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**11.27.19**

# RFD offers kitchen safety tips for Thanksgiving Day

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

While it's not easy to wolf down that third serving of turkey at the Thanksgiving dinner table, the real work on this holiday is done in the kitchen.

Millions of Americans will spend much of Thanksgiving Day cooking in kitchens. Millions of others will spend time there salivating and repeatedly asking when the turkey will be ready.

Either way, the kitchen is Thanksgiving's nerve center. And with so much traffic in this room, the Russellville Fire Department wants to promote awareness of some Thanksgiving safety tips.

RFD fire marshal Justin Green said safety in the kitchen is important every day, but particularly on a day when children and other family members are spending time there.

"The kitchen is the center of our homes, especially on

Thanksgiving Day," Green said. "With so many people in your home and so much activity, these are just some basic safety reminders to help keep everyone safe."

**"The kitchen is the center of our homes, especially on Thanksgiving Day," Green said. "With so many people in your home and so much activity, these are just some basic safety reminders to help keep everyone safe."**

Some of the kitchen safety tips include:

- Stay in the kitchen while cooking on the stove top to keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home while cooking turkey and check on it frequently.
- Keep kids away from hot food and liquids.
- Keep the kitchen floor clear so as not to fall over items.
- Make sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker or other appliances are not dangling off the counter in reach of children.

See 'SAFETY,' Page 9

# Many residents claim they did not receive broadband surveys

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After the *Free Press* published an article in its November 20 edition about the low response from Franklin Electric Cooperative members in returning a survey designed to gauge interest in high-speed broadband internet service, several residents contacted the *FFP* and said they did not receive the surveys in the mail.

Franklin Electric manager Mark Stockton said monthly invoices for the cooperative's 8,000 residential and business customers are prepared and sent by an outside vendor. Stockton said the vendor was directed to insert the survey with every member's bill.

"They were to be included with all power bills," Stockton

said. "We had two or three contact us and say they didn't get one. There's no way to know the exact number that didn't receive one, but we requested one to be included with every bill."

**"They were to be included with all power bills," Stockton said. "We had two or three contact us and say they didn't get one. There's no way to know the exact number that didn't receive one, but we requested one to be included with every bill."**

Eighty-three percent of Franklin Electric members did not return the survey. Fifteen percent of members returned it answering that they were interested in the cooperative undertaking broadband as a service to its

See 'SURVEYS,' Page 5

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**Frances Hazel Kimbrough**, Russellville, age 93  
Died Wednesday, November 20, 2019. Graveside services held at Knights of Pythias Cemetery. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.

**Marlon Joil McAlister, Jr.**, age 50  
Died Tuesday, November 19, 2019. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Chestnut Ridge Cemetery in Phil Campbell.



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

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# Tharptown parent questions selection process for school's Robotics program

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Since the program began three years ago, the Tharptown Elementary School Robotics Team has seen its share of success. But one parent, whose child was part of the first-year program, is questioning the selection method of students, and he's growing increasingly frustrated with what he calls a 'lack of answers' from school and system officials.

Tommy "Junior" Vinson, whose daughter is a second-grader at TES, said his child was on the 2017-18 and 2018-19 teams and never missed a practice or competition while maintaining an "A" average in school. But Vinson's daughter was not selected for the 2019-20 team by faculty sponsor Jake Ward, and Vinson is not satisfied with the answers he received about the Robotics team selection method from TES principal Dr. Karen Thorn.

**"You have a known entity with a straight-A student who never missed a practice in two years," Vinson said of his daughter, a second-grader at TES. "There's no reason for her not to be selected. And we found out she was not chosen this year because the Robotics team started having practices and she wasn't told about them. It just shouldn't be like that."**

"You have a known entity with a straight-A student who never missed a practice in two years," Vinson said. "There's no reason for her not to be selected. And we found out she was not chosen this year because the Robotics team started having practices and she wasn't told about them. It just shouldn't be like that."

Vinson, who had multiple disagreements with former TES principal Kelby Daniel, including issues about absences, believes his daughter not being selected is a result of his conflict with the school's former administration.

"Why would they remove a two-year member of the TES Robotics Team and replace them with a new member who has never participated?" Vinson said. "It is my view that if a child has two years of satisfactory participation in any school program and they are terminated, they should be provided with some kind of explanation," Vinson told Thorn in an e-mail dated October 28, 2019.

In that correspondence, Vinson asked for an explanation of why his daughter was not selected, along with the roster of this year's team as well as a list of all applicants. In Thorn's response, dated October 30, 2019, she denied his request for the roster of students or list of the applicants, based on privacy concerns for the students.

Thorn, in her first year as TES principal, said she did not believe there was any evidence of discrimination against any student in the selection process.

"Earning a spot on the team one year does not ensure a place on the team the next year," Thorn said. "Although parents may not agree with the decisions of the coaches/sponsors, unless there is evidence that a coach/sponsor has done something illegal, immoral, unethical or against board policy, then I have no reason to question the coach's decision nor believe that the coach/sponsor has been discriminatory.

"For clarification purposes, Mr. Ward did not remove your daughter from the Robotics team this year. As I stated earlier, every year the Robotics season ends and each school year begins a brand-new year with new applicants for the Robotics team. The number of applicants changes every year, and so does the level of competition for a position on the team. Mr. Ward is more than willing to discuss with you areas of improvement that could help your daughter if she chooses to apply for the Robotics team next year. Please feel free to contact him at your convenience."

The *Franklin Free Press* obtained a copy of the Tharptown Elementary School Robotics Team application, which states the following guidelines for selection:

- Maintain 80% homework grade.
- Display positive behavior in class.
- Display positive behavior in Robotics (work on task, work as a team, help other team members, follow directions, listen carefully to coaches, be a great representative of Tharptown Elementary School).
- Adhere completely to attendance policies
- Be at Robotics practices and competitions.

Thorn also said that Jake Ward, along with TES second-grade teacher Kendra Ward, are the coaches of the Robotics team and they were the selection team for applicants this year.

Vinson said he contacted Ward and asked him specifically why his daughter was not selected for this year's team and he was told by Ward he want-

ed to try somebody else.

"This is an unacceptable response," Vinson said. "Nowhere in the TES Robotics guidelines does it say it doesn't matter if you meet all the guidelines, no applicant can be on the Robotics team if the coach wants to try someone else."

Vinson said he went by Ward's room on Parent Conference Day to talk with him last year and Ward did not share any areas of improvement for his daughter.

"I want to know why no areas of improvement were ever mentioned until such time as she was not chosen to be on the Robotics Team," Vinson said.

Vinson's next step was to take his complaint to Franklin County superintendent of education Greg Hamilton.

In an e-mail sent November 5, 2019, Vinson tells Hamilton he has twice requested to meet with him and he asked to be placed on the November 20, 2019 board meeting agenda.

Hamilton responded back to Vinson in a November 8, 2019 email that said he had received Vinson's oral request to be on the board agenda and that he would send Vinson a formal response in writing.

Vinson responded that he also made a written request on November 5, 2019 to be placed on the meeting agenda.

When contacted by the *FFP* about Vinson's concerns with the TES Robotics Team selection method, Hamilton said he had complete confidence in the integrity of both Ward and Thorn.

"I have known Jake Ward for many years, and there's no doubt he will always do what's right for kids. Dr. Thorn is an outstanding administrator, and if she believes there was nothing improper in the selection process, then I stand behind that 100 percent," Hamilton said.

Hamilton said Vinson's concerns and request to be placed on the agenda had been referred to the board's attorney, Danny McDowell. Hamilton said he expected Vinson would be added to the November 20, 2019 agenda.

## Attention Tharptown Elementary School Parents

If your child applied for the Tharptown Elementary School Robotics Team for school year 2019-2020 and was not selected to participate as a team member, please contact [thsconcernedparents@yahoo.com](mailto:thsconcernedparents@yahoo.com) to be included in a Tharptown Elementary School parent discussion group.



