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11.20.19

Do local residents really want broadband service?

Low response to survey sends mixed message

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With much of rural Franklin County having no available high-speed broadband internet service, you would think changing that would be a priority for area residents.

Customers served by Franklin Electric Cooperative, though, missed a golden opportunity to voice their desire for the cooperative to build and operate a broadband network when an overwhelming majority of members failed to return a survey that asked that very question.

Although nearly all ballots that were returned indicated members were interested in the cooperative undertaking broadband as a service to its membership, the low response to the survey sends a mixed message about how serious residents are in wanting broadband.

Customers served by Franklin Electric missed a golden opportunity to voice their desire for the cooperative to build and operate a broadband network when an overwhelming majority of members failed to return a survey that asked that very question.

Even with the low response, though, Franklin Electric manager Mark Stockton said his Board of Directors will continue to receive and review information on how a project could be structured to serve Franklin Electric Cooperative members with access to broadband.

The survey was sent to all Franklin Electric members. The cooperative serves almost 8,000 residential and business addresses in Franklin, Colbert and Lawrence counties. The survey was mailed the week of July 22,

See 'BROADBAND,' Page 9

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COURTESY PHOTO

Stella, owned by Sherry Davis, is still mending from major surgery after being hit by a vehicle.

Fundraisers helping local woman recoup medical costs after rescue dog surgery

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When it comes to rescuing animals in need, Sherry Davis has always had a hard time saying 'no.'

So when Stella, one of three Cavalier King Charles Spaniels she recently adopted, needed major surgery after being hit by a vehicle, Davis once again

See 'SURGERY,' Page 9

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Elizabeth Joyce Borom, Russellville, age 58

Died Sunday, November 10, 2019. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Spruce Pine Cemetery.

Claudette Marie Brewer, Russellville, age 76

Died Saturday, November 9, 2019. The family was planning to hold a memorial service at a later date. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Billy Joe Burks, Phil Campbell, age 64

Died Saturday, November 16, 2019. Funeral held at Pleasant Hill FCM Church. Interment in Spruce Pine Cemetery. Atkins Funeral Home assisted the family.

John Elmer Grissom, Spruce Pine, age 89

Died Sunday, November 17, 2019. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Quinn Memorial Cemetery.

James "Jim" Joseph Grobe, Tuscumbia, age 79

Died Friday, November 15, 2019. The family was planning to hold a memorial service at a later date, including a Broken Wand Ceremony performed by the International Brotherhood of Magicians. Spry Memorial Chapel of Russellville assisted the family.

Shirley Motes Lawler, Phil Campbell, age 78

Died Sunday, November 17, 2019. Funeral will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment will be in Edgar's Chapel Cemetery in Phil Campbell.

David Wayne Tammisto, Russellville (formerly of DeKalb, IL), age 64

Died Saturday, November 16, 2019. Funeral service held at Spry Memorial Chapel.

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Russellville Hospital is excited to announce that nurse practitioner Haley Knight, CRNP, is welcoming new patients along with Dr. Jeffrey Chenyi at Russellville Hospital Medical Clinic. The clinic provides comprehensive medical care for children to adults.

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Roxy's Christmas Spectacular set to open soon

By Susie Malone, President
Franklin County Arts & Humanities Council

It's almost time for the curtains to open for *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular!*

With great anticipation, the Franklin County Arts & Humanities Council, Inc. is ready for its own musical production to come to life on the stage of the historic Roxy Theatre.

The Arts Council began work on *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular* back in April. This action became necessary when Lanny McAlister, writer and director of *The Legend of Toyland*, informed the council in March that *The Legend of Toyland* would be pulled from the historic Roxy and moved to a larger venue.

The Arts Council's goal has always been to restore the historic Roxy Theatre and to work with the revitalization of downtown Russellville. Council

members were surprised with McAlister's decision. The Council had made a large investment in costumes, stage extension, and lighting for McAlister's *Legend of Toyland*, and it was successful over the two-year period at the Roxy.

The Arts Council Board decided to do its own production after learning *Toyland* would not be continued. That's when the idea of *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular* became a reality.

This decision has had its rewards as many local sponsors have donated to the Roxy's Christmas Spectacular. The production received a grant from the Alabama Council on the Arts, along with several in-kind donations. *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular* features a larger cast, which includes elementary, high school, college students and adults, along parents as volunteers.

This musical tells a story that centers around the mischievous elf whose name is Fred. He acciden-

tally boards the North Pole Express that travels from city to city in North America. Fred gets involved with each city's holiday celebration through dancing, singing and comedy.

The music will feature upbeat Christmas favorites like "Hot Chocolate," "It's a Marshmallow World," "Frosty the Snowman," "Cool Yule," and "Feliz Navidad." As an elf, Fred has always believed that Christmas was all about Santa. But in the end he learns the 'Reason for the Season.'

The production's closing number is a Nativity Scene that features the song "Holiest of Nights," written and performed by Denise Davis. Hillary Hall is writer of the musical, with Susan Crittenden as choreographer and both as co-directors.

General admission tickets are \$15 for the orchestra section and \$10 for the mezzanine. Call 256-810-2711 to purchase. Follow our Facebook page *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular*.

Four local establishments earn satisfactory ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Each of the four Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of November 4-8 had scores that fell 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 four Franklin County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range. The high score was 97, received by Quinn's Grocery, 9980 Hwy. 48, Russellville, and B&J Cafe, 1327 Shellnut Loop, Phil Campbell.

Other inspection scores and violations of Franklin County businesses included:

- Southside Quick Mart, LLC, 12301 Hwy. 43 S, Russellville, 90. (No proof of manager course).

- Homestead Cafe, 6631 Hwy. 43, Spruce Pine, 92. (Paint chipping and peeling in the interior of the microwave).

Of the 14 inspections done in Colbert County from November 4-8, all received scores falling in the range of satisfactory.

The high score of 100 went to Dollar General #1762, 8582 Hwy. 72, Cherokee.

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

Annual Thanksgiving Fellowship Service set for Sunday

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although we may worship in different ways, a special Thanksgiving service is about coming together for fellowship and thanks.

The annual Thanksgiving Community Fellowship Service is set for this Sunday, November 24 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville High School auditorium. The free event is open to the entire community.

Several local ministers have been asked to par-

ticipate and be a part of this special service.

"We've done this for several years now," said Russellville First United Methodist Church minister Bo Lloyd. "It's a time to come together and celebrate. We all worship the same God. We just do it a little differently at times."

In addition to Russellville FUMC, other sponsoring churches include Gateway Church, St. Paul CME Church and Branches Church.

There will be a mass choir with members from several churches. The choir will be directed by

Gary McNutt and Danyelle Hillman.

Rev. Charles Dale, a member of St. Paul CME Church, encouraged local families to attend the special service.

"We're asking for participation from the community," Dale said. "We want to bring everyone together, including our Black and Hispanic communities, for this time of fellowship."

For more info on the Thanksgiving Community Fellowship Service, contact FUMC at 256-332-2955 or Gateway Church at 256-332-7176.

RV Hospital enters strategic affiliation with HH System

Submitted to the FFP

Russellville Hospital (RH), a non-profit corporation, entered into a strategic affiliation agreement with Huntsville Hospital Health System to become a part of a larger affiliated healthcare system that will allow for more efficient delivery of healthcare services to residents of northwest Alabama.

Through this affiliation with Huntsville Hospital Health System (HHHS), Russellville Hospital will benefit from shared services, purchasing cooperatives for cost savings, physician services like specialist rotation and recruitment support, as well as assistance with other services.

"The agreement is not a purchase nor an acquisition but rather an initiative to increase efficiency in the delivery of medical services to residents of

Franklin County and surrounding counties," said David Spillers, CEO of Huntsville Hospital Health System.

Russellville Hospital is managed by Java Medical Group, and Bappa Mukherji, CEO, cites poor reimbursement rates and an ever-changing health care system as reasons for the agreement.

"Financially, Russellville Hospital will be able to save money through economies of scale and collaboration to be better prepared for healthcare reform down the road," Mukherji said. "All of this translates into better care with more options for our patients, at a reduced cost to the hospital."

Said Russellville Hospital CEO Christine Stewart, "The local board felt it was better to enter a relationship with a strong partner on a proactive basis."

Huntsville Hospital and Russellville Hospital have had a developing relationship since 2015. The affiliation will strengthen ties to meet the increasing challenges to health care and more specifically challenges to small rural hospitals. The affiliation provides many benefits to our hospital and patients. These include access to HHHS services such as linen, purchasing agreements, physician recruitment, specialty physician services and quality initiatives expertise.

"We welcome Russellville Hospital as an affiliate of Huntsville Hospital Health System, and we look forward to working more closely with the RH team in helping serve the patients of Franklin County and northwest Alabama," said Philip W. Bentley Jr., chairman of the Health Care Authority of the City of Huntsville.

Honey Do List: Light it up!

Things change quickly. The time changed, leaves change and the seasons change. I know many of you are changing to a holiday mindset and getting ready to decorate.

Fire safety is not often top of mind during the holidays, but with roaring fires, candles, potentially flammable decorations (including the family Christmas tree) and electric light strings, the threat of disaster is always present. You've got enough to worry about to get everything done in time for the holidays. But follow basic safety guidelines and you should have nothing extra to worry about.

