

Hamilton recognized by ACEA as Superintendent of the Year

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Franklin County Schools superintendent of education Greg Hamilton thought he was making a trip to Montgomery last Tuesday evening to attend the final day of the Alabama Community Education Association (ACEA) annual conference on Wednesday.

Little did Hamilton know he would be the guest of honor at Awards Day. Hamilton was honored as the 2018-19 Alabama Superintendent of the Year by the ACEA for his outstanding contributions in promoting community education within Franklin County Schools.

"I am humbled by being named Superintendent of the Year," Hamilton said. "The honor truly belongs to the teachers, principals, supervisors, staff and the community stakeholders who work so hard to provide the best opportunities to our students. I accept the award on their behalf."

Nominations were received from school systems across Alabama, and regional winners were recognized before Hamilton was named the

See 'HAMILTON,' Page 11



Greg Hamilton, superintendent of Franklin County Schools, with Alabama secretary of state John Merrill (right) at last week's annual ACEA conference.

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McDowell set to perform 27th Russellville show on March 16



Ronnie McDowell

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As the date nears for his 27th concert in Russellville, country legend Ronnie McDowell reflected last Friday on the relationship he's built with the community.

"In 1990 when *Unchained Melody* came out, Wanda [Myrick] brought me down to Russellville," McDowell said. "I came to do one show, and now here we are 29 years later."

Through the last three decades, McDowell has developed friendships with so many folks in Russellville, he calls it his 'adopted hometown.' McDowell has received a key to the city and has a street in Russellville named after him.

He will make his 27th appearance in Russellville on Saturday, March 16 at the historic Roxy Theater. Local artists Jacob Green and Joseph Baldwin will open the show at 7 p.m., followed by the headliner McDowell.

See 'MCDOWELL,' Page 11

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Terry Wilburn Harris, Tuscumbia (formerly of Russellville), age 70
Died Wednesday, February 27, 2019. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Shady Grove Cemetery at Liberty Hill in Phil Campbell.

Christina Leigh Owens, Russellville (formerly of Haleyville), age 35
Died Monday, February 25, 2019. Funeral arrangements had not been announced at press time.

Hoover Eugene "Gene" Pace, Muscle Shoals (formerly of Russellville), age 90
Died Sunday, February 24, 2019. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Carol Latham Thompson Risner, Huntsville, age 93
Died Thursday, February 28, 2019. Memorial service held at Weatherly Heights Church of Christ in Huntsville. Interment followed a brief indoor service at Franklin Memory Gardens in Russellville. Spry Memorial Chapel of Russellville assisted the family.



We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.
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Red Bay resident receives Korean War medal

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although the Korean War is often called "The Forgotten War," the Korean government never forgot the heroism of American men and women who served in the three-year conflict, and those veterans are now being honored with a medal for their service.

Red Bay resident Herdis Williams received his Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal from Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore February 21 at a ceremony at the Franklin County Courthouse. Williams was not feeling well the day of the ceremony, so his son David and daughter-in-law Angela received the medal in his stead. Michael White, Franklin County Veterans Affairs officer, also attended the presentation.

The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs has been actively seeking Korean War veterans eligible to receive the medal. It's a way for the Korean government to show its respect and gratitude for the devotion and sacrifice of the U.S. Troops during the Korean War.

Wedged between World War II and the Vietnam War, the Korean War began after more than 75,000 North Korean soldiers invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. The three-year war saw more than five million soldiers and civilians lose their lives, including more than 700 Alabama residents.

South Korea's government started offering the medals in 1975 to veterans who visited the country through its "Revisit Program," which was designed to show gratitude for their service and to provide an opportunity to see how the country has prospered since the armistice was signed in 1953.

Williams ran a Texaco station in the Red Bay Bottoms, known as Williams Texaco, with his wife Clara "Dale" Williams for many years. He was the first veteran to be presented his medal in Franklin County.

Veterans who served in the Korean War and are interested in receiving the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal are encouraged to contact the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs. The local number for the Franklin County office is 256-332-8845. The office is located in the Franklin County Courthouse.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Pictured above, from left, are Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore, David Williams, Angela Williams and Veterans Affairs officer Michael White. David's father, Red Bay resident Herdis Williams, is the first veteran to receive the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal in Franklin County. Veterans who served in the Korean War and are interested in receiving the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal are encouraged to contact the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs. The local number for the Franklin County office is 256-332-8845.

FCDC members authorize funds for 55 grants

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The recent meeting of the Franklin County Development Commission saw its members authorize funds for 55 various grants across Franklin County.

Committee members include Russellville mayor David Grissom (whose two-year appointment alternates with that of the Red Bay mayor), Brad Bolton (Sen. Larry Stutts' appointee), Jeremy Campbell (Rep. Jamie Kiel's appointee) and Chris Wallace (Rep. Proncey Robertson's appointee).

The three members appointed by the local legislative delegation serve for a four-year period that coincides with the legislator's term.

The commission distributes funds that come from in-lieu of tax payments made by the

Tennessee Valley Authority to the State of Alabama. The funds are divided among the counties served by TVA.

The funds are further split based on percentages of the population contained within Franklin County in each representative's House District. Kiel's House District 18 includes 79 percent of Franklin County registered voters, and Robertson's House District 7 only 21 percent.

Committee members approved a motion by Grissom to begin distributing \$5,000 at each meeting to the Economic Development Fund, beginning with the April 2019 meeting. The motion was conditioned upon funds being available to do so.

Total grant distribution was \$24,156, the majority of which was awarded for various school projects and purchases of classroom equipment. Grants

not related to education included \$3,580 to the Red Bay Police Department for purchase of a weather siren on Hospital Road; \$500 to the Franklin County Coroner for purchase of body bags and personal protective equipment; \$2,506 to the Russellville Fire Department for purchase of eight AED's; \$1,500 to the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce for purchase of sound equipment for the A.W. Todd Centre; \$400 to the Frog Pond Volunteer Fire Department for equipment purchases; and \$230 to the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce for a Junior Leadership trip to Montgomery.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Franklin County Development Commission will be April 19 at Red Bay City Hall at 8:30 a.m. Deadline to apply for grant funding at this meeting will be April 12.

Six local establishments receive satisfactory ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

All six Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of February 18-22 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.

All six 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 99, received by Vina High School Cafeteria, 8250 Cty. Road 23, Vina. Inspections of Franklin County businesses, with critical item violations noted, resulted in the following scores:

- Tharptown Elementary and High School, 145 Hwy. 80, Russellville, 88. (No date mark or incorrectly dating TCS/RTE foods, corn, fajita chicken, cheese dip and salsa, hot holding units holding pizza at 104-124 degrees).

- Cardinal Drive In, 602 4th St. W, Red Bay, 91. (Walk in cooler out of temp).

- 2 Moons Quick Stop, 606 4th St. SE, Red Bay, 93. (Improper insecticides).

- Big Star #345 Deli, 406 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 94. (Pulled pork in up front warmer out of temp).

- Piggly Wiggly Deli #93, 518 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 96.

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

Honey Do List: Are you severe weather-ready?

As I mentioned last week, we have already experienced a wide range of weather patterns just this year, including tornadoes. We know from past experience that March and April are prime time for severe weather in our area.

Are you and your family ready? Staying in touch with weather alerts, communicating with family and emergency personnel, and having a plan of action are all important components of your preparation.

Staying in touch with weather alerts, communicating with family and emergency personnel, and having a plan of action are all important components of your preparation for severe weather.

Weather alerts can be followed on TV, cell phones and radio broadcasts. A battery-powered radio can be extremely useful should the power be interrupted or cell phone towers destroyed. Every home should have at least one battery-powered radio with extra batteries on hand.

Family meetings are very important to communicate emergency

plans to every family member. Teach each child according to their age level. School-age children will most certainly be taught many aspects of safety in class. Make them a part of the plan by letting them share their knowledge with you and then customize it to fit your family's situation. Teach them to make use of safety equipment, such as bike helmets.

Make plans to care for elderly family members. Special needs, such as medications and mobility, need to be planned for.

Teach the family the safest place to be in the instance of severe weather. If a storm shelter is not available, look to the lowest floor and most protected place in the home away from windows.

Severe weather doesn't always appear at a convenient time. Next week: What to do when caught away from home in severe weather.

Don't forget the flashlights, and remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green



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The *Franklin Free Press* strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

Letters to the editor

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

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Farewell to this man's best friend

It was almost eight years ago when I was awakened one morning at my house on Upper Bear Lake by the yapping of puppies.

The only problem was I didn't own a dog.

I walked outside to find eight young puppies gleefully barreling out from under the safe confines of my front deck.

As I learned was often the case, someone had callously dumped the pups and left them homeless, alone and to fend for themselves.

