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04.1.20

RCS, county schools prepare to submit plans to finish 2019-20 school year

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Although Alabama public school students won't be returning to their campuses this spring, that doesn't mean school's out for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

The March 26th announcement from Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey instructed each of the state's public school K-12 systems to prepare a Local Education Association (LEA) continuity plan that must be submitted to the Alabama Department of Education by April 3rd.

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Eric Mackey held a telephone conference with all state superintendents Friday morning to further discuss the governor's order.

The announcement gives educators one week to prepare a localized system that cover core educational principles.

While some systems will rely entirely on virtual online classes, the two systems in Franklin County must also devise plans that provide the same level of instruction to students in homes without broadband internet.

Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton believes almost 70 percent of students in his system are without broadband internet at home.

"Virtual learning is part of it, but not the main option for us. We will communicate with students through means we've used all year, including ClassDojo (an educational technology communication app and website)," Hamilton said.

"Obviously for those we're not reaching, we'll also continue the paper packet option we already started," he added.

Hamilton said classroom materials could be distributed by bus drivers when they deliver meals, which will continue through the end of the school year.

See 'SCHOOLS,' page 5

Following in her mother's footsteps

26 years after her mother was crowned Dream Girl, PC Sophomore Grace-Lyn Habada is continuing the family legacy.

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

It was March 19, 1994, when Kristy Nix Habada heard her name announced as the Phil Campbell High School Dream Girl.

26 years later, she watched her daughter, Grace-Lyn Habada, get crowned as the 2020 Dream Girl.

This year's pageant was held on Friday, March 13th, one of the final days that school events could take place. Grace-Lyn was named Dream Girl for 2020, and Macey Welborn was crowned 2020 Junior Dream Girl earlier in the evening.

Katie Thomas was selected as First Alternate Dream Girl, with Lexie Crittenden Second Alternate, Cypress Quinn Third Alternate and Madison Vickery Fourth Alternate.

For Habada, winning Dream Girl was secondary to the experience of taking part. The Phil Campbell sophomore doesn't see Dream Girl as a competition. Rather, she

See 'HABADA,' page 9



COURTESY PHOTO
 Habada (right), was able to take home the 2020 Dream Girl crown on March 13th.

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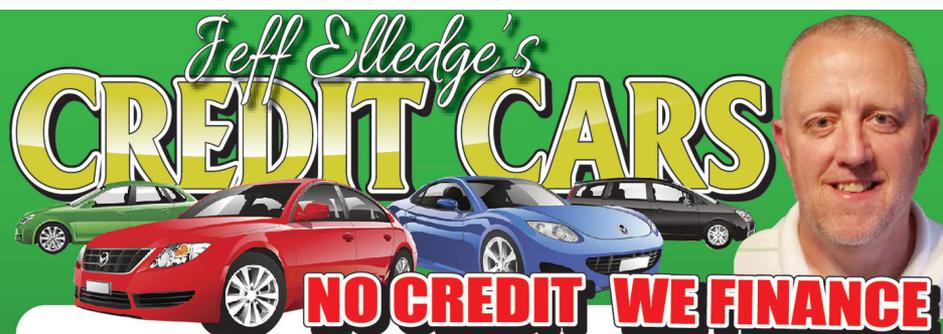
John Norris Bendall, Russellville, 87, died on Saturday, March 28th. Internment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Willo Irene "Billie" Jordan, Russellville, 88, died on Friday, March 27th. Internment at Liberty Hill Cemetery.

Barry Steven "Steve" Montgomery, Littleville, 59, died on Wednesday, March 25th. Internment at Colbert Memorial Gardens.

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Statewide runoffs postponed to July due to Coronavirus

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Citing health concerns to Alabama voters, the state's March 31st primary runoff election has been postponed until July 14, 2020.

After an attorney general's opinion issued last week indicated that Gov. Kay Ivey has the authority to postpone an election during a State of Emergency, the announcement to push back the runoff date came Wednesday at a joint press conference with Ivey, Secretary of State John Merrill and Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall.

That means voters will have to wait until July to see who will serve as the next Franklin County Revenue Commissioner.

Veronica Copeland Stancil faces Stratt Byars in the Republican runoff. There was no Democratic candidate to qualify for the position.

For Stancil, the incumbent, the announcement was not a surprise, and she understands the need for the decision, but it still was a bit frustrating.

