Odom knew that only his team's best performance would be sufficient to carry the day.

Hence his pre-game directive: *Attack.*

Odom's players certainly seemed to take that message to heart. Senior guard Lucas McNutt was in attack mode right out of the gate, pouring in 12 first-quarter points to stake Russellville to an early 19-13 lead. Sophomore wing Chandler Dyas attacked in the second quarter, repeatedly getting to the rim on dribble-drives and scoring nine points to help the Golden Tigers push the lead into double-figures.

The Aggies, to the surprise of no one, fought back, cutting the lead to two by halftime and then surging in front on a three by Justin Webb early in the third quarter. Russellville regained a six-point cushion by the early stages of the fourth, but Hamilton answered again with an 8-0 spurt to grab a 50-48 lead with just a few minutes remaining.

When the Aggies had made a similar push at essentially the same juncture of that game on January 14, the Golden Tigers had wilted, allowing Hamilton to close them out with a decisive 17-4 run. Last Friday, however, Russellville refused to relent. Instead, the Golden Tigers—with Odom's pre-game message still fresh in their minds—went back on the attack.

Freshman point guard Will Bonner continued to burnish his reputation as a big-time playmaker in the clutch, scoring back-to-back buckets to stem the tide and put Russellville back in front. He also

made a crucial defensive play (what else is new?) in the final minute and combined with McNutt to go 10-for-10 from the foul line down the stretch, sealing a 62-52 win that delivered the Golden Tigers their third area tournament championship in the last four years.

"I thought our kids played with exceptional toughness and a lot of pride," said Odom. "I've said this the last two or three weeks. Sometimes this group can make it interesting, but when it's winning time, these guys really do believe they're gonna win. I wish I had a book on how to create that, but these guys have that. You can just see it—the passion, the pride...I'm just so proud of our kids."

"I thought our kids played with exceptional toughness and a lot of pride," said Odom, whose team improved to 20-6 on the year and was set to host Area 16 runner-up Madison Academy in a sub-regional game on Tuesday night. "Tonight was one of those nights where, when you play somebody for the third time, our kids were very mentally prepared. There were not a lot of secrets. Our guys did their homework. I'm proud of my staff for the preparation we put in. We didn't allow a lot of clean looks tonight.

"I'm proud of my kids. I've said this the last two or three weeks. Sometimes this group can make it interesting, but when it's winning time, these guys really do believe they're gonna win. I wish I had a book on how to create that, but these guys have that. You can just see it—the passion, the pride...I'm just so proud of our kids."

Odom credited McNutt and his aggressive approach early with setting the right tone for the Golden Tigers. The senior guard entered the game averaging a team-best 17.8 points per game on the season, but he had been relatively quiet offensively in both prior meetings with Hamilton—largely because of the energy and focus he was expending on the other end of the floor while guarding Webb, his AAU teammate during the summer and the Aggies' most dangerous perimeter shooter.

McNutt opened Friday's game with back-to-back layups—one off penetration in the half-court, the other off a steal—and later knocked down an 18-footer and a pair of three-pointers to cap off his huge first quarter.

"We talked about the fact that they're gonna play him the way we play Justin Webb," Odom said of McNutt, who recovered from a scoreless second and third quarter to put up nine points in the fourth quarter and finish with 21. "They're gonna try to

chase him off the three-point line and really make him work. We wanted to attack tonight, and I thought Number Two [McNutt] set that tone for us very well. He got to the glass, he got to the rim, and he actually created some open looks for himself."

McNutt—who topped the 20-point mark for the 10th time this season—was by no means the only Golden Tiger to take Odom's pre-game message to heart. Dyas, whose primary offensive weapon is typically the spot-up three, beat Aggie defenders off the dribble on multiple occasions Friday night. While Hamilton focused on containing McNutt after his scorching start, Dyas picked up the slack with 14 points in the second and third quarters—and made a prophet out of his head coach along the way.

"The past two days I've been telling our coaches that I believed Chandler Dyas would be the difference tonight," Odom said. "I didn't think he attacked very well in either game we played them during the regular season. [Russellville beat Hamilton 77-72 in overtime at home on December 7.] I told Chandler yesterday, 'If you get twelve to fifteen [points], we win by ten.'"

