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Fortune ecstatic to bring 'God's songs' to the Roxy

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

More than 17 years after the legendary Statler Brothers retired, the last word on former member Jimmy Fortune's mind is 'retirement.'

Fortune's busy schedule includes song writing, recording and touring. He will headline a show at Russellville's Roxy Theatre this Saturday, November 2 starting at 7 p.m.

Franklin County native Joseph Baldwin will open the show. Reserved tickets are \$35 and \$30 and are available at www.briarforkrecords.com or at the box office the night of the show. General admission balcony seats are \$20.

"When I stand in front of people and sing songs," Fortune said, "they aren't my songs—they're God's songs. It's not about me. It's about the people God wants me to reach for Him."

The 64-year-old Fortune, who provided the tenor voice for the Statler Brothers for 21 years, will include a mix of Statler Brothers hits, patriotic and

See 'FORTUNE,' Page 8



Jimmy Fortune will play a show at Russellville's Roxy Theatre this Saturday, November 2 at 7 p.m.

Community Development Commission okays grants

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Community Development Commission met October 25 and approved a number of grants to local schools, non-profit agencies and one incentive payment for a local manufacturer.

The commission, which includes Brad Bolton, Jeremy Campbell, Chris Wallace and David Grissom, meets quarterly to review grant applications. The next meeting of the commission will be December 13, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. at Red Bay City Hall.

Any grant request for that meeting must be received by a member of the commission on or before December 6, 2019 at 12 p.m.

With the most recent grants, more than \$1.963 million has been returned to Franklin County since the inception of the funding. The funds come from in lieu of tax payments from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The Franklin County Legislative delegation (Sen. Larry Stutts, Rep. Poncey Robertson and Rep. Jamie Kiel) each make an appointment to the commission to represent them.

Grant awards for the October 25 meeting included:
•\$2,500 to Franklin County Sheriff's Office for purchase of radios for officers.
•\$4,500 to Back to Basics Life Skills Center for new HVAC unit.
•\$4,475 transfer of funds to Future Economic

See 'GRANTS,' Page 11

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(L to R) - Shannon Smith, Wynoka Bostick, Brenda Rodriguez, Dr. Steve Hammack, Kelly Powers, and Lauren Sims.

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Cody Michael Adams,
Birmingham, age 26
Died Monday, October 21, 2019.
Visitation held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville.

Ruby Nell Duncan,
Russellville, age 78
Died Saturday, October 26, 2019.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Belgreen Cemetery.

Nancy P. Johnson,
Decatur, age 78
Died Thursday, October 24, 2019.
Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Iva Dean Raper,
Haleyville, age 69
Died Sunday, October 20, 2019.
Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Shady Grove Cemetery, Liberty Hill.

Johnny Holland Richardson,
Russellville, age 79
Died Monday, October 21, 2019.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Hollis Ray Smith, Littleville, age 85
Died Wednesday, October 23, 2019.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Colbert Memorial Gardens.

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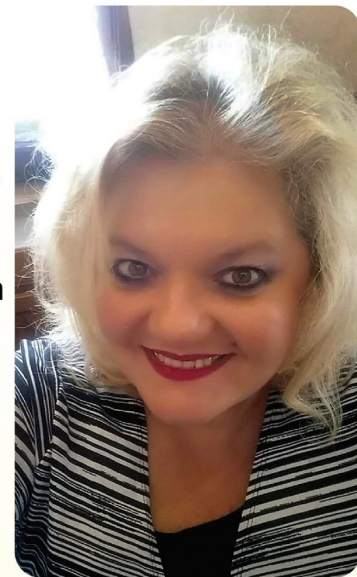
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"We welcome Tammy to our business and to our community. We feel that her expertise will certainly prove to be an asset," said Rex Pinkard, owner and director of Pinkard Funeral Home.



Call Tammy at 256-332-7772 with any questions you have concerning end of life needs.

Council moves forward on paving project

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council accepted a bid from North Alabama Paving, Inc. to make necessary paving improvements to the Alabama 24/Lawrence Street/Walnut Gate Road intersection at the council's October 21 meeting.

The paving project will include additional turn lanes in advance of a traffic light being installed at the intersection next year.

Mark "Yogi" Welborn, owner of Lineco, Inc., has announced plans to build a convenience store and gas station on the south side of 24 at the intersection. Lineco and the council entered into a contract last Monday after the council voted to approve the same. Welborn will be responsible for some of the paving on his property as part of the intersection improvements.

The bid from North Alabama Paving, in the amount of \$504,623, was the lowest responsible bid received by the city. The state right-of-way project is

a 100 percent match from the State of Alabama, so all expenses by the city will be reimbursed by the state, and the city will incur approximately \$43,000.

In other action, the council:

- Approved a memorandum of understanding with FivePoint Payments, LLC, to handle credit card payments online for municipal court costs and fines.

- Authorized advertisement for a patrol officer with the Russellville Police Department.

- Accepted a maintenance request from the Franklin County Highway Department for short portions of Tidwell Avenue and Joe Wheeler Avenue that extend beyond the corporate limits of Russellville for the Russellville Street Department to maintain those portions of the two streets, subject to reimbursement from the county.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Russellville City Council is set for November 4 with work session at 6 p.m. and meeting to follow.

Commission accepts bid on garbage can loan

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission accepted a bid from Community Spirit Bank for a \$354,000 loan to finance the purchase of 6,500 new heavy duty plastic garbage cans at the commission's October 21 meeting.

The \$354,000 note will be for 60 months at 2.485 percent. Community Spirit Bank's bid was the lowest interest rate offered.

Commissioners voted on September 28 to solicit bids for the garbage cans, which will be distributed to Franklin County residents.

Franklin County Solid Waste manager Gene Ward received a \$354,000 quote for the cans that would be compliant with the one-armed garbage trucks like the ones purchased by the City of Russellville. County officials plan to eventually purchase the trucks that can be operated by a driver and don't require employees to ride on the back.

The heavy-duty cans would have a different color lid than the cans issued to Russellville residents.

The loan will be paid back out of the Solid Waste Fund, according to Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore. As far as a schedule of when county residents will receive their new trash cans, Moore said they will be distributed in phases once they are purchased. Ward said his department will

begin distributing cans on November 12, 2019, if the cans are delivered on time.

In other action at Monday's meeting, the commission:

- Approved advertising for a custodian position for the Franklin County Courthouse.

- Accepted the resignation of Shane Oliver as a deputy with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and Hunter Haithcock as a correction officer, and approved advertising for the two positions.

- Awarded a contract for resurfacing County Road 80 to Mid South Paving in the amount of \$242,901.90.

- Approved the resignation of Joey Tyra and Ronnie Gaston as full-time employees with the Franklin County Highway Department.

- Appointed Brent Jeffreys to the North Alabama Council of Local Government Board.

- Tabled an appointment to the Industrial Development Board in order to find a candidate who resides in District Four.

- Authorized a letter of support for the Franklin County Census Committee as part of a grant application through ADECA.

- Set a public hearing for November 18, 2019 at 8 a.m. in relation to a request by Timmy Horton to vacate Hollow Road. The road is located at the base of Spruce Pine Mountain.

Belgreen introduces new playground equipment

Adrian Lopez
Franklin Free Press

On Tuesday, October 15, Belgreen Elementary School was awarded a grant from the "Be Healthy" School Grant Program from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. Belgreen received new equipment for their playground as well as an award of \$10,000 and a check of \$500 for use in the P.E classroom.

Among those in attendance were State House Representative Jamie Kiel, County Extension coordinator Katernia Cole-Coffey, grant writer and County Communications director Dr. Susan Hargett, Community Relations manager Jeff Adams, P.E teacher Susan Crittenden, as well as principal Derek Ergle and vice principal Brianne Roberts.

The goal of the program is to promote healthy living in elementary students to combat child obesity.

"We are going to provide nutritional education for elementary students," Cole-Coffey said.

Students will learn about nutrition through presentations and information that can be taken home and shown to parents. The program will not only help children during school but also benefit after-school and summer programs by allowing kids to take advantage of the new playground.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama will return at the end of the school year to view the results of the program. Tharptown Elementary was the first to participate in this grant last year and has benefited greatly from the program.

