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McDowell concert delayed to May

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

As he nears his 70th birthday, country legend Ronnie McDowell says he thinks about his age 'a lot of the time.' But to hear McDowell tell it, that's not a bad thing. The Portland, Tenn., native remains just as busy as he's ever been. Whether he's out on tour, sitting down with producers for his new television show, entertaining fans on a cruise or painting his latest inspiration, McDowell couldn't enjoy life more.

"I saw Tony Bennett perform not too long ago," McDowell said. "He was 87 at the time. The show was just him and a piano. Now that's what I want to do at 87—still be out there singing *Older Women*. That would mean a lot."

McDowell will perform his 30th show in Russellville on Saturday, May 16th at the historic Roxy Theater. Originally scheduled for Saturday, March 21st, the concert was postponed due to Alabama being placed in a state of emergency, according to concert organizer Wanda Myrick.


Myrick said the decision to postpone the event came after consultation with the council's attorney.



COURTESY PHOTO
 McDowell (pictured with Dolly Parton), will perform his 30th show in Russellville to celebrate his 70th birthday.

See 'MCDOWELL' Page 7


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Runoff election to decide revenue commissioner, U.S. Senate seat

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Editor's note: As of press time, it appears likely that Alabama's primary runoff election will be postponed from March 31st. Please check www.franklinfreepress.net or our Facebook page for breaking news.

If the March 31st runoff results mirror those of the March 3rd primary, Tommy Tuberville will be very satisfied with how Franklin County residents voted.

Tuberville received the most votes statewide in the Republican Primary for Alabama's junior seat for United States Senate, and Tuberville fared well in Franklin County as well.

In a county where Jeff Sessions began his law practice in 1973, Tuberville was able to win Franklin County with 2,125 votes. Sessions, seeking a return to the Senate seat he vacated to become United States Attorney General in 2017, received 1,637 votes. Congressman

Bradley Byrne finished third in Franklin County with 773 votes. Roy Moore, who traditionally has fared well with Franklin County voters, received only 665 votes.

Haleyville businessman Stanley Adair received 154 votes. Ruth Page Nelson received 57 votes and Arnold Mooney 31 votes.

Tuberville and Sessions are in the runoff set for Tuesday, March 31st. Polls across Alabama will be open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.


More than 5,500 voters participated in the Republican Primary in Franklin County, by far the largest amount to ever vote Republican.

Those voters, along with registered voters who did not participate in the March 3rd primary, are eligible to vote in the Republican runoff on March 31st. The 1,118 voters who cast Democratic ballots in the March 3rd primary are not allowed to crossover into the Republican runoff.

In addition to the Senate race, Franklin County voters

See 'RUNOFF' Page 9

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Sammy Batchelor, 75, died on Friday, March 13th. Funeral service will at Pinkard Funeral Home in Haleyville. Internment at Winston Memorial Cemetery.

Gary Franklin Burleson, Haleyville, 78, died on Wednesday, March 11th. Funeral service at Pinkard Funeral Home in Haleyville. Internment at Corinth Heights Cemetery.

Charles H. Holcomb, Russellville, 88, died on Monday, March 10th. Funeral service at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Internment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Jackie Thomas Saind, of Russellville, 70, died on Monday, March 9th. Funeral service at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Internment at Bethsaida Cemetery.

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Local man charged with two felonies in accidental shooting

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A Russellville man faces two felony charges after a gun he was handling discharged and seriously injured an 11-year-old child.

Carl Eugene Garrett, 1223 College Avenue, Russellville, was charged with shooting into an occupied dwelling and reckless assault second degree as the result of a Sunday afternoon incident at a residence on Norton Avenue.

According to Russellville Police Chief Chris Hargett, Garrett was handling a .45 caliber Springfield handgun inside the residence when the gun discharged. The bullet went through the wall and struck the 11-year-old child, who was outside.

Hargett said the child was struck in the torso, with the bullet traveling through his stomach before it lodged in his wrist.

The child was taken to Russellville Hospital before being airlifted to Huntsville. Hargett said surgery on the child was 'successful' and he is expected to recover from the injuries.

"The gun was laying on the table in the residence when (Garrett) picked it up and chambered a round. Then the gun went off," Hargett said. "After one round was fired, they immediately heard screaming outside and realized the child had been struck."

Hargett said RPD investigators believe the shooting was not intentional, so Garrett was charged with reckless, rather than intentional, assault. The assault charge is a Class C felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison upon conviction. Shooting into an occupied dwelling is a Class B felony, punishable by up to 20 years in prison upon conviction.

Garrett, who was not related to the child, was taken to the Franklin County Jail to await a bond hearing. He remained in custody as of Monday.

"He told an officer he believed it was a BB gun and when he chambered a round, it accidentally discharged. We do not believe it was an intentional shooting," Hargett said.

"As firearm instructors, we learn the motto that every gun you pick up, you treat as if it was loaded. Why pick up a gun and start messing with it not knowing if it is loaded?," Hargett said.

"It's reckless and dangerous to be messing with a weapon you have no business touching and this is a prime example of why you don't do that," Hargett added.

County commission addresses Coronavirus concerns

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Monday's Franklin County Commission meeting ran a bit longer than usual, but with concerns about the COVID-19 virus and its potential impact in Franklin County, there was nothing 'usual' about the meeting.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore told commissioners about measures being taken by the Franklin County Courthouse custodial staff to keep the facility as safe as possible.

Fortunately, courthouse custodians already had some safeguards in place for the recent flu season, including multiple hand sanitizer stands at the entrance and several locations throughout the courthouse. Additional materials, including disinfecting wipes and cleaners, have been distributed to all courthouse offices.