Decorative lights you use both indoors and out can be potential fire and electrical hazards. Use only indoor lighting for your holiday lights inside your home. This may seem like obvious advice, but people often don't know there's a difference. Holiday lights are rated for indoor or outdoor use and must be used in their intended settings.

For example, outdoor lights burn brighter and thus create more heat, which increases the chance of a fire if they are used inside. The same goes for extension cords. For outdoor lights, only use heavy-duty extension cords rated for outdoor

use. Check your light strings for fraying, breaks or tearing. Before you hang them, check each bulb and the entire wire for any kind of damage. **Doug Green**

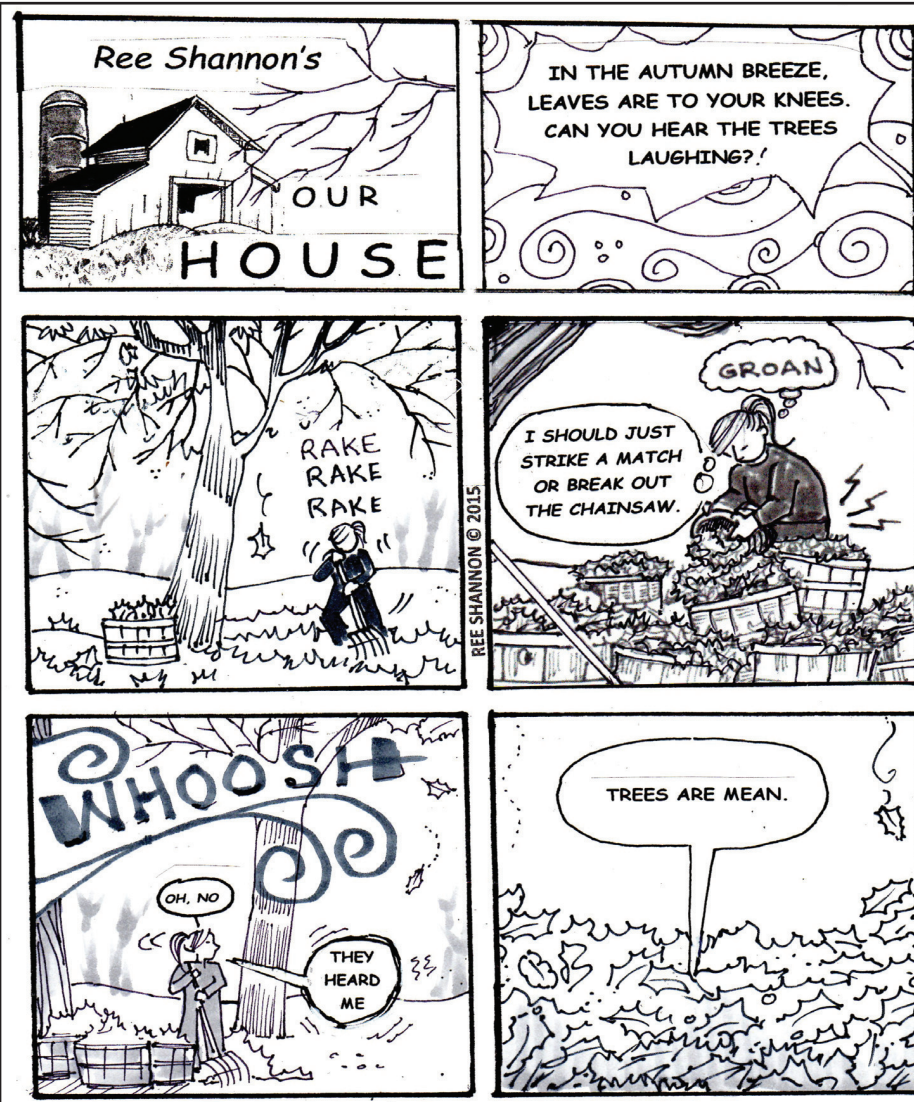


Look specifically for places where bare wires are exposed. If you see extensive damage, the strand needs to be replaced.

Whether you are hanging lights indoors or outdoors, don't use staples, nails or other sharp objects to hang them. You risk damaging the wire, which can then potentially cause a fire or electrocution. Use insulated holders specifically manufactured for hanging holiday lights. Don't hang indoor lights near your fireplace.

Be sure your holiday lights are UL-approved. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) evaluates thousands of products each year for safety and assurance. Products that bear the UL mark have passed stringent tests and meet high safety standards. Check the packaging to see if the UL stamp is present. If it is, the product is very safe to use as

See 'LIGHT,' Page 5



REE SHANNON © 2015

FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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Letters to the editor

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DAVE SAYS
Financial Straight-Talk
www.davesays.org
by Dave Ramsey

Double for couples?

Dear Dave,
Does the amount you advise saving for a beginner emergency fund in Baby Step 1 double for a couple, or does it stay the same?

Charlie

Dear Charlie,
Whether you're single or married, Baby Step 1 of my plan is to save \$1,000 as quickly as possible for a starter emergency fund. This may not sound like a lot of cash to have on-hand in the event of an emergency, but you need to remember the \$1,000 figure is a temporary thing.

Baby Step 1 is saving up \$1,000 for a beginner emergency fund. Baby Step 2 is paying off all debt, except your home. The vast majority of folks working my plan are debt-free, except for their mortgage, in two years or less. Then, you move to Baby Step 3, which is increasing your emergency fund from \$1,000 to three-to-six months of household expenses.

In reality, we're talking about a pretty short period of time where you'd have just \$1,000 in emergency savings. Plus, it serves as an exercise in financial discipline. A lot of people have nothing

saved before beginning the Baby Steps.

If that makes things seem a little scary at the start, it's not necessarily a bad thing. A healthy level of fear can be a fantastic motivator. I don't want anyone constantly living their lives in fear, but that added push—that sense of urgency—can make you work harder to get out of debt and move on the Baby Step 3 as quickly as possible!

Dave

Baby Step for weddings?

Dear Dave,
We recently started following your plan, and it has made a huge difference in our financial outlook and our marriage. When it comes to the Baby Steps, when do you recommend setting aside money for a wedding? We have a daughter, and we want to be able to do as much as possible for her when the time comes.

Jim

Dear Jim,
That's a good question. There's not really a Baby Step specifically for weddings. In my mind, it should probably come after Baby Step 5—setting aside a college fund for your kids.

Maybe part of this is the dad in me, but in prioritizing these things I think a good education is more important than a big wedding. Don't get me wrong, a wedding is a wonderful event and cause for lots of joy and celebration. But it's also a one-day event. Plenty of people have inexpensive, beautiful weddings and enjoy long, wonderful lives together!

Dave

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

Commission okays funding for work force assessment

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission voted Monday to contribute to a work force study assessment for Franklin County.

The assessment, jointly sponsored by the commission and the cities of Russellville and Red Bay, will cost each entity \$3,000. The work force study assessment will be conducted by the North Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG).

The assessment will be designed to determine the current and future needs of Franklin County employers, as well as a determination of how adequately the available work force is able to fill those needs.

In other action, the commission:

- Approved the hiring of Ricky Tharp as a temporary corrections officer/dispatcher with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and Albert Kerry Hallman as a permanent deputy. An additional vacancy for a permanent corrections officer/dispatcher was tabled by commissioners.

- Approved the accepting of sealed bids for a 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. The vehicle, according to sheriff Shannon Oliver, has a blown motor and is inoperable.

- Approved the vacating of an approximate 400-foot portion of Hollow Drive. A public hearing held prior to the commission meeting saw no opposition or support voiced for the proposal.

- Agreed to solicit interest rates on a \$400,000 equipment purchase for the Franklin County Highway Department, to include pick-up trucks and heavy equipment.

- Appointed Phillip Rogers to the Industrial Development Board.

- Approved a proclamation designating November 20-17, 2019 as Farm-City Week in Franklin County.

- Agreed to open a bank account at Community Spirit Bank for grant monies received for the 2020 Census. Ann McDermott was hired as a contract consultant and social media coordinator for the Franklin County Census Committee.

'LIGHT,' from page 4

long as it's used properly.

If you haven't already done so, change to LED lights. They burn brighter, use much less electricity and last longer than the old type.

Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind.

- Unplug all holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.

- Keep all cords out of the way in high-traffic areas in your home.

- To add protection against electric shock, outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets.

Wishing you a bright, beautiful and safe holiday. Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.

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

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What's Happening


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


 **R**ussellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Thanksgiving hams. Hams are \$30 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Wednesday, November 27 from 8-10 a.m. at the Lodge on Coffee Street.