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is a great partner with our schools," Kiel said. "They've partnered with Tharptown and now Belgreen. The Belgreen staff does a great job with our kids, and this grant will help our kids live a healthier lifestyle."

Usually, core classes receive the most attention when it comes to educating local students. Susan Crittenden, who has taught P.E at Belgreen for



PHOTO BY ADRIAN LOPEZ

Belgreen School was awarded a grant from the "Be Healthy" School Grant Program from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. Belgreen received new equipment for their playground as well as an award of \$10,000 and a check of \$500 for use in the P.E classroom.

more than 15 years, said this is the first time she has seen anything like this, and she is happy to see Physical Education getting some recognition among core subjects.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama hope to continue implementing the program in other Franklin County schools.

For additional information about The Be Healthy School Grant Program, please contact CommunityRelations@bcbsal.org or 205-220-7821.

Honey Do: Be scareful

Halloween has certainly changed since I was a kid. We would pile in the car (no seat belt laws), go house to house (as long as there was a porch light on), run wide-open across yards in the dark and wear costumes that may or may not have been flame-retardant.

I remember a specific house that no one ever skipped because they always had extra special treats (i.e. popcorn balls, cupcakes, etc..) and some special set-up like Mr. Lane in a clown costume (before they were really scary), but he sat so still you just weren't sure if he was real or not. Of course he was sitting right at the candy table. (Thanks Mrs. Gladys.)

These days, many groups will get together and have festivals or "trunk or treat" events to provide a safer environment for the little spooks. This is great, but you should never forget to practice safety on Halloween.

It's very tempting to dress in scary, dark colors. Be sure to add some bright or reflective elements to your child's costume. Glow sticks, electric lanterns or flashlights are a great idea.

1) BE SEEN. It's very tempting to dress in scary, dark colors. Be sure to add some bright or reflective elements to your child's costume. Glow sticks, electric lanterns or flashlights are a great idea.

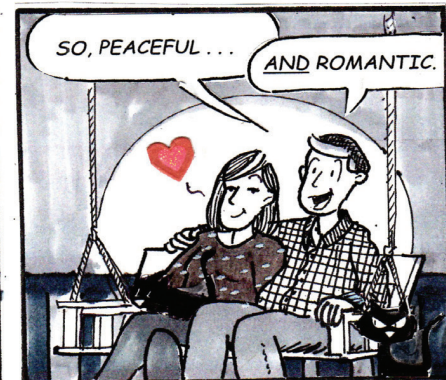
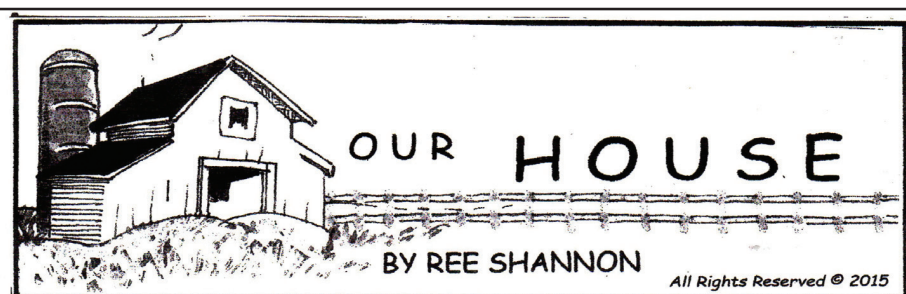
2) BE SAFE. Stay in your comfort zone. Go only to houses or events where you know people. Use your phone and snap a picture of your child prior to going out with costume and without. Of course, always check the candy your child receives.

3) BE SPOOKY. Whether a princess or a witch, costumes should be designed without trip hazards. and all materials should be flame-retardant. Purchased costumes should be plainly labeled. Masks and make-up shouldn't hinder the child's ability to see their surroundings.

Have a great Halloween, and don't forget to "FALL BACK" this weekend as daylight saving time ends. Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green



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The *Franklin Free Press* is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc. Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.

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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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DAVE SAYS

Financial Straight-Talk

www.davesays.org

by Dave Ramsey

Mini emergency fund?

Dear Dave,
I'm 26 and single, and I have about \$35,000 in credit card and student loan debt. I'm only making \$20,000 a year right now, but I expect to be making almost \$30,000 soon. Under the circumstances, can I get by with \$500 in my emergency fund, or do I need to have \$1,000 set aside like you recommend in Baby Step 1? I'm worried about keeping up with bills while saving money for my starter emergency fund.

Thomas

Dear Thomas,
I know it will be tough, but a \$1,000 emergency fund should be your first big goal. Also, if you're not already doing a monthly budget—and spending every dollar on paper before the next month begins—start doing it now! Living on a budget will help you control your money instead of allowing a lack of money to control you. That's how you can keep up with the bills while you save that first \$1,000.

Let's say you know you'll be getting two \$750 paychecks each month. You go ahead and plan out how to spend that money before you ever get

it. Take care of necessities first. I'm talking about food, clothing, shelter, transportation and utilities. After that, make sure you're current on your debts. Once those things are out of the way, pump every spare dollar you can into your emergency fund. And remember, limit your spending to *necessities only!*

Start working on that now, Thomas. It's very important. Remember the old saying about Murphy's Law, and how anything that *can* go wrong *will* go wrong? If you keep living without a plan and no emergency fund, Murphy will hunt you down!

Dave

They're just trying to help, but...

Dear Dave,
My husband and I are in our twenties, and we work for the same company. We've been thinking about going back to school and finishing our degrees, because our employer is willing to pay for up to 10 credit hours, plus books, per semester with no strings attached. My parents think we should get student loans instead, so we can finish faster. We both have less than two years to go to complete our degrees, so what do you think?

Janet

Dear Janet,
Wow, this is a fantastic opportunity! How many times does someone offer to pay for a college degree with no financial strings attached? I'm sure your folks want what's best for you, but the truth is you probably couldn't take more than nine or 10 hours per semester, work full-time jobs and keep your relationship and marriage healthy. If you've both got less than two years of school left, it's not going to take that long anyway. You're

See 'DAVE,' Page 9

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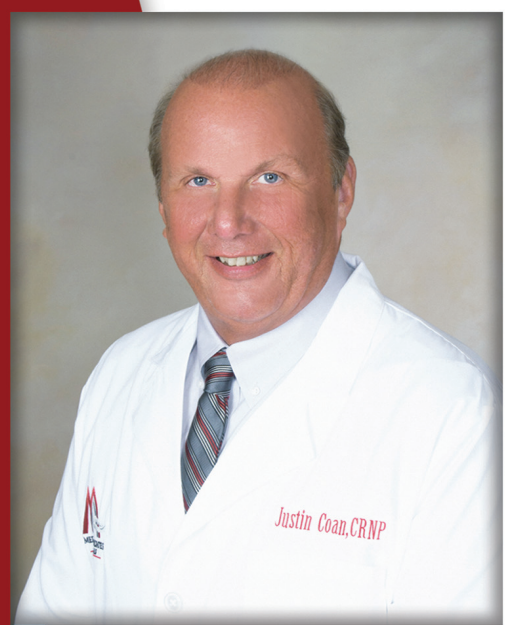


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What's Happening


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


 Mount Hebron Baptist Church will host its Fall Festival this Wednesday, October 30 from 6-8 p.m. at the church (located at the intersection of Hwy. 59 and County Road 26 in Spruce Pine). There will be food, games for children, a cake walk and fellowship for all. Everyone is welcome!


 There will be a Swamp John's plate fundraiser this Thursday, October 31 from 4-7 p.m. at the Foodland Shopping Center parking lot in Russellville. Plates are \$12 with choice of fish or chicken. Proceeds benefit Irene Meade, who is undergoing cancer treatment. Please come and support a great cause!


 First United Methodist Church of Russellville will be having their Fifth Thursday food giveaway on October 31 at 2 pm. Food will be distributed until supplies run out. The church is located on the corner of Jackson Avenue and Madison Street, and food will be distributed from the ministry center behind the main church building. Please contact the church office for details at 256-332-2955.