"As we know, this virus is ever-changing," Moore said. "The custodial staff is doing a very good job keeping the courthouse clean. They have taken these safeguards for several months now."

Franklin County Commissioner Jason Miller took part in an emergency conference call last week with Alabama Governor Kay Ivey.

"The governor said if you have concerns and want to be tested, to contact your doctor first," Miller said. "If you don't have a health care provider, call 1-888-264-2256."

Miller said additional information is available at www.cdc.org and www.adph.org.

Moore said a fact sheet about COVID-19 is available to the public at the Franklin County Probate Office.

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

—extended the advertising and application process for the Accountant/Payable Clerk position for an additional three weeks.

—authorized Franklin County Solid Waste Officer Gene Ward to solicit bids for a \$385,000 loan for the purchase of two garbage trucks.

See 'COMMISSION,' page 5



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How to save your money for your dream summer vacation

Have you started planning your summer vacation yet? It'll be sipping-lemonade-by-the-pool season before you know it. I love vacations, but here's what I don't love: Nearly 40% of millennials are willing to go into debt for their trips.¹

Coming back home to credit card bills makes the end of a vacation miserable. I don't want that to be your story. If you start saving up now, you'll be in great shape when it's time to pack your bags.

Here are eight ways to save up and pay for your vacation with your own money:

Give your budget a refresh. If it's been a while since you looked at where your money is really going each month, I bet you'll find some areas where you can cut back in a matter of minutes. Then, you can put that cash toward your vacation sinking fund!

Brew your own coffee at home. I get it. Fancy coffee with a designer label makes me feel special, too. But if you put that \$25 a week into a vacation fund for a while, you'll add a couple hundred bucks or more to your travel budget.

Pack your lunch. Peanut butter and jelly today means piña colodas all day on the beach this summer!

Order water at restaurants. If you go out to eat, give up extras like soda, appetizers, and alcohol.

Save on groceries by shopping generic or at Aldi. Everyone I know swears their grocery bill was slashed in half simply by switching to shopping at Aldi. If you don't have one near you, you can save money buying store brand or generic brand items.



Rachel Cruze

Sell your kids' clothes at consignment stores. I'm a huge fan of this! I also love shopping consignment to save money.

Sell stuff online through places like Facebook Marketplace. You know there's stuff laying around the house, in the garage, or in your closet that you don't use anymore. Put it to good use by selling it, and put that money toward your vacation!

Cancel any unused subscriptions. When's the last time you really watched a show on HBO, or used any of the makeup samples from your Birchbox? I'm not hating on subscription services, but if you don't use them, that's money leaving your bank account each month you could be saving.

Once you try these money-saving tips, you might just make them a habit. Then, you'll be ahead of the game when it's vacation time next year. My free Vacation Budget Worksheet makes it super easy to plan for all your expenses.

Things always cost more than you expect. But this worksheet will help you plan for everything—even the unexpected stuff!

About Rachel Cruze

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

Please send your guest columns and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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

Letters to the editor

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

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**DAVE
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by Dave Ramsey

Learning to say no

Dear Dave,

We're debt-free except for our home, and we'll have our fully funded emergency fund of three to six months of expenses [we've agreed on six months' worth] saved up by the end of February.

We're also setting aside a little each month to buy a newer car with cash later. We're about \$5,000 from our car fund goal, but my husband is getting impatient. He wants us to go ahead and finance the remainder, since it's a relatively small amount. He has tried to justify this by mentioning that you don't seem to have a problem with people borrowing money to buy a house. Could you explain the difference?

Lana

Dear Lana,

Okay, first things first. I don't like debt of any kind. I don't really like borrowing for a house, but I'm not unreasonable. I tolerate mortgage loans,

as long as people use a 15-year, fixed rate mortgage, with payments that are no more than a fourth of their monthly take-home pay. A house is often the largest purchase in a person's life and one most people can't achieve based solely on saving. I still recommend, however, setting aside as much as possible for a down payment before taking out a mortgage.

Here's the thing. Cars go down in value, while traditional homes generally increase in value substantially over the years. Plus, you can get an absolutely great, pre-owned car for \$10,000 to \$15,000 dollars. This is an amount which, in my mind, is doable over the course of several months through determined saving and living on a budget. Depending on where you live, a good home can

See 'LEARNING' Page 8

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'Commission,' from page 3

—hired Jonathan Frederick and Sherry Crowder as Corrections Officers/Dispatchers in the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, hired Brooke Harbin as a temporary Corrections Officer/Dispatcher and Josh Barber as a part-time, contract deputy on an as-needed basis.

—accepted a bid of \$159,950 from Maddox Construction for the purchase of a roadside ditcher for the Franklin County Highway Department.

—accepted the resignation of David Hamilton from the Highway Department and approved the employment of Ty Linedecker as a temporary employee.

—authorized the advertisement of 10 part-time and/or full-time positions with the Franklin County Highway Department.

—authorized Moore to execute a buyback contract with JM Wood Auction for two trucks in the Highway Department.

—approved the expense of \$4,400 by the Franklin County Coroner's Office for a van to be used for transport of bodies. An additional sum of \$2,500 of grant proceeds will also apply to the purchase price.

—tabled action on moving forward with a low kill animal shelter for Franklin County.

—approved the employment of Janett Vargas and Ana Montes-Lucas as aides for the 2020 Franklin County Census Committee.

A request from David Garrett for reimbursement of \$125 in wrecker costs, \$789 in repairs and \$297 for rental car expenses died for lack of a motion. Garrett was requesting reimbursement for damage to his vehicle incurred as a result of driving through a pothole on Highway 69.