# The Honey-Do List: Count your blessings

It's certainly that time of year when we should all count our blessings, and I believe your "honey-do list" should have a prominent place in that count. Just think about it.

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

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

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

I hope this season finds you in good health with a great "thankful" attitude. Wise men still seek Him, but there are far more busy inn keepers who don't have room for Him.

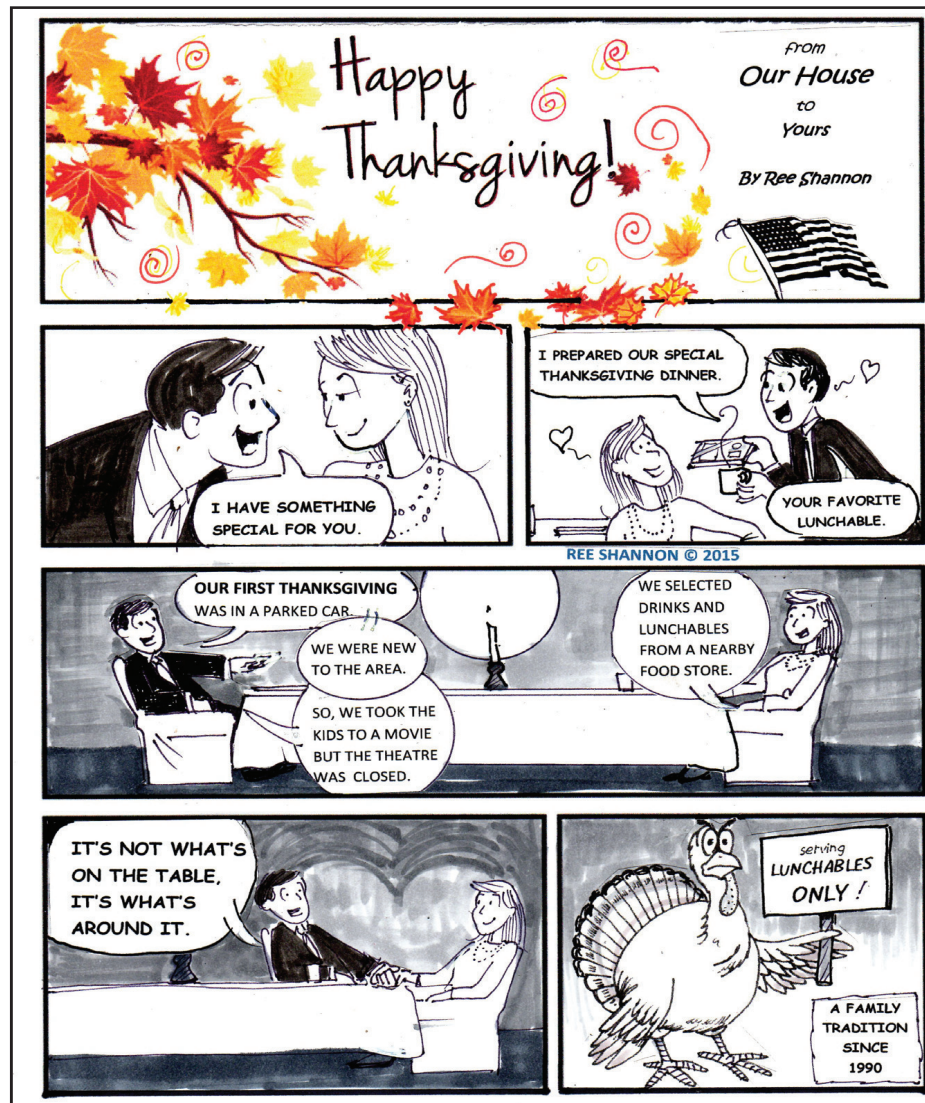
Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green

**Letters to the Editor**

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



## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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### Don't use emotion to rationalize an upgrade

Dear Dave,

My husband will be finishing physician assistant school in December, just a few days before our first baby is due. We've got about \$70,000 in student loan debt, and we're trying to get everything paid off. Both our cell phones are pretty old, and I'd like to get a new one that costs \$350 so we can have really good pictures of the baby. My job is the only income we have right now, and I'm making \$45,000 before taxes.

Is this a silly thing to do in our situation?

Jamie

Dear Jamie,

This is an important question. It's not important because \$350 is a big deal in the grand scheme of things; it's important because you're making a judgment call as to what you're focusing on and what you value.

If you're focusing on your husband finishing school, so his income goes up and you're trying to get out of debt, that fine. I love it when people are willing to work their tails off to have better lives. But if that's your focus, and at the same

time you're trying to rationalize buying something you don't really need, that's a bad thing. You don't need a new cell phone for a camera, especially if the camera is the only reason you're buying it. You can find decent digital cameras everywhere these days for \$50 or less.

I understand the joy that goes along with having a child. I have three kids, and we were absolutely ecstatic every time one was born. And, of course, we wanted good photos of them all. But right now, I think you're trying to rationalize a phone upgrade based on the emotion of a new baby.

As an exercise of your value system, that's a tendency you need to break. This is a test, Jamie. What you're talking about here is a luxury, not a necessity. Rationalization is one of the prime causes of overspending.

**I understand the joy that goes along with having a child. I have three kids, and we were absolutely ecstatic every time one was born. And, of course, we wanted good photos of them all. But right now, I think you're trying to rationalize a phone upgrade based on the emotion of a new baby.**

Please understand, I'm not picking on you, and I don't mean to be harsh. We've all flunked this test at times. But this is an important moment where your judgment and values are concerned. It's your call, but you really don't need to blow \$350 on a new phone right now.

Dave

\*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including *The Total Money Makeover*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 16 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

## 'SURVEYS,' from page 1

membership. One percent said they were not interested, and one percent returned a blank survey, Stockton said.

Regardless of the percentage of members who responded, though, Stockton said his board of directors is considering the next step, which would be a feasibility study that will provide more information on what the required thresholds would be to make the project successful. Those numbers would include the customer take rate, price and build-out cost Franklin Electric would face to move forward with a broadband project.

Stockton said the board must vote to approve the feasibility study before it moves forward. The Franklin Electric Cooperative Board of Directors meets the first Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the main office in downtown Russellville.

Kristi Powell May, a Belgreen resident and a Franklin Electric Cooperative member, said she did not receive a survey and that if she had she would have been wholly supportive of the board moving forward with high-speed broadband internet service.

May said she knows of three friends, also Franklin Electric members, who didn't receive the survey in the mail.

The only internet option available to May is satellite internet, which she describes as 'notoriously slow.'

"I'm disabled, and I can't work from home because I don't have high-speed internet access," May said. "You must have broadband or fiber-optic internet to have the computer speed needed to do an at-home job."

"There are a lot of legitimate companies hiring at-home workers, and that's the only way I could work."

May believes a door-to-door canvas by Franklin Electric workers would be the most effective way to gauge members' interest in broadband internet.

"At one point they had workers going to every single house to read meters before they went digital," May said. "That would be a more accurate representation of what the people want."

For Stephanie Ivey Cook, who lives in the Belgreen area between the Britton boat ramp and the Lost Creek boat ramp, having high-speed internet would have a direct impact on her youngest child's education.

"I still have one child I'm home-schooling. He's 14 and has autism. He has real high-functioning autism, and he'll start high school next year," Cook said. "That's my main concern—helping with his education. The amount of things available for children now versus 18 years ago when I started educating my children is tremendously different. We just can't access them without high-speed internet."

**"I still have one child I'm home-schooling. He's 14 and has autism. He has real high-functioning autism, and he'll start high school next year," Cook said. "That's my main concern—helping with his education. The amount of things available for children now versus 18 years ago when I started educating my children is tremendously different. We just can't access them without high-speed internet."**

Cook believes that Franklin Electric should have provided advance notice to members that the survey would be coming in the mail, although she said she didn't receive one regardless.

"I know everyone in the area gets the *Franklin Free Press* and reads it, so they could do something through the paper," Cook said. "At least communicate with us that there is a questionnaire coming."