 Trunks of Treats will be held on Jackson Avenue, Thursday, October 31 from 6-8 p.m. Those wanting to decorate a space/vehicle or those seeking more information should contact the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce by calling 256.332.1760 or emailing info@franklincountychamber.org.


 The musical group "Still Here" will hold its annual White Bean Plate Sale this Friday, November 1 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Russellville Canteen, 201 S. Washington Avenue. Dine in or carry out. Price is \$9. Plates include white beans, ham, cole slaw, onions, pickles, cornbread, dessert and a drink. Free delivery with purchase of 4 or more. For info, call Larry Freeman at 256-324-2404.


 The United Methodist Women will sponsor their annual Rummage/Bake Sale from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. this Friday, November 1 and 7-11 a.m. this Saturday, November 2 in the Ministry Center directly behind the First United Methodist Church in downtown Russellville. This event is held to raise money for local and foreign missions. Items for sale include household goods, furniture, books and white elephants. Cakes, pies and other homemade baked goods are available for purchase. A \$4 lunch, including homemade chili, crackers and tea, will be served beginning at 11 a.m. until it is gone. Take-outs will be available.


 There will be a chicken stew sale this Saturday, November 2 at the Frankfort Community Center. Serving starts around 10:30 a.m. \$20/gallon, or eat a bowl on-site, which includes a drink and dessert.


 The Phil Campbell Civitan Club will hold its annual Civitan Country Christmas this Saturday, November 2 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Phil Campbell Community Center, 135 Sherry Brice Drive. There will be lots of arts and crafts for sale as well as great gift ideas, including homemade quilts, handmade wood décor, wreaths and arrangements, crocheted items, costume jewelry, Kidsworld Kreations, Tupperware liquidation, Papparazzi Jewelry, Arbonne, Thirty One, Scentsy, door signs and shirts. Door prizes will be given away. Shop early for Christmas and help support the Phil Campbell Civitan Club!


 The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay announces its first production for the 2019-2020 season, *Southern Fried Funeral* by Osborne and Eppler, directed by Scotty Kennedy. The performance dates are Thursday-Saturday, November 7-9, 2019 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, November 10, 2019 at 2 p.m. Tickets are on sale now at the Weatherford Centre in Red Bay. You may call or go by between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m. weekdays to reserve or purchase your tickets at \$8.00 each. For group sales, contact Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286.


 Come join us for a Gospel Singing, featuring Resound, on Sunday, November 10 at 5 p.m. at Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 305 Bethlehem Road, Russellville.

 The second annual Gospel Singing featuring the Primitive Quartet and Heaven's Mountain Band will be held Friday, November 15 at 7 p.m. at Pebble Community Center (100 County Road 3423, Haleyville, AL 35565). Master of Ceremony will be Jerry Edgil from WBTG. Admission is \$10. Children under 12 get in free. Concessions go to support the Community Center. Campsites available for \$12/day.

 The group "Still Here" will celebrate its ninth anniversary on Sunday, November 17 at 5 p.m. at New Freedom Fellowship Church, 15312 Highway 43 in Russellville (located between Subway and Sonic Drive-In). Everyone is invited to be part of this celebration. All groups, soloists and choirs are welcome. If you are unable to attend this event, your love offering will be greatly appreciated.

 Truman Capote's *The Thanksgiving Visitor* and *A Christmas Memory* will be discussed at the November 20 10 a.m. meeting of the Readers of the Lost Ark Book Club. The club meets at Coldwater Books, 101 West Sixth Street, Tusculumbia. For more info, email nancy537481@yahoo.com.

 The Russellville and Franklin County Bicentennial Committee invites you to attend the grand finale Bicentennial Birthday Celebration on Thursday, November 21 at 6 p.m. at the Todd Centre in Russellville. Tickets are \$15 per person and can be purchased from committee members or by contacting Chris Ozbirn at 253-332-8827 or by email at archive@hiwaay.com. Attendees are encouraged to dress according to any period of history of their choosing. The menu will consist of smoked chicken, pinto beans, turnip greens, potato salad, corn bread and fried pies. Music will be provided by the Athens Dulcimer Jam Group.

 Spruce Pine Historical Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Next meeting is November 5.

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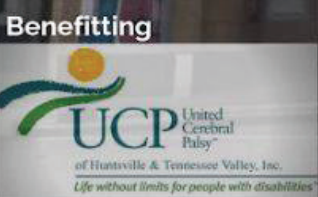
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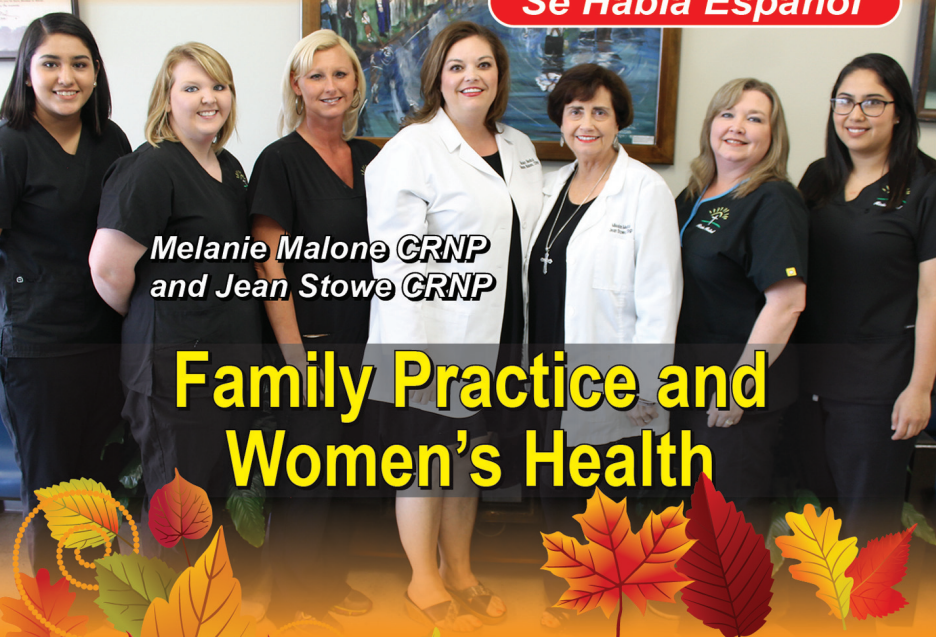
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'FORTUNE,' from page 1

inspirational songs, and some traditional Southern gospel, just like his mother would want him to do. "My parents always wanted me in gospel music and not to sing worldly music," Fortune, one of nine children born to Dabney and Odie Fortune, recalled. "I remember my mother praying for nine of us kids, and her prayer was that God would take care of us. I really think that led me to the Statler Brothers. They were very gospel-oriented as well as country. They were a well grounded group in faith, family and country when I joined in 1982. When the Statler Brothers retired in 2002, it was like an alarm went off inside me.

"God spoke to me and said He needed me to take songs of inspiration, and He wanted me to honor my mother's prayers. At that moment, I promised God that is what I'd do with my music."

Fortune originally joined the Statlers as a fill-in for Lew DeWitt after DeWitt took a break from touring due to health issues resulting from Crohn's Disease. Six months later, after DeWitt's health prevented him from returning to the group,

Fortune was hired in late 1982 as a permanent replacement. When he got the call from the Statlers, Fortune was playing clubs and performing cover songs, in genres from "gospel to disco."

Although he had never been a songwriter before joining the group, Fortune penned some of the Statler's biggest hits, including "Elizabeth," "My Only Love" and "Too Much on My Heart."

"I knew Lew wrote songs, and I asked the other members if I wrote a song, would we record it or at least consider it," Fortune said. "Harold [Reid] was honest and said, 'If it's good enough.' I went that night and wrote 'Elizabeth.' It was one of the most beautiful names I'd ever heard, and so many families have someone named Elizabeth in the family. I had no idea it would be a number one song or song of the year in 1984 in country music, but I always tell people there's a lot of folks out there not discovered yet who will sometimes just need a reason to be. It's all in God's timing, and if you work hard enough, sooner or later it will come to fruition."