Dyas finished with 14 on Friday. The Golden Tigers won by ten.

"There you go," Odom said with a smile. "That's not by accident. We wanted him to be more aggressive, and you saw the kind of offensive player he is. When other teams are trying to take away our senior weapons [specifically McNutt and Devin Buckhalter, who entered Friday's action averaging 16.0 points per game on the year], that's when we need Chandler Dyas to be who he is. And that's what makes us a really tough team to guard."

Dyas's big second quarter helped stake Russellville to a 10-point lead at 30-20 late in the first half, but the Aggies (25-5) erased 15 minutes of excellent work by the Golden Tigers with an 8-0 flurry over the final 60 seconds to get back within two and take a ton of momentum into the break.

Odom pointed out after the game that Hamilton's push to close out the first half came with Will Bonner on the bench due to foul trouble.

"Really, it shows the importance of Number One [Bonner] to our basketball team," Odom said. "We had to take him off the floor, because we were afraid he was gonna get a third foul. Again, it changes how we play. He's so important to us in so many ways.

"In that little run they had, the first four [points] we gave up were on offensive putbacks. We had

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Bulldogs secure three-peat with rout of Panthers

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

BELGREEN - Inflation is an economic fact of life, but—fortunately for head coach Clint Isbell and his Belgreen boys—the price of nylon has remained relatively steady.

At the rate the Bulldogs go through basketball nets, they might be going broke otherwise.

“They’re not too expensive,” Isbell said with a smile on Saturday night as he watched his players take turns climbing the ladder to snip the string following a 90-65 rout of Hackleburg in the Class 1A, Area 12 championship game. “We’ll keep buying them. That’s fine.”

Brant Bragwell and Mason Bragwell, the leaders of Belgreen’s senior class, combined for 59 points on Saturday, helping the Bulldogs bring home their third area tournament title in three seasons under Isbell.

“It’s a special way for them to go out,” said Isbell, whose team improved to 18-11 and was set to host Covenant Christian in a sub-regional game on Tuesday night. “They had won two, and to get a third one in their career here is really nice. It’s special for them.”

The two Bragwells were sophomores back in 2017 when the current streak of area titles began. They’ve watched two talented senior classes graduate and leave the program, taking much of the Bulldogs’ depth and experience with them. This year’s team features plenty of new faces in key places, but the expectations come area tournament time remained the same.

And so did the outcome.

“It’s a special way for them to go out,” Isbell said of his seniors, who have helped Belgreen go 28-2 in area play over the past three seasons with three tournament titles. “They had won two, and to get a third one in their career here is really nice. It’s special for them.”

“It’s special. It means a lot,” said Brant Bragwell, who hit four first-half threes on Saturday and finished with a season-high 30 points on 12-for-20 shooting from the floor. “Especially since it shows all the hard work we put in all summer, in the off-season, in the preseason—just trusting each other and becoming a family together. We had a lot of new guys, and we didn’t know what to expect. But they’ve all done a good job stepping up, and Coach has done a good job keeping us together

as a team.

“That’s been a big thing for us—being a family.”

Mason Bragwell also shot 12-for-20 from the floor on Saturday night and finished with 29 points, nine rebounds and three blocks, helping the Bulldogs continue their reign of domination atop the area. Over the past three seasons, Belgreen is now 28-2 in area play (tournament games included) with three regular-season championships and three tournament titles.

“It feels good,” said Mason Bragwell, who set the tone Saturday night with 10 first-quarter points on his way to topping the 20-point mark for the 13th time this season. “We’ve put in a lot of work. It feels really good to do it three years in a row.”

Hackleburg senior Kaleb Moore scored 45 points on Saturday, but the Panthers were powerless to slow down Belgreen even a little bit on the other end. The Bulldogs reached the 90-point mark for the second straight game and the third time this season, shooting 54 percent (35-for-65) from the field and hitting 10 threes. They also totaled 18 assists, including seven by Brant Bragwell and four apiece by sophomores Isac Willingham and Scout Bragwell.

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been so clean on the glass, and then all of a sudden they freed up. Then we don’t guard a baseline out-of-bounds, which I about blew my top on. All of a sudden, a ten-point lead is a four-point lead. But when you play good people...it’s like us—we continue to put pressure on our opponents, and [Hamilton] continued to put pressure on us. You just can’t have a lapse, and we kind of had that. But, again, we responded really well.”