I had plans to get a female chocolate Labrador retriever puppy. My previous dog, Hershey, lived 16 years and was not just a pet. She was my shadow. So it was my natural inclination to get another lab. Those plans changed that June morning, as one of the eight puppies caught my eye.

When my father came over to the house, he immediately pointed out the same small brown puppy as the 'leader of the pack.'

"If you're going to keep one of these, he's the one you want. He's the leader," my dad said.

So I followed my father's advice, kept the Alpha male and named him Brady. I put a photo of the other seven puppies in the *Franklin Free Press* and found homes for them as well.

Saturday morning, I carried my best friend and companion to be put down after watching him suffer through a week of paralysis.

We don't know how he injured his back. It could have been trauma-related or a degenerative condition that finally manifested itself. Either way, he lost control of his back legs and was incontinent.

We tried treating him with an injection, carrying desperate hopes it would help him regain movement. Sadly, it didn't.

I have four other rescue dogs at home, each

with their own unique personalities. I love them, but it won't be the same without Brady.

It's the unconditional love a dog offers that binds us to them. They innately know how we're feeling and when to offer that extra love at times we need it most.

Brady was my sidekick. He went everywhere with me, sitting on his favorite spot on the console between the front seats of my car.

He spent thousands of hours at the office with me, always alert to let me know when someone came in. If it was a man, he'd let out a muffled growl, just to remind the visitor who was boss. If it was a female, he'd schmooze his way over to her and wait to be petted.

He was the namesake for our weekly football picks contest in the *FFP* for six years, although his picks were remarkably similar to those of sports editor Mike Self.

It's heartbreaking to lose a pet. If you're an 'animal person,' you know how strong the connection is with them. I'll always remember Brady and can take comfort knowing he had a good life.

Much like his 'person,' Brady loved food. He was especially fond of cheese. If I ate cheese, we ate cheese. He'd quickly wolf down his piece and look at me, letting out a whimper to advise me he was ready for more.

I wish he was still with me. I'd let him have a whole block.

Rest in peace buddy. You're not in pain anymore. And your time on this earth made me a better, happier person. I love you and miss you already.



John Pilati
Publisher



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Investigate your options

Dear Dave,
I'm single and a firefighter, and we have a pension plus a 457(b) retirement plan. I'm not contributing to the 457(b) right now, because I'm following your plan and in Baby Step 2, which is paying off debt.

Our retirement plan is managed by a big life insurance company, but I know you don't like the idea of using insurance companies when it comes to investing. I need some guidance.

Dustin

Dear Dustin,
I'd max out a Roth IRA, which would be \$6,000 a year in your case, before I did anything with the 457(b). That may not take you to the level I recommend—which is putting 15 percent of your income toward retirement—so then I'd investigate the options offered by the insurance company that's managing your 457(b).

When you have a look at the

options available to you within the 457(b), you'll need to pay special attention to two things—the fees (this is where they'll kill you) and the rates of return. If they are somehow accessing mutual funds, and you can get stock market-like rates of return—I'm talking about a 10 to 12 percent average over many years—then I'd put some in there.

Still, warning sirens in my head go off when I hear that a life insurance company is running a 457(b). Investing through a life insurance company is a bad idea 100 percent of the time. Now, is it a bad enough idea in *this* case to avoid it altogether? It may be an *okay* idea in this specific instance, but chances are it won't be anything you'll look at later and be blown away by great results.

That kind of thing just isn't going to happen when you wrap an insurance company, or life insurance, around investing. You don't go to a transmission shop to get your muffler fixed. It's just not what they do!

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 15 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.*

Letter to the Editor

To the editor:
We just came through Valentine's Day, and I was reading about all the sweethearts. I wanted to write in and tell of my sweetheart.

I've been single 14 years, and they have been wonderful years. I have a sweetheart—it is the Lord Jesus, and although love between a couple is blessed and special, there is no greater love than the Lord Jesus has for us.

He has stood beside me through everything I have been through in my life. I know I'm never alone.

He takes care of my needs and hurts and is my best friend. He's never busy, never too tired and never too overwhelmed for me to come to Him and share my problems and concerns and He can actually do something about them.

I could never have a better savior, friend, Lord, confidant, burden bearer and everything else than the Lord Jesus. He is my forever sweetheart and all and all and won't even leave me in death, but will go with me into eternity.

—Anonymously submitted

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

The Phil Campbell Friday Night Dance will be celebrating its 17-year anniversary this Friday, March 8 at the Phil Campbell Community Center from 7-10 p.m. Finger food will be served, and all former band members are invited to join in the fun!

The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert with special guest Billy Lawson at the Roxy Theatre this 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. Call 256-335-4356.

The next meeting for American Legion Post 64 will be Thursday, March 14 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

The Shoals Chapter of the Order of St. Luke will meet in the Sheffield Room at Park Place (501 N. Montgomery Avenue, Sheffield) on Thursday, March 14 at 2:30 p.m. Linda Romine will teach on "Healing and Protection in the Psalms." We believe that God heals spiritually, physically and emotionally. Prayer for healing will be offered. All are welcome.

Osborn Hill Cemetery will meet on Thursday, March 14 at the Littleville Town Hall at 6 p.m. to elect officers for the coming year. Donations are needed to help maintain the perpetual care now and in the future. Please make check payable to the Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Lana Duncan, 2330 Colburn Mtn. Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674, or to the Valley State Bank in Russellville, AL 35674. We encourage everyone to come.

Sheffield Public Library and U.S. Marine Sergeant Fred Gossi, a Purple Heart recipient, invite you to attend an evening with Craig and Fred to hear the story of how in a remote part of Afghanistan in 2010, the sergeant fed a piece of beef jerky to a funny-looking stray dog. Theirs is a poignant and inspiring tale of hope, resilience and optimism, with a timeless message at its heart: It's not what happens in life, but how we respond to it. Craig and Fred's story is a shining example of the power of love to transform our hearts and lives. The event will take place on Thursday, March 14 at the Clarion Hotel in Sheffield. Doors open at 6 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. A donation of \$35 for tickets includes the meal and is available through the Sheffield Public Library. For more information, call 256-386-5633. This program is presented by Friends of Sheffield Public Library.

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.

Come one, come all to a benefit gospel singing on Saturday, March 16 at 5 p.m. at the Phil Campbell Community Center. Groups performing include Family Tradition, The Sharp Family and others. Come show brotherly love! There will be door prizes and plenty of food. Get a hamburger or a hot dog plus chips and a drink for \$5.00. Water will be for sale for \$1.00, and cakes will also be for sale for \$1.00/slice. All donations welcome!

Belgreen kindergarten registration will be held on Friday, March 22, 2019 from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in the school library. Children registering must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2019. Please bring your child's birth certificate, social security card, immunization record, and proof of residency (copy of current utility bill, deed, or rental agreement) to register. For more information, please contact Belgreen High School at 256-332-1376.

Tharptown Elementary is holding on-line pre-registration for its Pre-K program through March 22. Child must be four years old on or before September 1, 2019. If you have already registered your child online, please bring the following forms to the school on Friday, March 22: Child's birth certificate, immunization record (blue slip), Social Security card and proof of where the child lives (copy of power bill, gas bill, water bill, rental agreement/lease or deed). Pre-register your child at <https://alprek.asapconnected.com>. Drawing for registration will be March 22.

Tharptown Elementary will hold Kindergarten registration on Friday, March 22 from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. in the K-2 Building. Child must be five years old on or before September 1, 2019. Please bring the following forms: Child's birth certificate, immunization record (blue slip), Social Security card and proof of where the child lives (copy of power bill, gas bill, water bill, rental agreement/lease or deed).

There will be a ribbon cutting for a Little Free Library at the Phil Campbell Memorial Park on Monday, March 25 from 10 a.m.-noon. Book swap, local authors, snacks and crafts for kids. For info, call 256-627-7489.

The 15th annual Relay for Life Open Bass Tournament will be held at Cedar Creek at Slick Rock Boat Ramp on Saturday, March 30 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Entry fee is \$70 per boat. \$10 per boat for Lunker (100% payback). \$1,000 guaranteed to first-place winner! Second and third place will pay out based on number of entries. Five-fish limit per boat. Only two contestants per boat. Large mouth, small mouth and spotted bass only will be counted. Fish must measure 12 inches with mouth closed and roll tail. Make all checks payable to American Cancer Society. For more information, contact Rhonda Boyles (4125 Waterloo Road, Russellville, AL 35653 or 256-627-4112) or Jamie Sumerel (256-762-5123).