"Also, I drive to the office to pay our bill, and there was no signage or anything about it posted."

Cook also questioned why a survey was needed when Gov. Kay Ivey signed the Rural Broadband Initiative into law earlier this year. That law provides a \$30 million initiative for the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to expand the grant program for broadband providers in rural and under-served areas. The law states that it's the decision of utility companies whether to install, operate and maintain broadband systems. Another option is for the electric companies to provide broadband services through a third party.

It is estimated that more than 800,000 Alabama residents don't have access to a connection capable of 25-megabytes-per-second download speed. Additionally, more than 275,000 residents don't have any wired internet service available at all.

"When the governor gives a mandate that by some date in the future every part of Alabama needs access to high-speed internet, why do we even need a survey?" Cook said.

Stockton said Franklin Electric's Board of Directors will continue to receive and review information about how a project could be structured to provide its members access to broadband service.

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

**NOT EVERYONE BREAKS DOWN FROM 9-5**



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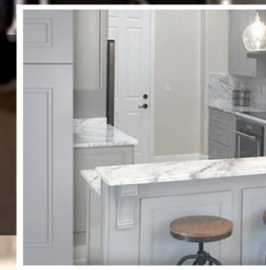
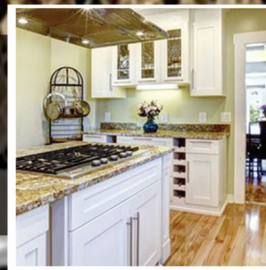
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# What's Happening

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

**R**ussellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Christmas hams. Hams are \$30 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Saturday, December 21 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.

**Y**ou are invited to gather in Red Bay's Bay Tree Park and be a part of our 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.

**T**he Cultura Garden Club will hold its annual "Every Light a Prayer for Peace" ceremony on Thursday, December 5 at 4:30 p.m. on the steps of the Franklin County Courthouse. The club will host a reception for all local Veterans from 3:45-4:15 p.m. in the Probate Court Hearing Room of the Franklin County Courthouse.

**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. For more information, call 1-800-MYDIXIE or 256-324-2317.

**P**lease join us on Saturday, December 7 for Christmas Expo 2019 at the Ralph C. Community Center located at 201 Ash Avenue, Russellville, AL. The Christmas Expo is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is hosted by Studio X-Treme Twirl and Dance. Studio X-Treme is owned by former Russellville Majorette captain and former Mississippi State majorette Heather Davis. Come out and support more than 20 local vendors! We will also have performances by Studio X-Treme students. Admission to this event is FREE, but with ANY donation to Jagger's Journey you will be entered to win one of the many door prizes provided by our vendors!!!

**A**merican Legion Post 64 will meet Thursday, December 12 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

**T**he Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert with special guest Robin Akers at the Roxy Theatre on Saturday, December 14 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Call 256-335-4356. The KGB will be the featured act at a show sponsored by the Franklin County Arts Council at the Roxy on the second Saturday of each month. Proceeds will benefit the renovation and restoration of the historic Roxy Theater.

**P**eggy Barnes' book, *I Knew You by Name: The Search for My Lost Mother*, will be discussed at the December 18, 2019, 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.

# Helicopters using Russellville Airport for equipment testing

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

Residents living near the Russellville Airport have seen—and heard—increased air traffic at the facility located on Highway 243 South.

That's because the airport is being used to test electronic equipment in military helicopters, according to Russellville Police chief Chris Hargett.

The large, twin-engine tandem rotor Chinook helicopters are military aircraft out of Redstone Arsenal, Hargett said.

Crews are testing on-board electronic systems and equipment and coordinating with crews on the ground.

The testing previously was done out of the Courtland Airport, but that facility was permanently closed, and now Russellville Airport is the site going forward.

Hargett said he believed the equipment testing would continue indefinitely.

"We've had some questions about it, and I've seen some people complaining about it on social media," Hargett said. "Basically, the helicopters are hovering over the airport while testing the on-board equipment. They have to travel to Muscle Shoals to refuel, so there is some back and forth travel as well."

Hargett said he would post updates on the testing on the Russellville Police Department's Facebook page, but he assured residents there was nothing to worry about with the military aircraft flying nearby.

"Actually, it has the potential to be a good thing for Russellville," Hargett said. "The more they come from Huntsville to Russellville, there's an increased chance some business may want to invest in our community. If we could draw in some economic benefit from this, that would be great."

The Chinook helicopters are among the heaviest and largest helicopters manufactured. They are primarily used by the United States Army and other military around the world.

The average cost to manufacture one of the Chinook helicopters was around \$38.55 million as of 2015.

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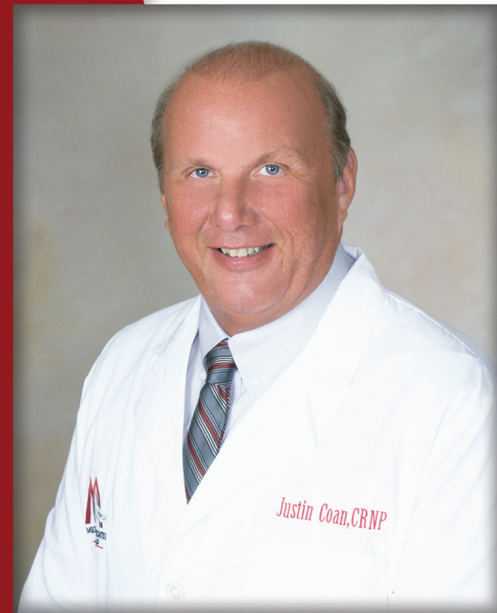
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**City, county reach agreement on street repairs**

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council approved an agreement with the Franklin County Commission that will see the city assume maintenance of portions of Joe Wheeler Avenue and Tidwell Avenue, subject to reimbursement from the county.

According to councilman David Palmer, there are portions of Joe Wheeler and Tidwell Avenue that extend beyond the city limits of Russellville. Maintaining these short portions are the responsibility of the Franklin County Highway Department.

There are no county roads connected to or near these two roadways, so maintaining them is a difficult and costly process for the county.

**According to councilman David Palmer, there are portions of Joe Wheeler and Tidwell Avenue that extend beyond the city limits of Russellville. Maintaining these portions are the responsibility of the Franklin County Highway Department. There are no county roads connected to or near these two roadways, so maintaining them is a difficult and costly process for the county.**

As a result, the two entities agreed that the city shall perform any necessary maintenance on the portions of Joe Wheeler and Tidwell Avenues located outside the city limits, subject to reimbursement from the Franklin County Commission.

The agreement shall remain in effect unless either party cancels it with at least 30 days written notice.

The council approved the agreement at its November 18 meeting. Other action by the council included:

- Approval of an ordinance authorizing issuance of the city's \$2,570,000 general obligation warrants and \$15,000,000 general obligation school warrants. This includes the refinancing of existing bond debt for the city in the approximate amount of \$480,000 and for Russellville City Schools in the amount of \$4.5 million.

- Approval of up to \$20,000 to make drainage improvements on Washington Avenue behind First Baptist Church. Palmer said water flows off the hillside west of the street and jumps the street and runs into the church building, which is lower than the street. A slotted drain will be installed to alleviate the runoff.

- Authorized mayor David Grissom to sign a letter

of support for Mr. Richard Rowland, senior coordinator for the 2020 Franklin County Census.

- Approval of the purchase of a 2020 International MV607 knuckle boom truck in the amount of \$147,235.90 for the Russellville Street Department, to be paid from the 2013 Capital Improvement Fund "B" Series.

- Approval of the purchase of a 2013 Volvo loader backhoe in the amount of \$41,000, to be purchased from the Alabama Department of Transportation Surplus Program, to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund "A" and "B" Series.

- Approval of a resolution commending the work of Chris Ozbirn and the Franklin County Bicentennial Committee.

- Approval of a resolution honoring the work and service of the Cotton Flat Cruisers.

- Approval of a resolution honoring the winners of the Fire Safety Week poster contest.