The Golden Tigers got a bucket from Buckhalter and a straight-on three from Dyas early in the third quarter to take a 36-32 lead. The Aggies responded with a 9-2 run to go up 41-38, but then Buckhalter drilled a three from the left wing to send the game to the fourth quarter tied 41-41.

McNutt opened the final period with a three-point play; he then followed a pair of free throws by Bonner with another basket to stretch Russellville’s lead to 48-42. The Aggies rallied again, eventually pulling even on a layup by Hogan Gann and then taking a 50-48 lead on a bucket by Caleb Weeks.

It was at that point that Big Game Bonner took over.

The freshman point guard tied the game with a driving layup, then stripped the ball away from Hamilton senior Ethan Brumley and scored again to put the Golden Tigers on top 52-50. Buckhalter came up with another steal, leading to two free throws by McNutt and a four-point lead.

Peyton Williams made a pair at the line for Hamilton, but Bonner answered with two free throws to make it 56-52. The Aggies missed a shot on their next trip, and McNutt grabbed the defensive rebound. Hamilton stole a cross-court pass to regain possession—but only briefly, as Bonner reached in and stole the ball right back, snuffing out the Aggies’ last, best chance before it even materialized.

“Again, like we talked about with that stretch at the end of the first half, that just shows his importance to us on the floor,” Odom said. “I’ve said it all along: He has instincts that are just natural. I wish we could figure out a way to teach what he has, because I’d teach it to everybody. But the kid is just special in those moments. You see those kids every once in a while...it’s like a magnet to their hands with the ball. He’s that guy. He just finds ways to make plays.

“He looked so comfortable at the foul line, too. He wanted the ball, and I wanted him on the line. I’m proud of him for finishing. I know there’s been stretches where that’s been an issue for our young freshman, but I’ll tell

you—he’s a big-time player.”

Bonner was fouled after coming up with his crucial steal and made both free throws to push the lead to six at 58-52 with 34.9 seconds left. He made two more moments later, and then McNutt tacked on two more to provide the final margin.

Bonner, a 62-percent foul shooter on the season entering Friday, shot 8-for-8 from the line in the fourth quarter and 10-for-10 on the night, finishing with 14 points. McNutt went 5-for-5 from the line (all in the fourth quarter), helping Russellville finish 20-for-24 as a team.

“That’s how you win championships,” Odom said.

The Golden Tigers have now done exactly that three times in Odom’s four seasons as head coach. Friday marked the second time they’ve won an area tournament title on an opponent’s home floor. [They beat top-seeded West Point in the area final at West Point in Odom’s first year.]

“We need to get more in the habit of hosting these,” Odom joked afterwards, “but it is sweet to go on the road and win one for the second time since I’ve been coaching at Russellville.”

Buckhalter finished with nine points on Friday. Collin Bonner added two, and Caden Parker and Brooks Scott each had one. Webb and Jordan Cross led Hamilton with 10 points apiece. The Aggies shot just 7-for-12 from the foul line.

Both teams quickly turned their attention to Tuesday’s sub-regional play, with the Golden Tigers set to host Madison Academy (a 38-37 loser to East Limestone in Friday’s Area 16 final) and the Aggies bound for Athens to take on East. As he prepared to go down and join in the net-cutting celebration on Friday night, Odom wasn’t ready to rule out the possibility of a fourth meeting between Russellville and Hamilton—which would have to take place in the Northwest Regional final.

“There’s a reason they were 25-4,” Odom said of the Aggies. “They’re an outstanding basketball team. And you know what? There may be one more meeting. Who knows? There are a lot of good teams to navigate through, but these two teams that played here tonight will not be easy outs. Coach [Ethan] Lawler and his kids, they’re experienced, and they expect to win. For us to come in here and win tonight, it’s a credit to a bunch of special kids I’ve had the opportunity to coach this year.”

OT win sends Belgreen girls back to Hanceville

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Chatting court-side with his Belgreen counterpart Chad Green prior to Monday night's Class 1A sub-regional showdown, Mars Hill coach Jay Mitchell said he was expecting a really tight game.