 **O**nce again, the City of Russellville is "Helping Santa" with toys for all the boys and girls of Russellville this Christmas. Toy Drive sign-up dates will be November 1-21, and completed paperwork will be accepted until November 27. Pick-up dates will be December 18 (inside the city), December 19 (in the county) and December 20 (for those who sign up late on November 22-27). Our goal is that no child in the city of Russellville will go without Christmas gifts this year. During these rough economic times, we are seeing more and more children that will go through Christmas without food, clothing or toys. We are asking that those who can help please do so. If you would like to donate, we will be accepting new or slightly used toys for age groups between newborn and 15 years old. Monetary donations may be made at any bank listed below. All money raised will be used to purchase toys and clothing for needy children. Please don't miss the blessing you will receive by making a donation to a child's Christmas. Last year, your donations allowed more than 350 children to have a more enjoyable Christmas! There will be donation boxes throughout the city at participating businesses. If you or your family would like to help, please donate in any way possible. We would all like to thank you and your family and wish you a Merry Christmas! Donation boxes will be at the following locations: Russellville Fire Dept. Stations #1 and #2, Russellville City Hall, Russellville Parks and Rec (Bishop and Mullins Center), Russellville Police Department, Russellville Street Department, Family Pharmacy Group locations in Russellville, Alabama Central Credit Union, First Metro Bank, Valley Credit Union, Miller's Affordable Furniture, CB&S Bank locations in Russellville, Valley State Bank locations in Russellville, Listerhill Credit Union in Russellville, Green's Dependable True Value, Country Cottage, Auto Zone, Speedy Pig, O'Reilly Auto Parts, 43 Grill, CVS, American Health & Fitness, Jack's Restaurant, Goody's, Hibbett Sports, Community Spirit Bank, Dollar General, Gold Kist, State Farm Insurance and El Patron Restaurant.


 **T**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, Tuscumbia. For more info, email nancy537481@yahoo.com.


 **T**he Russellville and Franklin County Bicentennial Committee invites you to attend the grand finale Bicentennial Birthday Celebration this 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. Ticket sale deadline is Thursday, November 14. No tickets will be sold at the door. 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.

 **F**irst Free Will Baptist Church in Russellville (16140 Hwy. 43) will hold a food giveaway this Saturday, November 23 at 9 a.m.

 **R**eedtown Back to Basics Skill Center will host its annual free Thanksgiving dinner this Sunday, November 24. The Russellville community is welcome to attend. The dinner will be held at College Avenue First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 521 College Avenue NW, here in Russellville. Dinner will be served from 2-4 p.m.

 **Y**ou are invited to gather in Red Bay's Bay Tree Park and be a part of your **FIRST EVER** Live Tree Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, December 1 at 5 p.m. Enjoy the sounds of the season as our children's choir (directed by Mark Gajewski) and our community adult choir (directed by Phoebe Harrison) fill the night with familiar Christmas carols. Bask in the joy of the Christmas season as our local businesses offer special discounts, good food, door prizes and much, much more in downtown Red Bay on Sunday afternoon, December 1 during open house. Then, on Monday evening, December 2, enjoy the annual Red Bay Christmas parade. Don't forget that Red Bay Bucks winners will be announced after the parade. Also remember to get your Punch Card punched between November 18 and December 1 to be eligible for a gift basket drawing. This is a "Vintage Christmas in the Bay" you won't want to miss!

 **S**pruce Pine Historical Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Next meeting is December 3. All members and friends are urged to attend.

 **I**f you are interested in the study of the Civil War and have an ancestor who was in the Confederate Army, join the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month (except January and July) at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center. Next meeting will be December 5. The Sons of Confederate Veterans is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Membership is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate Armed Forces. Membership can be obtained through either direct or collateral family lines, and kinship to a veteran must be documented genealogically. The minimum age for membership is 12. For more information, call 1-800-MYDIX-IE or 256-324-2317.

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We the people continue to make America great

[The following essay was written by Tharptown High School senior Annslee Bottoms as part of her entry in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Audio/Essay Scholarship Contest. This year's theme was "What Makes America Great." Bottoms won the local contest through VFW Post 5184 in Russellville. Her entry will now be submitted to the state contest. Established in 1947, the Voice of Democracy College Scholarship Program is awarded by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization. The program awards \$2.1 million annually, with a nationwide first prize of \$30,000 and statewide first prizes of \$1,000 in addition to an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.]

By Annslee Bottoms

Tharptown High School Senior

"We the people..." I start off reciting the preamble in front of my history class. It is a week before the project is due, yet I couldn't help but present early. I found myself enthralled studying one of the greatest documents in the world's history and (I am proud to say) *my* history.

Those three words represent what we as a nation hold dear: Unity, equality and service. These ideals and the people that protect it are what make America great.

My dad is the first person who comes to mind when I think of how unity makes America great. He is a veteran who has served eight years as an Army Ranger. He has been deployed everywhere from Germany to Greece as an 11 Bravo, and he is so proud of it. Every night, right before *Wheel of Fortune*, you can hear his deep voice bellowing old cadet songs. The songs that made brothers and sisters from strangers. The songs that transformed citizens into heroes. The songs that united them under one flag.

In fact, I can still remember his hearty laugh as he found his old Ranger flag. His eyes were alight with such patriotism and fondness as he told me about how much his squadron, sergeants and his family in arms meant to him. The unity brought forth by serving is what makes America great.

Another veteran that has greatly impacted and inspired me is David Epperson. Mr. Epperson has served in the military for 20-plus years, completing missions such as rebuilding the Haitian government and re-establishing their emergency call center. Mr. Epperson grew up in Japan with a half-African-American, half-Korean boy named Chris. Though they look very different and they believe very differently, they have always treated each other as brothers, even living and serving our nation together.

We the people founded America. We the people are what make America great. And we the people will continue to make America great forevermore.

As my boss, Mr. Epperson has shown me the same fairness, giving me opportunities usually only afforded to students who live in the D.C. area, far away from my small home in Alabama. Despite the distance, despite my southern drawl, and despite the financial barriers, Mr. Epperson found a way to apply the sense of justice and equality he gained from serving in the military and offered it to me. The equality brought forth by boot camp, stripping people down to their core just to build them up stronger, is what makes America great.

The veterans I know personally and the ones I have yet to thank all make America great and in turn inspired me to do the same. I currently do not have the privilege to serve overseas like my dad, brother and boss; however, I can still do my part in protecting our great nation.

For the past two years, I have served the Department of Homeland Security working as a GS-1 Student Trainee alongside veterans who never stop making a difference. Over the summer, I live in D.C. working 40-hour weeks, and when I have to move back to Alabama for school, I continue to do all I can over the computer clocking in 20 hours a week.

I love my job, because I love being able to serve and protect the vision our founding fathers had so many years ago. Together, on equal ground, we serve so all Americans can do their part to make America great, whether that be continuing their education, becoming a teacher, raising a family or joining the military.

Our unity, our equality and our drive to serve are what make America great. We the people make America great. Every single day, we make history. The United States currently stands as the longest-reigning democracy in the world, and with the traditions our veterans continue to pass on and programs such as this to remind and humble the next generation, the United States will continue to stand as such.

We the people founded America. We the people are what make America great. And we the people will continue to make America great forevermore.

'SURGERY,' from page 1

couldn't say 'no.'

Now, some fellow community members have organized fundraisers to help Davis recoup some of the \$5,200 in medical costs she incurred with Stella's surgery.

Davis adopted the three dogs after their owner passed away unexpectedly. She drove to Georgia to pick up the animals, and a few days after she returned home to Russellville she watched in horror as Stella got off her leash and ran out in the road where she was hit by a vehicle.

The result was a shattered pelvis that required surgery to have a plate installed to reconstruct the pelvis and allow her to stand and walk again. Both of the dog's hips were dislocated and were pieced back together with plates and pins by Dr. Nicki Plunkett at Huntsville Veterinary Specialists and Emergency.

Stella is back home but has to stay confined to bed rest for seven to eight weeks, which will be followed by water therapy.

"She has a good prognosis of being able to walk again," Davis said. "I would not expect anyone else to pay for all of this. She's my responsibility. But people helping financially is taking the edge off. It was a lot of money right up front, but Stella is worth it.

"She's the most precious little dog. They lost their mama. I adopted Stella, her mama Sheba and a third named Shelby. The three dogs grew up all together, so I wanted them to remain together."

The first fundraising effort is through Facebook and organized by Davis's

friend, Collie Barker, the founder of Casa Canine Pet Rescue. Barker has a link set up on her Facebook page for people to donate. As of November 18, \$630 had been raised through this account.

A Go Fund Me account has also been set up to help offset some of Davis's medical costs. Log onto www.gofundme.com, then search for "Stella the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel," and the account will appear. As of November 18, \$260 had been raised through this account.

Davis says she's always had a soft spot for abandoned and abused animals.

"I get a lot of eye rolls from people, but I can't help it," Davis said. "I don't want any dog to be hungry or helpless. I've always had rescues. I've never went and got a dog other than rescues. We have a total of five dogs now."

Davis' sister, Wanda Wilson Otts, said her sister's love and compassion for people and animals has been there throughout her lifetime.

"She was a registered nurse for the State of Alabama Home Health Care in North Alabama, and now she's a nurse for Alabama Hospice of the Shoals," Otts said. "Sherry was so happy when she got to bring Stella home. Putting her fur baby down was never an option for her. She is just depending on God to see them through."

While Davis knows Stella still faces a long road to recovery, she feels blessed to see the progress the little dog has made so far.

"She's alive, she's not in pain and she will be able to enjoy a good life once we get through all of this," Davis said.

'BROADBAND,' from page 1

2019, with that month's power bills.