'LEARNING,' from page 4

cost 10 to 20 times that much.

The best way to build wealth and have a secure financial life is to stay away from debt. This means getting out of mortgage debt as quickly as possible, too. You're never going to win with money if you can't learn to delay pleasure.

Everyone has that little kid inside them, and that little kid wants everything he or she wants *right now*. Your husband is asking a normal question, but he's dangerously close to letting that immature little kid out.

It happens to all of us once in a while, but we have to grow to a point as adults where we tell that little kid no!

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 and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

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Development Commission approves multiple grants

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Community Development Commission met February 28th and approved a number of grants to local schools and non-profit agencies.

The commission, which includes Brad Bolton, Jeremy Campbell, Chris Wallace and Russellville Mayor David Grissom, meets quarterly to review grant applications. The next meeting of the commission will be April 17, 2020, at 8:30 a.m., at Red Bay City Hall.

Any grant request for that meeting must be received by a member of the commission on or before April 10, 2020, at 12 p.m.

With the most recent grants, more than \$2.022 million has been returned to Franklin County since the inception of the funding. The funds come from in lieu of tax payments from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

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

Grant awards for the February 28th meeting included:

- Transfer of \$5,000 to Future Economic Development Fund.
- \$500 to Russellville Middle School for purchase of physical education

See 'GRANTS' Page 8



Please Elect

ELECT **Stratt Byars**
Revenue Commissioner

Thank You Franklin County for the support shown to me in the March 3rd Republican Primary for Franklin County Revenue Commissioner. I would appreciate your support in the Tuesday, March 31st, Runoff.

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with Chapter 1, Title 39, Code of Alabama, 1975, notice is hereby given that Hovater's Metal Works, Inc., Contractor, has completed the Contract for Renovation of Building Renovation for Phil Campbell Splashpad, Phil Campbell, AL, Project # 21712, for the State of Alabama and the Town of Phil Campbell, Owners, and have made request for final settlement of said Contract. All persons having any claim for labor, materials, or otherwise in connection with this project should immediately notify CREATE Architects, Inc., 218A North Court Street, Florence, AL 35630.

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What's Happening


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


 Osborn Hill Cemetery will meet on Thursday, March 19 at the Littleville Town Hall at 6 p.m. to elect officers for the coming year. Donations are needed to help maintain the perpetual care now and in the future. Please make check payable to the Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Lana Duncan, 2330 Colburn Mtn. Road, Tusculmbia, AL 35674, or to the Valley State Bank in Russellville, AL 35674. We encourage everyone to come!


 Phil Campbell Study Club is sponsoring the sale of William Bishop's BBQ Pork & Smoked Half Chicken plates which include sauces, baked beans, coleslaw, dinner roll and dessert; Thursday, March 19, 2020, 3 PM till 6:30 PM; pick up at Phil Campbell First Baptist Church Annex; \$10 each. Proceeds will be used for Scholarships and other community projects. For info, call 205-993-4470.


 There will be a one-year celebration of the Little Free Library at Phil Campbell Memorial Park on Saturday, March 21 from 10 a.m.-noon. Guest authors DeCory Hale and Jake Owens will be in attendance, and a book swap will be held. Everyone is welcome!


 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.


 The Russellville Civitan Club is holding a Chicken Stew Fundraiser on Saturday, March 21. Pre-orders may be made by calling Pat Lane at 256-332-0965 or 256-627-7738. Quart jar is \$10, two quarts \$16, three quarts \$20 and gallon is \$24. Please pick up by noon on March 21 at Calvary Baptist Church on Highway 43 in Russellville.


 There will be a fundraiser for the Martin Luther King Jr. scholarship on March 22 from 1-3 PM at the Russellville canteen. There will be smoked chicken or chicken tender plates along with baked beans, slaw, rolls, cake, tea and water. Dinner will be \$8.


 Belgreen Alumni Banquet April 4th. Saturday 4-5:00 social hour. Meal 5:00. Business meeting at 6:00. Honoring classes of 1965, 75, 85, 95, 05, 2015 and Class of 1970 for 50th year. Meal is \$12. Please rsvp 256-332-1376. You can pay at the door.


 The NACOLG SenioRx Medication Assistance Program supplies free and low-cost medications for anyone in Alabama with a disability or a chronic illness, regardless of age, that requires daily medication. Medicare recipients may also be eligible. For more information, contact NACOLG SenioRx today. There is no charge for this service. Call 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) or 256-389-0529 and ask for Paula Pardue. This program is in partnership with the state of Alabama and Alabama Department of Senior Services.


 There will be a Health and Beauty Aids Giveaway on Saturday, March 21, at 9 a.m., at First Free Will Baptist Church, 16140 Highway 43 in Russellville.


 St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal Church invites you to be a part of their spring revival Wednesday March 25 through Friday March 27 at 7 PM nightly. Guest evangelist will be Rev. Bruce Williams from Enon United Methodist Church in Birmingham. For more information call 256-332-6177.


 TOPS 0155 Russellville is now meeting at the Russellville Hospital Education Room at 4:30 p.m. every Monday. Everyone is welcome to drop in for a free meeting visit. Call 256-446-5962 or 256-412-2855 for more info.

 You are invited to attend an old fashioned dinner on the grounds with all day singing and preaching at My Fathers House in downtown Russellville on March 29. Festivities will begin at 10:30 AM with lunch beginning at 12:30 PM and praise and worship at 2 PM. Heart's Desire will perform a singing special and Bradley Bowen will be preaching. Come be our guest & receive your miracle! Everyone is special and always welcome! For more information call 256-460-1376.

 The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris Jr., Camp #1833 will meet Thursday, February 6 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. The Sons of Confederate Veterans is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Everyone welcome!