"I was talking to Coach Mitchell before the game," Green said, "and he said we were fixing to be in an even matchup."

Four quarters—and four extra minutes—later, Mitchell looked like a prophet.

Sixth-ranked Belgreen rallied from a double-digit third-quarter deficit and actually led in the final minute of regulation before No. 9 Mars Hill hit a late free throw to pull even and force overtime. Emma Dempsey then scored five of her game-high 19 points in the extra period, helping the Lady Bulldogs win 59-56 and earn a trip to Hanceville for the second straight season.

"I thought it was a great atmosphere," said Green, whose team held an overwhelming edge at the foul line on Monday and will now face Falkville on Thursday in the Northwest Regional semifinals at Tom Drake Coliseum. "Our crowd, their crowd—it was a playoff basketball atmosphere. Our girls did a great job, being down twelve or thirteen, on the road, and finding a way to come back and get the job done and get the win."

Mars Hill (19-10) led 25-18 at the half and then stretched the lead into double-figures in the third quarter as Belgreen (23-7) struggled to get anything going on the offensive end.

"We couldn't hit anything," Green said. "I thought our defense and rebounding was good. We just couldn't hit a shot in the first half, and we turned the ball over too much. We did a lot better job in the second half. About midway through the third,

quarter.

The Lady Bears closed the third on a 9-2 run, getting a three-pointer from senior Skylar Hammond, two free throws apiece from Audrey Stults and Macy Hanback, and a bucket from Kirk to trim the lead down to four at 44-40.

Seemingly on the verge of blowing the game open only a few minutes earlier, the Lady Bobcats suddenly found themselves in a fight for survival.

"Whew...I thought we were gonna melt down," a visibly relieved Thomas said in his office after the game. "It got a little dicey there in the third quarter. We had a few turnovers that are not real common to us. We felt the pressure, I felt like. They did a good job with it. Give Lexington credit for that.

"They jumped out in that press that usually doesn't bother us, and it affected us. We had about four turnovers right there in a row where we didn't get shots at the basket. We've gotta be shooting the ball."

But the Lady Bobcats didn't make their run to the Final Four last season without gaining a lot in the way of toughness and mental fortitude. Big-game wins rarely come adversity-free, and Phil Campbell's veterans know how to right the ship when things go sideways.

"It does help a lot to face that pressure," said Thomas, whose team has now won 40 of its last 45 games dating back to last season. "Another thing that's helped us is, we've played about three overtime games this year. That has helped us mature a little bit when it gets down to a game like this—other than that little stretch right there in the third quarter where we kind of lost it. But we

we turned the pressure up and got a few steals and forced some quick shots out of them. We rebounded the ball good, and we came down and started making shots."

The Lady Bulldogs cut the lead to six at 38-32 by the end of the third and then out-scored Mars Hill 16-10 in the fourth. Belgreen got five points from Emma Dempsey, four points from Katie Dempsey and a big three-pointer from Gracie Dempsey in the final period, surging in front before Mars Hill tied the game late at the foul line.

The Lady Bulldogs had a final chance to win the game in regulation, but Gracie Dempsey's three-pointer was partially blocked as time expired.

Emma Dempsey went 3-for-5 from the line and scored five points in overtime, and Gracie Dempsey hit another big three (her third of the night, all of which came after halftime).

"Gracie hitting those three threes in the second half was big," Green said. "She did the same thing against Deshler for us [in an overtime loss on February 1.]

Belgreen led Mars Hill by three in the final seconds when senior guard Gabbie Moore got fouled and made two clutch free throws to seal the deal and punch the Lady Bulldogs' ticket to Hanceville. [Mars Hill scored an inconsequential basket at the buzzer to provide the final margin.]

"When Gabbie hit those two free throws," Green said, "that was the ball game."

Emma Dempsey finished with 19 points, 10 of which came in the fourth quarter and overtime. The 6'1 sophomore attempted 23 free throws on the night and made 11 of them. As a team, Belgreen shot 28-for-45 from the line, compared to just 8-for-14 by Mars Hill.