"As far as the campaigning, whether that be signs, ads or any other part, it prolongs that. The state will soon begin mowing and signs will have to be moved," Stancil said.

"It's a little frustrating. I feel like people get tired of an election season going on that they believed would end in March. And we'll still be hammering the trails as hard as we can with what we can do being limited."

Like Stancil, Byars believes the safety and welfare of Franklin County citizens is what's paramount.

"I understand our country is in a health care crisis and the health and safety of citizens should always come first. I agree that a postponement was necessary," Byars said.

"Hopefully, we'll get back to a normal situation sooner than later and that will give us ample time to start seeing people again.

"It's kind of unprecedented. It's been a long time since our country has seen a situation that causes a slowdown to the point where we're concerned about our health and safety. And that takes priority over everything else," he added.

Additionally, Alabama voters will not decide the runoff for the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate until July.

That race, between Tommy Tuberville and former Sen. Jeff Sessions, will decide who faces incumbent Democrat Doug Jones in November.

While 3 1/2 months of waiting will be difficult for the candidates, Merrill said safety concerns dictated the move be made.

"The guidelines prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health have made it clear that it is no longer advisable for the people of Alabama to go to the polls to vote on March 31st," Merrill said.

One side effect of the postponement is that eligible Alabama citizens who aren't registered to vote may now do so through Monday, June 29th, and take part in the July 14th runoff election.

For voters who cast ballots in the March 3rd primaries, only those who voted in the Republican Primary will be eligible to vote in the Republican runoff. Those who voted Democratic may not crossover into the Republican runoff.

If a voter did not cast a ballot on March 3rd, he or she may vote in the party runoff of his or her choosing.

Absentee ballot applications that have already been successfully submitted will be valid for the July 14th runoff.

All other absentee ballots must be received by the close of business on Thursday, July 9th.

"I am grateful to Governor Ivey and the Attorney General for their proactive leadership, sincere dedication and spirit of teamwork that we have seen displayed during these trying times to ensure we are providing a safe and secure environment for all 3,585,209 voters in the State of Alabama," Merrill said.



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Letter to the Editor

Not to whom it may concern because this CONCERNS EVERYONE:

About two weeks ago, I came down with a cold that quickly went to my chest, with not much fever, but very hard to breathe, very weak and painful.

I called work to let them know and they told me I could not come back for 14 days, no matter what, to protect others and our customers.

At the time, I thought that was silly, but now I understand.

Anyway, I self quarantined myself 14 days just to make sure I did not cause anyone else to catch whatever this was. I said all of that to get to this, as you would expect,

I have watched a lot of television and a lot of news. I have watched this COVID-19 crisis everyday from when we only had a few cases in the United States until now over 115,000 known cases and over 2,000 deaths and growing fast in the US alone.

Going forward to March 28, today was my first day out of the house and back to work.

I know all of the restrictions we are under, all of the businesses that are closed, school closing for the rest of this school year, and our new phrase

“social distancing”.

However, what really blew my mind as I got out, other than getting a haircut, going inside a restaurant to eat, or going to church, it is business as usual.

People are everywhere. Entire families, 6-8 members including infants, are going into Wal-Mart, convenience stores, and dollar stores! People are everywhere! I did not expect this.

Are we not paying attention to the COVID-19 crisis, the biggest health care crisis in over 100 years??? People are dying! We lost our first Russellvillian to COVID-19 today!

People, this is the biggest health crisis we have seen in over a hundred years. Government should not have to force us to stay at home. We are smarter than this.

I know we have to work and have things we have to do, but again this is the biggest health crisis in the world in the last 100 years. This is simple, go to work, practice social distancing as much as you can, wash your hands frequently, use sanitizers, and masks, if you can, and GO HOME!

I am not speaking as a councilmen, but as a concerned citizen

See ‘LETTER,’ Page 9

Protect yourself in times of crisis

If you're feeling panicked about money in these uncertain times, I want you to hear me on this:

You are not alone.

You will be okay.

People all across the country are wanting to know how the COVID-19 virus will affect their finances. Here are some of the top questions I'm getting about how to handle money during this trying time.

What should I do to protect myself and my family right now?

Conserve your financial resources. This means cutting unnecessary spending, like cable television, eating out, and subscription memberships. Focus on taking care of the Four Walls. I'm talking about the absolute necessities—food, shelter, utilities, and transportation.

Should I cash out my investments or take my money out of the bank?