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Students gather for annual Black History Program

Sheryl Hamilton
For the FFP

The Windy City of Chicago is endowed with history!
The story of Black History begins in Chicago during the late summer of 1915. The state of Illinois sponsored a national celebration of the 50th anniversary of emancipation. Carter G. Woodson, the father of Black History, envisioned the need to gather detailed information about the progress and contributions of Blacks. Exhibits and message boards were displayed at the coliseum, the site of the 1912 Republican Convention. A crowd of between



COURTESY PHOTO

Senior students took lead parts in this year's Black History Program at Russellville High School, which was held on February 22.

6,000 and 12,000 people waited outside for their turn to view the exhibits. Not thousands but hundreds of Russellville High School students gathered last month in the auditorium for this year's annual Black History Program, and another RHS graduate was returning to his alma mater to tell his story of success. Byron Graham, a 1993 graduate who played football and engaged in other extracurricular activities while walking the halls of RHS, was excited to come home.

Born in Tharptown, Graham was proud of his upbringing and work ethic. He was a history maker himself by being the first Black head basketball coach for Florence High School. Time has moved forward, and now he is the athletic director for Florence City Schools. As athletic director, Graham oversees the school's sports programs. He has experienced both wins and losses as a coach and can connect with the youth.

Coach Graham knows the importance of helping encourage the youth to do their best as athletes and in the classroom. In his speech, he told the students that they will have to make tough decisions in life but that with a little guidance from their teachers, the results can be positive. He gave honor and respect to Dr. Murphy and Mrs. Pace, who imparted a world of knowledge into him and helped guide him along the way.

Graham selected education as his major while attending the University of North Alabama, because Dr. Murphy told him that as a Black male in education he could go places and do great things. Mrs. Ramona Robinson agreed to be a reference for him because she knew his capabilities. As a graduate of Athens State University, he was glad that Dr. Martin Luther King had a dream, and because of his dream Coach Graham could stand at the podium of RHS. Many retired teachers had deposited golden nuggets into him and pushed him forward. Although he was determined and dedicated, he dreamed of a better life for himself.

"Sacrifices had been made by so many great and talented people before me," Graham said. "You should always treat people fairly, and this can help open up doors for you. Don't see color. Just see people and love them. Be proud of your opportunities, and remember your heritage."

Jaleesa Escott was the guest poetry reader. Her poem told an intense story

See 'PROGRAM,' page 10

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How to stop the money fight in your marriage

Nobody wakes up on their wedding day and thinks, I bet we'll be divorced by this time next year. At least, I hope they don't!

Most of us have the highest hopes and dreams for our marriages. Sometimes, though, after a few years, reality sets in—in the form of debt, credit cards and financial infidelity—and we give up hope. That's why money problems are a leading cause of divorce in America, and it's why I'm so passionate about helping people take control of their money.

When I speak at events or talk to couples across the country, I hear time and time again that money is at the root of so much marital stress. It's amazing how appearance, status and stuff can take over our lives and ruin our relationships if we aren't careful. The good news is that there is an antidote. It all comes down to common sense.

Whether you're just dating or are already an "old married couple," here are a few tips to make money a blessing in your relationship—not a cause of stress and fights.

•Work together, not separate

How can you be on the same page about money if you have two separate bank accounts? Didn't the pastor at your wedding ceremony say, "You will become one"? Keeping your accounts separate is one of the most effective ways to completely wreck your financial life—and maybe even your marriage. If you want to win with money in your marriage, you must be on the same team.

•Make a routine

At the end of every month, sit down with your spouse for your monthly budget meeting. Plan out how you will spend every dollar for the coming month—groceries, gas, bills, everything. And don't forget to budget a small percentage of "fun" money!

•Stay involved

It's okay if one of you is in charge of budgeting and paying bills, but you both need to communicate and know what's going on. My husband and I use the budgeting app EveryDollar, because it's easy to use and gives us both visibility into what's going on with our money.

If you and your spouse are struggling right now, change won't come overnight. But you've got to start somewhere. Getting started is the hardest part, but once you start those conversations with your spouse, it will change your marriage. So, sit down for a heart-to-heart with your spouse, be honest, and be proactive.

•Be willing to say "no"

If it's not in the budget, then it's not in the budget. That might mean you can't have the latest iPhone or designer shoes. Remember, it's only no for now. Once you're debt-free, you'll have more freedom to afford the things you really want. My dad, Dave Ramsey, taught me to "Live like no one else, so later, you can live like no one else."

•Don't compare your marriage to anyone



Rachel Cruze

else's

You may think other couples have it all together based on what you see on social media, but their marriage may very well be stressed. Maybe they have no margin with their money, because their paycheck comes in and goes right back out in payments. Their "perfect life" may be just one money fight away from divorce. Stay focused on your marriage and your goals!

If you and your spouse are struggling right now, change won't come overnight. But you've got to start somewhere. Getting started is the hardest part, but once you start those conversations with your spouse, it will change your marriage. If you're struggling with how to approach it, check out my list of six money conversation starters to help.

So, sit down for a heart-to-heart with your spouse, be honest, and be proactive. Don't let your marriage fall apart because you're not paying attention to money issues!

About Rachel Cruze

As a #1 New York Times best-selling author, host of *The Rachel Cruze Show* and *The Rachel Cruze Show Podcast*, Rachel helps people learn the proper ways to handle money and stay out of debt. She's authored three best-selling books, including *Love Your Life, Not Theirs* and *Smart Money Smart Kids*, which she co-wrote with her father, Dave Ramsey. You can follow Cruze on Twitter and Instagram at @RachelCruze and online at www.rachelcruze.com, youtube.com/rachelcruze or facebook.com/rachelramseycruze.

Gunderman, Carter win Junior Beef Cookoff

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Two local students cooked their way into a statewide contest at the Junior Beef Cookoff held last Friday at the A.W. Todd Centre.

Phil Campbell senior Anna Gunderman and Belgreen eighth-grader Harley Carter won the senior and junior divisions of the competition, which was sponsored by the Franklin County Cattleman's Association and the Franklin County Extension Service.

Thirteen family and consumer science students from Belgreen, Phil Campbell and Red Bay high schools took part in the competition, which was reinstated this year by Franklin County Cattleman's Association president Caleb Beason.

Rules for the cookoff required participants, who were broken into senior (10th-12th grade) and junior (seventh-ninth grade) divisions, to prepare a recipe with beef as the primary ingredient. Only fresh beef products found at your local supermarket were allowed to be used, and students were encouraged to limit sodium and fat in their recipes.

Gunderman's low-carb Mexican stuffed bell peppers won the senior division, and Carter's Hawaiian burgers secured first place in the junior division. The students will prepare

the same recipes at the state cookoff April 6 at Montgomery's Carver High.

In the senior division, Phil Campbell senior Carly Rice placed second and Belgreen sophomore Julie Layman third. In the junior division, Belgreen student Seth Sykes placed second and Phil Campbell student Kyra Rollins third.

Other students to compete included Makayla Lane and Kellie Clements from Belgreen, Camron Burks and Jon Shotts from Red Bay, Makenzie Nelson from Belgreen, and Tasha Trapp and Emilee Mashburn from Phil Campbell.

CB&S Bank donated prizes for the award winners, with \$30 to each first-place finisher, \$20 for second place and \$10 for third. Dishes were evaluated in four categories: Flavor intensity, healthfulness and nutritive balance, palatability and appearance.

Beason expressed his appreciation to 4H agent Janet Lovelady for her support and assistance with the competition. Beason said the event was a way to showcase beef products to young people.

"The program is beneficial to show the end result of the cattle industry and the opportunity for students to participate even if they don't own cattle," Beason said. "They learn culinary skills and proper food preparation, and it highlights the whole beef life cycle from pasture to plate."



PCHS senior Anna Gunderman (left) and Belgreen eighth-grader Harley Carter won the senior and junior divisions of the Junior Beef Cookoff sponsored by the Franklin County Cattleman's Association and the Franklin County Extension Service. The students are pictured above with Eric Fike of CB&S Bank, which donated prizes for the event.



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on Hwy. 43 South in Russellville this Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, starting at 7 AM each day.

Yard Sale Wednesday, March 13 off Hwy. 48 in Tharptown. Go past school. First road to the left from Russellville. Lots of items! Wii, Pokemon, kid's bow, clothes and more.

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3 BR, 2 BA Home for Sale. 716 Kent Street, Phil Campbell. Includes app. one acre with house. Vinyl Siding. 24x24 garage. 2 car carport. Roof recently replaced. New refrigerator and stove. Call 256-460-7055. (2)

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'PROGRAM,' from page 8

of the Negroes and some of the things they had encountered dating back to slavery. I was reminded of the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance. One class at RHS is studying the writing of Zora Neale Hurston.

Senior students took lead parts in this year's Black History Program. Everyone was enthusias-

tic about presenting their piece of the puzzle to demonstrate a well finished project. Junior classmates assisted with the thank you to RCS superintendent Heath Grimes and RHS principal Jason Goodwin. Kudos to Mrs. Patrice Smith, Mrs. Emily Rush and Mr. Gary McNutt, whose help was remarkable.