The students received prizes including ipads, ipods and gift cards donated by Walmart. The winners, all from grades 3-5 at Russellville Elementary School, included:

Overall Winners: 1st Place, Alexa Trapp, 4th grade; 2nd Place, Sara Juan, 3rd Grade; 3rd Place, Gavin Willis, 5th grade.

5th Grade Winners: 1st Place, Gavin Willis; 2nd Place Britlie Morshauer; 3rd Place, Khushi Patel.

4th Grade Winners: 1st Place, Alexa Trapp; 2nd Place, Sam Webb; 3rd Place, Abby Coronado.

3rd Grade Winners: 1st Place, Sara Juan; 2nd Place, Alex Rivera; 3rd Place, April Hall.

The contest was sponsored by the Russellville Fire Department as part of Fire Safety Week. State Farm Insurance agents Lee Nickels and Rhett Bradford presented the department with a check for \$2,500 to be used for fire prevention and safety education.

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The Russellville City Council honored the winners of the annual Fire Safety Week Poster Contest at the council's November 18 meeting.

PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

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# RC&D grant recipients meet with legislators

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The recipients of the nine projects funded by the Northwest Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Council in Franklin County came together last Friday to share with their legislators how the grants benefit their agencies.

Representatives from Russellville High School, Tharptown School, the Phil Campbell Future Farmers of America, Franklin County Child Nutrition Program, Red Bay Weatherford Library, Franklin County Extension Systems, Russellville Fire Department and Franklin County Volunteer Fire Association, Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the City of Russellville met with Sen. Larry Stutts (R-Tusculumbia), Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville) and Rep. Proncey Robertson (R-Mount Hope) to share how their agencies used the grant funding they each received.

The meeting was held last Friday morning at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex.

The Northwest Alabama RC&D Council administers grant funding for non-profit agencies, governmental entities and schools in Franklin, Colbert, Lauderdale, Winston and Marion counties. The council divides its available grant funding equally among the five counties.

Stutts, Robertson and Kiel each said they appreciated the work done by the RC&D Council, which serves as a clearinghouse for many grant applications.

"There's no way we could keep up with every need out there, and this is a wonderful way to give back to local needs that you have," Robertson said. "It's about teamwork."

Kiel said he and his fellow legislators don't believe they deserve any recognition for bringing taxpayer funds back into the community, but he agreed it was beneficial to see the various ways the monies were used to help Franklin County.

"It's our job to get these funds back to you," Kiel said. "We appreciate all the hard work you do through the Northwest Alabama RC&D."

There were nine completed projects in Franklin County in 2019, totaling \$38,264. They included:

- Russellville High School, \$10,320.51: Used to purchase 50 Chromebooks to be used for college and ACT prep programs. Approximately 750 students benefited from this grant.
- Tharptown School, \$2,918.49: Tharptown

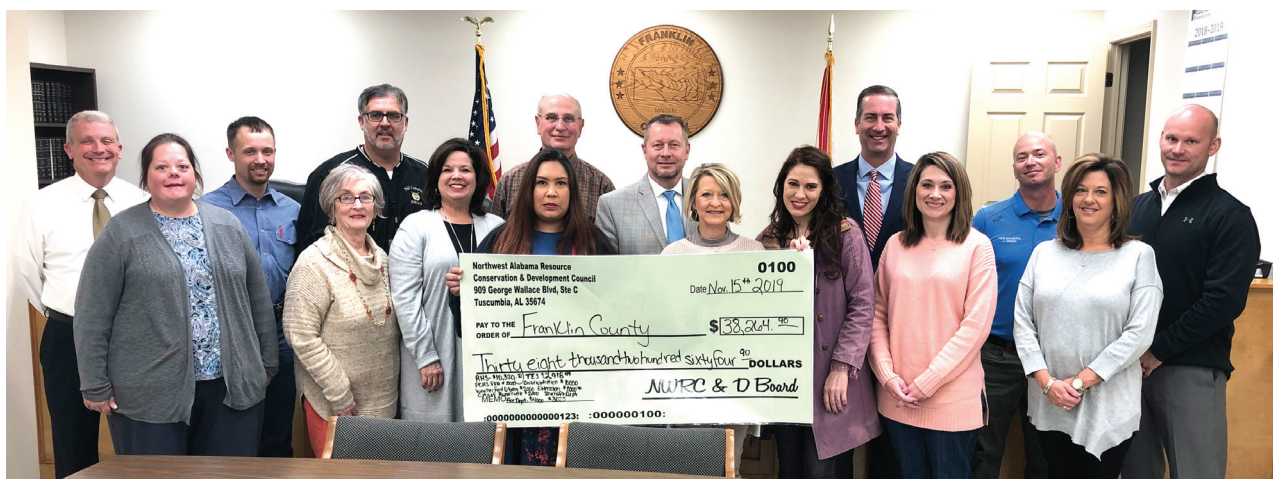


PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Local legislators met with Northwest Alabama RC&D Council officials and representatives from nine agencies that received grants through RC&D this year.

Elementary Principal Karen Thorn said the funds were used to purchase Kindle Fire tablets. She stressed the importance of improving technology in the classrooms and how that positively impacts the quality of education for students.

- Phil Campbell Future Farmers of America, \$2,000: More than 100 PCHS students have worked on the Agri Science Greenhouse Project. The grant was used to fund greenhouse production and sales. From community members who purchase plants to the students who grow them, the students now have the proper equipment and tools needed to make a greater impact in their community.

**"There's no way we could keep up with every need out there, and this is a wonderful way to give back to local needs that you have," Robertson said. "It's about teamwork."**

- Franklin County Child Nutrition Program, \$10,000: The staff at Tharptown School cafeteria serves approximately 1,900 meals each day. Two milk coolers and two ice cream freezers were needed to ensure food safety. The grant helped pay for these coolers and freezers.

- Red Bay Weatherford Library, \$2,000: The library staff understands the importance of continued education for students during summer breaks. The grant helped purchase books for the 2019 Summer Reading Program. There were 71 new books purchased.

The program had 95 children participate this summer and more than 400 children visited the Red Bay Library this summer.

- Franklin County Extension System, \$2,000: Funds were used to help conduct a Mother-Daughter Symposium. Topics covered at the symposium included self-esteem, bullying, etiquette, career development and college preparation.

- Russellville Fire Department & Franklin County Volunteer Fire Association, \$4,000: Local fire departments use the RFD's Fire Safety Trailer to educate K-2 graders throughout Franklin County. The trailer has been used since the late 1990s and needed major upgrades both to the trailer and educational materials distributed to students to better prepare children to make smart decisions in the event of a fire.

- Franklin County Sheriff's Office, \$3,025: The FCSO's Special Response Team used the funds to purchase three new tasers. These devices allow deputies to maintain officer safety as they put themselves at risk to serve and protect.

- City of Russellville, \$2,000: Ninety percent of people who suffer from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest do not survive. However, 45 percent of those victims survive when CPR and an automated external defibrillator are used. This project purchased AEDs for local sporting complexes and other public locations to ensure easy access in the event of a cardiac emergency. Eight defibrillators were purchased.

## 'SAFETY,' from page 1

•Make sure smoke alarms in the home are working. Test them prior to Thanksgiving Day.

Those who prefer frying their turkeys are faced with additional safety issues. The National Fire Protection Association discourages the use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers that cook the turkey in hot oil. Dangers with turkey fryers include the risk of hot oil splashing or spilling during cooking. Additionally, caution must be taken to fully defrost any turkey before placing it in the fryer. Again, a partially thawed turkey will cause oil to splatter.

There are turkey fryers available that do not use oil. This type of fryer is considered to be much safer, Green said.

As part of National Fire Safety Week (October 6-12), the Russellville Fire Department and departments from across Franklin County presented fire safety programs to students in Franklin County and Russellville City Schools.

Lee Nickels presented the Russellville Fire Department with a check for \$2,500 to be used for fire prevention and safety. A portion of those funds will be used to purchase smoke alarms that are available, at no cost, to Russellville residents.

