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02.19.20

HARSA reps advocate for low-kill animal shelter in Franklin County

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

According to www.shelteranimalscount.org, Alabama has the nation's highest euthanasia rate for animals, at 33 percent, based on recent data.

Franklin County has a temporary animal shelter located at the Franklin County Landfill and is not equipped to euthanize animals. But Franklin County Animal Control Officer Joey Wingo had approximately 350 animals transported to Marion County to be euthanized last year.

A group of local citizens wants to lower that number significantly, and they addressed the Franklin County Commission about the possibility of creating a low-kill animal shelter at the commission's February 10 work session.

Volunteers from Heart of Alabama Save, Rescue and Adopt (HASRA) told commissioners about their agency's

success in operating a no-kill shelter in Lauderdale County. As a private shelter, HASRA has a no-kill policy, but members realize that wouldn't be possible with a county shelter.

"We would love for y'all to have a low-kill shelter and give these animals a chance," said HASRA member Al Horton, a former Franklin County resident. "And it's not going to cost you a lot of money to do this."

Franklin County's current policy on stray and abandoned animals is to house the animal at the shelter for seven days. After that time, if no one claims the animal, it is transported to the Marion County Animal Shelter to be euthanized.

Horton told commissioners that grant money could be available if the county moves forward with the low-kill shelter concept.

"Sunshine Mills, right here in your county, awards See 'SHELTER,' Page 5

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Jones rap career trending upward

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Regardless of how far his aspiring music career takes him, Russellville's Robert Jones is already successful.

When you look back at the 39-year-old's younger life, it's a near miracle that Jones even has the opportunity to follow his dream.

That dream is a career in the rap music industry. And Jones is using his life experiences, particularly those that were hardest to endure, as the foundation for his music, all of which he writes on his own.

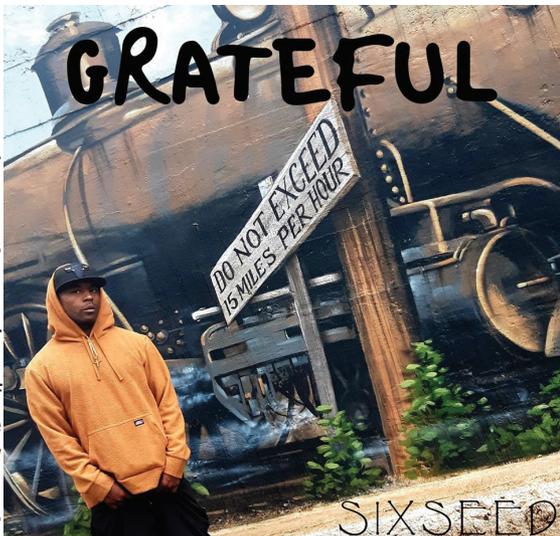
Jones saw his mother almost die at the hands of a domestic abuser. Later, she died from complications after an alcohol overdose. His father was killed in a shooting at a local apartment complex a few years later.

"I was then like the black sheep of the family and didn't have much of my family still there," Jones said. "I turned to music as therapy. I wrote songs even back then and filled notebooks with them. I just didn't know what to do with them at the time."

In 1999, Jones began a prison sentence for a drug conviction. It's something he owns up to, and he's never strayed back into the criminal justice system since. It's also a subject he touches on in his music.

"From my own experience, I share the platform that they've got a place for you if you don't walk the right path, and that place is not good. They've had no trouble out of me since that experience," Jones said.

Jones goes by "Six Seed" when performing. That name is a tribute to



COURTESY PHOTO
 Jones' song *Grateful* had over 12,000 listeners on Spotify last month.
 See 'JONES' Page 9

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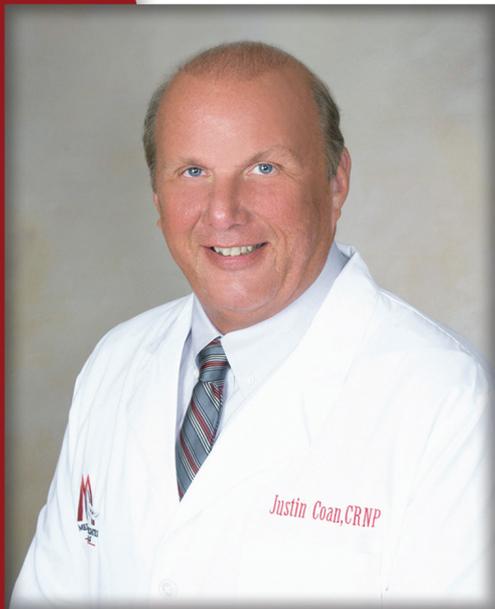


Justin Coan, CRNP

Justin is a native of North Alabama and has over 23 years of direct patient care experience in the fields of Internal Medicine and Family Practice with special expertise in kidney health.

Justin has been with Medical Associates of the Shoals for over eight years and works in constant collaboration with the physician partners.

Justin is welcoming new patients and would be honored to care for you and for those you love.



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Charlotte Jerice Bradford,
Leighton, age 58
Died Sunday, February 9, 2020.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Beulah Cemetery.

Margaret Williams Kemp,
Rogersville, age 101
Died Wednesday, February 12, 2020.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Aurora Chavez Cancino,
Russellville, age 82
Died Sunday, February 9, 2020.
Funeral held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Albert Ray Parker,
Russellville, age 65
Died Saturday, February 15, 2020.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel.

Destin Drake Sargent,
Sheffield, two months old
Died Friday, February 7, 2020. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

Dudley Chase Davis,
Phil Campbell, age 32
Died Thursday, February 13, 2020.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Gray Rock Cemetery.

David R. Tucker, Vestavia, AL
Died Wednesday, February 12, 2020.
Funeral held at Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home Chapel. Graveside service held at Franklin Memory Gardens in Russellville. Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home of Trussville and Spry Memorial Chapel of Russellville assisted the family.

Jimmy D. Jones,
Phil Campbell, age 75
Died Friday, February 14, 2020.
Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Old Line Cemetery.