Fortune now records on the Gaither Music Label. He released his newest album, *God and Country*, in May. The album celebrates the beauty of America, the courage of those who have made it free and the songs that have warmed the hearts of Americans for centuries.

"*God and Country* says it all, because our country needs God and some positive input," Fortune said. "I think when people listen to this album they feel what this country was built on, and it will give them a sense of pride and hope for the future."

Fortune's 2017 *Jimmy Fortune Sings the Classics* features a collection of songs that were all the most recommended by his fans for Fortune to record. Even after countless shows in front of audiences surpassing 100,000 fans, Fortune said he still battles with nerves before each show. And that's okay, as he recalls his father telling him.

"I still get butterflies every time I go out on stage," Fortune said. "I talked to my dad about it years ago, and he said, 'Don't be ashamed of that. The reason you're nervous is because you care.' And I hope I'll always be a little nervous, because that means you care. It makes me stay on top of my game and stay sharp with my music."

And when he takes the stage at the Roxy Saturday night, those same butterflies will be there.

"Small-town shows feel better to me because they are so intimate. I'm doing what God wants me to do, and He's blessed me in my life so much by giving me this talent to share," Fortune said. "Until I can't walk on stage anymore and can't sing another song, He still has a job for me to do, and I'll enjoy it with all my heart. When I stand in front of people and sing songs, they aren't my songs—they're God's songs. It's not about me. It's about the people God wants me to reach for Him."



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Qualifying starts slowly

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although qualifying continues for local offices in the March 2020 primaries, there has not been much response from Franklin County residents when it comes to declaring as candidates.

The qualifying period for local and state offices runs through 5 p.m. on Friday, November 8, for both Democratic and Republican candidates.

As of Monday, October 28, no Democratic candidates have qualified for any of the four county commission seats, revenue commissioner, Franklin County Board of Education District 3, Franklin County Superintendent of Education or any constable position. On the Republican side, Republican Party chairman Jerry Mays said three of the four incumbent county commissioners, Chris Wallace, Jason Miller and David Hester, have filed their paperwork to run again, as has revenue commissioner Veronica Stancil.

Former Franklin County commissioner Stratt Byars has filed his declaration of candidacy to run for revenue commissioner as a Republican, as has political newcomer Joseph Baldwin, who will make a run for Franklin County Commission District 3. Rayburn Massey, the incumbent in District 3, had not filed his paperwork with the Republican Party as of Monday afternoon.

Candidates wanting to run for office as Republicans may submit their declaration of candidacy and the qualifying fee to Mays or in Russellville at 500 North Jackson Avenue. You can contact Mays at 256-810-2551 or Lowell Moore at 256-324-8698 for more information.

On the Democratic side, Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee chairman Eddie Britton said he expects to have candidates in several of the races, but as of Monday no person had submitted their paperwork to run.

You can contact Britton at 256-436-8330 for more information or any questions related to qualifying as a Democrat.

Incumbent Board of Education District 3 member Pat Cochran, who was elected as a Democrat in 2014, has not filed paperwork to run again, although a source with the Republican Party said Cochran was considering running as a Republican.

Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton, an Independent, will run again in the general election as an independent candidate and will file the petition with the required number of signatures before the deadline next year, Hamilton said.

Primary elections are set for Tuesday, March 3, 2020, as part of what is called 'Super Tuesday' on a national level due to the large number of states having Presidential primaries that day.

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Kreme of the Crop



The Russellville High School Future Business Leaders of America recently held its 18th annual Krispy Kreme Doughnut Sale. FBLA sold more than 700 dozen doughnuts to raise money for the FBLA Scholarship fund. Each spring the club awards cash scholarships to two seniors who will be pursuing degrees in a business field. FBLA sponsor Dr. AnnaKay Holland and the FBLA officers (pictured above) would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all members of the community who supported the sale. A special thank you to FBLA member Yesenia Vargas for being the top salesperson this year. FBLA officers (from left) are Rachel Tena (parliamentarian), Billy Alonzo (projects chairperson), Kaydee Don Holland (president), Julianna Wallace (treasurer), Kyra Greenhill (vice president), Anna Woods (reporter), Annsley Gault (historian), Lauren Sturdivant (vice president) and Ellyse Strickland (secretary).

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'DAVE,' from page 4

still young and have plenty of time to make this happen.

I don't think your parents mean any harm, but they're wrong on this one. I've got a feeling they're like most people in America today. They've spent most of their lives swimming in debt, and they've reached a point where they've just accepted it and think there's no other way. To me, that's sad.

If you and your husband really want to finish your degrees, I'd say the two of you need to march into work tomorrow morning and take advantage of that wonderful offer. Stay away from debt!

Dave

*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

Classifieds

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LOST AND FOUND
 Thank You! (4)
 Lost Wedding Ring. I lost my diamond wedding ring Friday, September 6th, sometime after 5 p.m., at Tharptown High School football game, or at Subway in Russellville. If found, please contact Donna at 256-566-8864. Reward for return of ring.

YARD SALES
 St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church will hold its Relay for Life Yard Sale this Friday, November 1 from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday, November 2 from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Born Again

Auto Collision Center, Hwy. 243 and Hwy. 81 intersection in the Trappstown Community. All sizes of clothing, household items, pictures, tools, fishing equipment, furniture, arts and crafts and much more! Saturday will feature a Bake Sale and pancake breakfast. Hamburgers and hot dogs at lunch. All money goes to the American

Cancer Society. Call 256-810-0009 for more information.
 Estate Sale/Yard Sale this Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1-2 from 8am-3pm in the Backyard Bargains and parking lot on Hwy. 24 East. Furniture, glassware, clothes, misc. Cancelled if raining.
 De-cluttering yard sale. Belgreen. Hargett 12516

Hwy. 187. Clothes, home decor, crafting supplies, general mix of good stuff! Priced to sell! Friday, November 1 and Saturday, November 2.
 Garage sale this Friday & Saturday, Nov. 1-2, from 7-4 at 360 Cedar Ridge Estates, Russellville (Belgreen area). Located off CR 49 by Edar Creek reservoir. Indian artifacts, old Rock-N-Roll LPs, 45's, CDs, items signed by David Jones of the Monkees, Christmas items, vases, bonnets, purses, Star Wars and other collector plates, books about 20th century events. Rain or shine!

Saturday, Nov. 2. 8 a.m.-until. 442 Highway 44, Russellville. Turn right across from Hwy. 24 Texaco onto Hwy. 44. 4th house on left. Furniture, Ashley loveseat and couch, sofa, tables, desk, chair, clothing for men, women and children. Cancelled if rain.

\$300 down, \$250 per month. \$19,900. Perc tested. Call 256-335-8274. (5)
 256-668-1914. (3)
MISC. FOR SALE
 Canoe for sale. Old Town Discovery 158. \$450. DR wood chipper for sale. Electric start, 342cc Briggs & Stratton engine, extended discharge chute, chipping capacity 4.5". \$2,000. Call 256-627-1499. (3)
 Boat for Sale. 14-foot Flat Bottom Aluminum and Trailer with 12/24 volt trolling motor. \$500. Call 256-668-0006. (4)
 Ceramic pouring table with mixer, \$225. GMC scroll saw "16." Never used. \$225. Ban saw (Ryobi). Never used. \$225. Husqvarna tiller, needs carburetor. \$300. Call Kim at 256-436-3992. (5)
 Franklin Free Press Classified Rates Yard Sale Rates: FREE,

Deadline Monday at Noon; Real Estate-Homes, acreage, lots for sale or rent. \$25 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 40 words per ad; Vehicles, Boats, RVs, Motorcycles for sale. \$15 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25 words per ad; Pets For Sale only \$10 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25 words per ad; Free of Charge: Lost & Found, Giveaways, and Items Under \$100 (Private Parties Only). 15-word limit; Commercial Classified Rates: \$25 for Businesses, 15 words or less for six weeks. Ads exceeding word limit add \$10 per additional 15 words. The number in parentheses represents the number of times the ad has appeared. Call us at 256-332-0255 to place, cancel or renew your ad. Payment is required in advance of publication for ads.