Students in grades 3-5 at Russellville Elementary participated in a poster contest for Fire Safety Week. The winners were honored by the City Council at its November 18 meeting.

Residents who do not have working smoke alarms in their homes can call 256-332-8761 and leave their name, address and telephone number, and someone from the department will come to their home and install a smoke alarm at no cost.

Requests for smoke alarms may also be made by email at [main.rfd@gmail.com](mailto:main.rfd@gmail.com).

Green expressed his appreciation to State Farm, Lewis Electric for discounting the cost of the smoke alarms, and to Walmart for donating prizes for the poster contest.

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Applications will be accepted until November 28, 2019.



# New buildings at Vina, Tharptown to be ready for use next semester

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As he updated the Franklin County Board of Education on the building projects at Vina and Tharptown Schools, superintendent Greg Hamilton had a smile on his face.

"We received the certificate of occupancy for the new Vina High School science and band building, and a certificate of occupancy for the new classroom addition at Tharptown," Hamilton said. "We're waiting on some lab equipment at Vina for the science lab, and we will start next semester in both buildings. Also, we'll start [removing] the mobile units at Tharptown."

"We received the certificate of occupancy for the new Vina High School science and band building, and a certificate of occupancy for the new classroom addition at Tharptown," Hamilton said. "We're waiting on some lab equipment at Vina for the science lab, and we will start next semester in both buildings. Also, we'll start [removing] the mobile units at Tharptown."

A certificate of occupancy is a document issued by a local government agency or building department that certifies a building's compliance with all applicable building codes and laws and indicates it's ready for occupancy.

When it comes to the six-classroom addition at Tharptown, Hamilton said there were times he wondered when, or if, this day would come. The project was delayed multiple times as a result of contractor delays and the eventual termination of the original contractor.

Agenda items approved by the board at its November 20 meeting included:  
•Recognition of board member Kacey Johnston for completing her Level 1 Certification with the Alabama Association of School Board Member Academy Achievement.

•Out-of-state trips by Vina baseball to Tremont, MS, February 24, 2020;

# City officials share Thanksgiving meal with RHS students

Brady Petree  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - During this time of year, giving back is one of the staples of the holiday season, and the staff at the Russellville High School cafeteria wanted to do their part.

As part of a yearly tradition at the RHS cafeteria, the staff feeds the students a Thanksgiving lunch consisting of turkey and dressing, green beans, red velvet cake and other delectable sides. However, amongst the students wearing backpacks and sweatshirts at this year's meal were adults wearing more official attire.

Police officers and firefighters from Russellville, along with city and state leaders, sat alongside the students at RHS as they took part recently in the annual Thanksgiving lunch.

Among the leaders in attendance were Russellville Fire chief Joe Mansell, Russellville Police chief Chris Hargett, Russellville mayor David Grissom, state house representative Jamie Kiel and several city council members.

Sandra Suddith was a vital part of the RHS lunchroom staff for over two decades before retiring last year. However, she returned this year in a part-time capacity to help out the rest of the staff.

For a staff that typically feeds around 700 kids on a daily basis, adding a few more people to that list was no problem, according to Suddith.

"We invite the mayor, the city council and our first responders every year that we have our Thanksgiving lunch," Suddith said. "We invited more this year because they have been such a big help with the incident at West Elementary."

The incident Suddith is referring to is the fire that broke out inside of the West Elementary School computer lab early last Tuesday morning. First responders were able to put the fire out before the fire spread to any neighboring classrooms.

For the students at RHS, Suddith believes that the Thanksgiving lunch has a much larger impact than just getting a nice warm meal.

"The students love being amongst the first responders and city leaders. They mingle, and it gives them a chance to see firsthand who these important people are," Suddith said. "It's good for our kids to be able to see them out like this, and it helps them relate on multiple levels."

Renay Hallman, who is the manager overseeing the RHS cafeteria and its day-to-day operations, says that while it is something different to see so many important people dining with their students, it is not out of the ordinary to see certain Board of Education administrators within the lunchroom.

"It's a good thing for our kids to be able to see these people in person and to be able to sit and eat with them, but it's not something unfamiliar to them," Hallman said. "Our superintendent and assistant superintendent come eat with us all the time. They are very supportive of us and the students, and that reflects back onto the students."



PHOTO BY BRADY PETREE

Local officials and first responders stopped by the RHS cafeteria to enjoy a recent meal with students and staff.

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## 'BUILDINGS,' from page 10

Tharptown senior trip to New York City, May 4-8; Phil Campbell varsity boys and girls basketball teams to Belmont, MS, January 31, 2010; Phil Campbell varsity softball team to Columbia, TN, March 27-28, 2020; Red Bay boys basketball team to Breese, IL, for Christmas tournament December 26-30, 2019.

- Compensation of \$500 to Patti Swinney as Yearbook Sponsor at Vina High School. The school will reimburse the board the \$500 plus applicable benefits.

- Compensation of \$900 to Sherry Leigh Smith as Yearbook Sponsor at East Franklin Junior High. The school will reimburse the board the \$900 plus applicable benefits.

- Personnel moves as follows: Resignation: Christopher Jones, bus driver Phil Campbell Schools; Trenia Oliver, East Franklin bus driver; and Holley Lewey, Red Bay Elementary teacher.

- Leave of Absence: Vicki Oliver, bus driver Phil Campbell, 90 days retroactive to November 2, 2019; Emily Taylor, science teacher at Red Bay, FMLA leave from January 3, 2020 through February 28, 2020; and Paige Wehunt, bus driver, FMLA leave of absence from November 1, 2019 through January 31, 2020.

- Employment: Anita Grimes, bus driver Phil Campbell; Terry Pennington, bus driver Tharptown; Jaime Oliver, Child Nutrition Program bookkeeper, effective November 12, 2019; and Mallory Sutton, custodian, Tharptown.

- Volunteers: Chris Nix and Eric Weeks, volunteer baseball coaches at Phil Campbell High School; Kurt Rogers and Skeeter Benford, volunteer softball coaches at Phil Campbell.

- Boat Captains at Phil Campbell High School: Shane Mansell, Chris Gonzalez, Donnie Cummings, Chris Newell, Kevin Hill, Brad Hill, Joey Norton, Eric Jackson, Harold Pace, Jamie Simpson, Brad Osborn, Jerry McCafferty and Tim Franks.

- Volunteers approved were Lisa Norton and Betty Jackson. Coach approved by the board was Elisha Mansell.

The next regular meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education is set for Tuesday, January 14, 2020, with work session at 5 p.m. and meeting to follow.

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## Week 14 in the SEC

Last week's record: 4-0  
Year-to-date record: 44-8  
This week's games:

**Ole Miss at Miss. State (-2.5) – Thursday at 6:30 on ESPN**

The Bulldogs need this one to get bowl-eligible, while an 0-4 record in games decided by one possession (eight points or less) is going to keep Ole Miss (4-7 overall) from reaching the postseason.



**Mike Self**  
Sports Editor

Oddly enough, the road team has won the last four meetings in this series. Expect a fair amount of fireworks on Thanksgiving night, given that both teams rank in the bottom four in the SEC in scoring defense and yards allowed per play.

Neither team is playing particularly well of late, with State having lost five of seven and Ole Miss have dropped four of its past five. We'll ride with the Rebels, who hung tough with Auburn and Texas A&M and put 37 points on LSU. The Bulldogs got clobbered by all those teams.

**The Pick: Ole Miss 34 Miss. State 31**  
**Louisville at Kentucky (-3) – 11:00 on ESPN**

Louisville has quietly turned things around to go 7-4 on the heels of last year's 2-10 disaster. The Cardinals do it with offense, ranking second in the ACC in scoring and yards per play.

Kentucky is headed to a bowl game for a fourth straight season on the strength of a ground game that has produced at least 297 rushing yards in five of six games since Lynn Bowden, Jr. took over at quarterback in mid-October. Louisville ranks next to last in the ACC in yards allowed per carry at nearly 4.8. That and home field should be enough for the 'Cats to reach 7-5.