Mrs. Sheryl Hamilton, a substitute teacher for five years, recognized a need for a Black History Program and began talking with the principal and the students, and they welcomed the idea.

Therefore, on February 22, RHS faculty, staff and students recognized the importance of diversity.

Job Opportunity

The Franklin County Commission will accept applications for a Solid Waste Technician for the Franklin County Solid Waste Department until 5:00 PM on Friday, March 8, 2019.

An application and job description may be picked up at the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, AL 35653, Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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'MCDOWELL,' from page 1

After serving nearly 30 years as the president of the McDowell's fan club, Myrick no longer has that responsibility, but she and the Portland, TN native remain good friends.

"He's a good family friend, and he counts Russellville as his second hometown," Myrick said. "And he has a wonderful relationship with the mayor, Bobby Brown and a lot of other people in Russellville."

McDowell's show will contain a mix of his classic hits, including *You're Gonna Ruin My Bad Reputation*, *Older Women and Personally*, along with songs from his more recent albums.

Although he will turn 70 next year, McDowell's schedule remains as active as ever, and he has no plans to slow down any time soon.

"I don't even think about stuff like that. My total focus is on my family anyway and always has been," McDowell said. "I put my priorities there a long time ago, not on my business but my children. I don't really have any plans to retire. The last thing I want to do is sit on the porch or play golf."

In addition to his busy tour schedule, McDowell will see the premiere of his television show, *Painting America*, air later this year on HGTV.

An accomplished painter, McDowell tells a unique story through a painting in each episode of

Painting America. The first show focuses on Elvis Presley receiving his first guitar at age 11 in Tupelo.

"We depict that moment at the Tupelo Hardware Store in the painting, called *That Magic Moment*," McDowell said.

Elvis walked out of Tupelo Hardware on January 5, 1946 with a 1940 Kay model guitar purchased as a birthday gift by his mother. The rest, as they say, is musical history.

At the end of each episode of *Painting America*, McDowell auctions off the number one print of each painting with proceeds going to a local children's charity.

"In Tupelo, the auction brought in \$10,500 for the Children's Rehabilitation Center, and we were able to give all those kids hearing aids," McDowell said.

McDowell's career was transformed by the song *The King is Gone*, which took him from accomplished songwriter to accomplished performer. It was his tribute to Elvis Presley.

"I never wrote that song thinking about it being released. I did nothing but turn on the radio at 2:22 on August 16, 1977, and hear about Elvis's passing," McDowell said. "I only wrote it because it came right out of my heart and soul. Every bit of those words just flowed out."

While his career has seen him travel across the United States as well as the world, McDowell recently had an opportunity to perform in Scotland, something he will always consider a special experience.

"That's where the McDowells are all from. So I was just glad to get to play in my homeland," McDowell said. "Actually, a lot of McDowells came to the show. That was interesting. I went to a pub and sat with some Scottish McDowells, and that was really enjoyable."

Asked whether the McDowells received a discount on tickets at the show, Ronnie coyly answered no.

"I didn't get a discount at the pub either," he said.

Other than a few singles, floor seats are sold out for McDowell's March 16 show, but general admission balcony seats remain. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling 256-415-3270 or at Abstract and Appraisal, 403 North Washington Avenue in Russellville.

Proceeds from the concert benefit the restoration of the Roxy Theater.

"I love coming back to the old Roxy theater. Those are my favorite venues," McDowell said. "It just doesn't seem like 29 years since the first show, though. It seems like it was just the other day, then I realize how much time has passed."

'HAMILTON,' from page 1

Superintendent of the Year.

Hamilton said he was humbled and surprised by the award, but he immediately deflected credit for any success his system has seen to others.

"I am honored to serve as superintendent of Franklin County. I am proud of the accomplishments of our system," Hamilton said. "I am humbled by being named ACEA Superintendent of the Year."

"The honor truly belongs to the teachers, principals, supervisors, staff and the community stakeholders who work so hard to provide the best opportunities to our students. I accept the award on their behalf."

Community education is a philosophy and set of principles that advocate for the creation of life-long learning opportunities for community members to become partners in addressing community needs. These community members include individuals, schools, businesses and public and private organizations, according to the ACEA website.

Community education includes before- and after-school education, youth development and adult education. All are connected by the principles of the field and the belief that through education and learning, individuals and their communities can be transformed.

Franklin County Schools were recognized by the ACEA for the support the system has given to after-school programs, securing funding for six after-school programs, cooperative work with members of the Franklin County community and helping promote life-long learning.

"These T.R.A.C.K.S. Centers have become a lifesaver for working parents and our at-risk children struggling to keep up with the academic standards," said Dr. Susan Hargett, who nominated Hamilton for the award. "Mr. Hamilton has helped develop ways to sustain these services for children since the beginning of his term in January [of] 2017. He has helped find dollars from other sources to ensure these programs are available to all children."

Dr. Susan Hargett submitted Hamilton's nomination to the ACEA, and she described his support of after-school centers and summer programs.

"The Franklin County School System manages six after-school centers and summer programs in the county schools under the Franklin County Community Education System," Hargett wrote. "These T.R.A.C.K.S. Centers have become a lifesaver for working parents and our at-risk children struggling to keep up with the academic standards...Mr. Hamilton has helped to develop ways to sustain these services for children since the beginning of his term in January [of] 2017. He has helped find dollars from other sources to ensure these programs are available to all children. When three schools were not refunded with 21st Community Learning Grants last year, he even secured donations to keep the programs going throughout the school year and summer."

Said Hamilton, "I am and always will be an advocate of helping children any way we can. Education and learning are life-long objectives we fully support."

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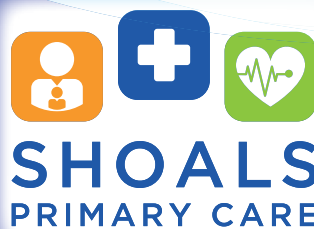
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Cameron's consecutive one-hitters get Lady 'Cats back on track

Staff reports

Freshman pitcher Taylor Cameron tossed back-to-back one-hitters on Saturday at Wilson Morgan Park in Decatur, helping Tharptown bounce back from a slow start to the day with wins over West Limestone and West Morgan.

The Lady Wildcats (3-2 through Sunday) dropped their first two games on Saturday to Class 5A Madison County and Class 6A Decatur. Cameron helped them right the ship with a complete game one-hitter in a 2-1 win over West Limestone, and she was even more dominant in a 3-0 shutout of West Morgan.

Cameron (2-0) was working on a no-hitter and had struck out eight consecutive Lady Rebels when she allowed a one-out double in the top of the fourth. She pitched around that hit and then struck out two more batters in the fifth, finishing the game with 11 K's and just one walk in another complete game one-hitter.

Of those 11 strikeouts, four came in the second inning alone. Cameron started the inning with a strikeout, but the batter reached base on a dropped third strike. Cameron proceeded to strike out the next three batters and then whiffed all three hitters she faced in the third inning as well. She started the fourth inning with another K before losing the streak and the no-hitter on a double to center.

Tharptown gave Cameron the only run she would need in the bottom of the first when Brooke Daily doubled, stole third and scored on a groundout by Olivia Egle. The Lady Wildcats added two more runs in the third, getting bunt hits from Shaylee Wieting and Daily and an RBI double from Egle to make it 3-0.

Daily finished 2-for-2 with two runs scored, and Egle was 1-for-2 with two RBIs. Wieting also went 1-for-2.

Earlier on Saturday, against West Limestone, Cameron looked to be headed for a tough-luck loss after giving up a solo home run in the top of the third. That was the only hit she allowed, but Tharptown trailed 1-0 going to the bottom of

See 'ONE-HITTERS,' Page 18

Franklin Free Press 2018-19 All-County Girls Basketball

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Another high school basketball season came to a close last week in Birmingham, which means it's time for us to unveil our annual All-County teams—starting this week with our picks on the girls side and then continuing next week with our boys selections.

This was a strong year for girls basketball in Franklin County, particularly at the top. Phil Campbell will be haunted by a nightmarish fourth quarter in the regional semifinal loss to Winfield for a long time, but let's not lose sight of what the Lady Bobcats accomplished this season. Their 24-5 record included a 3-0 mark against eventual state champions Rogers (Class 4A) and Phillips (Class 1A). Not many teams can say they went on the road and beat two state champs in their own building, but that's exactly what Phil Campbell did at Greenhill and Bear Creek—two of the toughest places to win in northwest Alabama.

Add in victories over the likes of Wilson (a 20-win team at the 4A level) and perennial Mississippi power Belmont, plus a fourth trip to Hanceville in five seasons under head coach Craig Thomas, and the Lady Bobcats' overall body of work this year was pretty darn impressive, despite the disappointing ending.