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Complex-Wide Yard Sale. Friday, Nov 1 & Saturday, Nov. 2. 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Charles Place Apartments in Russellville. Behind Legacy Chevron.
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PUBLIC NOTICE
 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ALABAMA ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLE ACT, ALABAMA CODE SECTIONS 32-13-1 THROUGH 32-13-8, THE FOLLOWING MOTOR VEHICLE WILL BE SOLD FOR CASH AT 9:30 A.M., ON NOVEMBER 23, 2019, AT M&N WRECKER & SERVICE CENTER, 11833 HWY. 43 SOUTH, RUSSELLVILLE, AL, 35653. SELLER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY BID AND THE RIGHT TO BID. SELLER WILL ACCEPT SEALED BIDS THROUGH 5 P.M., NOVEMBER 22, 2019, AT THE LOCATION DESCRIBED ABOVE. BIDS WILL BE OPENED ONSITE AT M&N WRECKER & SERVICE CENTER ON NOVEMBER 23, 2019, AT 9:30 A.M.
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JOB OPPORTUNITY
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 An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Ave., Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
 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.

JOB OPPORTUNITY
 The Franklin County Commission will accept applications for the following position: Corrections Officer/Dispatcher in the Franklin County Commission Office until 5:00 PM on Friday, November 1, 2019.
 An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Ave., Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
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JOB OPPORTUNITY
 The Franklin County Commission will accept applications for the following position: Custodian/ Housekeeper/ Groundskeeper in the Franklin County Commission Office until 5:00 PM on Friday, November 1, 2019.
 An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Ave., Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
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'GRANTS,' from page 1

Development Fund.

- \$393.95 to Franklin County Board of Education Special Education Department for purchase of teaching supplies.
- \$1,500 to Vina High School for helmet reconditioning.
- \$12,500 to Franklin County Economic Development Authority for Franklin Structures, LLC. (Franklin Homes) for an incentive payment for reaching another employment threshold.
- \$1,000 to Tharptown Elementary School for purchase of an interactive whiteboard.
- \$150 to Phil Campbell High School for Junior Scholars Bowl competition expenses.
- \$150 to Phil Campbell High School for purchase of archery starter pack.
- \$900 to the Healing Place for services for Franklin County Schools.
- \$1050 to City of Red Bay Education Foundation for RBHS softball sidewalk.
- \$1,000 to Franklin County Commission for 2020 Census expense outreach for media professional for Latino Outreach in regard to the census.
- \$1,200 to Belgreen High School for purchase of flexible seating options in elementary special education classroom.
- \$250 to Red Bay High School Tip Off Club for ad purchase. •\$1,342 to KinderVision Foundation for Greatest Save Teen PSA Program for Franklin County high schools.
- \$750 to Red Bay High School FFA for purchase of new drum set for string band.
- \$1,497 to Franklin County Emergency Management Agency for purchase of 7' x 16' enclosed trailer.
- \$2,500 to Franklin County Board of Education for Tharptown Elementary Gym HVAC project.
- \$1,500 to Phil Campbell High School JAG classroom for purchase of student tables and chairs.

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Week 10 in the SEC

Last week's record: 4-0
Year-to-date record: 29-7
This week's games:
Georgia (-3) vs. Florida – 2:30
on CBS



Mike Self
Sports Editor

Missouri's sudden collapse over the previous two weeks all but assures that the annual meeting between the Bulldogs and the Gators in Jacksonville will—to the surprise of no one—decide the SEC East.

For the first time in what feels like a long time, Florida heads into this game with the superior passing attack. The Gators rank third in the SEC with 31 completions of 20-plus yards, while Georgia ranks third from the bottom with just 18. The Bulldogs' leader in receiving yards (freshman George Pickens) ranks 24th in the league in that category, so you can bet Florida will be loading up defensively to stop a Bulldog ground game that leads the SEC with 6.1 yards per carry and 236.9 yards per game.

Consider this a vote of confidence for Jake Fromm, an established big-game quarterback, and for Georgia's defense, which allows the fewest yards per play (4.3) and points per game (10.6) in the conference.

The Pick: Georgia 23 Florida 17
Mississippi State (-7) at Arkansas – 3:00 on SECN

After showing signs of progress in tight losses to Texas A&M and Kentucky, Arkansas was completely non-competitive in getting out-scored 99-17 by Auburn and Alabama over the past two weeks. Fortunately for the Hogs, Mississippi State is in the former class and not the latter.

Only three defenses in the SEC are giving up more than 30 points per game and more than six yards per play, and these are two of them. The Bulldogs have the slightly more competent offense, so we'll take them in a shootout.

The Pick: Mississippi State 38 Arkansas 28
Ole Miss at Auburn (-18.5) – 6:00 on ESPN

Auburn has a championship-caliber defense that's getting virtually no help from its offense when it needs it the most. The Tigers knocked Joe Burrow around early and came up with some key short-yardage stops, but repeated three-and-outs by the offense eventually took their toll on Saturday. LSU ran 88 plays, the Auburn D wore down, and the Tigers dropped a 10th straight game in Baton Rouge.

They'll bounce back at home against Ole Miss, but it won't be easy. Auburn got beat up pretty bad against LSU, and the Rebels are coming off a bye. Ole Miss has run more offensive plays than any team in the league, and that over-worked Tiger D will have to chase John Rhys Plumlee around all night. Things could get dicey.

The Pick: Auburn 34 Ole Miss 27
Vanderbilt at South Carolina (-14.5) – 6:30 on SECN

The Gamecocks fell flat on Rocky Top, but they should bounce back well enough to earn an 11th straight win over Vandy.

The Pick: South Carolina 28 Vanderbilt 17

Whatever it takes



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Austin Ashley (7), who ran for a career-high 203 yards in last week's win at Dora, and Jacob Bishop (9), who has accounted for 1,438 yards of total offense and 17 total touchdowns this season, are two of the Russellville seniors who will be honored on Friday when the Golden Tigers host Central-Florence for Senior Night.

In dire need of a win after getting blanked in back-to-back games for the first time in 22 years, Russellville relied on its prolific rushing attack and stingy D to get by Dora.

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

DORA - Russellville headed down to Dora last Thursday night desperately in search of a win.

It didn't matter how or by how much; the Golden Tigers, having been shut out in back-to-back games for the first time in 22 years, just needed a W.

"Any time you lose two or three games in a row, in any sport, whether it's baseball, basketball, soccer or whatever, that win you need to get to break the streak and get back on track is probably gonna be ugly," said John Ritter, Russellville's second-year head coach. "In every sport, if a team loses two or three in a row, in the game they win there's gonna be a lot of mistakes, there's gonna be some

pressing, there's gonna be some uncharacteristic things done, because that's just normal from a kid after not winning two or three games in a row."

"There's nothing wrong with winning 16-6," Ritter said. "There's nothing wrong with winning 21-7 or 21-17. Who cares? I think, sometimes, people—and I'm the world's worst to do this—start asking, 'Well, why didn't you score 35? Or 42? You did that early in the year, why aren't you doing that now?' The bottom line is, we're a different bunch now than we were early in the year."

Ritter might be onto something. The Golden Tigers didn't find a magic elixir to cure what's been ailing them on offense. They didn't suddenly transform back into the juggernaut that averaged better

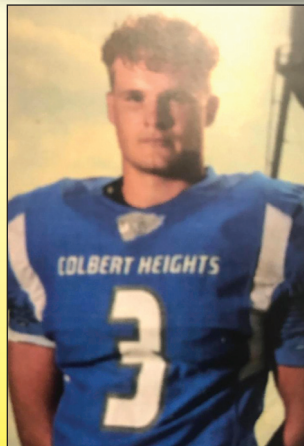


'TAKES,' from page 13

Gage Pugh Junior RB/DB, Colbert Heights

Pugh set season-highs with 30 carries, 227 rushing yards and three touchdowns last Thursday, helping the Wildcats wrap up their regular season with a 31-28 overtime win over Phil Campbell.