Katie Dempsey shot 7-for-8 from the line and scored 11 points. She had seven big points in the

second quarter to keep the Lady Bulldogs from falling too far behind. Gracie Dempsey finished with nine points, and junior guard Autumn Bragwell hit two threes and scored eight points. Junior post player Ansley Tate shot 6-for-10 from the line and also scored eight points. Moore finished with four.

This marks the second straight season that Belgreen has gone on the road and clinched a trip to Hanceville with a sub-regional win on an area champion's home floor. The Lady Bulldogs won comfortably at Marion County last year, but going into a place like Mars Hill and coming out with a tight win over a program like the one Mitchell and the Lady Panthers have built is another matter entirely. Green knew it would be a tough task, but he believed his team could get it done.

"I did," he said, "but I knew we'd have to play well. We had watched them on film a lot. Other coaches were so good to us. We had four films, and we talked to several coaches who gave us good info. I knew it was gonna be a tough, close game. Coach Mitchell thought the same thing, and it definitely played out that way.

"He's got a good ball team and does a good job with those girls. They shoot the ball well."

Mars Hill made four threes on Monday, compared to five by Belgreen. Riley Vaughn and Sadie Killen led the Lady Panthers with 11 points apiece, and Erika Mitchell added 10.

Green and the Lady Bulldogs will now head to Hanceville for the third time in the last four seasons. With a win over Falkville on Thursday, they would advance to the regional final to take on either Phillips or Decatur Heritage next Monday.

"We're thankful that the good Lord has blessed us with good health and an opportunity to get this far," Green said.

'TOUGH,' from page 13

regained our confidence and got right back in it."

It helps, of course, to have the two best players on the floor, which Davis and Allen were on Monday night. The two combined to score all nine points in a 9-3 run to open the fourth quarter that pushed the lead back out to 10 at 53-43.

"I mean, everybody kind of panics a little bit, but we knew we had it," said Davis, who shot 5-for-6 from the line in the final period and scored seven points down the stretch. "We just had to keep playing our game. We knew if we kept playing our game, we were gonna win. I just know we kept fighting harder and harder."

Added Allen, "We just had to take care of the ball and not let them get the shots off they wanted."

The Lady Bobcats certainly accomplished both of those goals down the stretch, turning the ball over just once in the fourth quarter and holding the Lady Bears to 1-for-11 shooting from the floor while out-scoring them 16-6 to put the game on ice and wrap up yet another regional berth.

Davis, the team's lone senior, is now preparing to make her fourth trip to Hanceville in five seasons at the varsity level.

"That's awesome," she said, "being able to go almost every year out of all the years I've been playing. It's a great honor. And to be able to go with my team one last time makes it even better."

Given that Thomas is also about to make his fourth trip to Hanceville in five seasons as head coach, it only seems fair to ask: What happened that one other year?

"Red Bay. Donnie Roberts," Thomas said with a laugh, recalling his third season, in which the Lady

Bobcats were sent packing by the Lady Tigers and their Hall of Fame head coach on the post-season's opening night. "We lost a coin toss and had to play them in the first round."

Since that loss to Red Bay two years ago, Phil Campbell has won exactly 50 games while losing only 10. Fresh off making their first Final Four appearance last season since 1987, the Lady 'Cats are no longer satisfied with merely making it to Hanceville. Their sights are set a little further down I-65.

"Birmingham," said Allen, last year's Northwest Regional MVP. "We wanna make it back to Birmingham and get to the finals."

Still, Thomas recognizes that the only way to reach Birmingham is to win two games at Tom Drake Coliseum, and he's thrilled to be going back. [Phil Campbell will face Tuesday's winner between Winfield and Good Hope on Saturday in the Northwest Regional semifinals, with a potential meeting with Lauderdale County looming in the regional final next week.]

"It's terrific for our program," Thomas said. "We're taking it one game at a time. Hanceville's gotta be on the way. We're trying to make it to Birmingham, but we've gotta go one game at a time. We found that out last year. A little bit of luck and being a little bit good helps a lot."

Caitlynn Mills shot 5-for-7 from the line and finished with 10 points and four rebounds for Phil Campbell. Katie Thomas had eight rebounds and three assists to go along with her two points. Kenner Scott and Olivia Taylor also scored two points apiece, and Kaci Harris added one.