Belgreen, meanwhile, has become nearly as much of a regional tournament regular as Phil Campbell. The Lady Bulldogs are still trying to get over the Hanceville hump, but the trick is to keep getting there—which they've now done three times in four years under head coach Chad Green. Belgreen finished with 23 wins—none more noteworthy than the come-from-behind overtime victory on the road against Mars Hill that clinched a regional berth.

Perhaps even more noteworthy is the list of teams responsible for the Lady Bulldogs' eight losses this season. It only includes four teams: Phillips, which won a state title; Deshler and Falkville, both of whom made the Elite Eight in their respective classifications; and Phil Campbell, whose resume we've already detailed. [And, for

2018-19 Franklin County Leaderboard Scoring (Points per Game)

Abby Davis, senior, Phil Campbell	15.8
Rayleigh Guin, freshman, Vina	14.9
Kallie Allen, junior, Phil Campbell	13.7
Reagan Kuykendall, senior, Red Bay	12.2
Caitlynn Mills, sophomore, Phil Campbell	11.4
Madison Murray, junior, Russellville	11.1
Mallori Miller, senior, Red Bay	11.0
Kaitlyn King, junior, Vina	10.3
Emma Humphres, senior, Vina	9.5
Autumn Bragwell, junior, Belgreen	9.0
Gabbie Moore, senior, Belgreen	9.0
Brooke Daily, junior, Tharptown	8.7



Abby Davis

Photo/KG

what it's worth, that loss to Deshler came in overtime, by one point.]

Oh, and neither Phil Campbell nor Belgreen hold the distinction of being the last girls team standing in Franklin County this year. That title goes to Red Bay, which played its way all the way to the Elite Eight and was tied with eventual Class 2A state champion Cold Springs early in the second quarter of the regional final before ultimately falling one step shy of the Final Four.

Those three teams are well represented, as you might imagine, on our All-County squad, but there were talented players from all across Franklin County who put together seasons worthy of recognition. Without further adieu, here are this year's selections.

Player of the Year

Abby Davis, Senior Forward, Phil Campbell

A first-team selection for the fourth time in her

See 'GIRLS,' Page 14

'GIRLS,' from page 13



illustrious career, Davis takes home POY honors for the first time after improving her production virtually across the board as a senior while also increasing her efficiency on both ends of the floor.

Hampered by the lingering effects of a knee injury throughout her junior season, a healthy Davis was noticeably more athletic and explosive as a senior. The 5'11 forward led Phil Campbell in scoring at 15.8 points per game (up from 13.8 a year ago), topping the 20-point mark nine times. In anticipation of a more perimeter-oriented role at the next level for UAH, Davis also became a more prolific and accurate shooter from beyond the arc in her final prep season, knocking down a career-high 25 threes.

Davis still did the bulk of her damage in the paint, however, and also from the foul line area, where she displayed reliable touch on her mid-range jumper. She also demonstrated a knack for rising to the occasion in the biggest games against the toughest opponents: 16 points, 10 rebounds, four blocks and four steals in a 41-37 win over Phillips on November 29; 19 points, six boards and six blocks against Belgreen in the county final on January 19; 24 points on 10-for-15 shooting, with 12 rebounds, five assists and three blocks in a 77-75 win at Bear Creek on January 28; 20 points, 11 rebounds, three steals and three blocks in the area championship game against Colbert Heights on February 8; and 22 points in a 60-46 sub-regional win over Lexington on February 11.

Davis was Phil Campbell's top rebounder at 6.1 per game and also handed out 53 assists on the year. Despite playing in three fewer games than the previous season, Davis also upped her production on the defensive end with 54 steals (up from 48 as a junior) and 59 blocks (up from 40).

She finished her four-plus seasons at the varsity level with 1,833 points scored, four trips to Hanceville, two county championships, two area tournament titles, one Northwest Regional championship and one Final Four appearance. The next chapter of her basketball journey will be written in Huntsville; if it's half as good as the hoops story she penned at PCHS, it'll be worth reading and then some.

First-Team All-County Kallie Allen, Junior Guard, Phil Campbell

Allen wasn't quite the three-point threat this season that she was as a sophomore when she took home POY honors in her first year at Phil Campbell, but her versatility, athleticism and toughness on both ends of the floor were as evident and impactful as ever.

Slight of build but deceptively strong, the 5'9 Allen was a difference-maker on the boards, averaging 5.1 rebounds per game. Unselfish to a fault, at times, she handed out 64 assists (an average of 2.2 per game), leading the team in that category for a second straight season. Allen was also a menace defensively, hawking opposing ball-handlers and disrupting passing lanes on her way to recording a team-best 60 steals (2.1 per game).

Despite struggling to find a rhythm from beyond the arc or at the foul line, Allen still managed to increase her scoring average to 13.7 points per game (up from 12.3 as a sophomore). Allen was at her best after Christmas, averaging 15.8 points per game and topping the 20-point mark five times in 17 games from December 26 through the end of the season. That included a season-high 26-point outing against Colbert Heights in the area final on February 8 and then a 21-point, nine-rebound, six-steal showcase against Lexington in the sub-regional round.

Allen went over the 1,000-point mark for her career the day after Christmas in a double-overtime win over Mars Hill; she'll enter her senior season with 1,266 points scored at the varsity level.

Emma Dempsey, Sophomore Post Player, Belgreen

A second-team selection as a freshman, Dempsey made major strides this season on her way to becoming the focal point of Belgreen's offensive attack.

Blessed with size (6'1), quickness and footwork that continues to improve, Dempsey is most dangerous when she catches the ball in the high post (near the foul line), faces up her defender and attacks off the dribble. She led the Lady Bulldogs in scoring at 12.4 points per game (up significantly from 9.8 a year ago), reaching double-figures 21 times in 31 games and topping the 20-point mark on five occasions.



Also a gifted passer with good vision, Dempsey nearly doubled her assist total from last season, jumping from 31 to 54 (third-most on the team). She led Belgreen in rebounds (6.2 per game), blocks (1.8 per game) and steals (1.9 per game), setting new career-highs across the board.

Dempsey is already knocking on the door of the 1,000-point club; she's scored 993 at the varsity level. With just a slight bump in efficiency [she shot a respectable 42 percent from the floor this season and 58 percent from the foul line on a team-high 154 attempts], Dempsey may well make a run at the 2,000-point mark before her career is done.

Caitlynn Mills, Sophomore Guard, Phil Campbell

After showing flashes of major potential during a productive freshman season, Mills transitioned seamlessly into the starting lineup as a sophomore and immediately became Phil Campbell's most prolific perimeter shooter. She knocked down 48 threes on the year, third-most in Franklin County, and was also the team's most consistent foul shooter, knocking down 55-of-79 attempts (70 percent) from the line.

Mills more than doubled her scoring average from a year ago, jumping from 4.7 points per game in a reserve role to 11.4 per game this season (third-best on the team). Davis and Allen were clearly the Lady Bobcats' top two players, but Mills gave them a legitimate Big Three on the offensive end.

She also stepped her game on multiple occasions against high-caliber opponents, hitting four threes and scoring a team-high 19 points in a 71-65 win over Wilson on November 19; shooting 8-for-8 from the foul line and scoring a team-best 15 points in an overtime win at Rogers on November 30; putting up 18 points and five steals against Mars Hill the day after Christmas in a double-OT win; knocking down a season-high five threes and scoring a team-leading 19 points in an overtime loss to Susan Moore on December 27; and scoring a career-high 24 points with four threes and four steals in a 67-46 rout of area opponent



TOP LEFT:
Kallie Allen (24)
TOP RIGHT:
Caitlynn Mills (10)
BELOW:
Emma Dempsey (42)
Photos/KG

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'GIRLS', from page 14

Colbert Heights on January 14.

Quick and instinctive on the defensive end as well, the best is yet to come for Mills, who scored in double-figures 17 times in 27 games this season and is already nearly halfway to 1,000 career points [she has 445] with two full seasons to go.

Rayleigh Guin, Freshman Guard, Vina

How did the Lady Red Devils manage to win 17 games in their first season without former All-State guard Abby Hester? Look no further than Guin, who took over as the team's primary facilitator/scorer and posted some numbers Hester herself would be proud of.

Guin led Vina in scoring at 14.9 points per game (up from 9.1 the previous year as an eighth-grader). She was remarkably consistent, reaching double-figures in each of the team's final 16 games from December 11 through the end of the season. She failed to score in double-figures just three times all year and topped the 20-point mark on five occasions, putting up a career-high 26 on January 11 in a 63-62 loss to Tharptown.