Eighty-three percent of Franklin Electric customers failed to return the survey. Fifteen percent of the membership returned the survey and answered yes, they were interested in the cooperative building and operating a broadband network with the goal of providing broadband internet service to the entire membership.

One percent of the membership returned ballots with "No" marked, and one percent of the membership returned ballots with no mark at all.

"Because a large majority of membership has not expressed a present interest in the broadband project, Franklin will not be immediately pursuing a capital-intensive broadband project," Stockton said. "However, in its effort to meet the needs of all members, Franklin will continue to gather information and follow the progress of other cooperatives that are actively pursuing broadband projects and evaluate the feasibility and success rate of those projects."

Stockton encouraged members to check back to the cooperative's website, www.fecoop.com, for updates on the broadband issue.

Former Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, who organized the Franklin County Broadband Task Force several years ago, previously called on officials from Franklin Electric Cooperative to follow the lead of Tombigbee Electric Cooperative in Hamilton in moving forward to set up the infrastructure needed to bring broadband internet for its membership.

Steve Foshee, CEO of Tombigbee, said earlier this year his cooperative is willing to work with Franklin Electric, or any other Franklin County entity, to bring broadband internet here.

FreedomFiber, a subsidiary of Tombigbee Electric Cooperative, provides high-performance fiber optic internet services across northwest Alabama, including affordable broadband internet at a monthly residential cost of \$49.95 for 100 Mbps.

FreedomFiber is completing the process of lighting up the cities of Hamilton, Winfield, Guin, Brilliant and Beaverton, with plans to expand into the rest of Marion and Lamar counties, the City of Haleyville and portions of Fayette County over the next few years.

While Morrow expressed frustration in past

years with Franklin Electric officials not acting on the need for high-speed internet services to its rural customers, Foshee said that in order to financially survive, the service would have to be offered to subscribers beyond the Franklin Electric Cooperative membership.

"In my judgment, it can not be done in Franklin County without a significant investment of utilities. Yes, we are willing to sit down with them and say what can be done here and how it can be done," Foshee said in an April 2019 interview with the *Franklin Free Press*. "Distributing electricity is complex, and distributing high-speed broadband is complex. It's also capital-intensive.

"So how do you reduce the cost and do this in a rural area in a cost-effective manner? If you own the poles, you have a significant advantage. The most important aspect is, electrical cooperatives are non-profit. If you do rural Franklin County, there's no money in this. The only reason to move forward is to help the community. But you can build it and make it affordable because of that non-profit status."

"Because a large majority of membership has not expressed a present interest in the broadband project, Franklin will not be immediately pursuing a capital-intensive broadband project," Stockton said. "However, in its effort to meet the needs of all members, Franklin will continue to gather information and follow the progress of other cooperatives that are actively pursuing broadband projects and evaluate the feasibility and success rate of those projects."

While the City of Red Bay is serviced by Franklin Electric, Russellville and the towns of Phil Campbell, Vina and Hodges are not. Russellville has the Russellville Electric Board, and the other communities are lit up by Alabama Power.

High-speed internet allows communities to improve quality-of-life issues like education and improved access to health care and expansion of economic development, Foshee said.

Members of the Franklin County Broadband Task Force have previously called on utilities to take the lead on establishing infrastructure for high-speed broadband, but the low response to the survey from Franklin Electric members sends a mixed message as to how big a concern broad-

band actually is to its members.

Of 22 electrical cooperatives in Alabama, two have operational broadband projects, and three more are in the early stages of development, Stockton said. Franklin Electric remains in the 'information-gathering' stage.

Stockton said that if Franklin Electric were to pursue broadband for its members, there would be a need for additional employees to do so.

"Because we are considerably smaller than most coops in the state, both in miles of primary line and number of meters, and also fewer employees, we would not be able to provide broadband with only our current employees," Stockton said.

The National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative subsidiary Pulse Broadband has stated for an above-ground buildout using existing poles, the cost would be from \$13,000 to \$17,000 per mile. Stockton said another Alabama coop recently received an estimate of \$20,000-\$25,000 per mile.

"Franklin Electric Cooperative's service area presents unique challenges to the financial feasibility of a broadband project, in so far that its only municipal area, Red Bay, is already served by a would-be competitor in the broadband space," Stockton said.

Stockton said there are some grant opportunities available, but there is competition for these funds and qualifying for the grants can be difficult.

"In the present environment, grants alone will not fund a project, and thus millions in loans must be secured," Stockton said. "We must approach any cost-intensive project with great caution."

The next step for Franklin Electric's Board of Directors is to secure a feasibility study that will provide more detailed information on what thresholds are needed in customer take rate and price, as well as the buildout cost Franklin Electric would face in pursuing the project.

There is also an issue related to Franklin Electric's line density and whether it would support such a project, Stockton said.

"Franklin Electric's first calling is to continue to provide safe, reliable power at reasonable cost, but we acknowledge the cooperative way of serving the underserved, and we intend to carefully and thoroughly consider the broadband issue," Stockton said.



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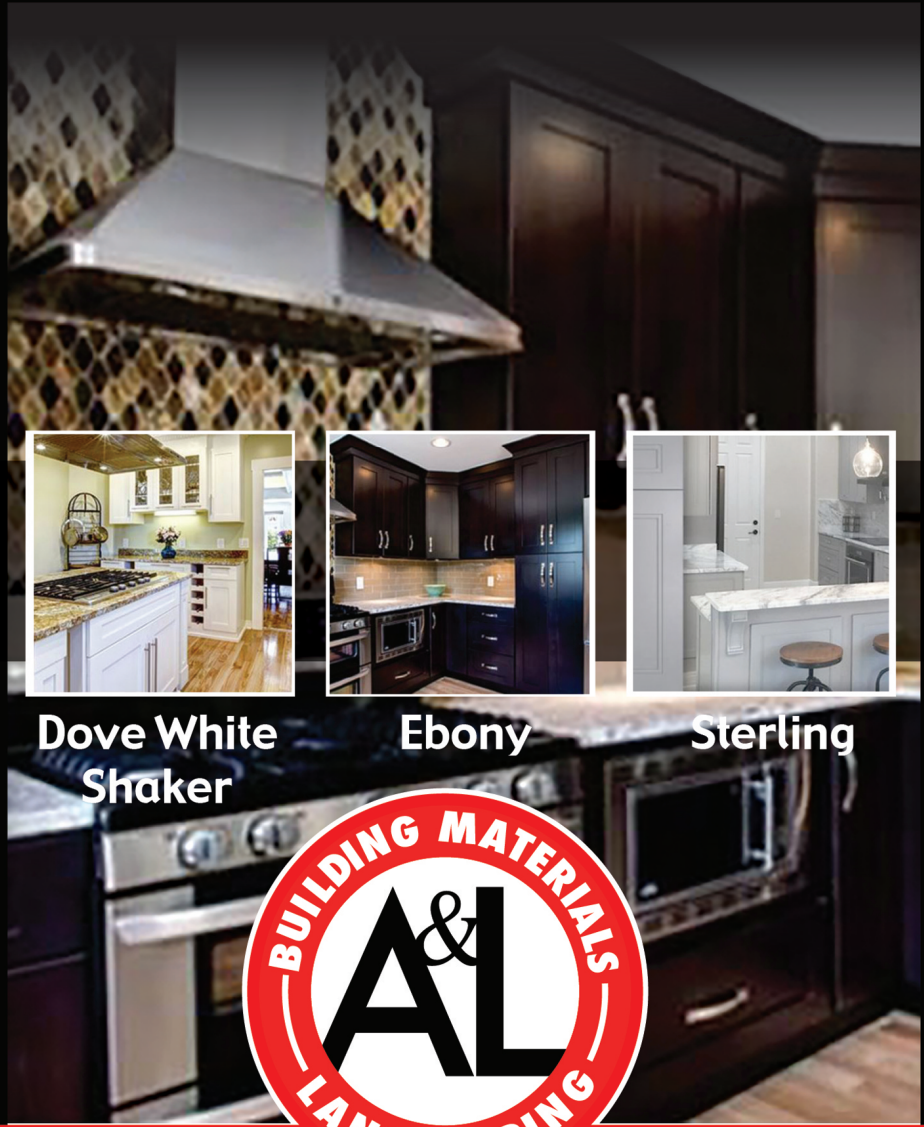
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Week 13 in the SEC

Last week's record: 4-0
Year-to-date record: 40-8
This week's games:
Texas A&M at Georgia (-13) –
2:30 on CBS



Mike Self
Sports Editor

The Bulldogs clinched the SEC East last week at Auburn, and a home win over Texas A&M would keep them right in the thick of the playoff hunt. Incidentally, this will be the first meeting between these two teams since the Aggies joined the SEC.

Georgia's defense allowed Auburn to go on a couple of fourth-quarter scoring drives but was otherwise dominant again last week. The Bulldogs have now held four SEC opponents to less than 4.0 yards per play [Auburn finished at 3.83] and lead the league in that category on the season. They're also first—by a lot—in total defense, scoring defense and rushing defense.

A&M has been on a roll offensively during its four-game win streak, but Kellen Mond and company will have their work cut out for them in Athens. Also, the Aggies are not the shut-down unit against the run that they were a year ago, so Georgia will be looking to get its ground game back on track after three straight sub-par outings.