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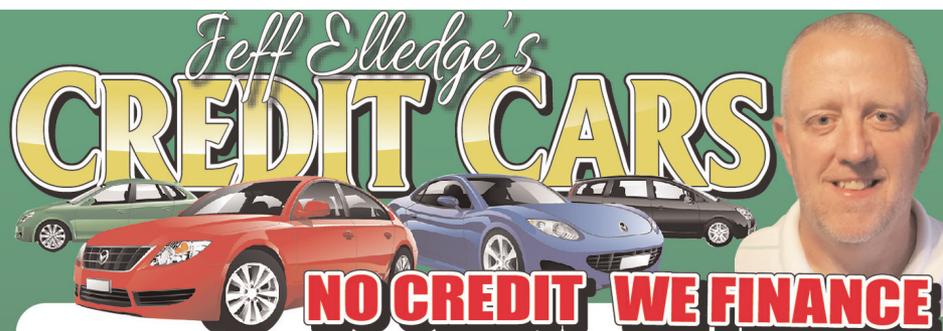
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Wallace announces commission candidacy

Submitted to the FFP

Franklin County commissioner Chris Wallace has announced his intention to run for another term representing District One on the Franklin County Commission.

Wallace will be on the Republican Primary in the Tuesday, March 3 election. He was first elected in 2012 and re-elected in 2016.

Wallace has owned and operated a construction business for more than 33 years. He and his wife Cheri have two children, Slate and Julianna. They are members of North Highlands Church of Christ in Russellville.

As a county commissioner, Wallace has used his professional experience in helping recruit and attract new businesses to Franklin County.

"Bringing jobs into Franklin County is something very important to me, because it helps everyone in numerous ways," Wallace said. "New jobs help residents provide for their families and lead a better life. And they help our area economically by providing salaries to people, who can turn around and spend money at local businesses."

In addition to his duties as commissioner, Wallace serves on the Franklin County Community Development Commission and the Russellville Industrial Development Board.

Wallace pledges to continue to work to improve infrastructure across Franklin County by supporting funding for repaving of roads and bridges in need of repair across Franklin County, just as the commission did with more than \$11 million received through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation Improvement Program.

Wallace's background in construction helps him have a thorough knowledge of what's needed and what is being done through road construction and other projects across Franklin County.

"And as a business owner, I have an idea of what businesses here need and what it takes to recruit some of these businesses to our area, which is beneficial for a variety of reasons," Wallace said.

Wallace hopes to continue with the positive working relationship formed among county and city officials across the county during the next four years.

"We have developed a good team of people at the county and municipal levels who work well together to make Franklin County a better place, and I'm honored to have been part of that team," Wallace said. "I have always tried to do the best job possible as Franklin County Commissioner District One, and I would be honored to have that opportunity another four years to help make Franklin County an even better place to live and work."

"And I am proud to say I fully support our President Donald Trump."



Chris Wallace

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My take on this... turn around, don't drown!

With all the rain and flooding we've had lately, it brought back memories of the time I was surrounded by water after taking one turn off the four-lane to an access road.

The only reason I even turned was because I'd come upon traffic that was bumper-to-bumper on all four lanes with an emergency vehicle ahead of all the traffic much farther down the road. I figured it had been a bad wreck and I'd go to the dollar store because it looked like the traffic would be like that for a while.

That one turn resulted in a big mistake within seconds. My car began floating, and I was surrounded by water. I pressed accelerator hoping I could get to the other end of the access road before my engine died. It didn't take long to realize there was no other side.

The bad thing was knowing there was a ditch on each side of me and the one to the right was the deepest, but I had no idea how close I was to either of them. Well, I need up at the deepest end with the front end of my car pointed downward.

My car was sinking while the water was rising on the inside. When it got halfway to my knees, I tried to open the door, but it slammed shut. IT was at that moment when panic began setting in. I'm very claustrophobic, but I talked myself into taking a few slow breaths and straightening myself up, or I might not make it.

I began looking around for something to break the window, just in case I couldn't get the door open on my next try. So, with Maglite in hand, I gave it another try. It was all I could do to push it open, but I was able to hold it long enough to put my legs out to keep the door from slamming shut. The force was causing the door to beat against my legs, so I was able to push the door away from my legs, keeping the beating to a minimum.

To top that off, the water came pouring in and was now above my waist. I knew I'd need to manage



Gail Motes

See 'DROWN' Page 8



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Correction Policy

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

Letters to the editor

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

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Honey Do: buttercups & tuneups

I think there is only one thing in creation that tries to rush Spring more than I do... buttercups. It seems these guys get fooled every year and push their pretty heads up through the soil at just the mention of warm temperatures, only to be bit back as ffoidils).

But, I get a little daffy when

Spring begins to tease us and just can't wait to get the mowers cranked and the yard cut that first time. With just a little warmer and drier weather that will become a reality.

Those mean machines have probably been dormant for a few months and they need a little TLC before they are put into service. Remember, engines are much like us. They need proper nutrition (oil, fuel and grease), they need to be able to breathe freely (air filters), and they need regular checkups (blades, tires, etc...).

Hopefully you put some type of fuel additive in your tank last fall or drained the tank. Fuel is not fresh and should not be used in small engines after 30 days. Cranking the equipment periodically over the winter will help by circulating fuel through the carburetor and engine. Consider draining the tank and adding fresh fuel. Check



Doug Green

fuel filters for blockage and discoloration. These filters are cheap and easy to change if there is any appearance of blockage.

Change your oil and filter either in the Spring or Fall. Refer to your owner's manual for the proper oil for our area.

Many times dirty air filters are the sole reason for an engine to not run smoothly. If the filter appears clogged or dirty, change it. Again, it's an easy fix and inexpensive maintenance. Never run an engine without an air filter properly in place.

Tires that are underinflated will cause the mower to cut uneven or scrape the ground. Also, look for cracks that may indicate dry-rotted tires that will probably go flat soon.

Clean the deck over and under. This will give the best air flow and move the grass clippings through the system. Blades should be sharpened or replaced for the new season.

Don't forget the grease. Many machines have grease fittings on wheel hubs and spindles as well as blade housings. Refer to your owner's manual.

Here's to a new season of trouble-free cutting and remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.

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

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

Love is in the air! Winners of the FFP Valentines Day contest

Last week in the FFP the first half of the winners from our Valentines Day contest was published. This week we continue with the second half. Congratulations to all the winners and be on the lookout for more contests in the future!