Absolutely not! The stock market is like a rollercoaster, and you don't jump off a rollercoaster in the middle of the ride.

If you pull your money out now, you're guaranteed a loss. But if you ride it out, you can bet the value will eventually go back up. Plus, bank deposits are insured by the FDIC and protected up to at least \$250,000.

How long will this last?

Honestly, I don't know. What I do know is the economy will recover. All you have to do is look at history as a guide. The market has always gone back up, even after the 2008 crash and other pandemics, like SARS.

How can I give myself some cushion in case of job loss?

Now is the time to build up your emergency fund. Focus on getting three to six months of expenses saved up. If you're receiving a tax refund, put that money in a savings account. If you need extra money, sell some things around the house, or look for part-time work at companies that are experiencing high demand.

Remember, control what you can control, and don't let fear dominate you. It may take a while to get through all this, but you're going to be okay!

*Chris Hogan is a two-time #1 national best-selling author, financial expert and host of The Chris Hogan Show. For more than a decade, Hogan has served at Ramsey Solutions, equipping and challenging people to take control of their money and reach their financial goals.



Chris Hogan

What we need is love, not hatred

Lucas Shepherd

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On Saturday, March 21, the infamous American white supremacist organization, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), conducted a protest on the Franklin County Courthouse steps in Russellville.

The event lasted approximately 30 minutes, had four participants, and garnered an underwhelming audience of less than 50 people.

According to multiple sources, the speaker made obscene comments regarding African-Americans, Latino-Americans, and interracial relationships.

He also lashed out with crude rhetoric toward members of the audience who opposed their viewpoints and beliefs.

In 1963 – 56 years ago, at the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave one of the most articulate speeches in American history, known as “I Have A Dream,” in an attempt to drive out hate and preserve the right to be treated equally.

In 1965 – 54 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led a coalition of non-violent protesters on a five-day, 54-mile march from Selma to the capitol steps in Montgomery in order to ensure African-Americans the fundamental right to vote. In 1968

51 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed in Memphis, TN., by James Earl Ray simply because King was a black man, fighting on behalf of black men, in order to be viewed, treated, and respected equally.

In 2020, we still see an outpouring of hate and intolerance.

In 2020, we have opposition of the worst variety taking center-stage and spewing their filth without regard for others. In 2020, it seems at times we have learned nothing from the greatness of this one man, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who sacrificed his life to bring attention to injustice and intolerance.

I know what you are thinking right now: I am not responsible for their actions. I am not in accordance with their views. I, seemingly, am not guilty at all.

However, when we stand idly by and see such disgust take place time and time again without standing up for what is right, we ultimately align ourselves, accidentally or purposefully, with that which is wrong. Silence in the face of hate is a loss in itself.

So, now you may wonder, if silence is wrong, is anger right?

To that I respond, no.

On the contrary, I refer back to Dr. King's quote: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

It is our responsibility to combat the negative with the positive. It is our responsibility to wage war against intolerance and hate with that of love and acceptance. It is our responsibility to defend that which is morally right against that which is utterly wrong.

I urge you to join me in this fight. I ask that you walk with me in these times to prevent the growth of hate. I ask that you stand with me on behalf of goodness, acceptance, and love for one another, no matter the differences our eyes may see.

God Bless You.

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Bradford lending a helping hand to local businesses

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As a small business owner, Rhett Bradford said he's familiar with the stress and anxiety business owners are feeling lately, as he's dealing with the same issues.

With health concerns leading to all restaurant dining rooms being closed, Bradford said mom and pop restaurants are really hurting as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

A new promotion at Bradford's State Farm Insurance office in Russellville is designed to help those small businesses.

Starting March 26th, for every insurance quote referred to Bradford's office, he will make a \$10 donation to the local restaurant of the choice of the person who receives the quote.

The promotion will continue until \$1,000 is raised for local restaurants.

"These places need our support and business more than ever," Bradford said. "The nature of their business, for the most part, requires us all to come inside and dine with them and they have all been told to close their dining rooms to the public.

"Their staff depends on the doors being open and people in the seats so they have the opportunity to earn our tips," Bradford said. "We want to do our part by helping our neighbors work through this rough time so that we all may enjoy their services when this has all settled down."

Donations will be paid on a weekly basis to the restaurants to help them through the current difficult economic times.

"I hope others will join us in helping other local small businesses that have experienced an impact from the circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus," Bradford said.

To receive an insurance quote, contact Bradford at 256-332-0540.