The Pick: Georgia 30 Texas A&M 17
UT Martin at Kentucky – 2:30 on SECN

It's unofficially FCS Week on the SEC schedule, so finding a fourth game to handicap was a challenge. We'll go with this one, which should make Kentucky bowl-eligible for the fourth consecutive season. The Wildcats haven't gone to four straight bowls since Rich Brooks was the head coach.

The Pick: Kentucky 34 UT-Martin 13
Arkansas at LSU (-44) – 6:00 on ESPN

Arkansas has traditionally given LSU some trouble when they shouldn't, but this is Worst vs. Best in the SEC—as the mammoth point spread would indicate. The name of the game for LSU is two-fold. First and foremost, stay healthy. Secondly, get some confidence back on the defensive side of the ball after surrendering 78 combined points to Alabama and Ole Miss.

Heisman favorite Joe Burrow actually threw a couple of picks last week in Oxford, but he also threw for five touchdowns and a season-high 489 yards while completing at least 76 percent of his attempts for a fifth straight week.

The Pick: LSU 48 Arkansas 10
Tennessee at Missouri (-5) – 6:30 on SECN

These two teams are headed in completely opposite directions. Tennessee has won three straight and four out of five to dig its way out of a disastrous 1-4 start. Missouri, meanwhile, has dropped four straight on the heels of a 5-1 start, scoring a total of 27 points in the process.

The Tigers have beaten Tennessee by the exact same lop-sided score (50-17) each of the past two years, and the last time the Vols won this game—in 2016—they put up 63 points. This one should be much more low-scoring. We'll take the Vols, who are rested (off the bye) and rolling.

The Pick: Tennessee 24 Missouri 21

Long time coming



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

GROUND AND POUND - Humphres (17) ran for a pair of first-half touchdowns (his 14th and 15th of the season), and Red Bay rushed for 250 yards on its way to a resounding 43-6 win.

Red Bay hadn't been to the state quarterfinals in 12 years, but the Tigers put an emphatic end to that drought with a second-round spanking of Sulligent. The reigning state champs are up next.

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - Cam McKinney understands the significance of what he and his Red Bay teammates accomplished last Friday night at Fred Bostick Memorial Stadium, earning the program's first quarterfinal berth since 2007 with a 43-6 shellacking of Sulligent in the second round of the Class 2A playoffs.

He also understands what it took to get there. "It means a lot," said McKinney, a junior linebacker whose team-leading 10 tackles on Friday included a key stop on fourth-and-one on Sulligent's opening drive of the second half. "This team put in a lot of hard work over this past offseason—especially the seniors. We have a good group of seniors that have led us juniors really well. It's special. Over the years, I've played with a bunch of great groups of seniors, and to be able to go further than what they did is really special."

Receiver Arden Hamilton, a member of this

year's senior class, knows just how much last Friday's win—the Tigers' 12th of the season, the first time they've hit that mark since they finished 13-1 in '07—means to a program and a community that have high standards for success on the football field.

"Four thousand three hundred and eighty days," said Jackson, whose team out-gained Sulligent 390 total yards to 136 and will travel Friday to take on reigning state champion Fyffe in a battle of unbeaten. "It's been twelve years since we've been to the third round. That was one of our goals—win the region, go undefeated, get to the third round and be one of the last teams playing."

"It means a lot," said Hamilton, who caught four passes for 66 yards on Friday and is now just one big game away from reaching the 1,000-yard mark on the season—after not playing football at all the previous two years. "Most people didn't think we were gonna do too good this year. Then we had a



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Hot start helps Bulldogs cruise past Wildcats

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

BELGREEN - Belgreen's boys rode a dominant first quarter to their second win of the season last Thursday night, cruising past county rival Tharptown 67-40.

Sophomore guard Collin Bonner came out hot, scoring seven points in the opening two minutes to set the stage for a hot first quarter that saw the Bulldogs (2-0) shoot 9-for-14 from the field and 4-for-4 from the line on their way to building a 25-10 lead.

"He just finds a way to get open by himself," Belgreen coach Marty Cooper said of Bonner, who out-scored the Wildcats 11-10 by himself in the first quarter and finished the night with 13 points. "He finds a way to do it. He's got a knack for getting around people. He's got good body control, and he's a good finisher."

The Bulldogs largely struggled on the offensive end after their hot start, shooting just 28 percent (15-for-54) from the floor over the final three quarters. But they dominated the boards (out-rebounding Tharptown 40-24), forced 26 turnovers and finished plus-18 points from beyond the arc (knocking down nine threes to just three for the

Wildcats).

"I don't care what level of coaching you're on, it's hard to maintain that intensity once you get a lead," said Cooper, who is in his first year at Belgreen after spending 21 seasons coaching junior college basketball in Mississippi. "There were spots where we got back and did what we were supposed to do. Early in the game, when we got a big lead, I really liked our ball movement. I thought that was good. But it's still early in the year. There are a lot of things we need to improve.

"I didn't like our defense, especially our half-court defense. I thought we got broken down off the dribble too much. We started out pressing because we felt like they would have trouble with that, and we sort of got lulled into going for steals. Then when we got out of the press, we continued to do that in the half-court, going for steals instead of guarding them."

On the bright side, the Bulldogs did come up with 16 steals. Nine of those came from sophomore point guard Will Bonner, who also stuffed the stat sheet with five assists, four rebounds and a game-high 21 points on 7-for-14 shooting.

Belgreen got four threes from Bonner and three from junior guard Scout Bragwell, who shot 5-for-10 from the field and 4-for-4 from the line on his

way to scoring a season-high 17 points.

With just two games in the books, Will Bonner has already hit six threes—just one less than he made all of last season while starting for Russellville as a freshman. Bragwell has also hit six threes in two games, putting him on pace to surpass his total of 66 made threes from last season. [He shot 49.6 percent from beyond the arc, a figure that would rank second-best for a single season in AHSAA history had he not fallen just short of the minimum 150 attempts to qualify for the record book.]

"Will is such a good penetrator," Cooper said. "[Tharptown] stayed back and tried to cut that off. We've gotta make some shots, and we did that tonight. Will has really improved his outside shooting, and, of course, Scout, you can't leave him open. I would say we're gonna see the lane clogged up a lot this year."

Down 15 at the end of one quarter, the Wildcats (0-1 through Sunday) clawed back to within 11 at 27-16 on a basket by Luis Valdez. Will Bonner answered with a three and then a layup off a steal to push the lead to 32-16.

Winston Nolen buried a three to cut the lead back to 13, but then Belgreen closed the half on an 8-0 run. Senior forward David Plott started the spurt with a bucket, and then Bragwell and Will Bonner nailed back-to-back threes to send the Bulldogs into the locker room with a 40-19 lead.

The margin swelled to as many as 28 early in the second half before Tharptown whittled it back down to 17 on a pair of free throws by Nolen with 36 seconds left in the third quarter. Will Bonner answered with his fourth and final three of the night to make it 54-34, and Belgreen never looked back.

Bragwell had three rebounds and three steals to go along with his 17 points, and Collin Bonner pulled down nine boards. Junior post player Isaac Willingham also had nine rebounds to go along with his two points.

Plott scored seven points, and Will Donahoe added four points and six boards off the bench. Senior Bryant Hubbert chipped in with three points and five rebounds.

"We've only got nine guys dressing out," Cooper said, "and all of them can help us. We got to play a lot of people tonight, and that's always good. We're gonna need those four guys who don't start to come along and help us."

The Bulldogs will need that depth soon, too, with back-to-back-to-back games against Winfield (at home), Hackleburg (on the road) and Deshler (at home) looming this Thursday, Friday and



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

SCOUT'S HONOR - Bragwell (4) scored a season-high 17 points last Thursday night as Belgreen improved to 2-0 with a 67-40 rout of Tharptown.

See 'CRUISE,' page 15

Bragwell, Belgreen girls pull away from Tharptown

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

BELGREEN - Belgreen got a career-high 29 points from senior guard Autumn Bragwell and a double-double from junior post player Emma Dempsey last Thursday night, pulling away from county rival Tharptown for a 64-48 win.

The Lady Bulldogs came out hot, shooting 62 percent (8-for-13) from the floor in the first quarter, but they still found themselves trailing by one at 30-29 after Tharptown sophomore Gracie Montgomery knocked down her third three-pointer of the night with 4:30 left in the first half.

Belgreen turned up its defensive pressure at that point and held the Lady Wildcats (0-1 through Sunday) scoreless for the next four minutes, going on a 10-0 run to take a 39-30 lead.

"My group is very athletic. We're a very athletic 1A basketball team," said Belgreen coach Chad Green, whose team forced four Tharptown turnovers during that late first-half run and 20 on the night. "We can get out and half-court trap a little bit and full-court press. We're still not where I want us to be with our half-court man-to-man defense, but it's early in the season.

"I thought Tharptown did a great job offensively in that first half. We gave up a lot of basket cuts, and we let them get where they wanted to be with the basketball. Also, hats off to Gracie Montgomery. She did an outstanding job stepping out and hitting shots. I think she hit three [threes] in the first half. That was big for them."