 Village Square Apartments in Russellville host George's Country Boys each Monday from 6-8 p.m. for some Gospel and Country singing!

 The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris Jr., Camp #1833 will meet Thursday, February 6 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. The Sons of Confederate Veterans is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Everyone welcome!

 Mountain Valley Hee Haw features live music every Saturday night. Show time is 6 p.m. Free admission. No alcohol or drugs. From Russellville, take 243 to Hwy. 79, turn right, go 1/4 mile, third building on left. For more information, please call 256-332-5479 or 256-810-4840.

'MCDOWELL,' from page 1

All tickets purchased for the March 21st show will be honored on May 16th. Myrick said it won't be necessary to obtain new or replacement tickets.

The show begins at 7 p.m., and will feature Joseph Baldwin and Johnathan Len before McDowell takes the stage. Remaining tickets are \$20 for floor seating and \$15 for general admission balcony seats. Call 256-415-3270 for ticket information. Proceeds benefit the Franklin County Arts and Humanities Council's Roxy Restoration Fund.

Myrick, McDowell's long-time fan club president and good friend, said he genuinely loves Russellville and the annual concert is one of McDowell's favorite shows.

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

McDowell's annual cruise will set sail in September, this year to Cozumel and the Cayman Islands. He has a 2021 cruise itinerary that features five Hawaiian islands.

"I see so many friends who come back for the cruise every year and there are always some new ones who come along. Just like me, they just enjoy the cruises," McDowell said.

When McDowell's career took off in 1990 with the release of *Unchained Melody*, his busy schedule was the result of his record label and manager dictating where he needed to be, and when.

These days, McDowell handles most of his own scheduling, and that's just the way he likes it.

"When I first got started, it was all programmed out of Nashville, with other people telling me where to go and what time to be there. Now, it's all up to me and I love it that way," McDowell said.

McDowell was set to meet last week with officials from Cracker Barrel Restaurant about a marketing agreement that could put a McDowell painting

of the original Cracker Barrel Restaurant outside Gallatin, Tenn., on a variety of items for sale at Cracker Barrel.

"I'm excited about it and they are too. I painted the original Cracker Barrel building which is gone now. And I took that original painting and put it on an afghan, cup, puzzle, place mats, a clock and more," McDowell said.

"I'm hoping the meeting goes well and we get the painting on several products at their restaurants."

Much like the music he writes, every painting done by McDowell has a story behind it.

"My latest one is a painting of Jerry Lee Lewis, who's on my new album," McDowell said. "Jerry Lee had a stroke recently and hasn't been doing too well. The painting is called *Looking Back At Me*. It's Jerry Lee looking back at himself playing the piano with overalls on."

"As soon as the album is released, I'll take a copy of it and the painting and give them to him," he added.

McDowell's 20-song album, *Country Heaven: Ronnie McDowell and Friends*, will soon be released on Curb Records. It features the Righteous Brothers, John Schneider and other country greats singing duets with McDowell. It's McDowell's first release on Curb Records since *Unchained Melody*.

McDowell also met last month with producers from HGTV about his television show, *Painting America*.

McDowell said producers are finishing up all the graphics and final details in advance of airing the premiere.

"I'm really excited about that pilot. We filmed at different places all last year. This project combines my fascination with history along with my love for painting," McDowell said.

Each episode will see McDowell telling a unique story through a painting. The first one shows Elvis Presley receiving his first guitar at age 11 in Tupelo.

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100 years of love and family: Hallmark family history

Submitted to the FFP

February 29th 2020 was a special time for the Hallmarks. Lawson and Pearl Hallmark were married 100 years ago on February 29th, 1920. They were the parents of twelve children. Some of their children grew up during the great depression, but God blessed their family beyond any family I have ever known. I am the eighth child in this family so I have been blessed to have a relationship with the older ones and the youngest too.

Not one of these children finished high school, but we never gave up and went on to become servants in our community.

There were seven girls and five boys. My oldest sister Lassie Box was loved by everyone who knew her. My oldest brother Vester, went to work at Reynolds when he was 16 years old as a water boy but unfortunately died at age 45. My next brother, Chester worked at Reynolds and became the business agent for his union. Donnie raised her children then finished high school and became a nurse and retired from Helen Keller Hospital. Carrie raised her children then finished high school and became a nurse and retired from ECM hospital. Otis also worked at Reynolds and was known through out Colbert County and "The Coyote Hunter" and played the guitar. Melvin worked as an operator engineer, learned to play the banjo and was one of the original "Southern Strangers" traveling most states playing Blue Grass music.

As for myself, I raised my children, learned to play piano and other instruments, finished school and became a nurse. I worked for Dr. Matthews and Dr. Holcomb for 7 years and became a RN and retired as such. Clyde learned to play piano, also retired as an operating engineer for TVA. As for twins Vera and Vada. Vera married young and lived in Chicago for 10 years, moved back home raised three children, went back to school and became a RN, also retired. Vada was a stay at home mom. Raised two wonderful daughters. She studied music and became a great pianist and piano teacher. She worked at Marvin Morgan Furniture in Leighton and retired.

Last but not least, Judy the baby, everyone's pride and joy. She raised two wonderful children, helped her husband on the farm, went back to school and became a nurse. She worked for Dr Kenneth Copeland for twenty nine years but unfortunately she died before she could enjoy retire-

ment. She spent 10 years helping raise money for St. Jude Hospital. There is a stone at the hospital with her name on it. Her daughter Nina carries on her name sake as RN and works for Dr. Jimmy Garner.