My special valentine is my husband Wade Willingham. He is my heartbeat, in a few days we will be married 30 years. He is a hard working man who puts God and family before himself. He is a great father to his 2 boys Cody Willingham and Cole Willis Willingham. I wouldn't know what to do without him by my side. He is well known in the community for owning the Cedar Hill Trap Range that supports youth shooting sports. He enjoys all the kids he has met and coached throughout the years. I love him infinity plus forever and a day. — Robbin Willis Willingham

My special valentine is my husband, Lukas Terry. This year we will celebrate two years of marriage and nine years of love. ? He has been my rock for the past nine years. He has supported me through every second of pursuing my dream of becoming a doctor. He uprooted his life with me and moved away from our home so I could go to the most amazing PhD program. He did all of this and more without complaining. He believes in me more than I believe in myself, and he shows me that everyday. I am the luckiest woman alive, and no one can tell me differently. Grad school is hard, but it would be impossible without him in my corner. I love you, Luke! —Mikayla Murphree Terry

My special valentine is my husband Jimmy Poss. We will be celebrating our 56th Anniversary come June 5, 2020. We love our hometown of Russellville, where we both grew up and graduated from RHS, and have lived all our lives. Jimmy is a wonderful Christian man with a very loving heart. He is the best husband, daddy and papaw ever. He is adored by his family; his four grandchildren think "he hung the moon"! He doesn't have to tell me he loves me because his actions show it; but I still like to hear those words, "I love you"; and, I do hear them quite frequently!! —Billie Sue Poss

My special Valentine is Tammy Holland we will spend this year at the Rattlesnake saloon if the Lord's willing and the creek don't rise she's put up

with me for over twenty years. She loves her garbageman and I love my lunch lady! —Jimmy Holland

My Valentines are all my grand children. They are so loving and rock my world. If they tell me they love me one time they tell me a hundred times. Sophie and Ruby are in dance and Lily dances and plays basketball. Isaac and Isaiah plays basketball, Landon is in the band which he loves, Lucas played baseball and has the best heart! Each one is special in their own way! Vivian is the newest grandbaby and she is happy and smiles all the time. Can't leave out my children and their spouses they are special and the reason I'm called Mawmaw! I think I have the best family which I love with all my HEART! —Freida McKay

My special valentine is my son Bryson. He is our only boy of 4 girls. Lord help him!!! He is such a sweetheart. He makes my day in so many ways. He is loving and at times a stinker but he is so loved. His smile will make anyone's heart melt. — Jessica Wilson

My special valentine is my fiancé, Riley Nolen. We will have been together seven years by the end of this month. We have grown up together. Each day I love him more than the last. It's so crazy to think that my high school sweetheart & first love will soon be my husband. I couldn't have hand picked a better man. He is definitely heaven sent! He loves me better than I deserve and treats me so well. My forever valentine is the most amazing man in the world. I love you, Riley!! —Lauren Rumble

My special valentine is James O. Taylor we been married for 48 years we have one daughter Stephanie Taylor Renfroe and son-in-law Ashley Renfroe two beautiful granddaughters Shelby & Emma Renfroe! My Valentine is a hard working man still work each day he a Christian man would do anything for you or your family, he take care of his family and loves his granddaughters very much ! —Judy Wilson Taylor

My special valentine is my Pops (Floyd Willingham Sr.)!! The reason why is because he means the world to me!! He is the rock to our family!! Life without him would be so hard!! There has

'SHELTER' from page 1

Wingo was scheduled to interview applicants for the temporary animal control technician position that is currently vacant in Franklin County. He expects to make a hiring recommendation to commissioners at their February 18 meeting.

Several citizens present at Monday's work session committed to volunteer their time to a low-kill shelter should commissioners decide to pursue that option.

Horton said between 1,200 and 1,500 dogs were adopted out of the HASRA shelter in Lauderdale County last year.

Eddie Britton also addressed commissioners about the condition of Jacinto Road, the primary road that leads into a subdivision along Cedar Lake being developed by Britton.

As more homes are constructed and infrastructure was completed in the subdivision, Britton said his ad valorem taxes have increased, but the con-

dition of Jacinto Road has declined. "You can look at it as helping promote business in Franklin County. The more houses sell, the more the tax base goes up," Britton said. Britton said he's already lost one potential home buyer due to poor road conditions into the subdivision. He also asked commissioners to consider subcontracting the work to his business, Dependable Dozer and Dirt, since he already has done some work on the road and his equipment is readily available in the area. "I'm asking you to consider subcontracting to people who have a vested interest in the area to work on," Britton said. The subdivision includes 11 lots, six of which have sold, Britton said. His original design calls for a total of 32 lots, to come in phases.

been so many times he has got to the point of passing but he was strong and brave and fought through it!! He has 3 wonderful boys with wife's and has 12 grandkids and i am one of the 12!! I'm the oldest granddaughter. He always makes sure we are all taken care of and always makes sure we are happy!! When I played ball he was one of my biggest supporters. He always made sure he was at all of my games and the other grandkids!! He is the most sweet precious man you'll ever meet!! He's a great man but he's an even better grandpa!! I love him more than he will ever know!! He will always hold a special place in my heart forever!! God has blessed our family with a wonderful man like him!! I hope I get to spend many more Valentine's Days with him!! I love you so much pops!! —Emma Grace Willingham

My special valentine is my husband Austin Miller. We have been together for almost 9 years and married for almost 6 of those years. Hes my best friend and I dont know where I would be without him. We have 3 beautiful children together and I couldn't ask for a better father for them. We have laughed, fought, cried, and loved each other through it all. Our story is just beginning and god has big plans for our little family. I'll always love you sweetheart and I cant wait to spend many more years with you. —Kaleyonna Fayth Miller

My special valentine is my boyfriend of over 4 years, Dylan, and our precious boys, Scout and Bandit! I know when I have a hard day of school or work I having loving hearts to heal my troubles. My eyes will fill with tears thinking of the amount of love me and Dylan share, and the love we have for our babies. They push me to become a better me and to never give up. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for us. I soak up every moment we spend together. —Carly Rice.