With his monster effort last week, Pugh took over as Colbert Heights' leading rusher on the year with 990 yards and 12 touchdowns on 153 carries, an average of 6.5 yards per attempt. A corner on defense, he also leads the team with four interceptions. The Wildcats will open the Class 3A playoffs at Susan Moore next Friday.



than 40 points and 400 total yards per game during a 5-0 start.

What they *did* do was whatever they had to. They fought. They battled. They played—and coached—with passion. Bottom line, they *won*, relying on a prolific ground game and a stout, opportunistic defense to grind out a 16-6 win over a Bulldog team that entered the night 0-6 in region play.

It wasn't a work of art, by any means. The offensive struggles aren't entirely in the rearview mirror.

But the losing streak is.

"I think we found our niche with what suits our personnel," said Ritter, whose team rushed 40 times for a season-high 344 yards, including a career-high 203 on 22 carries by senior tailback Austin Ashley. "The plan was to control the ball, to kind of limit Dora's possessions. Defensively, we've been playing really well, up until last night. I don't think we played very well in the first half on defense, but we played really well in the second half. We wanted to shorten the game and control the clock."

Shorten the game? Control the clock? Limit possessions? Those were tactics often employed by Russellville *opponents* throughout the course of Ritter's first 16 games as head coach, a stretch during which the Golden Tigers topped the 40-point mark ten times and averaged 40.2 points per contest.

Then came a tough night offensively against Lawrence County on October 4, when Russellville survived three turnovers and escaped Moulton with a 22-14 win. That was followed by a six-turnover disaster in a 17-0 loss at Hamilton and then a 31-0 loss to top-ranked Jasper in which the Golden Tigers mustered only 167 total yards against a Viking defense that may well be the best in the state in Class 5A.

A three-week dose of reality like that has a way of simplifying one's goals a bit.

"There's nothing wrong with winning 16-6," Ritter said on Friday afternoon. "There's nothing wrong with winning 21-7 or 21-17. Who cares? I think, sometimes, people—and I'm the world's worst to do this—start asking, 'Well, why didn't you score 35? Or 42? You did that early in the year, why aren't you doing that now?' The bottom line is, we're a different bunch now than we were early in the year."

The Golden Tigers (7-2 overall, 5-2 in Class 5A, Region 7) have made some significant changes scheme-wise on offense, but Ritter would prefer—understandably so—to keep the specific nature of those adjustments under wraps as much as possible. [Why do an opponent's film study for them? Especially with the playoffs kicking off in two weeks?]

Suffice it to say, though, that the offense was much more run-oriented on Thursday night, when Russellville put the ball in the air just six times—well below its season average of 15 pass attempts per game. The Golden Tigers leaned heavily on a reconfigured offensive line and a potent ground attack led by Ashley (who ripped off a whopping 11 runs of 10-plus yards) and sophomore Airreon "Boots" McCulloch (whose first three carries of the night went for 28, 17 and 15 yards).

"In the second half, [Ashley] ran extremely hard," Ritter said. "We challenged him and Boots at halftime to stop dancing so much and stop trying to make ten moves in the secondary to score every time they touch the ball. That's great, until it's not great. We really challenged them to finish runs, and the opportunity to score would present itself. Not every run can be a touchdown run. Finish drives. Finish runs. That dancing can get you clocked from behind if you're not careful."

"I really think those guys answered the bell. Ashley was kind of our guy we leaned on last night, especially in the second half, but both of those guys ran the ball better."

After rushing eight times for 58 yards in the first half, Ashley really got rolling on Russellville's first possession of the third quarter. The 5'8, 140-pound senior broke off runs of 12, 22 and 12 yards on consecutive carries before capping off the drive with his sixth rushing touchdown of the season, an 11-yarder on which he got turned around near the five-yard line and then backed his way into the end zone with multiple Dora defenders trying—and failing—to bring him down.

The extra point was no good, but the Golden Tigers still led 13-6 with 4:32 left in the third quarter. The defense took over from there, with senior outside linebacker Jaxon Hallmark providing a major spark. Hallmark tackled Dora tailback Ikei Hosea after a short gain to open the Bulldogs' ensuing drive and then sacked quarterback Dee Wilkerson for a loss of nine on third down.

"Jaxon is coming off an injury, and we've been slow to get him back mentally to full speed," Ritter said. "I think he was full speed the last couple of weeks, but maybe in his mind he wasn't. Jaxon has a set of skills that fit and work well against a certain type of offense. He's not a guy who drops into pass coverage or plays in space, but he's physical, he plays hard and he's really good in the box. With what Dora was trying to do, he fit what we wanted to do schematically on defense."

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'TAKES,' from page 14

"We had to play Jamal [Hubbard, another senior outside linebacker] at safety this week because we're so depleted with injuries [starting safeties Grayson Eady and J.D. Bishop were both out Thursday night], so Jaxon got an opportunity. He stepped up and played really, really good."

Speaking of stepping up, freshman receiver T.J. King continues to do exactly that, injecting life into a passing game desperately in need of some juice. On the first play following Hallmark's third-quarter sack, King ran a deep route down the left sideline and made a leaping grab of a beautifully thrown ball by senior quarterback Jacob Bishop for a gain of 41 yards down to the Dora 32.

The catch, as it turned out, was the easy part. The hard part for King was not getting knocked to the ground in a post-play celebration with 6'4, 290-pound junior guard Edgar Amaya. [King, who hauled in a 34-yard grab the previous week against Jasper and now has four catches for 103 yards and a touchdown on the season, thankfully emerged unscathed.]

"We've got a really good group of receivers," Ritter said, "and T.J. plays the ball better than any of them. He's got great ball skills, and that may have something to do with his basketball background. He's able to read the trajectory of the ball, and he's got a lot of athletic ability. Of course, he makes typical 14-year-old mistakes, but we're willing to live with that."

"Bryant Hyde is another freshman who gave us a big spark, on both sides of the ball. He didn't make any catches, but he made some crucial blocks, and then he steps in and plays corner after only practicing at that spot for three days. He came up with a huge pass break-up and had two or three tackles at a crucial point in the game. Throw those two guys in with Conner Warhurst [a freshman safety who made 14 tackles in his first varsity start the previous week against Jasper], and that's three freshmen out there making plays for us."

King's catch ultimately led to an opportunity for sophomore kicker Miguel Flores, who atoned for his missed extra point by drilling a 24-yard field goal from the left hash to extend the lead to 16-6 with 10:20 left in the game.

"That goes back nine weeks ago," Ritter said, referring to the season-opener at Deshler, where he elected to forego what would have been a short field goal attempt by Flores late in regulation due to the fact that the ball was on the right hash. [Russellville got stopped on fourth down inside the five but eventually won 27-21 in overtime.] "Miguel is a right-footed kicker who pushes everything right. He's much more comfortable from the left hash. I asked him [Thursday night] if he felt good inside the 20, and he said, 'Yes sir, I'm good.' So that kind of went into our play-calling on that drive. If we couldn't score, we wanted to at least make sure we ended up on the left hash."

After the kick by Flores made it a two-possession game, Russellville's defense came up with one last stop to seal the deal. Dora (2-7, 0-7) drove all the way down to the 11-yard line before junior inside linebacker Brooks Scott tipped a pass by Wilkerson, deflecting it into the hands of junior lineman Angel Martinez. The game-sealing interception was Russellville's second takeaway of the second half [Scott recovered a fumble to snuff out Dora's first drive of the third quarter], and it capped off an inspired effort by a Golden Tiger defense that recorded 10 tackles for loss and held the Bulldogs to just 215 total yards on 47 plays. Only 69 of those total yards came after halftime. "Playing with emotion was the key for us in the second half," said Ritter, who felt his team came out a little flat to begin Thursday's game. "I think it was the perfect storm for the way we played in the first half. Complacency is not the right word, but it was a perfect storm for us to play the way we did. We'd lost two games in a row, and you combine that with playing on a Thursday night, an odd week...there were a lot of factors at play."

"Coach Balentine [Chris, the team's defensive coordinator] and myself, we challenged the defense and the offense at halftime to start playing with more emotion. We played with more passion, and that's what helped us get things turned around."

Ritter said he took his own advice to heart with the way he approached things on the sideline in Thursday's second half.