Guin, a quick lefty who did most of her damage off the bounce and at the foul line [where she shot a team-best 72 percent on a whopping 185 attempts], was more than just a scorer; she also handed out 189 assists, an average of 7.3 per game. Guin dished out double-digit assists five times and was also a factor on the glass, averaging

3.8 rebounds per game.

It was Guin's work on the defensive end, however, that made her a nightly triple-double threat. She averaged 4.7 steals per game and posted some eye-popping stat lines this season: 23 points, eight assists, 10 steals in a rout of Cherokee on November 20; 14 points, 10 assists, seven steals in another rout of Cherokee on December 27; 14 points, seven assists, six steals in a 65-47 win over Whitesburg, also on December 27; 13 points, eight assists, six steals in a win at Waterloo on January 3; 18 points, seven assists, seven steals in a 55-34 win at Hackleburg on January 8; 21 points, 10 assists, 10 steals in a 65-34 shellacking of Hubbertville on January 22; 17 points, seven assists, six steals in a spanking of Shoals Christian on January 25; and 14 points, 12 assists and 10 steals in an 88-32 smoking of Cherokee on January 31.

Guin has totaled 687 points as a varsity player over the past two seasons alone; she's in position to surpass the 1,000-mark some time late next season as a sophomore. After that? The sky's the limit.

Second-Team All-County

Madison Murray, Junior Guard, Russellville

Still recovering from an ACL injury the previous January that sapped some of her trademark burst off the dribble, Murray nonetheless led the Lady Golden Tigers in scoring this season at 11.1 points per game. She knocked 20 threes and was very good at the foul line, shooting 72 percent (105-for-145).

Murray topped the 20-point mark four times, putting up a season-high 25 on January 11 against area rival Lawrence County. She has totaled 829 points since the start of her freshman season and is poised to eclipse the 1,000-point mark for her varsity career as a senior.

Reagan Kuykendall, Senior Forward, Red Bay

2018-19 Franklin County Leaderboard Most Games with 20-Plus Points

Abby Davis, senior, PCHS	9 (high of 29)
Kallie Allen, junior, PCHS	5 (high of 26)
Emma Dempsey, soph., Belgreen	5 (high of 26)
Rayleigh Guin, freshman, Vina	5 (high of 26)
Madison Murray, junior, RHS	4 (high of 25)
Reagan Kuykendall, senior, RBHS	3 (high of 21)
Mallori Miller, senior, RBHS	3 (high of 25)
Gabbie Moore, senior, Belgreen	3 (high of 24)
Autumn Bragwell, junior, Belgreen	2 (high of 27)
Ansley Tate, junior, Belgreen	2 (high of 28)

See 'GIRLS,' Page 16



Photo/KG

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'GIRLS,' from page 15

No player in Franklin County attempted more free throws or made more free throws this season than Kuykendall, who shot a solid 62 percent (146-for-236) from the line. She was a consistent source of offense for the Lady Tigers, reaching double-figures 22 times in 32 games and averaging a team-best 12.2 points per contest.

A capable perimeter shooter [she made 14 threes on the year], Kuykendall was most effective in and around the paint. She topped the 20-point mark three times this year and capped her career with an All-Tournament selection at the Northwest Regional in Hanceville, averaging 11.5 points and 6.0 rebounds in two games as Red Bay reached the Elite Eight.

2018-19 Franklin County Leaderboard Three-Pointers Made

Mallori Miller, senior, Red Bay	59
Emma Humphres, senior, Vina	50
Caitlynn Mills, sophomore, PCHS	48
Gracie Dempsey, junior, Belgreen	47
Kaitlyn King, junior, Vina	43
Autumn Bragwell, junior, Belgreen	42
Emma Willingham, senior, Belgreen	35
Gracie Montgomery, soph., Tharptown	29
Krista Sikes, junior, RHS	29
Abby Davis, senior, PCHS	25
Katie Thomas, sophomore, PCHS	25

Gabbie Moore, Senior Guard, Belgreen

A handful of missed games this season due to injury were likely all that kept Moore from reaching the 1,000-point mark for her varsity career [she finished with 944], but she still had a productive year as the primary ball-handler and facilitator for a 23-win team. The 5'4 Moore topped the 20-point mark three times as a senior and averaged 9.0 points per game. She also handed out a team-best 111 assists (4.0 per game) and averaged 2.5 rebounds and 1.8 steals per contest.

Gracie Dempsey, Junior Guard, Belgreen

A well established stopper on defense, Dempsey

Gracie Dempsey



Photo/KG

continued to make strides on the offensive end this season. The 5'5 combo guard split her time between the two and the point, averaging a career-high 8.8 points per game and knocking down a team-leading 47 threes. She ranked second on the team with 75 assists, an average of 2.4 per contest.

Dempsey shot 64 percent (48-for-75) from the foul line and also averaged 2.9 rebounds and 1.5 steals per game.

Mallori Miller, Senior Guard, Red Bay

Miller never met a three-point look she didn't like. The 5'7 senior led all of Franklin County with 59 threes made while also serving as Red Bay's primary ball-handler and facilitator. She averaged a career-high 11.0 points per game (second on the team), reaching double-figures 20 times in 32 games and topping the 20-point mark on three occasions.

Miller got hot at the right time, totaling seven threes and 29 points in two games at the Class 2A, Area 13 tournament, helping the Lady Tigers take home the title with wins over Sulligent and Addison.

Coach of the Year

Craig Thomas, Phil Campbell

Like any good coach worth his salt, Thomas is still kicking himself today—and probably won't stop any time soon—for the adjustments he failed to make and the buttons he didn't push with his team up 12 at halftime of what became a gut-wrenching 47-42 loss to Winfield in the regional semifinals.

But don't forget this: Despite the loss of three starters from last year's Final Four team, Thomas guided the Lady Bobcats to what was arguably a more impressive regular-season showing—one that included a sweep of rival Phillips (the eventual 1A state champion), an overtime victory on the road against Rogers (the eventual 4A state champion) and a handful of other quality wins over high-caliber competition like Belmont (MS), Wilson, Giles County (TN), Mars Hill and Belgreen.

Thomas successfully integrated three sophomores into the starting lineup and also coaxed meaningful contributions out of a couple of other young players. With only one senior (albeit a really good one in UAH signee and *Free Press* Player of the Year Abby Davis) on the roster, Thomas led Phil Campbell to a 24-5 record, a second straight county championship, a second straight area title and a fourth regional appearance in the last five seasons—all while making the jump to Class 3A. [It says here that if the Lady Bobcats had remained in Class 2A, they not only would have gone back to Birmingham but also would have come home with a Blue Map.]

One of Phil Campbell's best wins of the season, a 77-75 thriller in Bear Creek on January 28, was Thomas's 100th win as the head coach at his alma mater. He won three more to get to 103, but woulda-coulda-shoulda No. 104 (the one that got away) is the one that will likely keep him awake nights for the foreseeable future.

Thomas can take comfort in the knowledge that, with four starters returning and several young players ready to step into more meaningful roles, the Lady Bobcats should be right back in the hunt for a Final Four bid again next year.

Most Improved Players

Krista Sikes, Junior Guard, Russellville

Sikes found the hot hand late in the season, starting with a career-high 16-point outing at Hamilton on January 14. She hit three threes that night and proceeded to hit 14 more over the team's final seven games, including a career-high



Reagan Kuykendall

Photo/KG

five in a loss to Winfield on January 19.

During a three-week stretch to close out the season, Sikes averaged 9.6 points and knocked down 17 threes in eight games. For the season, she led Russellville with 29 threes made and ranked second on the team in scoring at 5.8 points per game.

2018-19 Franklin County Leaderboard Free Throw Percentage (min. 30 attempts)

Madison Murray, senior, RHS	.724 (105-145)
Rayleigh Guin, freshman, Vina	.718 (133-185)
Caitlynn Mills, sophomore, PCHS	.696 (55-79)
Autumn Bragwell, junior, Belgreen	.681 (47-69)
Katie Dempsey, junior, Belgreen	.653 (79-121)
Gracie Dempsey, junior, Belgreen	.640 (48-75)
Katie Thomas, sophomore, PCHS	.634 (26-41)
Reagan Kuykendall, senior, RBHS	.619 (146-236)
Macy Faulkner, sophomore, RBHS	.609 (42-69)
Gabbie Moore, senior, Belgreen	.600 (33-55)

Ansley Tate, Junior Post Player, Belgreen

Tate enjoyed a similar late-season spike in the scoring column, starting with an 18-point effort in a win at Brilliant on January 25. Three nights later, the 5'7 post player erupted for a career-high 28 points in a 70-39 rout of Hackleburg, and she followed that up by scoring 14 of her 22 points in the second half of a 68-53 win over Red Bay on January 31.