My special Valentine is my husband Chris. We have been together since 1989 and married for 28 years now. We have been through a lot in our time together. I had cancer 5 years ago and the love and support he showed me was beyond what I could have hoped for. He is a hard worker and good Christian man a great father and husband. I have been so blessed all these years to be his wife. He is my forever Valentine! —Martha Jones Southern

grants all over the country. And if you push spaying and neutering your pets, that will significantly reduce the problem," Horton said. "If you change from a 100 percent kill to a low-kill shelter, you'll be on the top of the list.

"Please look at this and see if you can change like Lauderdale County did. We hope you will talk with other shelters and give this your consideration."

HASRA is devoted to the "protection and enhancement of quality of life for animals that have been abandoned, neglected, abused, relinquished or found homeless," according to www.hasra.org.

Commissioners acknowledged flaws with the county's current animal shelter. Commissioner Chris Wallace said the concrete slab floor is cracking due to the shelter's location and that it needs to be larger to fulfill its purpose.

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

Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Easter hams. Hams are \$30 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Saturday, April 11 from 8-10 a.m. at the Lodge on Coffee Street.

West Elementary School is currently holding registration for Alabama's First Class Pre-K program at WES, a nationally recognized Pre-K program that sets school-ready children up for success as they continue through their educational career. Online applications can be filled out at <https://alprek.asapconnected.com>. Applications will be accepted through March 12. Enrollment is open to all children who will be four years old on or before September 1, 2020 and are residents of Alabama. Enrollees must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency (either a current utility bill or a copy of a loan or mortgage). Upon enrollment, the child's immunization form must be provided. Acceptance to the program is strictly through a random drawing that will be held Friday, March 13 at 9 a.m. at the RCS Board of Education. Parent/Guardian does not have to be present for drawing. For those interested in registering for Kindergarten at WES, registration will take place Monday-Friday, February 3-21, from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Russellville Board of Education located at 1945 Waterloo Road in Russellville. Documents required to register include: Birth certificate; Alabama shot record (not expired); lease, rental agreement, or deed; and a corresponding utility bill. Children who will be five years old on or before September 1, 2020 are eligible. For more info, visit <https://www.rcs.k12.al.us> and go to the West Elementary page.

The book *Scandalous Women: The Lives and Loves of History's Most Notorious Women*, by Elizabeth Kerri Mahon, will be discussed at the February 19 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 information, please email nancy537481@yahoo.com.

There will be a Candidate Supper at the East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department this Friday, February 21 from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. William Earl Bishop's smoked chicken and pulled barbecue pork plates will be sold for \$10 each. Proceeds will go to the repair of the pump on Fire Engine #3. The East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department is located at 10443 Hwy. 81, Phil Campbell.

The Franklin County Board of Education presents Gerry Brooks' show "Celebrating Educators" this Saturday, February 22 at Highland Park Baptist Church on Wilson Dam Road, Muscle Shoals. Meet and greet starts at noon, show starts at 1 p.m. All tickets must be purchased in advance at gerrybrooksprin.com.

Come out to this wonderful singing. Liberty Chapel Free Will Baptist , 410 Franke st Lawrenceburg TN. Presents a evening with The Hollies on Sunday February 23rd at 2:00pm .all are invited to come and enjoy this wonderful singing.

Sarah Collins Rudolph, the lone survivor of the bombing at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham on September 15, 1963, will be the guest speaker in the worship service at First Missionary Baptist Church, 521 College Avenue in Russellville, at the 11 a.m. service this Sunday, February 23, 2020, in celebration of Black History Month. A reception will be held from 9-10 a.m. in the church vestibule. On Saturday, February 22, from 5-7 p.m. there will be a Meet and Greet with Mrs. Sarah at the Reedtown Back to Basics Life Skilled Center (Old Reedtown School). Pastor B.J. Bonner and congregation invite everyone to attend.

Everyone is invited to a campaign rally for Tommy Tuberville for U.S. Senate. The rally is scheduled for Sunday, February 23 from 5-7 p.m. at the A.W. Todd Centre, 201 South Washington Avenue in Russellville.

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

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris, Jr., Camp #1833, will meet Thursday, March 5 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Flag Day Celebration will be held Saturday, March 7 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Sloss Lake Park in Russellville. For more info, please call 256-324-2317.

American Legion Post 64 will meet Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. with meeting to follow.

The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre on Saturday, March 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 historic Roxy Theater.

Ronnie McDowell returns to Russellville to celebrate his 70th birthday with a special show at the Roxy Theatre on Saturday, March 21 at 7 p.m. Joseph Baldwin and Johnathan Len will open the show. Tickets are on sale now. Reserved seats are \$20-\$35, and general admission balcony seats are \$15. For ticket information, call 256-415-3270. Proceeds will benefit the Roxy Restoration Fund.

Rudolph to speak on Feb 22

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press



Sarah Collins Rudolph

Most Alabamians know there were four young girls brutally murdered on September 15, 1963 at a bombing at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

Many don't realize there was a fifth young girl present in the church that morning. Sarah Collins Rudolph was standing by a sink when the bomb went off, and she was blinded by glass that shattered in her face.

Although Sarah survived, she lost friends and her sister, Addie Mae, that morning. As she grew up, Sarah endured extended physical and mental pain which led her into a battle with drugs and alcohol. The young girl received no counseling or mental health assistance after the tragic incident.

It took many years of pain, but Sarah eventually rediscovered God and overcame her addictions. Rudolph will share her testimony in a special service on Sunday, February 23 at First Missionary Baptist Church, 521 College Avenue in Russellville.

One of the unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement, Rudolph will appear as part of the February celebration of Black History Month. There will be a morning reception from 9-10 a.m. on the 23rd in the church vestibule, and a Saturday evening Meet and Greet will be held from 5-7 p.m. on February 22nd at the Back to Basics Life Skills Center (Old Reedtown School).

After overcoming her addiction, Rudolph has developed into a prominent and strong leader, not only in the City of Birmingham but across the country.

She's more than just a survivor—she's an advocate for black people and a devout Christian who practices what she believes in.

Pastor B.J. Bonner and the First Missionary Baptist Church congregation invite everyone to these special events.