"We have some emotional leaders, and they showed themselves last night," he said on Friday. "But Coach Voss [Brett, the team's offensive coordinator] and me are emotional leaders, too, whether we like it or not, and we took it upon ourselves to show a little more passion. Instead of watching the iPad and worrying about fixing every little mistake on offense while the defense is on the field, we were over there going crazy."

"Those kids feed off that, and that's gotta be our role moving forward."

After failing to score in each of its previous two games, Russellville got on the board first when Bishop rolled to his right on a designed pass play and, seeing open field in front of him, bolted 48 yards to the end zone for his eighth rushing touchdown of the season. Bishop's big play (his second-longest run of the year) did far more than stake the Golden Tigers to an early 7-0 lead; it allowed everyone in Black and Gold to breath a sigh of relief.

"When you don't score in a game and then you follow it up with another game where you don't score, that's definitely on your mind going into the next

one," Ritter said. "All we talked about all week was, 'We've gotta score early.' Scoring early had nothing to do with getting up on Dora. When you go that long without scoring, it can start getting in your mind a little bit. 'Can we score? Are we gonna be able to score?' You start second-guessing what you're doing. When we scored early, it was like a weight off my chest, too. I was tense. I don't think we were pressing, but we wanted to score so bad."

"Offensively, we played well. It was different than we played the first six weeks, sure, but different is not always bad. We have to do whatever we can to give ourselves a chance to be successful. It was almost like it was when Coach Balentine and me first started working together at Muscle Shoals a few years ago—just give us a chance to be successful defensively, and don't shoot ourselves in the foot."

Russellville's defense allowed just one scoring drive on Thursday night, and it came right after Bishop's touchdown run. Wilkerson broke loose for a run of 48 yards, setting up his own 19-yard touchdown pass to Jayden McDavid. Junior corner Ashaad Williams blocked the extra point, keeping the Golden Tigers in front 7-6 with 4:18 left in the first. Neither team scored again until Ashley's touchdown run just past the midway point of the third quarter.

Russellville finished with 386 total yards on 46 plays. Bishop threw for 42 yards on 3-for-6 passing and also ran 10 times for 84 yards and a touchdown (excluding one sack for a loss of 12). McCulloch finished with 59 yards rushing on five carries.

Ashley (677 yards and six touchdowns on 112 carries) and McCulloch (563 yards and seven touchdowns on 93 carries) have both run for more than 500 yards this year heading into next week's regular season finale against Central-Florence, with Bishop (489 yards and eight touchdowns on 78 carries) close behind. As a team, the Golden Tigers are averaging 233.2 rushing yards per game and 6.0 yards per carry.

Russellville will celebrate Senior Night against Central next Friday while also tuning up for the following week's first-round playoff game at Region 8 runner-up Scottsboro.

"We tell our seniors all the time, there are some things you're always gonna remember about your senior year," Ritter said. "You're gonna remember beating Deshler, because that's a big rival and the first game of the year, you're gonna remember homecoming, and you're gonna remember Senior Night. There's only one of two ways it can go. It's either gonna be a good memory or a bad memory. We want to make sure we create good memories for this senior class."

"The seniors that play should play above their heads, just because that's what you do on Senior Night. That's expected. The seniors are supposed to play better, and the underclassmen rise to the occasion as well. It doesn't matter if we're playing Central or the Dallas Cowboys, Senior Night is Senior Night. This is our last guaranteed home game, and we want to send these guys out with a win."

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Undefeated Red Bay rolls past Tharptown

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Red Bay's defense held a second straight opponent to less than 50 yards of total offense and recorded its third shutout of the season last Thursday night at Tharptown, wrapping up region play with a 50-0 rout of the Wildcats.

After limiting Tanner to just 48 total yards and two first downs the previous week in a 50-21 win, the Tigers (9-0 overall, 6-0 in Class 2A, Region 7) held Tharptown to 35 total yards and three first downs on 31 plays. The Wildcats (1-7, 0-6) rushed 24 times for 29 yards and completed just one pass in seven attempts for six yards.

The Red Bay defense did not allow a single play of more than 10 yards and made five tackles behind the line of scrimmage. Junior linebacker Cam McKinney led the defensive effort with seven tackles, and senior defensive back Kaleb Bragwell picked off a pass and returned it 71 yards for a touchdown on the final play of the first half to send the Tigers into the locker room with a 43-0 lead. [Red Bay has now recorded a pick-six on the final play of the first half in each of its last two games. Junior Jalen Vinson returned an interception 62 yards for a score to close out the first half against Tanner.]

Vinson had a solid day throwing the football against Tharptown, completing 7-of-12 passes for 164 yards and two touchdowns. He hooked up with big-play senior receiver Arden Hamilton for a 74-yard score (Hamilton's fourth touchdown catch of the season covering at least 60 yards) late in the first quarter and then found senior Colyn Humphres for a 30-yard touchdown early in the second quarter to stretch the Tigers' lead to 30-0.

Humphres opened the scoring with a four-yard touchdown run (his ninth of the season) on Red Bay's first drive, adding the two-point conversion run to make it 8-0 less than two minutes into the game. Junior tailback Hunter King scored on an eight-yard run midway through the first quarter, and Vinson hit Hamilton with the two-point pass to make it 16-0.

Vinson's two touchdown tosses to Hamilton and Humphres added to the lead, and then King scored on a one-yard run to make it 37-0 with 4:18 left in the first half. Bragwell's pick-six capped off Red Bay's highest-scoring half of the season. The Tigers tacked on one final touchdown in the second half, a 44-yard run by Jake Pounds that made it 50-0 late in the third quarter.

King finished the night with 119 yards on 13 carries, helping Red Bay rush for 244 yards (on 24 attempts) as a team. The Tigers piled up 408 total yards on just 36 plays—14 of which gained 10-plus yards. Hamilton caught two passes for 77 yards and a touchdown, and Humphres had three catches for 69 yards and a score.

Red Bay has now won 14 straight games in the regular season and 10 straight in region play. The Tigers will also carry a 13-game home win streak into their first-round playoff game at Fred Bostick, Jr. Memorial Stadium on Friday, November 8. First, though, Red Bay will aim for a 10-0 regular season this Friday at Wilson. The Tigers have finished unbeaten in the regular season only four times (2002, 2004, 2007 and 2015) in the past 27 years.

Following back-to-back dominant performances the last two weeks, Red Bay's defense is now allowing just 10.6 points and 165.3 total yards per game. The Tigers have completely stifled the run, holding opponents to just 69.7 rushing yards per game and 2.5 yards per carry while recording 44 tackles for loss. The pass D has been almost as good, holding opponents to just 95.7 yards per game and a 42 percent completion rate. The Tigers have returned four interceptions for touchdowns on the year.

Offensively, Red Bay averages 35.4 points and 347.6 total yards per game. The Tigers have been balanced all season, averaging 195.1 rushing yards and 152.4 passing yards per game. Vinson has excelled in his first season as the starting quarterback, throwing for 1,372 yards on 75-for-140 passing with 10 touchdowns and just two interceptions.

Hamilton has been his favorite target, leading the team with 30 catches for 709 yards and six touchdowns. He averages 23.6 yards per reception, and his six touchdown catches have covered an average of 49.3 yards. Junior Mason Holt is second on the team with 21 catches for 366 yards and two touchdowns, and Humphres has 14 catches for 210 yards and two scores.

Hunter King is the team's leading rusher on the year with 689 yards and six touchdowns on 134 carries. Vinson has rushed for 440 yards and nine touchdowns on 61 attempts, and Humphres has carried 74 times for 416 yards and nine scores. McKinney is the team's leading tackler on the season with 75 total stops. Junior linebacker Gavin Edgmon has 72 tackles, followed by Pounds and freshman lineman Braden Parker with 47 apiece.

Red Bay is now 51-14 in six seasons under head coach Michael Jackson, including a 29-7 mark in region play and a 29-5 record at home.

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Cheatham's kick lifts Wildcats to OT win

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

As soon as last Thursday's regular season finale against Phil Campbell came to a close, Taylor Leathers' immediate concern was the welfare of Tristan Cheatham, his freshman kicker.