**The Pick: Kentucky 31 Louisville 28**  
**Alabama (-4) at Auburn – 2:30 on CBS**

It's strength vs. strength and weakness vs. weakness in the Iron Bowl—though it might be a stretch to call Alabama's defense (which ranks third in the SEC in both yards allowed per play and points allowed per game) a "weakness."

It's by no means a stretch to say that Auburn's offense has scuffled against the better teams on the schedule. The Tigers averaged no more than 4.41 yards per play in games against Florida, LSU and Georgia, totaling 47 points.

Tide fans are down on their D right now, but Auburn might not be capable of scoring more than 24 to 28 points, tops. Can an excellent Tiger defense hold a Tua-less Alabama offense to less than that? Given the Tide's dynamic play-making ability at the skill positions, we doubt it.

Losses by Penn State and especially Oregon on Saturday have Alabama sniffing a playoff spot. The Tide need to win big to impress the committee. Auburn's D will prevent that, but Bama will make enough big plays to win.

**The Pick: Alabama 27 Auburn 20**  
**Texas A&M at LSU (-17) – 6:00 on ESPN**

The over-under here is 63.5 points. Both teams topped that number *on their own* in last year's wild seven-OT 74-72 win by the Aggies. This one won't be quite as high-scoring—or as close.

**The Pick: LSU 42 Texas A&M 24**

# Good as new



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

**COOP TROOP** - The Bulldogs got 44 combined points (on just 19 shot attempts) from Bonner (1) and Bragwell (4) in last Saturday's showdown with Deshler, improving to 5-0 under Cooper (in blue) with a 72-71 win.

With a first-year head coach and mass changes in personnel, Belgreen's boys definitely have a different look to them this season. But, as their 5-0 start proved, they're as dangerous as ever.

*Mike Self*  
*Franklin Free Press*

**BELGREEN** - Early-season basketball games are essentially a discovery process, played out in 32-minute experiments three or four nights a week. Questions are raised (and perhaps answered). Weak spots are revealed. Identities are forged.

First-year Belgreen head coach Marty Cooper still had much to learn about his team, which carried a perfect 4-0 record into last Saturday's showdown with Class 4A Deshler. For starters, Cooper was curious to see how the Bulldogs would fare in the event they had to play an extended stretch without stud sophomore point guard Will Bonner on the floor.

Cooper got his answer on Saturday—though the circumstances weren't exactly voluntary.

Bonner, averaging 22.0 points per game on the season, had scored 16 on 7-for-7 shooting from

the field when he was whistled for his third foul early in the third quarter. He then picked up a technical on his way off the floor, giving him four personal fouls and consigning him to the bench for the next several minutes.

**"Just thinking about what we've done...we beat a very good Winfield team on Thursday, we've played three days in a row, we don't have a deep bench, our best player gets in foul trouble, we're playing a really, really good program in Deshler, and we found a way to win,"** Cooper said. **"I couldn't be more pleased with our kids. We just have to continue to work hard and get better. Our kids have to understand—people are gonna take notice. We're gonna have a target on our backs. People are gonna come after us."**

The Bulldogs, leading 45-35 at the time, were about to get a trial-by-fire look at life without their best player.

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# Golden Tigers start 2-0

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Just 24 hours after his inexperienced team labored to finish off Colbert County (committing a couple of untimely turnovers and missing some key foul shots as a 16-point lead shrunk to two in what ultimately became a four-point win), Russellville coach Patrick Odom wanted to see the Golden Tigers get another chance to address some of those late-game issues in last Friday's home opener against Central-Florence.

He got his wish. And this time, Russellville handled the latter stages of a tight game with much more poise and proficiency.

The Golden Tigers shot 8-for-10 from the foul line in the fourth quarter and came up with a couple of clutch defensive stops down the stretch, holding on for a 63-60 win over the hot-shooting Wildcats.

"This is gonna be a grind-it-out basketball team we have," said Odom, whose team rallied from an 11-point first-quarter deficit to improve to 2-0 heading into the Thanksgiving holiday. "We were 18-for-24 from the line, and we played much cleaner down the stretch. We got off to a real slow start, but we fought and fought and fought. Again, we didn't finish everything, but we pounded the backboards. We've still got a lot to grow from and learn from, but it was fun to see us, in just 24 hours, be a much better basketball team tonight than we were last night."

Russellville was also a much more balanced team last Friday night, with four players scoring in double-figures. Junior wing Chandler Dyas—who was the only Golden Tiger in double-figures on Thursday night in Leighton, with a career-high 23—finished with 15 on Friday, going 5-for-6 from the line in the fourth quarter. Junior post players Brooks Scott and Jeb Bishop both posted career-highs with 14 and 12 points, respectively, and sophomore guard Boots McCulloch came off the bench to score 10 points, knocking down a pair of key free throws in the final minute. Senior guard Levi Gist nearly gave Russellville a fifth player in double-figures, finishing with nine.

"I'll take that every night," Odom said. "Points have gotta come for us in a lot of ways. We started Boots in the second half, because we felt like he earned it. It wasn't anything that anybody else did wrong; he was just playing really well. I didn't think we slowed the ball down enough early in the first half to get the ball inside a lot, but you saw a conscious effort on our part to pound the ball inside to Jeb Bishop and Brooks Scott."

Scott scored eight points in the first half, helping the Golden Tigers battle back from an early 16-5 deficit to pull even at 27-27 by halftime. Bishop then took over down low in the third quarter, scoring eight points as Russellville surged to a 49-44 lead by the end of three.

Payton Palmer nailed three fourth-quarter threes for Central, helping the Wildcats take the game right down to the wire. Trailing by one in the final seconds, Central threw an inbounds pass to a wide-open Palmer in the right corner, but he bobbled the ball on the catch and had to give it up. Junior guard Lane McCay, the team's top scorer, wound up taking a contested shot while being hounded by 6'2 Russellville senior Jamal Hubbard. The shot missed, and the rebound went out of bounds off the Wildcats.

"I know Jamal didn't score much tonight," Odom said, "but he might have been the most valuable player for guarding the McCay kid. I know he got some tonight [McCay finished with 21 points], but I thought we did a really good job on him, and a lot of that was Jamal. He played his role. That's what we saw tonight—a lot of guys playing their roles, and when we put all the pieces together, it was enough."

See 'START,' page 15

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## 'START,' from page 14

After Dyas went 2-for-2 at the line with 1.4 seconds left to make it 63-60, Central had one last chance to tie the game. The Wildcats had to inbound the ball the length of the floor, however, and they were forced to settle for a desperation heave from beyond mid-court that didn't come close.

"We were talking about a lot of things," Odom said of his team's final defensive huddle. "Do you guard the ball, do you not guard the ball? Our guys did a good job. We wanted to try and deflect anything long and try and make them catch it in front of the Tiger [the logo at center court], and that's what happened. Again, there's so much going on in that 1.4, you're just trying to make sure you finish properly—and don't foul, too. It was a great learning experience for a lot of our guys."

Russellville won despite finishing minus-27 points from beyond the arc. Central hit 12 threes to just three for the Golden Tigers, who would have been hard-pressed to survive a deficit like that from three-point range in Odom's first four years on the job.

"It would have been a rough night," said the coach, who has a much more post-oriented team in year number five. "It's about knowing who you are. This team is different, but different doesn't mean bad. You play to your strengths, and that's gonna be who we are all year—physical on the offensive and defensive end. We're long, we've got a bunch of big bodies—this is who we are, and this is how we're gonna win games this year. It's fun to see it already playing out."

Dyas knocked down two threes on Friday and finished 5-for-6 at the line. Gist made the team's only other three and also hit a clutch 18-footer in the fourth quarter.

Russellville is off to a 2-0 start and will carry that momentum into the area opener against Lawrence County on December 3 and then a trip to Hamilton for another area game on December 6.