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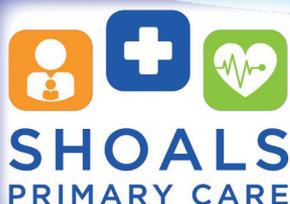
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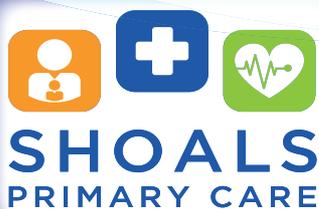
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'DROWN' from page 4

somehow to get onto my roof for safety. I was able to push enough to get my legs to move while I climbed from my seat up the inside of the door and pulled myself on top of the roof.

As I was sitting there, all cold and soaking wet in the sprinkling rain with the sky getting darker and darker, I noticed my car was close to three-fourths submerged and my hood was disappearing a little at a time.

A car finally pulled up, so I knew I was going to get a little help, but I was wrong. The people sat there a few minutes and left, to my surprise. Two or three more did the same thing.

People were hollering "Hi" from the safety of the four-lane, and I even heard my name called a few times.

Approximately 10 or 15 minutes later, a man who worked for the Russellville Electric Department helped me to get to the wet—but not flooded—pavement. His wife brought me a coat to wear.

After the waters receded, a young man walked from KFC and told me I was on Facebook. Now I know why the cars pulled in and left. They could have had a good video for the news if I hadn't made it. No, wait, I did make the news! I was "The Lady on the Car."

I can say from experience to stay out of water covering roads, and don't go near flooding waters. I had no previous warnings, but a floating car is not a good feeling. As we've heard on the news, it doesn't always have a happy ending.

Until next time, take care, my friends.



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'JONES' from page 1

his mother, Shelia Jones.

"I was the sixth seed that sprouted from my mom," Jones explained. "I have seven brothers and sisters. It's just a tribute to my mother. She would have loved seeing me do this. I made a CD a long time ago before I got out of prison, and she loved sharing it with other people."

As a teenager, Jones' musical idol was rapper Tupak Shakur. Shakur, who was killed in a drive-by shooting in 1996, rose to fame with music that addressed contemporary social issues and social inequality.

"He wrote about things he had experienced in life, and that's how my music is," Jones said. "It's not all talk about big fancy cars, big gold chains and all that stuff."

"Since I was 14, I always rapped. I'd get off the school bus and get in front of the TV and watch Tupac's music. All the stuff he had going on and the things he talked about in his music caught my attention."

Jones, the father of four, has jumped into music full-time. While he hasn't made it big yet, early returns look promising. Jones's song *Grateful* had more than 12,000 listeners on Spotify last month. He's won several live music reviews on social media, going head-to-head with other rap artists.

Jones has heard from listeners across the country who have been impacted by his music. And that reinforces that his musical messages are connecting with people.

"I've heard from folks all over the country and around the world. And they're all on there saying I'm representing Russellville, Alabama. It's blowing up pretty big," Jones said.

Jones recently recorded three songs at FAME Recording Studios in Muscle Shoals, and he plans to record a video for *Grateful* next month, followed by the release of his first CD, which will feature six original songs. Multiple scenes in the video will be shot in Russellville, Jones said.

Unlike his other songs, *Grateful* looks ahead in Jones' life, rather than reflecting on past life experiences.

Jones' notoriety on the live music reviews caught the attention of other artists, too. He's currently working with a singer who wants him to open for her on a six-city tour.

Jones' children are ages two, four, five and six, and they are the centerpiece of his life. But Jones said his relationship with new girlfriend Stacy Mills gave him the motivation to finally give music his all-in.

"Before that, I was doing all the wrong things. The money wasn't right to do this, and it just didn't feel right," Jones said. "I got with a new girl, and she's working with me on my career and I've swayed off the bad stuff and starting investing fully into my music."

"She helps me with the kids, allows me to be focused on my music and gives me the time to write. She also helped me get the money to get into the studio. She's been with me through this whole ride."

Like his idol Tupac, Jones wants those who hear his music to feel his emotion of sharing about life experiences.

"People have messaged me that they felt that in my soul, that they loved a song and it touched them to their heart. They're getting emotionally attached to my music, and that makes me feel great," Jones said. "I never thought I could have an impact on people like that."

"My life experiences have prepared me for this. If my mom and dad had been there for me like they should have been, I probably would have taken a different path in life. But you've got to live what life gives you and make the best of it."

Jones hopes to get signed by a record label and possibly move to Atlanta, known as a major hub for the rap industry. And he's not worried about his age being a hindrance. While 39 is young in life, it's not so young in the music business.

"Snoop Dogg and others are still putting out music. If my talent can make producers some money in the industry, they're gonna jump on it and my age won't make a difference," Jones said. "I've had this talent, and I've been letting it go to waste all these years. I've got a lot bundled inside of me, and I'm ready to get it going."

You can follow Jones' music on his Facebook Page (Six Seed), Instagram (Sixseed1) and Twitter (RSixseed).

Several of his songs are available through YouTube and his Facebook page as well. One word of caution—Jones' lyrics are often explicit and may not be appropriate for younger listeners.

"There is some explicit language, but to me, that makes my music more real and emotional. I've got some radio edited versions of my songs, too," Jones said. "A rapper telling a personal story is more important than just mumble rappers talking about killing and making money. I try to do with my music what Tupac did with his and get people emotionally attached."



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Dixie Youth in need of volunteers

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PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Olivia Taylor (pictured with ball), and the Lady Bobcats offensive attack allowed them to hold the ball for a majority of the second half en route to a 44-26 victory over New Hope.

PC girls advance to regional finals for 2nd time in 3 years

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

HANCEVILLE - The question was coming, and Craig Thomas was ready with his answer.

One year ago at this time, Thomas and his Phil Campbell girls built a double-digit lead in the first half of their regional semifinal against Winfield, only to watch that lead disappear bit by bit over the course of a nightmarish second half in which the Lady Pirates sat back in a zone defense while the Lady Bobcats missed shot after wayward shot from the perimeter.

Winfield won that game 47-42, ending Phil Campbell's hopes of earning what would have been a second straight Final Four berth. In the agonizing weeks that followed, Thomas second-

guessed himself over and over, wishing that he had instructed his team to pull the ball out and hold it in an effort to force the Lady Pirates to abandon their zone and go back to man-to-man.