Cheatham, who hadn't attempted a field goal all year, had just bounced one off the crossbar and through the uprights at Amos Mitchell Stadium, lifting Colbert Heights to a 31-28 overtime victory over the Bobcats and setting off a celebration that left him buried at the bottom of an exuberant dog pile—or 'Cat pile, as it were.

"Tristan is maybe 5'5, 5'6, probably a hundred pounds or something like that," said Leathers, the Wildcats' fourth-year head coach. "I checked on him to make sure he was alright. He came out of there okay."

Cheatham's game-winning kick came on Colbert Heights' first overtime possession, right after the Wildcats (6-4, 4-2 in Class 3A, Region 8) had stuffed Phil Campbell (3-6, 1-5) on fourth-and-goal from the one to begin the first OT. Cheatham's first attempt was blocked, leading to a somewhat confusing sequence of events wherein a Colbert Heights lineman picked up the loose football and ran it into the end zone for an apparent game-winning score.

"It was elation," Leathers said of the reaction on the home sideline following Cheatham's game-winner. "He chipped it through. I nicknamed him 'Chip 'em Cheatham' earlier in the year because his leg is not as strong as he wants it to be, but he goes up there and kicks on the game field everyday. When the time came and his name was called, he was able to get it done."

"The jury is still out on whether that's a touchdown or not," Leathers said on Sunday evening. "We're signaling touchdown, because the block occurred behind the line of scrimmage, we recovered it and we ran it in. We still need some clarification on that rule. You have to take into account that the overtime rules are a little different."

The officials convened and ultimately ruled that there had been an inadvertent whistle during the play, which meant that the two teams would go back and re-do fourth down. Leathers said he gave no thought to foregoing another field goal try and instead going for the touchdown on fourth-and-goal from the two.

"We were gonna kick all the way," he said. "We were gonna line up and kick it. We knew he was good from that distance. It was just a matter of protection. We called timeout and talked over the protection again."

Cheatham, who had made all four of his extra points on the night, took advantage of the mulligan, drilling the 19-yard kick from the right hash to secure a Senior Night victory and a third consecutive winning season for the Wildcats.

"It was elation," Leathers said of the reaction on the home sideline. "He chipped it through. I nicknamed him 'Chip 'em Cheatham' earlier in the year because his leg is not as strong as he wants it to be, but he goes up there and kicks on the game field everyday at practice. When the time came and his name was called, he was able to get it done."

The Wildcats got it done in large part due to a prolific running game that piled up 371 yards, including a career-high 227 on 30 carries by junior wingback Gage Pugh and 125 on 17 carries by Carson Shaw, another junior wingback. Colbert Heights got three first-half touchdown runs from Pugh and a 34-yard score from Shaw, taking a 28-14 lead into the locker room despite two turnovers.

"We were moving the ball effectively against them in the first half," Leathers said. "We lost a turnover early, which we didn't need to do, but I felt like if we could continue to keep the ball we could move it on them pretty well. We felt good about what we were doing offensively."

"Going into the half, I felt like we needed to finish, and we did not come out and do that in the second half."

The Bobcats, whose two touchdowns in the first half had come on a 69-yard pass from Luke Barnwell to Ridge Raper and a 34-yard toss from Barnwell to Trey Leindecker, opened the second half with another big play. Leindecker, a junior tailback, broke loose for a 61-yard touchdown run (his seventh scoring play this season of 60-plus yards) on the first play of the third quarter, cutting Colbert Heights' lead to 28-21.

The Wildcats responded with a 12-play drive but ultimately turned the ball over on downs deep in Phil Campbell territory. The Bobcats then marched 93 yards in 13 plays, pulling even on a seven-yard touchdown run by Barnwell with 10:18 remaining in the game.

Colbert Heights put together another good drive but once again failed to finish, turning the ball over on downs at the Phil Campbell 19. The Wildcats forced a punt and got the ball back one last time in regulation, driving down

to the Bobcat 11-yard line with 11 seconds left to play. Skyler Balta (who has a stronger leg than Cheatham and serves as the team's long field goal kicker) missed a 28-yard attempt, and the game went to overtime.

The Wildcat defense came up with the huge fourth-down stop at the goal line, giving Cheatham an opportunity to be the hero.

"It's a memory he'll never forget," Leathers said.

Colbert Heights finished the game with 384 total yards on 57 plays, 55 of which were runs. Pugh and Shaw combined to rush for 352 yards and four touchdowns on 47 carries.

Phil Campbell finished with 380 yards of offense on 45 plays. Barnwell, a junior, threw for 226 yards and two touchdowns on 14-for-18 passing while also rushing nine times for 33 yards and a score. Raper, another junior, had a huge night receiving, catching nine passes for 173 yards and a touchdown.

Leindecker scored twice, rushing for 119 yards on 17 carries and catching four passes for 44 yards.

"They're very talented. They're dynamic with that junior class," Leathers said. "We knew that last year. We knew when Coach [Kevin] Barnwell got the job, they were gonna be very competitive. We ran a punt back to beat them [21-14] last year when those guys were sophomores. This year was no different. We knew it would be a nail-biter and come down to the wire."

"Coach Barnwell's son is a very talented quarterback, and the Raper kid is extremely talented. So are [Austen] Baker and Trey. That nucleus of guys is gonna make Phil Campbell dangerous again next year. They didn't get the result they wanted the other night, but they're a talented group, and Coach Barnwell does a really good job with them."

The Bobcats will close their season at home on Thursday night when they'll be looking to snap a 16-game losing streak against rival Hackleburg.

Leindecker went over the 1,000-yard mark for the season last week against the Wildcats and has now rushed for a career-high 1,074 yards and 11 touchdowns on 126 carries, an average of 8.5 yards per attempt. He has also caught 21 passes for 240 yards and three scores.

Barnwell eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark through the air last week and has now thrown for 1,058 yards on 76-for-130 passing with 13 touchdowns and six interceptions. Baker has 348 receiving yards and four touchdowns on a team-high 25 catches. Raper has caught 21 passes for a team-high 382 yards and six scores.

Austin Douthit and Blain Goodson tied for the team lead against Colbert Heights with eight solo tackles apiece. Austen Baker added seven solo stops, and Brandon Baker chipped in with 1.5 tackles for loss and an interception.

For Colbert Heights, Pugh finished the regular season with 990 yards rushing and 12 touchdowns on 153 carries. Shaw is close behind with 939 yards and nine touchdowns on 120 carries. Sophomore quarterback Andrew Tedford has rushed for 381 yards and five scores on 100 attempts.

For just the third time in program history, the Wildcats have earned a playoff berth in three straight years. [They also did it from 1992-94 and 2009-11.] Following a bye this week, they will travel to face Susan Moore in a first-round game next Friday, November 8.

Colbert Heights finished 6-4 this season despite suiting up fewer than a dozen combined seniors and juniors.

"I'm extremely proud of this group for being able to finish again with a playoff appearance and a winning record," Leathers said. "Our expectations are high, and mine are always high each year. I'm not one to chalk it up as a rebuilding year or a young year and just let it go. We want to make the playoffs and be competitive each year, and I think we did that this year."

"I'm extremely proud of this group for being able to finish again with a playoff appearance and a winning record," said Leathers, who at 27-17 already has the third-most wins of any head coach in program history, trailing only Ivan Denton (52-43 from 2007-15) and Shannon McGregory (30-44 from 1998-2004). "If you go back and look at some of our losses, two of them were by less than seven points. There's a possibility of eight wins on the table if things would have gone our way. But there are no moral victories. We finished with six wins, and I'm very proud of them to be able to accomplish that."

"We recognized five seniors on Senior Night, and when you look at that you've got to feel really positive about the future of the program. I certainly feel really positive about the direction we're heading in. Our expectations are high, and mine are always high each year. I'm not one to chalk it up as a rebuilding year or a young year and just let it go. We want to make the playoffs and be competitive each year, and I think we did that this year. Our coaching staff did an outstanding job to be able to get us where we are."

"We're just very blessed, and we give God all the glory for our success we've had this year. We look forward to the playoffs and seeing what happens next week at Susan Moore."



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