Tate ran her double-digit scoring streak to five games with 13 points against Deshler on February 1 and 10 at Sulligent on February 2. After getting somewhat lost in the shuffle of Belgreen's balanced attack and deep roster for much of the season's first two months, Tate averaged 12.6 points over the final nine games of the year. She finished

'GIRLS,' from page 16

the season averaging 7.6 points per game while leading the team in rebounds (7.0 per game) and field goal shooting (45 percent).

Newcomer of the Year

Katie Thomas, Sophomore Forward, Phil Campbell

In her first full season at the varsity level, Thomas made a major impact on both ends of the floor and helped the Lady Bobcats sustain an elite level of play despite the loss of three starters from the previous year's regional championship team.

On offense, the 5'9 Thomas spaced the floor with her ability to step out and knock down shots from beyond the arc; she finished tied for second on the team with 25 threes made. Defensively, Thomas typically guarded the opposing team's top post threat, which freed up 5'11 senior Abby Davis to roam the paint and block shots from the help-side. Thomas was also a major factor on the boards, ranking third on the team with 4.8 rebounds per game.

Thomas shot a solid 63 percent (26-for-41) from the foul line and finished her first varsity season averaging 5.7 points per game. With Davis bound for UAH, Thomas should be more than capable of stepping into a more substantial role next season as a junior.

Thomas anchors our **All-Defensive Team**, and she's joined by these other All-Defense selections.

Emma Willingham, Senior Guard, Belgreen

Willingham's steady growth as an offensive threat [she averaged a career-high 5.4 points per game as a senior and ranked third on the team with 35 threes made] did not diminish her impact on the other end of the floor, where she remained a scrappy, hard-nosed defender.

Katie Dempsey, Junior Forward, Belgreen

Like her teammate Willingham, Dempsey also made strides as an offensive player this season, averaging a career-high 7.7 points per game, shooting a solid 65 percent (79-for-121) from the foul line and even knocking down the occasional perimeter shot (10 threes made). But the 5'7 Dempsey's primary contributions continue to come on the defensive end, where her athleticism and versatility are invaluable. She racked up 45 steals (an average of 1.5 per game) and also pulled down 6.3 rebounds per game, second-most on the team.

Lila Blackburn, Sophomore Forward, Red Bay

Tough-minded and physical, the 5'7 Blackburn wasn't afraid to mix it up on defense. She often drew the most important assignments on that end of the floor; such was the case in the regional semifinals in Hanceville, when she helped hold Altamont post player Kalia Todd in check in Red Bay's 36-28 win.

Lexi Glass, Junior Post Player, Russellville

True to her name, Glass put together stretches of dominance on the defensive boards and was Russellville's top rebounder on the season. The 5'11 junior also led the team in blocked shots.



Katie Thomas (20)

Photo/KG

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Lila Blackburn

Sophomore Pitcher/Hitter, Red Bay

Blackburn started off the season with a bang last week, going 5-for-5 with eight RBIs in a 13-3 win at Phil Campbell on Monday. Included among her five hits were a two-run home run and a three-run double. The following day, Blackburn shone in the circle, striking out 11 batters in five hitless innings to lead the Lady Tigers past Shoals Christian 12-0.

Blackburn finished the week 10-for-17 with a homer, a triple and two doubles. She drove in 12 runs and scored four, helping Red Bay open the year with four wins in six games.



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Belgreen bats heat up in blowout wins

Staff reports

Belgreen pounded out 14 hits, including three apiece by Kaycee Wilson and Camie Terrell, and got a strong pitching performance from Emma Dempsey on Saturday in Cullman, cruising to a 10-0 rout of Winston County in three innings.

Terrell, a senior, had a monster opening weekend, going 7-for-8 with a triple and two doubles in three games. She was 3-for-3 against Winston County with a triple, a double, two RBIs and two runs scored. Wilson also went 3-for-3 with a double and two RBIs.

The Lady Bulldogs (2-1) jumped in front 2-0 in the top of the first on an RBI single by Terrell and a sac fly by Emma Dempsey. They added five more runs in the second inning, getting an RBI bunt hit from Jaelyn Johnson, a sac fly from Sydney Borden, RBI doubles from Kaycee Wilson and Terrell, and an RBI single from Kelsey Wilson.

Belgreen kept pouring it on with three more runs in the third. Kaycee Wilson had an RBI single, Terrell tripled, and Emma Dempsey drove in two runs with a two-out hit.

Dempsey finished 2-for-2 with three RBIs, and the sophomore also had a big game in the circle. She allowed just two hits, struck out three and walked one in three scoreless innings, evening her record at 1-1.

Johnson was 2-for-2 with an RBI and a run, and Borden went 1-for-1 with an RBI and a run. Kelsey Wilson was 1-for-2 with an RBI and a run, and Gracie Dempsey went 1-for-1 with a walk and a run. Bailey Wood was 1-for-2 with a run, and Noelle Willingham scored twice.

In previous action:

Belgreen 7 Addison 1

The Lady Bulldogs scored all seven of their runs in the top of the third inning, pounding Addison for their first win of the season Saturday in Cullman.

Camie Terrell started the big third inning with a single, and Kelsey Wilson drew a walk. Both runners moved up on a sac bunt by Emma Dempsey and then scored on a two-run triple by Katie Dempsey. Bailey Wood followed with an RBI single to make it 3-0, and then Jaelyn Johnson doubled to center field.

Sydney Borden's two-run single made it 5-0, and

Kaycee Wilson walked. Terrell capped off the rally with her second hit of the inning and third of the game, a two-run single to make it 7-0.

Terrell finished 3-for-3 with two RBIs and a run. Borden was 1-for-3 with two RBIs, and Kaycee Wilson, Katie Dempsey, Wood and Johnson also had one hit apiece. Kelsey Wilson walked three times and scored a run.

Borden (1-0) got the win, striking out four and allowing just two hits in two scoreless innings. She walked one. Emma Dempsey pitched the third inning, giving up one earned run on three hits with two strikeouts.

Pleasant Valley 4 Belgreen 0

The Lady Bulldogs managed just three hits against Pleasant Valley and dropped their season opener last Friday.

Emma Dempsey took the loss, allowing three earned runs on five hits in three innings. She struck out five and walked two. Sydney Borden worked a scoreless inning in relief.

Camie Terrell went 1-for-2 with a double and a stolen base for Belgreen. Katie Dempsey had a triple, and Kaycee Wilson was 1-for-2.

Lady Tigers split four games at Waterloo

Staff reports

Sarah Eaton and Lila Blackburn both did good work in the circle on Saturday morning, leading Red Bay to a 5-2 win over Shoals Christian at Waterloo High School.

Eaton (1-0) pitched the first two innings, allowing two runs (one earned) on three hits. She struck out four batters, walked one and hit one. Blackburn worked the final two innings to earn the save, retiring all six batters she faced on four strikeouts and two groundouts.

The Lady Tigers jumped on top with two runs in the top of the first inning, getting RBI singles from Blackburn and Chloe Knoblock. Shoals Christian got one of those runs back in the bottom of the first, but then Red Bay scored two more in the top of the second to stretch the lead to 4-1.

Shoals scored another run in the bottom of the second but couldn't get to Blackburn over the final two innings. The Lady Tigers tacked on another run in the top of the fourth.

Blackburn, Knoblock, Eaton, Emma McCollister and Madison Wicker each had one hit. Wicker stole two bases and scored twice, and Georgia Inman drove in a run. Annaliese Rogers walked and scored, and Emmie Scott had two sacrifices, an RBI and a stolen base.

Later on Saturday, Red Bay suffered its first loss of the season in walk-off fashion against Waterloo, 3-2. The game was tied in the bottom of the fourth when Waterloo took advantage of a single, a passed ball and another single to push across the winning run.

Knoblock (2-1) took the loss, allowing three runs (just one earned) on seven hits in 3.2 innings. She struck out six and walked one.

Eaton led the Lady Tigers at the plate, going 2-for-2 with a double and an RBI. Annaliese Rogers was 1-for-2 with a triple and a run, and Blackburn drove in a run with a sac fly. Knoblock went 1-for-2 and scored a run.

In their third and final game on Saturday, the Lady Tigers fell to Tishomingo County (MS) 7-0. Blackburn (1-1) took the loss in the circle. She struck out five batters in two innings but also allowed five earned runs on five hits and four walks. Blackburn had the only hit of the game for Red Bay (4-2). Emmie Scott walked twice, and Emma McCollister, Chloe Knoblock and Georgia Inman each walked once.

In previous action:

Red Bay 3 Tishomingo County (MS) 2

Annaliese Rogers tripled and scored the go-ahead run for Red Bay in the bottom of the third last Friday, and the Lady Tigers held on to edge Tishomingo County.

Chloe Knoblock earned the win, allowing two runs (both unearned) on four hits in a four-inning complete game. She struck out three and walked one.