Team for the ages



COURTESY PHOTO

Belgreen recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its 1993-94 varsity boys basketball team (which won 25 games and a Northwest Regional championship on its way to the Final Four). Team members pictured above are: Back row (L to R) - Jeff Wilemon, Stewart Blackburn, Cade Boyd and John Davis; middle row (L to R) - Coach Steve Ponders, Brandon Oliver, Gary Britnell, Bradley Ponders, Dennis Hatton and T.J. Bragwell; front row - cheerleader Tressa Hovater Bragwell.

Belgreen honors last team to reach Final 4

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As his Belgreen boys prepared for the 1993-94 varsity basketball season, coach Steve Ponders knew it would likely be a good year for Bulldog basketball.

Belgreen reached the state tournament the previous season, and Ponders had nine seniors returning on his '93-'94 team, each hungry to build on that success.

"The year before, we went down to Tuscaloosa for the state tournament, and I knew we had a good nucleus coming back," Ponders said. "I felt good about the season, and it turned out to be special."

Special indeed. Belgreen went 25-4 and reached the Class 1A state championship game before falling to Brantley.

Twenty-five years later, at age 66, Ponders remains active in high school coaching as part of his son Brian Ponders' staff at Deshler High School. With that double Ponders connection, there couldn't have been a better opponent for Belgreen to host last Friday in the first game in the school's legendary old gym since 2007, although Ponders says his role on the bench has changed from his Belgreen days.

"Brian is the boss. I let him take the reins," Ponders said. "I sit there and have a good seat on the court and watch the games. He does a real good job, along with the other assistant coaches."

Ponders and his 1993-94 team were honored as they celebrated the 25th reunion of Belgreen's state finals appearance. Ponders' son Bradley was one of the 11 players on that squad, and Brian served as team manager.

Along with Bradley Ponders, the 1993-94 Bulldogs varsity included Jeff Wilemon, Stewart Blackburn, Cade Boyd (All-State first team), John Davis, Brandon Oliver, Gary Britnell, Dennis Hatton, T.J. Bragwell, Jason Conway and Nathan Mitchell. Ponders also received All-State coaching honors that season.

Nine of those players attended the February 1 reunion, which saw Deshler visit Belgreen for the second game of a home-and-home series this year. Although Ponders' Deshler team won the game, it didn't spoil

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Kallie Allen

Junior Guard, Phil Campbell

Allen helped the Lady Bobcats bring home their second straight area tournament title last Friday with a big performance in the finals against Colbert Heights.

Allen took over in the third quarter, pouring in 14 points to help Phil Campbell turn an eight-point game at the half into a rout. She finished with a season-high 26 points and also pulled down nine rebounds in a 64-39 win.

Allen was at it again on Monday, scoring 21 points to help the Lady Bobcats clinch a trip to Hanceville with a 60-46 win over Lexington.



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'BULLDOGS', from page 15

"Ball movement and teamwork," said Mason Bragwell, who upped his scoring average on the season to 18.8 points per game and entered the week with 1,822 career points at the varsity level. "That's every bit of it. We're just now getting a feel for how to play with each other, and it's working pretty good."

It certainly worked at the area tournament, where Belgreen averaged 93.0 points in two games while shooting 58 percent from the floor with 21 made threes.

"We've been moving the ball extremely well and getting a lot of unselfish play from our guys," Isbell said. "And we've been shooting it well, too. When you combine all that together, that's a tough combination."

Another key element to Belgreen's recent offensive bonanza is pace—the faster the better. That tempo is driven largely by defense; the Bulldogs held Hackleburg to 5-for-21 shooting in Saturday's first quarter and then forced five turnovers on their way to out-scoring the Panthers 24-10 in the second to open up a 21-point halftime lead.

"Me and Gaven [Taylor] and Scout pressuring the ball and forcing the other team to play faster—that is our game," said Brant Bragwell, who had three steals on Saturday and also pulled down six rebounds, helping Belgreen own the boards to the tune of a 36-22 advantage. "Fast is our game. The more we speed the ball up, the faster we get it back, and the faster we can score on our end. Playing fast is definitely our strength."