Fast-forward one year to Saturday evening's Class 3A Northwest Regional semifinal against New Hope, and the Lady Bobcats found themselves in an eerily similar situation. They played a terrific first half—particularly on the defensive end—and led by as many as 15 points before taking an eight-point cushion into the break.

Sophomore Faith Cook opened the second half with a three for Phil Campbell, but senior guard Bri Roberson answered with a three for New Hope to make it an eight-point game again. On the Lady Bobcats' ensuing possession, with the Lady

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Tony Bonds isn't too old to remember when the John Blackwell Sports Complex was the place to be in Russellville on spring evenings.

And he, along with his fellow officers of Russellville Dixie Youth Baseball, have a goal of building their association back to that point, but he knows it's not going to be a quick fix.

"There was a time when every kid in town would be at the Lee Complex," Bonds said. "Families came out and ate dinner there. Even people whose children didn't play would come to hang out and enjoy the atmosphere. We all as adults have good memories of Little League, and we are trying to recreate that and get back to that.

"We've got some work to do, and it's going to take a unified effort on everyone's part and the ability to be open and willing to come out and help a little more than what's been the norm the last couple years."

Bonds serves as president of Russellville Dixie Youth Baseball. His fellow officers include vice-president Tamara Hester, treasurers Brian and Amy Hamilton, and representatives Chris Fretwell, Jason Hartsell, Amy Ray and Eric Smith.

In recent years, Russellville Dixie Youth participation has declined, in part because of the growth of travel baseball leagues and in part due to other reasons. As for kids who want to play travel baseball, Bonds said there's no reason they should have to choose one or the other.

"I stress to parents whose kids play travel ball, play both," Bonds said. "There's nothing wrong with a kid playing both. As a coach, we believe the more times a kid is on the field the better off he'll be at the end of the day.

"If they are scheduled to pitch in travel ball, I would instruct our coaches to work with those players and parents so they can do both as far as travel and Dixie Youth."

Although the local Dixie Youth league held try-outs February 11 and 13, Bonds said there would be a make-up tryout date for kids who didn't come the first time, as registration will be extended through February 20. Parents may sign their child up for Dixie Youth at the Russellville Recreation Center.

There is a \$50 registration fee, which includes a hat and jersey. Pants, helmets and bats are to be provided by the players.

The league is broken into four age divisions: 6 and Under, 8 and Under, 10 and Under and 12 and Under. The 6 and Under league is a coach-pitch format, while players begin pitching at the

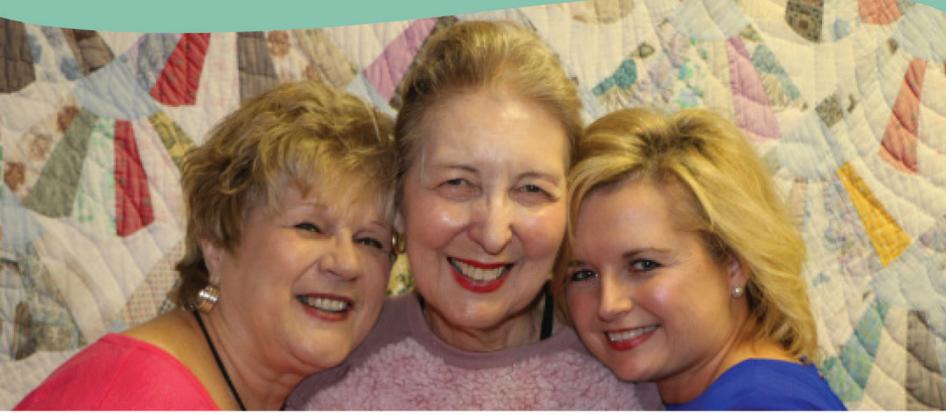
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'DIXIE YOUTH' from page 11

next age level.

Bonds said league play consists of games against other Russellville Dixie Youth teams along with other teams in the area. Last year, Dixie Youth teams played Haleyville, Red Bay, Phil Campbell and Belgreen teams.

Bonds encourages parents of players to assist the league in some capacity.

"We need everyone to help with donations. We don't make money off the concessions. We charge \$50 a kid, and we go through that the first month by paying umpires," Bonds said.

"We plan on having a couple of Fun Days, where we will keep the revenue from concessions. And we need volunteers to run scoreboards. If parents can at least be there and be positive about Dixie Youth Baseball moving forward, we'll try and bring it back to what it once was."

For more information about Russellville Dixie Youth Baseball, visit their Facebook page. You can search "Russellville Dixie Youth Baseball 2019" to find it. Although the year 2019 is in the name, there is updated information about the 2020 league available on it.

RHS falls in season opener

Staff reports

Hartselle rallied for four runs with two outs in the bottom of the third inning last Thursday and went on to beat Russellville 7-2 in the season opener for both teams.

Junior right-hander Gordon White started on the mound for the Golden Tigers (0-1) and was sharp early, striking out two in a one-two-three first inning and then retiring the side in order again in the second. White got the first two batters in the bottom of the third before Hartselle strung together three singles, a double and two walks to score four times and grab a 4-0 lead.

The Tigers tacked on another run in the bottom of the fourth and led 5-0 before Russellville got on the board with two runs in the top of the fifth. Senior outfielder Will Rogers sparked the rally with a single, and Casen

See 'OPENER,' page 15



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'PC' from page 11

Indians sitting back in a two-three zone, Thomas issued the order he regretted not giving a year ago in virtually the same spot.

Hold it.

And that's precisely what senior guard Kallie Allen did. For roughly the next *four minutes*. She stood on the logo just in front of the mid-court line at Tom Drake Coliseum and held the ball.

And held it.

And held it.

And held it.

Later, sitting at the post-game press conference after his team had finished pulling away for a 44-26 win that punched its ticket to the regional final for the second time in the last three years, Thomas was ready for the question.

When he went to the delay, was last year...?

"In my mind. In my mind. Absolutely," Thomas said. "We can function a little better against that man-to-man. We wanted to pull them out and make them guard the whole floor and do a good job handling the ball. We wanted them in man. We didn't wanna have to face a zone."