Rogers staked Red Bay to an early lead, singling and eventually scoring on an error in the bottom of the first. The Lady Tigers added another run in the second, getting singles from Emma McCollister and Knoblock.

Tishomingo County tied the game with two runs in the top of the third, but Red Bay got the lead right back in the bottom half when Rogers tripled and scored on a sac fly by Emmie Scott. Knoblock then struck out two batters in a scoreless top of the fourth to finish off the win.

Rogers was 2-for-2 with two runs scored and a stolen base. Scott was 1-for-1 with an RBI, and Blackburn went 1-for-2 with a triple. McCollister went 1-for-1 and scored a run, and Knoblock was 1-for-1.

‘ONE-HITTERS’, from page 13

the fifth.

The Lady Wildcats rallied to win with a little small ball. After a walk to Madison Vandiver, Macy Petree bunted for a base hit. Vandiver scored the tying run on an error, with Petree moving over to third. She scored the winning run on another bunt hit by Wieting to give Tharptown the 2-1 victory.

Cameron allowed one earned run in five innings, striking out five and walking two.

Wieting was 2-for-3 with an RBI and a stolen base. Vandiver and Petree had the Lady Wildcats' only two other hits.

In previous action on Saturday:

Decatur 12 Tharptown 1

Decatur had just seven hits but took advantage of seven Tharptown errors and cruised to the easy

win.

Decatur scored five runs in the top of the first and five more in the second, building a quick 10-0 lead. Olivia Ergle (1-2) took the loss for the Lady Wildcats, allowing five earned runs on six hits in two innings. She struck out three batters, walked two and hit three.

Olivia Darracott had a double and an RBI for Tharptown. Catie Dawson was 1-for-2 with a run and a stolen base, and Ergle and Kyndall Morgan also had one hit apiece.

Madison County 8 Tharptown 5

Olivia Ergle staked the Lady Wildcats to an early 3-0 lead with a two-run homer in the top of the first, but Madison County rallied with eight runs in the bottom of the second and then held on for the

win.

Shaylee Wieting led off the game with a walk, and then Brooke Daily bunted for a hit. Wieting stole third and scored on an error, and then Ergle smacked a line drive over the fence in left for her first home run of the season to make it 3-0.

Ergle then worked a scoreless bottom of the first, but Madison County surged in front with the big second inning. Tharptown got an RBI groundout from Ergle and an RBI single from Catie Dawson in the top of the third to cut the lead to 8-5, but Madison County held on for the win.

Daily finished 2-for-2 with a double and two runs scored, and Dawson also went 2-for-2. Wieting walked twice, scored twice and stole a base. Ergle and Taylor Cameron each went 1-for-2.

Parker pitches Golden Tigers to first win

Staff reports

Caden Parker struck out seven batters in six solid innings for Russellville on Saturday, and the Golden Tigers broke open a close game with five runs in the bottom of the fourth en route to beating Westbrook Christian 8-2 for their first win of the season.

Parker (1-1) walked two batters and gave up two runs (one earned) in the top of the second before settling into a groove. The senior right-hander didn't allow another run and gave up only two hits on the day before turning things over to reliever J.D. Bishop, who worked a scoreless seventh. Parker walked three batters, hit two and threw 53 of his 92 pitches for strikes.

The Golden Tigers, who were 0-5 on the season heading into the opener of Saturday's doubleheader, jumped in front of Westbrook Christian with two runs in the bottom of the first inning. Leadoff man Cole Barnett drew a walk, moved to second on a wild pitch and scored on a double to center by sophomore Jackson Lindsey. Lindsey stole third and came home on a groundout by senior catcher Hunter Briles to make it 2-0.

Westbrook Christian tied the game in the top of the second, but Russellville regained the lead with a run in the bottom of the third, taking advantage of walks to Rowe Gallagher and Lindsey and a single by Barnett.

Leading 3-2, the Golden Tigers broke open the game with a five-run fourth inning highlighted by a two-run double by Barnett and a two-run single by

Parker.

Barnett finished 2-for-3 with two RBIs and two runs scored. Lindsey went 2-for-2 with a double, an RBI, two walks and two runs scored. Parker was 1-for-3 with two RBIs, and Will Rogers had a double and a run scored. Bishop and senior Tanner James each went 1-for-2 and scored a run, and Briles was 1-for-3.

Later on Saturday, Westbrook Christian earned a split of the doubleheader by beating Russellville 6-1. Sophomore starter Sam Dutton was dominant on the mound for Westbrook, striking out 10 in four scoreless innings. Junior Andrew Dutton broke up a scoreless tie with a two-run homer in the top of the third and then took over on the mound in the fifth, striking out five and allowing just one unearned run in three innings of work to close out the win.

Between them, the two Duttons struck out 15 batters and walked only two in seven innings.

Gallagher (0-2) took the loss for the Golden Tigers (1-6 through Sunday), allowing four runs (two earned) on three hits in four innings. He struck out six and walked three before giving way to Devin Buckhalter, who pitched the final three innings. Buckhalter gave up two earned runs on two hits, striking out two and walking four.

Parker finished 2-for-2 with a walk and a stolen base. Briles was 1-for-3, and Barnett went 1-for-4 with a run. Buckhalter also went 1-for-4 and stole two bases. Briles was 1-for-3.

In other recent action:

Red Bay 2 Belmont (MS) 1

Red Bay scored one run in its first at bat and another in its last at bat on Saturday at Belmont (MS), riding a strong pitching performance from Kolby Bragwell to a win over border rival Belmont.

The Tigers (3-2 through Sunday) took advantage of two walks and an error to score a run without the benefit of a hit in the top of the first inning. Belmont pulled even in the bottom of the second with a two-out rally against Bragwell, who walked a batter, gave up a hit and then walked two more to force home the tying run. He escaped the bases-loaded jam without further damage, inducing a pop-up to short to keep it a 1-1 game.

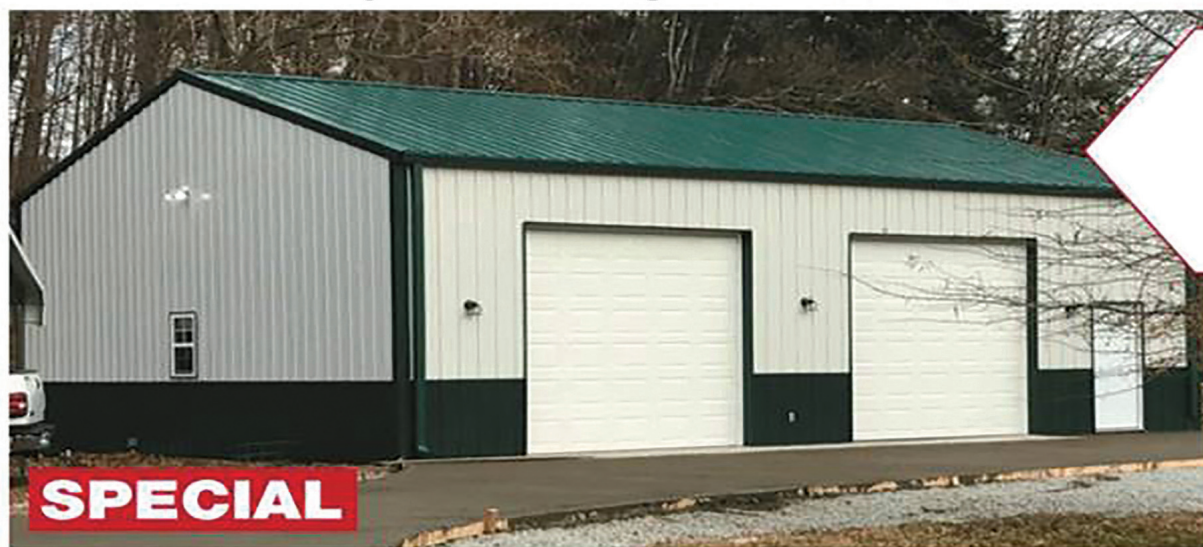
Bragwell was terrific over the next four frames, and Red Bay regained the lead in the top of the seventh when Kaleb Bragwell walked, took second on a wild pitch and scored on a throwing error to make it 2-1.

Kolby Bragwell went back out to the mound for the bottom of the seventh but couldn't quite reach the finish line. A single, a sac bunt and a hit batter put the winning run on base for Belmont, and Peyton Green came in to try and put out the fire. Green needed only six pitches to get a pop-out and a groundout, stranding runners at first and third and earning his first save of the season.

Kolby Bragwell (1-0) finished with eight strikeouts in 6.1 innings, allowing one earned run on four hits. The only three walks he issued came in that four-batter span in the second inning.

Cade McKinney went 1-for-3, scoring a run and stealing a base. Landon Glover and Colbie King also went 1-for-3, and King stole a base.

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