Brant Bragwell's fingerprints were all over a 14-2 run by the Bulldogs late in the first half that turned a 13-point game into a rout. First, the 5'11 senior

guard grabbed an offensive rebound and fed Mason Bragwell for a layup to make it 33-18 with 2:58 left in the half. After Moore hit two free throws for Hackleburg, Brant Bragwell buried his fourth three of the night off an assist from Willingham to push the lead to 36-20.

Bragwell then rebounded a Moore miss on the other end and fired an outlet pass to Scout Bragwell, who found Mason Bragwell filling the lane down the middle of the floor for an easy layup to make it 38-20. Brant Bragwell then picked off a Panther pass and took it the other way for a layup, stretching the lead to 20.

Moments later, Brant Bragwell rebounded another Hackleburg miss and then set up Scout Bragwell for a three-pointer (his 63rd of the season, one behind Brant for the team lead) to make it 43-20. Brant Bragwell then came up with another steal, leading to a layup by reserve Tanner Warhurst off an assist from senior Kostner Bryant to make it 45-20.

"Brant really stepped up and played great on both ends," Isbell said. "He really got us going tonight. He pushed the tempo, and he pushed the floor for us. He saw some unbelievable passes. Credit to our other guys for running the floor so he could even have the chance to get them those passes. Mason ran it well, Scout ran it well, and we got up and down the court and got those passes ahead to get some easy transition points."

By the end of the third quarter, Brant Bragwell had topped the 20-point mark for the eighth time this season; he hit his fifth and final three of the night midway through the fourth to finish with an even 30 points—one more than his previous sea-

son-high of 29, also set against Hackleburg in a home win on January 28.

Scout Bragwell hit two threes on Saturday and finished with eight points, eight rebounds and four assists. Bryant also hit two threes and scored eight points. Warhurst had six points off the bench, and Willingham chipped in with four points, six boards and four assists. Taylor hit a first-half three and also had four rebounds and two assists. Brodie Vandiver added two points.

Moore, a 6'4, 220-pound senior, hit eight threes on the night—including five in the fourth quarter—and shot 17-for-42 from the floor to get his 45 points.

"Credit to Kaleb Moore—he can play, and he can shoot it," Isbell said. "I felt like there were times we had a hand right in his face, and he still knocked it down. All you can do is just try and limit the damage he does. I thought we did that, but he still put up [45] points. He's an unbelievable player."

The Bulldogs were scheduled to host No. 7 Covenant Christian (19-7) Tuesday night with a trip to Hanceville on the line. The Eagles and head coach Brett Waldrep (a friend and former high school rival of Isbell's from their playing days) lost 67-51 to Mars Hill in the Area 16 final last Friday.

"They are a really good team," Isbell said. "They shoot it well, and Brett does a great job with them. They're extremely disciplined. They're definitely gonna be a tough challenge. We'll have to come in and play well and play together. We'll prepare these next couple of days and see what happens."

Regardless of how things turned out on Tuesday night, the game against Covenant was to be the final one in front of the home fans for Brant Bragwell, Mason Bragwell and the other members of Belgreen's senior class (Taylor, Warhurst, Bryant and Jonathan Gonzalez).

"It gives me chills just thinking about it," Brant Bragwell said. "We just have to keep doing what we're doing now—playing together and playing hard. Hopefully we'll come out with a win."

In order to do that, the Bulldogs were preparing to play with the same energy, selflessness and precision they showed during the area tournament—and to do it against a much higher level of competition.

"It's gonna be tough," Mason Bragwell said, "but I think if we play like we've been playing, it won't be a problem. If we play with teamwork and play hard, everything else will take care of itself."

Belgreen's big man admitted to having mixed feelings about playing in his final home game.

"It's gonna be sad," Bragwell said. "We've got some good memories in here."

And his favorite among those memories?

"Cutting down those nets," he said with a grin.

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'BELGREEN', from page 17

the celebration and the memories of a special season that will forever hold a place in Belgreen sports history.

When the school's new gym was completed in 2007, that marked the end of home games in the old facility, which likely came as a relief for the long list of teams who visited the cozy, warm facility before heading home with a loss.

"We definitely had a big advantage playing games in the old gym," Pounders said. "With the playing court and all the people right there on top of you, if you went out of bounds, you were likely to step on someone's foot. It was a big advantage for us. The crowd intimidated a lot of teams that came into that gym, because everything was so close together."