Bragwell was even hotter on the other end for the Lady Bulldogs, knocking down her first six shot attempts of the night and scoring 21 first-half points on 8-for-9 shooting from the floor (including 4-for-5 from beyond the arc). The senior guard scored Belgreen's first eight points of the game and later capped off that 10-0 run late in the first half with her fourth three of the night.

"Autumn had a good game for us offensively," Green said. "My girls have been working hard, putting in the hours. Her and Gracie [Dempsey] and Katie [Dempsey] have been coming to the gym a lot. They shoot a hundred threes a day, plus free throws, plus jump shots—and that's not even including practice. That's outside of practice. Kaley Chandler, too. She comes off the bench



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Belgreen's Autumn Bragwell goes for the steal against Tharptown's Autumn Montgomery as Jaiden Gaston (34), Ansley Tate (33) and Emma Dempsey (in back) look on.

for us, and she's been doing the same thing.

"You know how it is. If you want to get better, you've gotta work hard. And a lot of times you've gotta work hard on your own."

Senior post player Ansley Tate beat the first-half buzzer with a basket off a

See 'BRAGWELL,' page 16

'CRUISE,' from page 14

Saturday.

"That's why our bench is so important," Cooper said after last week's win. "With three games in three days, all nine people have gotta contribute. What I want to see from now until next Thursday is all nine people improving so we can put together a rotation and not wear out Will and Collin and some of those guys with so many minutes."

The Bulldogs finished Thursday night shooting just 35 percent from the field, but their plus-16 edge on the boards and plus-14 edge in turnovers forced allowed them to generate 26 more shot attempts (68) than the Wildcats, who shot 38 percent (16-for-42). Belgreen was 10-for-15 at the foul line, compared to 5-for-12 by Tharptown.

Nolen led the Wildcats with 10 points and also grabbed six rebounds. Colton Simmons had nine points and five boards, and Valdez scored seven. Big man Tyler Amos added six points and nine rebounds, and Edwin Garcia also scored six points. Edward Lopez had two.

Tharptown was scheduled to return to action Monday at Brilliant before opening its home schedule on Tuesday against Colbert Heights.

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Autumn Bragwell Senior Guard, Belgreen

Bragwell put up a pair of big games for the Lady Bulldogs last week, totaling 57 points in wins over Tharptown and Marion County. The 5'6 sharpshooter knocked down four threes and went 5-for-6 from the foul line Thursday, scoring a career-high 29 points in a 64-48 win over the Lady Wildcats. Then on Saturday at the Vina Invitational, Bragwell burned the Lady Raiders for 28 points, hitting five threes and going 7-for-8 from the line in a 55-26 rout.

Bragwell is now averaging 21.0 points per game for the 3-0 Lady Bulldogs.



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Lady Devils win two of three at Vina Invitational

Staff reports

Vina's girls won two of three games at the Vina Invitational on Saturday, rolling past Shoals Christian and Waterloo before coming up just short in a 45-44 loss to Marion County.

The Lady Red Devils (3-1) got six early points from Rayleigh Guin and four from Abbie Petree, jumping out to an 18-14 lead over Marion County at the end of one quarter. The Lady Raiders pulled even at 25-25 by halftime and then out-scored Vina 20-19 in the second half to pull out a win.

Sophomore post player Sara Scott led the Lady Devils with 15 points and also grabbed seven rebounds. Guin, another sophomore, scored 11 of her 13 points in the first half and also finished with six assists. Senior Kaitlyn King hit a pair of threes in the fourth quarter and finished with six points and three assists.

Petree had four points, and Kaitlyn Athey scored three. Sarah Johnson had 10 rebounds and three assists to go along with her three points.

Cara Sullivan led Marion County with 20 points.

In previous action at the Vina Invitational:

Vina 51 Waterloo 35

Kaitlyn Athey scored a career-high 16 points to lead the Lady Red Devils past Waterloo in their second game on Saturday.

Athey knocked down three threes and shot 5-for-6 at the foul line, adding five steals. Sarah Johnson hit a pair of threes and finished with 13 points, five rebounds, two assists, two steals and two blocks.

Rayleigh Guin chipped in with nine points, six



Sarah Johnson had 13 points for Vina in a 51-35 win over Waterloo on Saturday.

assists, four steals and three boards. Sara Scott had five points and six rebounds, and Kaitlyn King added three points. Hailey Cantrell scored two.

Leading 13-9 at the end of one quarter, Vina got six points from Johnson and five from Athey in the second quarter to out-score Waterloo 19-12 and take a 32-21 lead into the locker room.

Vina 53 Shoals Christian 22

Rayleigh Guin scored 11 of her season-high 19 points in a big second quarter by Vina, helping the Lady Red Devils pull away early in their opening game on Saturday morning.

Senior guard Kaitlyn King got off to a hot start,

hitting a pair of threes and scoring 10 first-quarter points to help stake Vina to an early 14-6 lead. Guin then got rolling in the second quarter, going 7-for-8 from the foul line as the Lady Red Devils out-scored Shoals Christian 19-4 to take a 33-10 lead into the break.

Guin finished 9-for-10 from the line and also had seven assists and six steals to go along with her 19 points. King made three threes and finished with 15 points, five boards and three assists. Kaitlyn Athey added nine points, seven of which came in the fourth quarter.

Sara Scott finished with five points, and Sarah Johnson chipped in with two points, four rebounds and two steals. Hailey Cantrell had two points and five boards, and Lexi Collum scored one point.

Belgreen 55 Marion County 28

Autumn Bragwell scored 28 points for the Lady Bulldogs, who pitched a second-quarter shutout on their way to improving to 3-0 with Saturday's rout.

Belgreen got six points from Bragwell and four from Ansley Tate in the first quarter, building a 14-11 lead. The Lady Bulldogs then out-scored Marion County 12-0 in the second quarter, with Bragwell accounting for 10 of those 12 points.

The senior guard finished the game with five threes and shot 7-for-8 from the line, falling just one point shy of matching her career-high of 29 points set just two days prior in a win over Tharptown.

Tate finished with 12 points, and Emma Dempsey, Gracie Dempsey and Katie Dempsey had four apiece. Kaley Chandler scored three.

'BRAGWELL,' from page 15

from the floor overall in the first three quarters before stumbling to a 1-for-12 showing in the fourth with the game already well in hand. "Our post players carried us that night. They scored close to 50 points out of our 65. Tonight our guards got more involved with it. I guess we shot the ball better tonight than the first game, but we were still sloppy at times and we didn't finish real well. We got a little sloppy at the end. We've got a lot of improvement to make on the defensive end and also when it comes to passing the ball, feeding the ball. But that comes along with work."

The Lady Bulldogs finished the night shooting 44 percent (23-for-52) from the field, compared to 35 percent (20-for-57) by Tharptown. After going 8-for-15 from the floor in the first quarter, the Lady Wildcats cooled off and shot just 29 percent (12-for-42) the rest of the night. They finished just 3-for-10 from the foul line, compared to 13-for-18 by Belgreen. The Lady Bulldogs also held a 36-28 edge on the boards.

Bragwell finished the game 10-for-16 from the field and 5-for-6 from the line, surpassing her previous career-high of 27 points set last December 3 in a rout of Brilliant. She also pulled down four rebounds on Thursday and had four steals. Emma Dempsey had three blocks and two assists to go along with her double-double. Chandler hit a first-quarter three and finished with three points. Katie Dempsey had two points and seven rebounds, and Noelle Willingham also scored two.

Just two games into the season, Belgreen has already had three different players put up a 20-plus-point night.

"That's the thing about our team—we're so unselfish," Green said. "I said that at the beginning of the season. We're unselfish. We don't care who scores. Gracie could go off for 20, and then she could go ten games and have ten or twelve assists and only score six or eight points a game. It doesn't matter to her. And the whole team is like that."

Belgreen is scheduled to play back-to-back-to-back games this Thursday, Friday and Saturday against Winfield (home), Hackleburg (away) and Deshler (home).

Montgomery made four threes and finished with 20 points last Thursday night to lead Tharptown. Reserve post player Jaiden Gaston came off the bench to score eight points and grab seven rebounds. Senior guard Shaylee Wieting also had eight points, adding four boards and four steals.

Adriana Borden finished with six points and five rebounds. Brooke Daily had two points and five boards, and Aly Vandiver and Autumn Montgomery also scored two apiece.

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Four RHS softball players sign JUCO offers

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - On the top floor of the Russellville athletic field house last Thursday afternoon, the athletic and academic careers of four RHS softball players were extended for at least two more years.

Alivia Clemmons, Madison Murray and Krista Sikes all signed on to continue their careers at Calhoun Community College. Teammate A.J. Taylor signed on to play with Shelton State once her career with the Lady Golden Tigers comes to a close next semester.

For the four teammates and close friends, it's the culmination of the hard work, sweat and tears that have been poured into the diamond for years. However, the fact that they were all able to sign alongside one another was something that they hadn't envisioned happening.

"It's really been a goal of all of ours to be able to sign and go play in college, and it's something that we've all been working towards for a while," said Taylor, an outfielder who earned All-State honors in 2018 as a sophomore after batting .406 with five home runs and 25 stolen bases and then hit .301 last season as a junior. "It really just made it that much more memorable for us to be able to sign together. We always thought that we would be able to do it, but now it's official and we've finally been able to do it."