Before Lawson died he became a 32nd degree mason and taught men, then became a Shriner. He was a member of New LaGrange Baptist Church. Pearl who was known by many here in Colbert County and was called "Mama Hallmark". She was a member of the Eastern Star and LaGrange Baptist Church. She loved the Lord and everyone else. She always had a word of wisdom and encouragement for all who knew her.

I don't have room to name every child, grandchild, great grandchild, or great great grand but I will name a few, not because they are more important, but because they are known by so many in Colbert County. Oldest grandson, James David Box (JD), musician retired from Reynolds, and Colbert County Board of Education. Oldest grand daughter Betty Peeples, at home mom, mother of 5. Her daughter works in medical field, grand daughter is a nurse practitioner and has 2 RN's in family.

Coy Hallmark (grandson), pastor at a Methodist Church in Huntsville. Carole Corsby (granddaughter) who retired from Auburn as professor of Biology. Becky Emens (granddaughter) became a doctor after raising a family. Dustin Gandy (great grandson) became a doctor and lives in Dothan with his family. Joey Puckett (great grandson) is a CRNA at Helen Keller Hospital. Sara Puckett (great great granddaughter) who has become well known for playing basketball all over Alabama.

The four girls, Carrie, Stella, Vera, Vada and Stella's daughter formed a Bluegrass Band and each played at least 2 instruments and was known as "The Hallmark Sisters". Before slowing down they performed in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana. At the present time they only perform for family and seniors who are in assisted living.

Papa and Mama Hallmark would be so proud of this family. There are doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, utility workers, business owners, crop dusters, farmers, factory workers, TVA employees, bankers, truck drivers, office staffers, musicians, stay at home moms, millennium baby, military serviceman who served during war and conflict time, and on and on the list goes on.

The total descendants from this wedding 100 years ago are at or above 218.

'GRANTS,' from page 3

equipment.

—\$500 to Tharptown High School for purchase of equipment for the new school soccer team.

—\$400 to Red Bay High School for purchase of Chromebooks and Console Licenses.

—\$400 to Belgreen Elementary School for purchase of new Chromebooks for third grade classroom.

—\$250 to Red Bay High School for purchase of a laptop to be used for workshops, meetings and training.

—\$150 to Red Bay Elementary School for expenses for Alabama History State Capitol Tour.

—\$92.38 to Red Bay Elementary School for expenses for Scholastic News and Science Spin Supplemental Magazines.

—\$96.38 to Red Bay Elementary School for expenses for Scholastic News and Science Spin Supplemental Magazines.

—\$2,500 to Red Bay Baseball Diamond Club for expenses for facility materials for the field.

—\$150 to Red Bay High School SADD Club for a vaping presentation.

—\$150 to Red Bay High School HOSA Club for expenses for State Competition.

—\$150 to Red Bay Elementary School for sixth grade Chattanooga Class trip.

—\$1000 to Russellville City Schools for After School Program purchase of materials.

—\$400 to Tharptown Elementary School for purchase of Chromebooks.

—\$800 to Belgreen High School for construction of a walk way from gym to workout facility.

—\$3,000 to East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department for purchase of 10 Motorola pagers.

—\$5,000 to Red Bay High School Tip Off Club for upgrades to gymnasium electronic equipment and scoreboard.

—\$1,000 to Belgreen High School Softball for purchase of bricks to repair pitching mound and batter's box.

—\$400 to Tharptown High School for baseball fence screen and overlay.

—\$400 to Belgreen Elementary School for purchase of printer and

Chromebook for first grade classroom.

—\$250 to Phil Campbell High School for Rocketry Team purchase of rocket motors.

—\$400 to Phil Campbell Elementary School for purchase of printer for Dyslexia/EL Intervention Classroom.

—\$150 to Belgreen High School Cross Country Team for purchase of canopy tent for events.

—\$150 to Belgreen High School for purchase of vacuum for custodial services.

—\$400 to Belgreen High School for purchase of desktop computer.

—\$400 to Belgreen Elementary School for purchase of

Chromebooks for first grade classroom technology project.

—\$3,000 to East Franklin Junior High School for gymnasium improvement project purchase of scoring table and sideline chairs.

—\$150 to Phil Campbell High School for baseball scholarship.

—\$400 to Belgreen High School for speech classroom purchase of equipment.

—\$400 to Belgreen High School for purchase of Chromebooks and printer.

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'RUNOFF,' from page 1

will choose their next Revenue Commissioner in a runoff between Veronica Copeland Stancil and Stratt Byars. Stancil currently serves as Franklin County Revenue Commissioner. Byars is a former Franklin County Commissioner and a self-employed businessman.

In the March 3rd Republican Primary, Stancil received 2,437 votes to Byars' 2,414. A third candidate, Charlie Nelson, received 614 votes. With no candidate receiving a majority, Stancil and Byars moved to the March 31st runoff.

Franklin County Circuit Clerk Anita Scott, who serves as Absentee Election Manager, said she expects to receive absentee ballots by March 17th. The deadline for absentee voting at the clerk's office is March 26th.

A job well done!



Congratulations to Franklin County Sheriff's Office employee Amy Patterson, who recently earned her Certificate of Completion for the Alabama Jail Training Academy course. Patterson received her certificate this morning at the Franklin County Commission meeting. Pictured above, from left: Probate Judge Barry Moore, Commissioner David Hester, Sheriff Shannon Oliver, Amy Patterson, Commissioners Rayburn Massey and Jason Miller.



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Get to know your new FFP sports editor

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press



Brady Petree
Sports Editor

Eight years ago, I wandered into the building at 113 Washington Avenue in downtown Russellville. I was there to be a guest on the 'Football Friday Tailgate Show' hosted at the time by Mike Self.