So...how long would the Lady Bobcats (23-6) have held the ball if the Lady Indians (21-10) hadn't eventually decided—with roughly 2:30 left in the third quarter—to come guard them?

"Until the end of the game," Thomas answered without hesitation, while Allen took it a step further.

"Forever," she said. "We were up, so..."

Indeed they were. So the next logical question is this: While restless spectators shifted in their seats or made a quick run to the concession stand, while the New Hope student section boomed and the Phil Campbell crowd cheered, while sports writers on press row joked with the nearest referee and watched the Auburn-Missouri game on a tablet, while the clock on the huge scoreboard hanging from the rafters at Tom Drake ticked down and down and down, what was going through the minds of the players on the floor as they stood rooted in the same spot for nearly four minutes?

"I'm thinking that we're winning," Allen said, "so I'm gonna hold it as long as they'll stay back."

"I was just wondering when they were finally gonna go back to the man," junior guard Caitlynn Mills said. "It took them forever."

"It was kind of funny," junior forward Olivia Taylor said of the frustrated boos and taunts coming from the New Hope faithful.

Craig McGill, the Lady Indians' second-year head coach, shared in that frustration, but he was the only one tasked with deciding how to respond to the stall tactic.

"I had a lot of things go through my mind," said McGill, who was clearly not a fan of the strategy but nonetheless instructed his players to sit back in their zone while the better part of the third quarter bled slowly away. "Like I just told our girls, I'm not gonna second-guess that. I thought we could stay fresh right there, and Bri already had two fouls. I thought, 'We can go at them at two minutes and try to get a stop and a score.' If we could do that, it would have cut it to six and put all the pressure on them, and they might get tight in that situation."

"But it didn't work out our way."

"Most of their turnovers, we got fast breaks on," said Thomas, whose team scored 12 points off those New Hope turnovers. "Ask our girls. What did we pound and pound and pound into their heads before the game? Push the ball up the floor. Transition points are important to us."

The Lady Bobcats worked the ball around for a few more seconds after New Hope matched up, and then Thomas called a timeout. Out of the break, Phil Campbell caught the Lady Indians out of position on a trap, and Cook found a wide-open Taylor for an easy layup to make it 31-21. The lead never got smaller than eight the rest of the way. Afterward, Thomas wasn't the least bit shy about defending his decision to go with the delay. He was sorry the previous year for *not* pulling the ball out and holding it; he wasn't about to make the same mistake twice—bored spectators be darned.

"That's not fun basketball to watch," he acknowledged. "But we've gotta win. All we're worried about now is a win. It ain't gotta be pretty, and it ain't gotta be flashy. We've just gotta win."

The Lady Bobcats did precisely that, earning their fifth win in a row and their 16th in the last 17 games. As is usually the case, defense was the driving force. Phil Campbell had seven blocks—including five by the 5'8 Taylor—and five steals in the first half, holding New Hope to just 6-for-22 shooting from the floor. The Lady Indians hit a couple of early threes but then endured nearly a ten-minute stretch without a field goal as the Lady Bobcats went on a 16-1 run to open up a 24-9 lead.

Seventh-grader Kaylee Yarbrough, listed generously at 5'1 in the tournament program, broke the drought with a three-pointer at the 2:30 mark of the first half and scored eight points in a 9-2 run by New Hope, but the Lady Indians still trailed 26-18 going into the break.

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"Our guards did an exceptional job on their guards," Thomas said. "They were a guard-oriented team, I thought. Number thirty [Yarbrough] can shoot the ball just about anywhere. To be a seventh-grader, she's an excellent player. Number one [Roberson], she penetrated well on the film we watched. Mills did a good job keeping her out of the paint."

"Defensively, none of their players had over eight points, so we defended well. We played good help-side when we had to. Olivia blocked three or four shots. That was big. It sort of went with our game plan. Olivia was gonna play a lot of help-side defense for us, and these two [Allen and Mills] kept their two main scorers out of the paint."

Taylor, who scored eight of her 12 points in the fourth quarter and finished the night 6-for-8 from the floor, was perhaps even more impactful on the defensive end, blocking a career-high six shots. The 5'8 Allen, a Wallace-Hanceville signee, blocked four shots and also had five steals to go along with her five points, five rebounds and three assists.

Allen scored all five of her points and also had three steals in the first quarter, helping Phil Campbell build a 17-8 lead by the end of one.

"We played better in the first quarter than we usually do," said Allen, who finished the night 2-for-4 from the floor. "We usually start off slow, but we started off strong today."

Mills shot 5-for-7 from the floor with a three and finished with 14 points, 11 of which came in the first half. Taylor had five rebounds to go along with her dozen points, and junior forward Katie Thomas added four points, seven rebounds and two assists. Cook chipped in with seven points, two boards and two assists, and Kenner Scott scored two points.

The Lady Bobcats shot 56 percent (19-for-34) from the floor, compared to just 24 percent (8-for-34) by New Hope. The Lady Indians really struggled in the fourth quarter, shooting just 1-for-9 and committing six of their 13 turnovers on the night. Taylor drove home the nail in the coffin with 3:35 remaining when she came up with a steal and turned it into a transition layup to stretch the lead to 40-25.

"Most of their turnovers, we got fast breaks on," said Thomas, whose team scored 12 points off those New Hope turnovers. "Ask our girls. What did we pound and pound and pound into their heads before the game? Push the ball up the floor. Transition points are important to us. We want twelve to fifteen points a game in transition. I'd rather have fifteen, but twelve is close enough."

"We did a good job taking care of the ball and seeing the open people at the right times. We got up and down the floor like we wanted to."

Yarbrough led New Hope with eight points, and Roberson added seven. Phil Campbell out-rebounded the Lady Indians 24-14 on the night.

Now the Lady Bobcats turn their attention to next Wednesday's regional final against Lauderdale County (28-5), scheduled for a 12:30 p.m. tip. A win would send Phil Campbell to Birmingham for the second time in three years.

"It's gonna be tougher next week," Allen said of the impending showdown with Lauderdale County. "They're bigger and stronger than the team we just played."

Added Mills, "They're a lot quicker, and they push the ball. We just have to push the ball and play at our level."