On a more personal level, for this day to become a reality is something that Sikes has known was in the works for years.

"This is something that I've worked hard for ever since I was little," said Sikes, who has racked up 14 wins and 130 strikeouts while throwing 158.2

innings for Russellville over the past two seasons. "I remember talking with my dad when we would practice my pitching, and he would always ask me who I would invite to my signing day. To think that this day has finally happened, it's crazy. It's finally real."

"It's really been a goal of all of ours to be able to sign and go play in college, and it's something that we've all been working towards for a while," Taylor said. "It really just made it that much more memorable for us to be able to sign together. We always thought that we would be able to do it, but now it's official."

While the idea of four teammates going on to further their careers on the diamond as well as inside the classroom is exciting, there is one other element that makes these signings just a bit more intriguing. Not only will the ladies be facing tougher competition once they reach the collegiate level, but they will also have to face one another down the road. Both Shelton State and Calhoun play one another in softball on a fairly consistent basis, therefore leading to old teammates becoming opponents on the same field during their college careers.

"I still love A.J. regardless of where we go or whatever happens. We've played against one another on travel ball teams before," said Clemmons, who has played outfield and second base over the past two seasons while batting .368 with a total of 10 home runs, 61 RBIs and 85 runs scored. "Nothing changes, but it will be different once we get to college and have to square off against each other. We're all competitive, and I

See 'SOFTBALL,' page 18



PHOTOS BY KYLE GLASGOW

Taylor (above) was an All-State selection in 2018 as a sophomore. Clemmons (directly below) has batted .368 over the previous two seasons with 10 home runs.



PHOTOS BY KYLE GLASGOW

Sikes (above) has racked up 14 wins and 130 strikeouts in the circle over the past two years. Murray (near right) led the Lady Golden Tigers last season with a .362 batting average.





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Tennessee at Missouri	Tennessee	_____
Oregon at Arizona State	Oregon	_____
TCU at Oklahoma	Oklahoma	_____
Tiebreaker Score:	Penn State _____	Ohio State _____
Your Name:	_____	
Phone number:	_____	

‘SOFTBALL,’ from page 17

know we'll all carry that over into college."

Each of the teammates expressed their joy and relief to finally be able to check off one of their lifelong goals. However, they also reiterated that their time at RHS wasn't quite over yet and they have their sights set on bringing a state title back to the RHS softball program.

"We're going to state this year," Sikes said. "We're going. That's the one thing that's been on my mind. Everyone has always said that we were going to be so good when we were seniors, and here we are. It's our time, and we're going to make the most of it."

There is no doubt that each of the Russellville standouts have worked extremely hard to get where they are today, but it isn't lost on them either about how lucky they are to be able to continue playing the game that they love.

"I just like to think of all this as a great opportunity that God has given me to advance my career," said Murray, a shortstop who batted a team-best .362 last season with 11 extra-base hits, 29 runs scored and 21 stolen bases in 22 tries. "I've been playing pretty much my entire life, and I love playing the game. I understand that there's a lot of girls that don't have the chance to further their dream, and I don't want to take this opportunity for granted."

First-year head softball coach Josh Graham came into the new job with a great understanding of just how talented this team was, highlighted by these four seniors. Graham had spent the previous five years coaching at Lawrence County before he was hired to make the trip one county over to coach the Lady Golden Tigers, so he had the chance to watch this group of seniors develop their level of play on the field firsthand.

"This is a program that has steadily been rising over the past couple of years, and we've got a really exciting group. These girls are a good testament to that talent pool," Graham said. "It takes a lot of dedication to want to be a college athlete, and these girls have a ton of dedication. They've done a great job with that."

When asked if he would be paying close attention to the matchups between Shelton State and Calhoun over the next two years, Coach Graham couldn't help but smile.

"That'll be fun to go to those games and watch them and see just how they compete against one another," Graham said. "It'll be a fun series to watch whenever they get on the field against one another, and I'm looking forward to watching them."

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'LONG,' from page 13

couple of different guys come out, and we've done a lot more than I think most people thought we ever would."

Head coach Michael Jackson is also keenly aware of just how significant it is to reach the state quarterfinals. He certainly didn't need to be told how long it had been since Red Bay had been there.

"Four thousand three hundred and eighty days," said Jackson, whose team out-gained Sulligent 390 total yards to 136 and will now travel next Friday to take on reigning state champion Fyffe in a battle of unbeaten. "It's been twelve years since we've been to the third round. That was one of our goals—win the region, go undefeated, get to the third round and be one of the last teams playing. And that's where we're at right now. Great job by our guys. We know there's not many teams left. That's what we talked about—we'll be one of the few teams in this area playing next week. There are only four teams in 2A in the north that can still go play at Auburn [in the Super Seven], and we're one of them.

"We're gonna play a really good team next week. We're going over to Fyffe and play. We know they're the defending champions, we know how many games they've won, we know what they're all about. When you get to the third round, you're gonna play the best teams around. It's time to play the best."

The Tigers (12-0) certainly put their best foot forward on Friday night, dominating in all phases and quickly turning a game that was 16-0 at the break into a rout in the second half. Offensively, they hit a handful of timely big plays in the passing game while also gashing Sulligent (9-3) on the ground, and coordinator Jamie Purser's veteran defense forced three turnovers while holding the Blue Devils to just nine first downs.

"Very complete game," said Jackson, whose team extended its home win streak to 15 and improved to 31-5 at The Fred since he arrived as head coach in 2014. "I'm really pleased with how we played. The defense forced some turnovers, we hit some big passes and we had some big runs in there, too. This was probably the most complete game we've played all year, and it's a great time to do it."

McKinney certainly agreed with Jackson's assessment.

"Like Coach said, I think it's the most complete game we've played all year," said McKinney, who now has a career-high 114 total tackles on the season. "Early in the year, either the defense was on or the offense was on. Tonight, they both came together really well."

The Tigers two-platoon, meaning no one starts on both sides of the ball—an exceedingly rare trait at the 2A level, and a definite advantage.

"It means a lot that we've got eleven guys on both sides, offense and defense," said Hamilton, who now has a team-high 40 receptions on the season for 885 yards and seven touchdowns. "Nobody plays both ways. That helps us out."

It also helps them stay warm, even when the conditions on a mid-November night most assuredly are not. Standing among teammates, coaches and fans in the post-game throng, McKinney just grinned and shook his head when a sportswriter ask him if he was cold.

"I stayed by the heater when I came out," he said. "I'm good."

Red Bay's defense has been good—if not great—all season long, shutting out three opponents and holding six others to 14 points or less. That D provided a spark early in Friday's game

when senior defensive back Kaleb Bragwell climbed the ladder to pick off a deep ball by Sulligent at the Tiger 38.

Two plays later, on third-and-five from the 43, a bone-jarring lead block by junior tailback Hunter King (who would rush for 106 yards on the night) paved the way for a 46-yard run by junior quarterback Jalen Vinson all the way down to the Sulligent 11. Three plays later, on third-and-six from the seven, senior back Colyn Humphres scored his 14th rushing touchdown of the season. Humphres added the two-point conversion run, and the Tigers led 8-0 with 3:02 left in the first quarter.

An exchange of punts set up the Blue Devils with excellent field position at the Red Bay 26, but the Tiger defense held fast. Junior end Logan Scott—who would exit the game a couple of plays later with an ankle injury and not return—dropped Neil Strickland for a loss of four on second-and-seven, and Sulligent ultimately turned the ball over on downs.

"We're going over there to win the game," Jackson said of this week's quarterfinal matchup with Fyffe, which has won 54 of its last 55 games. "We're going over there to fight. It comes down to momentum things in these games. You're gonna have to make some plays you haven't made all year to beat a team like that."

The Blue Devils began their next drive just shy of midfield and drove to the Red Bay 19 before back-to-back sacks by sophomore tackle Levi Blanton and junior end Alex Kennedy forced another turnover on downs.

"I thought our defense played well. They always play well," said Jackson, whose team held Sulligent to 113 rushing yards on 34 carries. "We're hard to run on. We've been hard to run on all year long. Our guys have made plays all year long. Tonight it was another complete effort by the whole defense. We had some guys step up tonight who came in to play when some other guys had to come out. Those guys who came in stepped up and played well."

Red Bay's defense has now allowed just 13 points total in two playoff games thus far and gives up an average of 10.7 points per game on the year.

"This group of guys has been together the last three or four years," said McKinney, who has started at inside linebacker since his freshman season and now has more than 300 tackles in his varsity career. "We had a rough year our freshman year, when we went 5-5, but we've all gotten better together."

Taking possession at their own 26 following the back-to-back sacks by Blanton and Kennedy, the Tigers drove 74 yards in 11 plays to find the end zone again. Vinson opened the drive with a 15-yard completion to Humphres and later connected with junior receiver Mason Holt on a picture-perfect out-and-up for a gain of 20 on third-and-11.

Humphres eventually capped off the drive with his second rushing touchdown of the night and 15th of the season, a seven-yarder with 37 seconds left in the half. He once again ran in the two-point conversion, and an interception by sophomore defensive back Elijah Luster sent Red Bay into the locker room with a 16-0 lead.