I was invited by my high school history teacher who had been on the show before and knew I had an interest in radio and other forms of media. Not knowing what to expect or what would eventually come from my appearance on the show, my main focus was to make sure my picks for the week were all winners.

After that first radio appearance, which my 14-year-old self fully believed was flawless and Paul Finebaum could not have done a better job himself, I wasn't sure what would happen next.

What did happen, however, is that I began slowly making more appearances on the 'Tailgate Show' and would eventually begin writing small recap articles for my high school's football team at Tharptown.

My relationship with the Franklin Free Press and WGOL has been off and on for the better part of 8 years until I was fortunate enough to return working on a consistent basis for the station.

Last year I was asked by publisher and station manager John Pilati if I would have any interest in taking over as the executive editor of the Free Press. I happily said yes and immediately began shadowing Mike Self in preparation for the day I would take over for him.

Well, that day is finally here and after so many years reading columns and stories from Mike Self it can be difficult to transition to getting to know someone new in that position. So now that I have given you the details of my beginnings with WGOL and the Franklin Free Press, let me tell you a bit more about myself so that you can become familiar with me...

I am a lifelong resident of Franklin County having grown up just east of Tharptown in a little community called Bethsaida. I was a student at Tharptown Schools from preschool until I walked across the stage for my graduation in 2015.

I then furthered my academic career by attending Northwest-Shoals Community College where I was lucky enough to serve as an ambassador and as a member of the college bowl team.

After my two years at Northwest were up, I then followed in my mother's footsteps and attended Athens State University in pursuit of a bachelor's degree majoring in social science with a minor in political science. I am on track to graduate this

See 'GET TO KNOW,' Page 12

A Self-fulfilling journey

After two decades in Franklin County, FFP sports editor Mike Self is ready to write a new chapter in his personal life.



Self, (pictured center with fiancée Katie), alongside Belgreen Principal Derek Ergle and coaches Chad Green, Marty Cooper and Jennifer Cooper.

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

If you've walked through the front door of the Franklin Free Press building in the past 14 years, there's a very good chance Mike Self has been the first face you see.

With his office situated perfectly to greet every person that strolls into the building, needless to say Self has come into contact with a lot of people across 14 years.

However, that might not be where you're most familiar with Mike from.

In the fall you could catch Mike at Russellville High School football stadium in downtown Russellville using his immaculate voice to deliver a play-by-play commentary of a Golden Tiger victory. As the winter months came along, one could go to any of the gyms within the county that were hosting a basketball game that evening and there was a great chance that Mike would be sitting behind the scoring table writing notes as fast as the game was happening.

With spring came the beginning of softball and

baseball throughout the county. On nights he wasn't inside the booth at Russellville High School's baseball stadium as the Golden Tigers were on their way to three straight state championships, he was working long nights making sure every county school was accounted for and had a write-up on their games for the night.

Mike's time has come to an end here in Franklin County as he has tied the knot with his lovely wife Katie and will be moving to Boston in the coming weeks to begin a new chapter in both of their lives. With him, Mike is taking a writing and broadcasting style that thousands of people have become accustomed to and will without a doubt miss dearly.

As one might expect, over the course of nearly two decades working in such a tight-knit community both in Franklin County and Russellville, Self couldn't expect to leave quietly – as much as he might have preferred it that way.

First on the farewell tour was a trip to Belgreen High School where Self had covered Bulldog

See 'SELF,' Page 12

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'GET TO KNOW,' from page 11

summer with that bachelor's degree. My duties at WGOL now include hosting the show I once appeared on to begin my radio career, the 'Football Friday Tailgate Show' every Friday night during football season. In addition to this I also host 'On Deck' a weekly talk show devoted to baseball on WGOL every Tuesday and Thursday. Finally, I am honored to take over as the voice of the Golden Tiger baseball program beginning this spring as well.

Having the title of "sports editor" means that sports should take center stage more often than not and I can assure the readers of the Franklin Free Press that I hold that sentiment to be personally true.

I also assure you that I will do my best to continue the excellence in writing and the quality of editing that you have become accustomed to over the years. I look forward to meeting and hearing from you as the years go by and if there is anything I can do to make your reading experience more enjoyable, give me a call at the Franklin Free Press.

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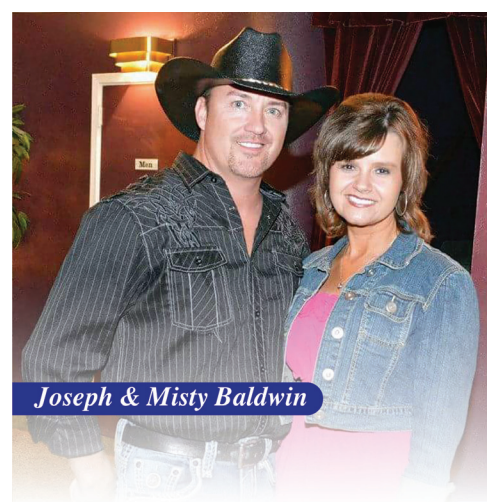
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Joseph & Misty Baldwin

THANK YOU:
I appreciate the support from Franklin County citizens in the March 3, 2020, Republican Primary for Franklin County Commission District Three. My pledge is always act in what I

believe to be the best interests of the people of this great county. Again, thank you, and I look forward to serving you.

Elect
Joseph Baldwin
Franklin County Commissioner
District 3

Work ethic, selflessness lead to Howard's tennis success

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

For most people, it takes quite a while to become good enough at something to be able to do it at the next level, whatever that thing might be. Ethan Howard is not like most people. Just three short years ago, Howard picked up a tennis racquet for the first time unsure of where it would take him.