The Lady Bobcats will also have to contain 5'11 freshman post player Ruthie Smith, who scored 19 points on 8-for-10 shooting in Lauderdale County's 47-32 victory over Winfield on Saturday.

"They have a lot of size to them," Thomas said. "Guard-play, we match up well with them. But their size, we'll have to account for that. [Smith] scored a lot of points for them today, and that was the difference in the game."

McGill, now in his second season as New Hope's head coach, sees in Phil Campbell what he hopes his young Lady Indians—who started two freshmen along with the seventh-grader Yarbrough on Saturday—can eventually become.

"Hats off to Coach Thomas. They have a great program," McGill said. "That's how we wanna be. That's how physical we wanna be and how tough we wanna be. I've got nothing but respect for that program."

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THS to debut boys & girls soccer

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

When Tharptown High School teacher Scott Vance decided to go back to college to get his administrative degree, he was forced to give up his role as assistant football coach for the Wildcats due to time constraints. Once he received that degree, he knew he wanted to get back to being a part of the athletic program at THS; he just wasn't sure how to do so. After a conversation with THS Vice Principal Bart Moss one day, Vance found his way in: a brand new soccer program for the school.

Developing a soccer program at Tharptown has long been a popular discussion amongst the students but has never come to fruition. That will all change this spring as the Wildcats will trot out boys and girls soccer teams for the first time in school history. The boys team consists of 22 players, the maximum number of players allowed on a roster according to the AHSAA, and the girls team will suit up 18 players this year.

Vance says that once the process started of getting enough players to form the teams, there wasn't any shortage of talent to go through.

"When we had our first meeting where we were trying just to gauge interest and see what we would have to work with, we had 85 kids show up to the meeting," Vance said. "85 kids in a smaller school like ours is unbelievable. The fact that we were able to get that many kids out and be supportive of the program is a good sign for things to come."

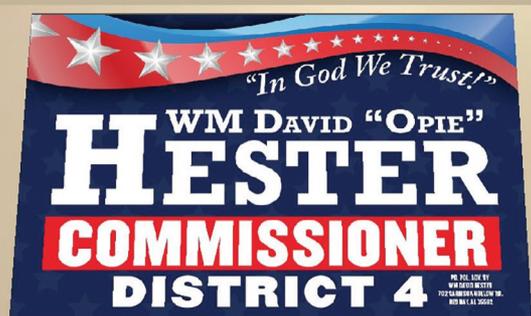
While the 2020 season will not be as extensive for the Wildcats as it might be for other soccer programs across the state, Tharptown does intend on playing as often as possible. Due to AHSAA rules, Tharptown is considered "non-competitor" which means that they will not be able to contend for area titles or any type of postseason play.

However, Vance and the Wildcats are not shying away from competition in their first season. Currently, the Wildcats are scheduled to play 6 matches throughout the season against Russellville, Muscle Shoals, and Clements high schools. In addition to these official matches, Tharptown will also play 4 intersquad matches as well.

Dixie Chavez and Carlos Perez have been brought on to help assist Vance in coaching the THS soccer program and will focus more on the X's and O's. While he is still learning the ins and outs of soccer, Vance hopes that this year can be a learning year for both him, and the players.

"This year we want to get our feet wet in terms of the competition, practices, and things like that. We said early on that we wanted this season to be a building block for next year and for years to come and just really build a nice foundation," Vance said. "Personally, I want to learn as much as I can about soccer. That way I can use that knowledge to continue to help this program grow and be a high-caliber type of program for years."

See 'SOCCER,' Page 15



Commissioner David Hester, Wife Liz Hester, Son Adam Hester, Daughter-in-Law Tina Hester, grandsons Dylan, Noah and Ty Hester.

I have been truly honored and blessed to be your Franklin County Commissioner for the past three years. Trust in me as I pray and "Trust in God" to continue to give me the wisdom and knowledge in making our beautiful county a better place to live.

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'SOCCER' from page 14

Starting a program from scratch will undoubtedly come with certain challenges regardless of the sport. However, that's something that Vance isn't too worried about as he heads into his first head coaching job.

"I've always just wanted to be involved in athletics, regardless of what it is. The desire has always been there and to me that desire helps deal with any challenges that come up along the way," Vance said. "Everyone is excited for the program, we have a ton of support across the board and I know we'll be in the best position to succeed."

'OPENER' from page 12

Heaps and Jackson Lindsey both walked to load the bases. Sophomore Canyon Pace delivered an RBI single to right, and Heaps scored on a wild pitch to cut the lead to 5-2.

The Golden Tigers stranded runners at second and third when sophomore Ethan Oliver lined out to left field to end the inning. Hartselle got those two runs back in the bottom of the fifth, extending the lead to 7-2 on a two-run double by Brodie Morrow.

Seven different pitchers threw one inning apiece for the Tigers, combining to strike out 13 Russellville hitters. William Turner picked up the win in relief, and Carter Borden and Andrew Rittman each struck out the side in the sixth and seventh innings, respectively.

White (0-1) took the loss, allowing four earned runs on four hits in 2.2 innings. He struck out three and walked one, throwing 32 of his 53 pitches for strikes. Logan White worked 1.1 innings in relief, allowing one earned run on three hits and two walks with one strikeout. Sophomore Emitt Green pitched the final two innings and did not allow a run or a hit, striking out four batters and hitting two.

The Golden Tigers finished with four hits on the day. Pace was 2-for-4 with an RBI, and Rogers went 1-for-2 with a walk and a run. Nick Smith was 1-for-3 with a double and a walk, and Eli Gipson walked twice.

Morrow led Hartselle at the plate, going 2-for-4 with four RBIs.

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Bragwell helped the Bulldogs earn a regional tournament berth last week, knocking down six first-half threes and finishing with a game-high 23 points in Tuesday's 75-48 sub-regional rout of Mars Hill. The junior sniper finished the year shooting 49.2 percent (97-for-197) from beyond the arc, the second-highest single-season mark in AHSAA history (minimum 150 attempts).

Bragwell averaged 12.0 points per game on the season, topping the 20-point mark seven times. He also shot 86.5 percent (32-for-37) from the foul line and helped Belgreen finish 27-7.



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