The Tigers kept it rolling after the break, scoring touchdowns on their first four second-half possessions. The defense made another big play first, however, when McKinney and freshman lineman Braden Parker combined to bring down Strickland for no gain on fourth-and-one at the Tiger 44.

Red Bay went right to work on offense, getting a 15-yard run from Vinson, a seven-yard run from King and a 33-yard completion to Hamilton down to the one-yard line. Vinson scored on a sneak on the next play and then found Kennedy with the two-point pass, stretching the lead to 24-0 with 7:49 left in the third quarter.

Kennedy recovered a Blue Devil fumble to give the ball right back to the offense, and King broke loose for gains of 17 and 28 yards to help set up another one-yard touchdown run by Vinson. The try for two was no good, but Red Bay still led 30-0 with 3:55 left in the third.

Senior rover Jake Pounds recovered the ensuing squib kick for the Tigers, and then Vinson hit Holt for a gain of 20 down to the Sulligent 14. Vinson scored his third rushing touchdown of the night (and 14th of the season) three plays later from nine yards out, pushing the lead to 36-0 with 1:59 left in the third.

Parker and Blanton pressured the Blue Devils into an intentional grounding penalty on their next possession, and Red Bay put together one final scoring drive. Vinson hooked up with Holt for 19 yards and Hamilton for 15 on third-and-10, and freshman back Blake Nix capped off the drive with a two-yard touchdown run. King kicked the extra point to make it 43-0 with 8:22 left in the game.

The Blue Devils then drove 54 yards in nine plays against the Tigers' second-team defense for their only touchdown of the night.

Vinson threw for 140 yards on 8-for-14 passing while also rushing 16 times for 90 yards and three scores. King ran for 106 yards on 16 carries and is now just four yards shy of 1,000 on the season. Humphres rushed eight times for 24 yards and two touchdowns, and Holt had three catches for 59 yards.

Red Bay ran for 250 yards as a team on 45 attempts.

The Tigers now turn their full attention to Fyffe, which blasted a 10-1 Ranburne team 38-7 on Friday night to improve to 12-0. The Red Devils have been a machine all season, recording an astounding eight shutouts and out-scoring their opponents by a combined margin of 517 points to 30.

Fyffe has won 27 consecutive games and 54 of its last 55 since the start of the 2016 season, with the only loss coming to Sulligent in the 2017 quarterfinals. The Red Devils went 15-0 in 2016 and 2018, winning state titles both years.

"Anybody you play right now, they're gonna be good," said Jackson, who is now 54-14 as Red Bay's head coach, including a 4-4 mark in the playoffs. "Fyffe is no exception. They've run over everybody this whole year. We've gotta go over there and make some big plays and take care of the football. You've gotta play your best game to beat the best team. They're the defending state champs for a reason.

"We're going over there to win the game. We're going over there to fight. It comes down to momentum things in these games. You're gonna have to make some plays you haven't made all year to beat a team like that."

Asked what it would take to knock off the champs, McKinney didn't mince words.

"Everything," he said. "We're all gonna have to play a complete game. The defense is gonna have to keep stepping up, and the offense is gonna have to make plays."

Hamilton was also asked what it would take to hand Fyffe just its second loss in four years.

"I'm not sure," he admitted. "We'll do whatever it takes."

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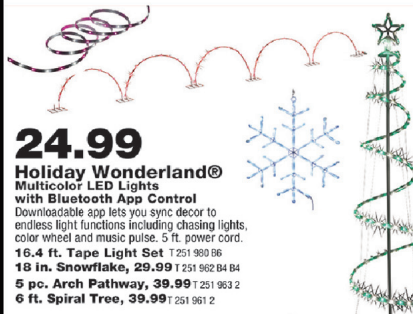
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99.99
Bosch®
2-pc., 12V Lithium-Ion Combo Kit R 240 375 1



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Diablo®
5 pc. Reciprocating Blade Set includes FREE Blades R 256 160 5



24.99
Holiday Wonderland®
Multicolor LED Lights with Bluetooth App Control
Downloadable app lets you sync decor to endless light functions including chasing lights, color wheel and music pulse. 5 ft. power cord.
16.4 ft. Tape Light Set T 251 990 B6
18 in. Snowflake, 29.99 T 251 962 B4 B4
5 pc. Arch Pathway, 39.99 T 251 963 2
6 ft. Spiral Tree, 39.99 T 251 961 2



\$239
7.5 ft. Quick-Set Smart Fir Tree
Compatible with Amazon Alexa, which has nine different voice commands for a hands-free control experience. Functions include warm white, multi, color change, blink, and fade. Amazon Alexa not included. T 252 609 1



17.99 YOUR CHOICE
Holiday Wonderland®
13 ft. Neon Flex Rope Light
Double-sided neon flex. Includes mounting clips. Choose blue, red, white or green. T 238 851, 852, 853, 854 B12



29.99 YOUR CHOICE
Holiday Wonderland®
18 in. Double Bell Window Decor
Red and gold double-sided neon flex. T 251 966 B4
8 in. Snowflake Window Decor
White double-sided neon flex. T 251 969 B4



99.99
Holiday Wonderland®
6 ft. Neon Flex Spiral Tree
Thousands of color combinations with cool white star tree top. Includes remote control, metal base and stakes. For indoor or outdoor use. T 238 968 2



79.99
Kalorik®
10 qt. Digital Air Fryer Oven
Digital control with LED touch screen panel. 13 menu presets, time and temperature 75° to 400°. Includes rotisserie spit with handle, 2 toasting racks. W 256 852 1



79.99
Smoke Hollow®
30 in. LP Smoker
Auto ignition. Includes 3 cooking racks, adjustable stainless steel burner and temperature indicator. T 257 099 1



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American Kennel Club®
36 in. Square Extra Dense Jumbo Pet Bed
Tufted top. Non-skid bottom. Assorted colors. H 230 743 B6
XL Dense Cuddler Pet Bed
Orthopedic base supports growing bones and aching joints. H 255 442 B6

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4.97 YOUR CHOICE
Amaryllis Bulb Kit
Assorted bulbs include Apple Blossom, Minerva, Paper White and Red Lion.



84.99 YOUR CHOICE
Gemmy®
12 ft. Self-Inflatable Santa or Snowman
Just plug in and stake down. Self-inflates in seconds. Includes stakes and tethers. T 222 417, 239 036 2

20% OFF ALL INFLATABLES



94.99
Gemmy®
Self-Inflatable Olaf & Sven
Just plug in and stake down. Self-inflates in seconds. Includes stakes and tethers. T 251 650 2

SAVE ON HOLIDAY ESSENTIALS



9.99 YOUR CHOICE
Holiday Wonderland®
100 ct. Starry Micro LED String Light Set
16.5 ft. lighted length. Choose steady or twinkle. Connect up to 30 sets. Available in warm white, multicolor or pure white. T 251 497, 498, 499, 503, 504, 508 B12



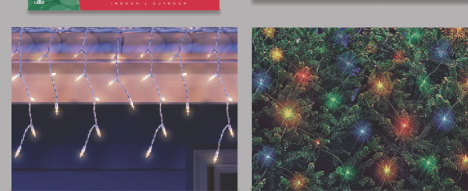
30
STEADY COMPACT LED Starry Lights Multi Color
100 LED LIGHTS



300
Icicle-Style Lights
450 LED LIGHTS



150
6-foot x 4-foot Net-Style Lights
300 LED LIGHTS



9.99 YOUR CHOICE
Holiday Wonderland®
5 pc. Seasoned Cast-Iron Set
Includes 10 1/2-in. griddle, 8-in. skillet, 10 1/4-in. skillet, 5-qt. Dutch oven and skillet/oven cover. W 233 972 1



\$229
Hover-1™
Self Powered Folding Electric Scooter
13.6 MPH top speed. 264 lb. max. load. Rechargeable battery. LED headlight. Foot brake. Weighs 20 lbs. W 258 358 1



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Brews quickly with sneak-a-cup technology. Washable brew basket. W 254 915 B2



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Black & Decker®
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Lodge®
5 pc. Seasoned Cast-Iron Set
Includes 10 1/2-in. griddle, 8-in. skillet, 10 1/4-in. skillet, 5-qt. Dutch oven and skillet/oven cover. W 233 972 1



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Pyrex®
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Microwave and dishwasher safe. Stain and odor-resistant. W 256 760 2



\$249
Oklahoma Joe's®
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630-sq.-in. cooking surface. 2 porcelain-coated cooking grates. T 245 965 1
Barrel Drum Smoker Cover, 29.99 T 245 966 B4

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Holiday Bright Lights®
140 ct. LED Bush Light
Warm white lights. Each brown wire frame branch can be bent to desired shape. 36 in. high. Other colors available. T 251 627 B6



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Holiday Wonderland®
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Approximately 20-ft. total length. Choose clear or multicolor. T 523 084, 407 426 B12
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4 x 6 ft. Choose clear or multicolor. T 392 019, 458 646 B6



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Choose Mesquite, Cherry, Apple, Hickory, Maple, Pecan, Alder or Oak. T 244 888, 142 377, 378, 156 309, 400, 401, 402, 169 951, 954 1



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Traeger®
Pro 575 Pellet Grill
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