Fast forward three years and Howard found himself sitting on the top floor of the Russellville High School field house overlooking the football field as students played a variety of pickup sports. Howard wasn't there to simply pass time or watch other students play games.

Howard was there to put pen to paper to continue his athletic and academic career at the collegiate level.

Gadsden State Community College will soon be the new home for Howard and his tennis racquet, once his high school career is over of course.

Choosing Gadsden State was a relatively easy choice for Howard citing proximity to home and academics as just a few of the reasons he chose the Cardinals.

"It was close to home at just about two hours away. They've had a good team over there for a long time and coach (Buster) Stewart has a lot of connections in the higher levels of tennis," Howard said. "Another reason is that the educational aspect of Gadsden State is very very good. Academics are a priority for me. I'm going to be going into something to do with STEM and academics is right on par with tennis for me."

Ben Phillips is in his first year as the head coach of the varsity tennis program after taking over for Charlotte Dollar who remained on as the girls varsity head coach.

Although he hasn't been the head coach for long, Phillips already knows what kind of player Howard is. When asked what made Howard such a special talent on the court, Phillips smiled and knew exactly how to describe the senior standout.

"His work-ethic by far is what makes Ethan special. Even on rainy days when most guys wouldn't be out there, there would be Ethan with a racquet in his hand," Phillips said. "You can see his work ethic by just looking at what we're doing here today. To have only been playing for three years and to then sign a scholarship to play college ball? That's work-ethic all day long."

Howard was self-taught on playing tennis and has put in extra hours and reps during and after practice according to Phillips.

Being self-taught in something is often a difficult process and one that takes time to get used to. Howard was no different in this sense but once he picked up on the basics of the sport, he began to improve rapidly.

"When I first started playing I didn't know anything. I didn't know how to hold a racquet, how to hit a ball or anything at all. I wasn't sure if this was going to be for me," Howard said. "Then I figured out the basics and figured out that I loved it. I started grinding every day and working hard and luckily

See 'HOWARD,' Page 14

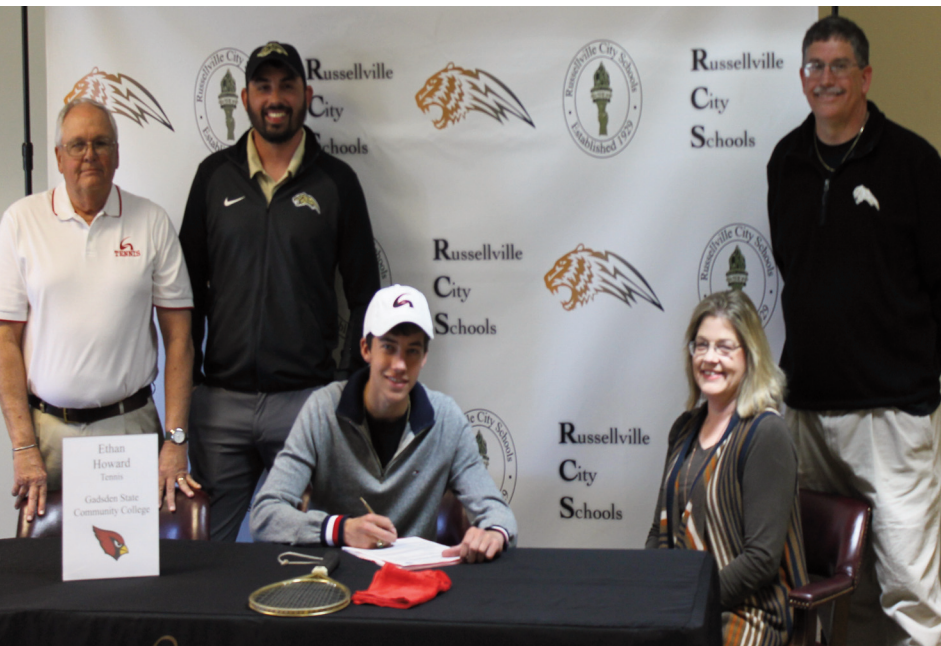


PHOTO BY BRADY PETREE

After only three years of playing tennis, Howard (center) was finally able to realize the culmination of his hard-work as he signed a letter of intent to play college tennis at Gadsden State Community College.



Ridge Raper

Junior Pitcher/IF, Phil Campbell

Raper was a key part of the Bobcats going 4-0 last week both on the mound and at the plate. Raper threw a no-hitter to go along with 10 strikeouts to lead Phil Campbell to a 10-0 win over East Lawrence in the first game of a doubleheader. In the same game, Raper went 2-3 at the plate with 3 RBI. In game two Raper would go 1-1 with an RBI and 3 runs scored in the 11-0 PC win. Earlier in the week, Raper went 2-3 with a walk in the Bobcats victory over Deshler while also adding a key RBI just two days later in a win over Haleyville.



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Jason Miller

for
**Commissioner
District 2**



Thank You to the voters who supported me in the March 3, 2020, Republican Primary for Franklin County Commission District Two. I humbly ask for your vote and support in the general election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Pd. Pol. Adv. By: Jason Miller • 605 Elm Circle, Russellville, AL, 35653

'HOWARD,' from page 13

I'm able to be here signing a scholarship to keep playing for a few more years."

Phillips is hopeful that Howard and his career at RHS will have a major impact for the younger players coming up through the tennis program.

"One thing that stands out to me is that after doing drills or things like that while most players are packing up to go home, Ethan is there working with the alternates and younger guys," Phillips said.