And don't forget the temperature in the old gym, which could charitably be described as 'warm.'

"Back in the old days, they built gyms real good, and that gym was well-insulated and held the heat in there pretty well," Pounders said. "We were used to practicing in there every day in the hot gym, so it wasn't a problem for us."

Tressa Hovater Bragwell was a Belgreen cheerleader in '93-'94, and her husband T.J. was one of the players. The couple now has two children, Scout and Autumn, both playing on Belgreen varsity basketball teams.

"It was a great story to see the first game in the

old gym since 2007," Bragwell said. "This is the only team in Belgreen history to play in the state finals, and they came home after twenty-five years to be together last Friday."

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Shelana Moore, whose daughter Gabbie is a senior guard on the Belgreen girls varsity, enjoyed watching the Bulldogs play in the old gym.

"Even though I went to Russellville, I remember attending some Belgreen games in the '90s," Moore said. "This past Friday night's game atmosphere was similar to the '90s. It was fun to watch Gabbie and her team play in the old gym and be part of Belgreen history."

"It's a wonderful school, and we've enjoyed our

years here with Gabbie and Grayson [Moore's son, who played varsity basketball and graduated two years ago from Belgreen]."

Belgreen's run through the playoffs that legendary season included area tournament wins over Hackleburg and Waterloo, a sub-regional 95-69 victory over Lynn, a 67-56 victory over Courtland in the regional round, a 78-51 win over Meek in the regional finals and a state semifinal defeat of St. Jude, 84-71.

Even though the team fell short in the 1994 finals, losing 79-62 to Brantley High School, Pounders said that season served as a lesson to Belgreen students.

"That team had a big impact on the community and the school," he said. "It showed that no matter who you are, if you work hard, are dedicated to the program and stay disciplined, you can make it down [to state]. It was a good example to all those elementary kids about what they could accomplish also."

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net! To contact us, call 256-332-0255 or email franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

Memorial service for Golden Tiger legend set for Saturday

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A Russellville legend will receive a memorial service in his honor this week to celebrate the impact his life had on his community, both on and off the basketball court.

Tommy Bonds, who graduated from Russellville High School in 1975, passed away recently in Germany due to complications from heart disease.

Bonds, a guard for the Golden Tigers varsity powerhouse teams from 1972-75, played for legendary coaches Jack Tucker at Russellville and C.M. Newton at the University of Alabama, where he and teammate Chris Bragwell continued their careers after high school.

Bonds earned All-Tournament honors in 1973, 1974 and 1975. After completing his education, Bonds joined the United States Army, which led him to make his home in Germany.

His nephew, Tony Bonds, is now an assistant principal at Russellville Middle School. Tony's mother Lucy and Tommy are two of 11 siblings. Tommy was the youngest boy of all the Bonds children.

Visitation and a memorial service will be held this Saturday, February 16 at Russellville High School Gymnasium. Visitation is tentatively set from 1-3 p.m., with the memorial service starting at 3 p.m. He will be laid to rest at Luketown Cemetery in Russellville.

Bonds' body is being transferred back to Russellville from Germany by the Army.

Although he lived overseas, Bonds returned to Russellville every couple years to visit family and friends, including Coach Tucker. Several

years ago, Bonds spoke about the impact his coach had on his life.

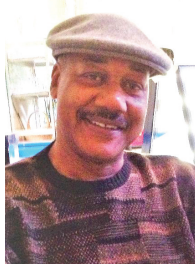
"I am so proud to have played four years for Coach Tucker. People say, 'You are the best,' or 'You are the best,'" Bonds said. "No, I was *part* of the best. What I had at Alabama doesn't compare to the experience of playing for Coach Tucker."

As a young man growing up in Russellville, Bonds grew close to Paul and Yvonne Foster. The friendship lasted a lifetime.

"We considered Tommy as our son," Yvonne said. "He was part of the first senior class I taught at Russellville. He was a great guy who will be missed."

Family members and friends of the Bonds family met last week to discuss the memorial service, although pinning down a date was difficult with the uncertainty of when his body will be returned to Russellville.

Arrangements are being handled by Pinkard Funeral Home. For details on Saturday's service, please call Pinkard at 256-332-7772.



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