"With a lot of unknown, if you had told me we'd be sitting where we are with how we've played, I'd have told you I'll take it," Odom said. "Now, we're nowhere near a finished product. But what's fun is, we've answered the call so far. That's a good characteristic that will continue. That will travel. But we know the games get important when we come back [from Thanksgiving break], so we need to continue to improve. That's what it's all about at this point."

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### Brooke Daily

Senior Post Player, Tharptown

Daily was a rebounding machine last week, pulling down 46 boards in three games to help the Lady Wildcats go 2-1. She narrowly missed a double-double last Monday, scoring nine points and grabbing 10 rebounds in a 50-22 rout at Brilliant. The following night, Daily put up 16 points and 15 boards to lead a 53-32 win over Colbert Heights. She then capped the week with 14 points and 21 rebounds in a 48-38 loss at Tanner on Friday.

For the week, Daily averaged 13.0 points and 15.3 rebounds per game.



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## 'GOOD,' from page 13

Deshler immediately went on a 6-0 run to get within four, but Belgreen senior Bryant Hubbert helped steady the ship with a couple of timely baskets. A three by Phillips transfer Brandon Green—one of his seven triples on the night—trimmed the lead to 49-46, but junior guard Scout Bragwell answered with his own personal 7-0 run for the Bulldogs, making a layup, a three and two free throws (following a technical on Deshler) to push the margin back out to 10 at 56-46.

The lead was still relatively comfortable at 60-52 following a fallaway by Collin Bonner early in the fourth quarter, but the Tigers got back-to-back threes from Tavaris Thirkill and Green to make it a two-point game at 60-58 with 3:55 remaining.

Will Bonner re-entered the game at that point and picked up right where he left off, scoring eight points down the stretch and making what might have been the play of the game when he drove the lane and dropped a dime to junior forward Isac Willingham, whose three-point play gave the Bulldogs a 65-63 lead with 1:28 to go.

Hubbert came up with a steal on Deshler's next trip, and Bonner tossed in a leaner from just inside the foul line to make it 67-63. Another three by Green brought the Tigers back within one, but Bonner went 4-for-4 from the line in the final minute to help seal a 72-71 win—Belgreen's third in as many nights and fifth in a row to open the season.

Bonner (one of three Russellville transfers, along with his brother and Hubbert, now starting for the Bulldogs) finished with a game-high 24 points on an incredibly efficient night [he shot 8-for-9 from the floor and 8-for-9 from the line], but Cooper was perhaps even more pleased afterward with how his team held things together with Bonner on the bench for an eight-plus-minute stretch against a quality opponent.

"The thing I'm most proud of is, we have to learn to play without Will Bonner," Cooper said. "He's gotta get a rest sometime. We didn't like the way he had to *take* a rest, but you know, we stuck with it. We didn't fold.

"Then we got him back out there. We had to have him on the floor at the end of the game."

Cooper said he had no set plan for when exactly he was going to bring his point guard back in.

"It was just a gut feeling of when I thought he could make it to the end of the game without fouling again," Cooper said with a smile. "I guess I guessed correctly."

Late-game drama didn't appear to be on the menu in the early going, with the Bulldogs showing zero ill effects from having played the previous two nights. [They beat Class 3A Winfield by 16 at home on Thursday before cruising to a 44-point rout at Hackleburg in their Class 1A, Area 12 opener on Friday.] Belgreen came out on fire Saturday, getting six straight points from Hubbert in the opening two minutes and then four points apiece from the Bonner brothers (and another basket by Hubbert) to open up a 16-1 lead.

After Bragwell buried back-to-back threes on either side of the 2:00 mark, the Bulldogs led 22-1. Deshler (2-1) finally got its first field goal nearly seven minutes into the game when Green nailed a three, but Belgreen still led 24-8 at the end of a stunningly one-sided first quarter. The Bulldogs shot 10-for-14 in that opening quarter, recording six assists (including three by Willingham). The Tigers, meanwhile, started just 3-for-13 from the field.

"One of the reasons we jumped out to such a fast start is, Hubbert hit some shots early that kind of got us going," Cooper said. "With Scout hitting some shots and Hubbert hitting some shots, we got a nice little lead there. But Deshler is an awfully good team. They missed a lot of shots early on, and we made some shots early on, and it just kind of snowballed. But the way basketball is played today, you knew they were gonna make a run."

The Tigers did exactly that, eventually pulling to within five at 30-25 on a three by senior guard Matthew Minetree with 3:10 left in the first half. The Bulldogs responded, getting a bucket from reserve post player Will Donahoe, two free throws from Bragwell and a layup off a steal from Will Bonner to make it 36-25.

The lead was still 11 after Bonner found Hubbert for a layup on a nice pick-and-roll, but Eric Malone, Jr. nailed a three for Deshler at the buzzer to make it 38-30 going into the locker room.

The Tigers kept coming in the second half, taking advantage of Bonner's absence to force a few turnovers and get some points in transition. They finally pulled even at 60-60 on a layup by Minetree with 3:00 left in the game. After Bonner made two free throws to put Belgreen back on top, Green drilled a three at the 2:20 mark to give Deshler its first lead of the night.

It was short-lived, however, as Bonner broke down the Tiger D off the dribble, drew multiple defenders in the paint and set up Willingham for the go-ahead three-point play.

"I didn't think Isac had a great game," Cooper said, "but, *man*, did he make a big shot down there, taking it strong to the basket."

Willingham finished with four points, five rebounds and five assists, and



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## 'GOOD,' from page 16

Hubbert—the team's other starting post player—scored 14 points on 7-for-13 shooting and grabbed six boards. Those two—along with Collin Bonner, who pulled down a team-high eight rebounds to go along with eight points—helped Belgreen hold a 25-20 edge on the glass against the bigger Tigers.

"Those guys had to play well for us," Cooper said. "Deshler's got a lot of size—and not just the big kid [6'7 senior Sawyer Wright] inside. They've got a lot of good-sized players. Our big guys had to step up to the challenge, and they did."

The guard combo of Bragwell and Will Bonner was terrific on Saturday, combining to score 44 points on just 19 shot attempts. Bragwell made all four of his team's threes on the night and finished with 20 points on 6-for-10 shooting from the floor and 4-for-4 from the line.

Bonner had three assists and three steals to go along with his big scoring night on Saturday and is now averaging 22.4 points per game. It's his basketball I.Q. that most impresses his head coach, though. One quick example from Saturday: Green drained a three in the final seconds to bring Deshler within a point, but the Tigers were out of timeouts, so the clock continued to run. Rather than panic and try to inbound the ball against pressure, Bonner recognized that with less than five seconds remaining, he didn't *have* to inbound the ball. He just calmly held onto it until time expired and then lifted a finger toward the rafters in triumph.

"For a sophomore in high school, he's very intelligent," said Cooper, who coached at the JUCO level for 21 years in Mississippi. "He really understands the game. Will studies the game. For a kid in high school, especially for a sophomore, he understands basketball. He's a coach on the floor. There at the end, we're out of timeouts, but he's telling everybody who they need to guard and getting everybody organized."

Belgreen's five wins through Sunday had come against teams from Class 1A (Lindsey Lane and Hackleburg), Class 2A (Tharptown), Class 3A (Winfield) and Class 4A (Deshler). The Bulldogs (who lost 1,000-point career scorers Mason Bragwell and Brant Bragwell to graduation in May on the heels of winning 65 games over the previous three seasons) will take aim at Class 6A Cullman on Tuesday at Wallace-Hanceville at 9 a.m. If nothing else, it will be another opportunity to grow, another chance to discover and learn.

"Just thinking about what we've done...we beat a very good Winfield team on Thursday, we've played three days in a row, we don't have a deep bench, our best player gets in foul trouble, we're playing a really, really good pro-

gram in Deshler, and we found a way to win," Cooper said. "I couldn't be more pleased with our kids. We just have to continue to work hard and get better. Our kids have to understand—people are gonna take notice. We're gonna have a target on our backs. People are gonna come after us. It'll be a challenge."

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Congrats to Week 13 winner **DANNY PINKARD**, who correctly picked 9 out of 10 games and also picked Ohio State to beat Penn State 42-31!