"Whether it be working on serving, or how to hit the ball he's always looking to help. That's not something I've told him to do or anything like that, it's just his nature. He wants to be better and he wants the team to be better. And ultimately I think he wants to make sure this program is in a great place when he leaves and that just speaks to his character and what kind of a person he is."

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklin-freepress.net!

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A kindergartener counted in the 2020 Census this spring will be starting high school when the next census comes around in 2030: That's 10 years of school supplies, teachers, school lunches, and so much more. This is your opportunity to help ensure they have a bright future.

Right now, students across the country are getting an introduction to the 2020 Census through the Statistics in Schools program. This program offers free activities and resources to schools to help prepare their students for an increasingly data-driven world.

Students are learning that the 2020 Census is a count of every person who lives in the United States and its territories. Responding to the census helps your community get its fair share of funding. Census data guides how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year for schools, health care facilities, roads, transportation, recreation centers, social services, and more.

Students are also learning these key things about the 2020 Census—and we want you to know them too:

- Starting in March 2020, everyone living in your home needs to be counted. That includes children and newborn babies, citizens and noncitizens, relatives and nonrelatives, and even those staying with you temporarily.
- It's easier than ever to respond to the census. You can respond in 13 different languages, and you can complete it online, by phone, or by mail.
- Your responses to the census are safe and secure. The law requires the U.S. Census Bureau to keep your information confidential, and your responses cannot be used against you in any way.

You have the power to shape your future, and the future of all children, by counting everyone in your home in the 2020 Census.

Learn more about how you can shape your future at 2020CENSUS.GOV.

Get more information about the Statistics in Schools program at CENSUS.GOV/SCHOOLS.



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United States
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2020

'SELF,' from page 11

sports adamantly over the years. Principal Derek Ergle and varsity girls basketball coach Chad Green were the first to greet Self and his wife Katie as they walked into the gymnasium unsure of what to expect. Mike and Katie were then led onto the gym floor in front of a small gathering of senior players along with Belgreen coaches.

Ergle then gave a speech honoring Mike and the work he has done over the years before presenting him with a signed basketball from the Bulldog varsity basketball team along with a plaque commemorating all of Self's hard work and dedication.

Self has without a doubt been grateful for the memories he has made covering high school athletics over the years. But it's the relationships he has made along the way that he cherishes the most.

"The best part of my job, without a doubt, has been getting the chance to build relationships with so many people in the community – coaches, administrators, parents, student-athletes, fans, and my fellow sports writers and broadcasters," Self said.

"Some of my best friends in life are folks I've gotten to know through the course of doing my job. I thank God for them."

Self has undoubtedly enjoyed every second of his time covering Franklin County sports over the years but there is one place where the connection is a little deeper.

Russellville High School has been the place in which Mike has become renowned for his play-by-play commentary for all major Golden Tiger sports. Mike's broadcasts were so special that people would often bring handheld radios along with them to the games they were attending, just so they could listen to Mike as they spectated.

So it was understandable that Russellville High School wasn't going to allow for Mike to leave without at least getting to say their goodbyes.

Before a game against Ardmore High School last Thursday, Self was invited to be a part of some "pregame festivities".

Once Self arrived, RHS head baseball coach Chris Heaps, surrounded by his coaches and players and in front of the fans in attendance, gave Mike a proper sendoff.

Heaps presented Self with a state proclamation constructed by state representative Jamie Kiel commemorating him for his work and professionalism across his two decades in Franklin County. Along with a heartfelt speech from Heaps himself, the Russellville baseball team also presented Mike with an official Golden Tiger jersey with an inscription stating the teams well wishes and thanks to Self.

The memories that Self will take with him as he begins this new journey are plentiful and the moments he has shared through his work with WGOL and the Franklin Free Press will remain with him wherever he goes.

"I'm grateful to have worked with some outstanding people, both on the radio and newspaper side of things. WGOL and the Free Press will always have a special place in my heart," Self said. "My prayer is that they'll continue to thrive and grow in service to the community."

Self's days writing for the Franklin Free Press are over and his voice will no longer grace the airwaves of WGOL. Self does have a final message for the people of Franklin County and Russellville to ensure that they know just how much they meant to him across all these years.

"Thanks to everyone for your kindness and generosity over the years, especially recently as I was preparing to get married and make this move," Self said. "My wife Katie is a gift from God, and we are so excited to start our life together. God bless all of you and keep up the good work."

There will never be another Mike Self—let us get that out of the way right now. Self has made his mark on Franklin County and will forever be remembered as a legend for his writing and broadcasting capabilities. His attitude toward anything he was tasked to do was always upbeat and positive.

The care and compassion he treated others with left a lasting impression on those he came in contact with during his two decades in Franklin County. His articles made you feel as though you were sitting court side at the game he described.

His broadcasting was so close to perfection that if you were to close your eyes and listen to a broadcast of Russellville baseball, you would think Vin Scully had jumped in the booth for an evening at Golden Tiger Stadium. Mike is moving to Boston and with him he is taking a voice and writing style that thousands have come to know and love.

It is without a doubt sad to see the end of an era, especially when it involves someone you have become accustomed to reading their work every Wednesday or hearing their voice on a broadcast multiple days a week.

However, there is a certain sense of joy in knowing that the person in question is happy and is making the best decision for his life.

We wish Mike and his new bride, Katie, the absolute best in their marriage and life in Massachusetts.

And to Mike, always know that if you decide to come back, there will always be a seat open for you at the Franklin Free Press.

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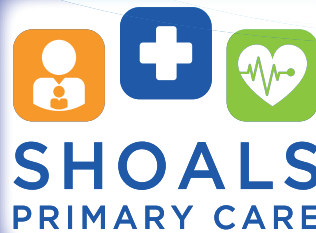
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