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Iowa State at Kansas State	Kansas State	_____
Notre Dame at Stanford	Notre Dame	_____
Wisconsin at Minnesota	Wisconsin	_____
Alabama at Auburn	Alabama	_____
Texas A&M at LSU	LSU	_____
Florida State at Florida	Florida	_____
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**27 oz. Holiday Tumbler**  
Keeps liquids cold up to 24 hours and hot up to 12 hours. BPA free. Made in USA. T 252 698, 699, 701, 702 12



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**Perky Pet®**

**Gilded Chalet Bird Feeder**  
Patented Sure Lock System holds up to 2 lbs. of seed. Twist off base for easy cleaning. Available in red or green. L 255 006 F4

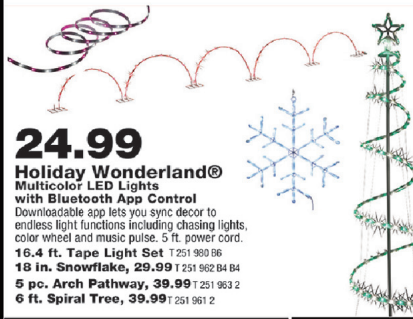
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**24.99**  
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Multicolor LED Lights with Bluetooth App Control  
Downloadable app lets you sync decor to endless light functions including chasing lights, color wheel and music pulse. 5 ft. power cord.  
**16.4 ft. Tape Light Set**, T 251 990 B6  
**18 in. Snowflake**, T 251 962 B4 B4  
**5 pc. Arch Pathway**, T 251 963 2  
**6 ft. Spiral Tree**, 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 238 908 2



**79.97**  
**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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36 in. Square Extra Dense Jumbo Pet Bed  
Tufted top. Non-skid bottom. Assorted colors. H 230 743 B6  
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Orthopedic base supports growing bones and aching joints. H 255 442 B6

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**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, 239 038 2

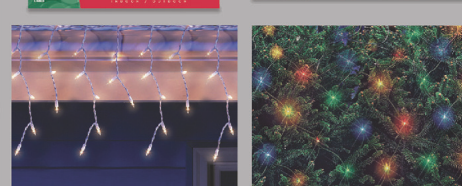
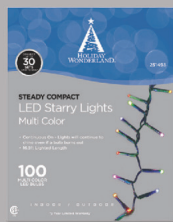
**94.99**  
**Gemmy®**  
Self-Inflatable Olaf & Sven  
Just plug in and stake down. Self-inflates in seconds. Includes stakes and tethers. T 251 650 2

**20% OFF** ALL INFLATABLES

## 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



**21.99**  
**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



**9.99** YOUR CHOICE  
**Holiday Wonderland®**  
300 ct. Icicle Light Set  
Approximately 20-ft. total length. Choose clear or multicolor. T 523 084, 407 426 B12  
150 ct. Net-Style Light Set  
4 x 6 ft. Choose clear or multicolor. T 392 019, 458 646 B6



**\$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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**Black & Decker®**  
12 Cup Coffee Maker  
Brews quickly with sneak-a-cup technology. Washable brew basket. W 254 915 B2



**34.97**  
**Black & Decker®**  
Air Fry Toaster Oven  
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**79.97**  
**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



**10.97**  
**Pyrex®**  
10 pc. Glass Storage Set with Lids  
Microwave and dishwasher safe. Stain and odor-resistant. W 256 760 2



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



**16.99** YOUR CHOICE  
**Traeger®**  
20 lb. Premium Hardwood Barbecue Pellets  
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



**549.99**  
**Traeger®**  
Pro 22 Series Wood Pellet Grill  
572-sq.-in. grilling area. T 399 124 1  
**Pro 34 Series Wood Pellet Grill**, T 499 894 sq. in. cooking surface. T 189 122 1

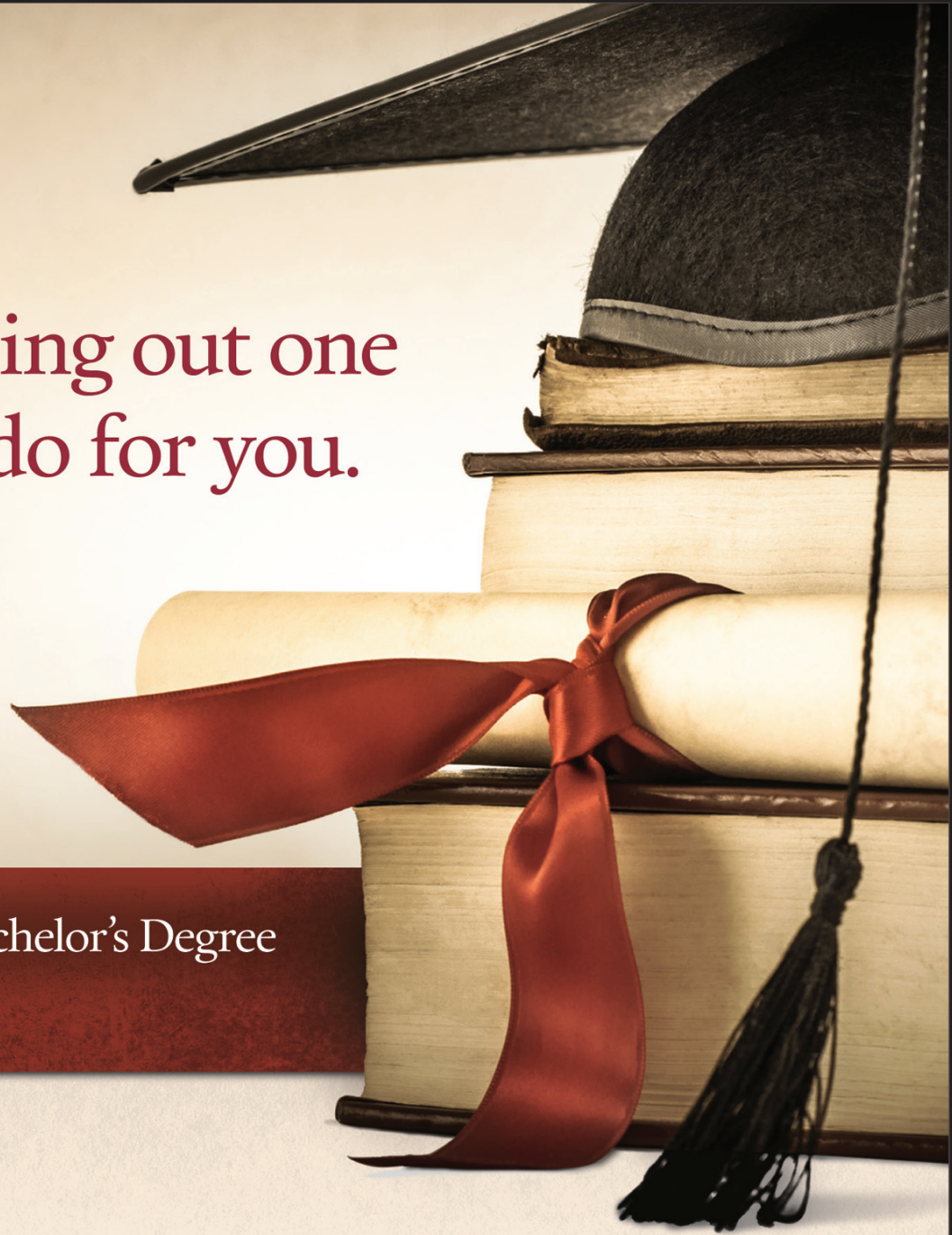


**699.99**  
**Traeger®**  
Pro 575 Pellet Grill  
Pro D2 controller with WiFi® Technology. 575-sq.-in. grilling area. Choose black or bronze finish. T 247 255, 256 1  
**Pro D2 780 Pellet Grill**, T 899.99 780-sq.-in. grilling area. Choose black or bronze finish. T 247 258, 259 1  
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