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'SCHOOLS,' from page 1

"We will distribute materials the students need. Coming back to the campuses is not an option. Social distancing is something they covered in every option discussed," Hamilton said.

"They made sure we have that handled even with the teachers who come to the schools as to how they arrive," he added.

Hamilton will spend this week working with administrators to devise the system's plan. While he would have preferred students return to campus, Hamilton realized the time was not right for that.

"That is not in the best interests of the safety of our students. This situation is not ideal because you can never replace the educational relationship you get between a teacher and a student in the classroom," Hamilton said. "I don't care how much technology you put in the mix.

"We have a lot of work to do before April 3rd. I know the employees of our system will do whatever it takes to make sure the kids get taken care of," he added.

Heath Grimes, Russellville City Schools Superintendent, said he plans to use "the technology we have in place" as much as possible in his system's LEA. Grimes said for those families who have connectivity in their homes, that teachers can teach in virtual classrooms just like they are in actual classrooms.

"We're sending surveys out now," Grimes said Friday. "We will use our phone calling system and put it online. There are different ways to reach out to see who is connected. Then obviously we'll see who is not connected. And we'll make telephone arrangements, snail mail or deliver the materials to those students.

"We need to use what we have in place first, the connectivity. And the goal is to make sure the ones who don't get that have equal access to instruction. That will take some work on our part. We don't need to get any farther behind with our students than we already are," he added.

As far as graduation plans, Grimes said Russellville City Schools will "definitely" have a graduation ceremony.

"It's possible that will be in May but we can't plan that right now. Before students start to college next fall, though, we have absolute plans to have a graduation ceremony," Grimes said.

RCS board approves emergency resolution, other moves

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Board of Education approved an Emergency Suspension of Policy resolution that will allow Superintendent Heath Grimes to take necessary action without the prior approval of the board during the State of Emergency period declared by Gov. Kay Ivey.

The board approved the resolution at its March 25th meeting. Board members Judy Pounders and Greg Batchelor were absent from the meeting.

"I hope not to have to take any action pursuant to this Emergency Suspension of Policy," Grimes said. "But in the event there's a necessity to approve a bid or something else comes up during this emergency period, we can take action without having to reconvene a board meeting."

In other moves, the board:

—heard a report from Buddy Johnsey with the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts regarding the Russellville City Board of Education audit for fiscal year 2018-19. Johnsey told board members the audit found no legal or compliance issues and no deficiencies of internal control.

—tabled a trip request from the RHS varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders to attend cheer camp at Auburn University from May 25-29, 2020.

—accepted the lowest responsible bid of \$373,479.00 from Porter Roofing Contractors, Inc., for the partial roofing of West Elementary School.

—approved the following personnel moves: Leaves of Absence: Rachel Seal, West Elementary School teacher, from April 17-May 22 and Alana Swinney, RHS Librarian, from May 4-22. Retirement in Position: Diane Hyde, Russellville Middle School Library Aide, effective June 1. Resignation in Supplement: Madalan Benford, Assistant Volleyball. Resignation in Position: Kyle Moore, RMS teacher, effective March 11. Reinstatement of Sick Leave Days for Rebekah Quaintance, CNP Worker at WES, from February 25-27. Substitute Bus Driver: Ray Cornelison, pending bus driver certification.

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What's Happening

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

Ronnie McDowell returns to Russellville to celebrate his 70th birthday with a special show at the Roxy Theatre on Saturday, May 16 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 Belgreen Alumni Banquet, set for April 4, 2020, has been postponed as a result of COVID-19 health concerns. There is not a date set for the rescheduling yet. Once a decision is made, we will let everyone know when we will have it.

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.

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.

The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts has announced that its next production, Cheating Cheaters, that was to be performed April 23-26, 2020, will be postponed until June. They apologize for any inconvenience, but hope everyone stays well and they look forward to seeing everyone in June.

As of Wednesday, March 18 the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art will be closed to the public due to concerns related to COVID-19. We will remain closed until further notice. Our offices are still open and able to receive your call. We will continue to respond to developments as they arise. Please check for updates on our Facebook pages. Thank you for your understanding.

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

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 for more information.

New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and for worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.

The Newburg Masonic Lodge #388 meets the first Thursday of every month. The Russellville Masonic Lodge #371 meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. The Franklin County Shrine Club meets the second Tuesday of each month. The Order of the Eastern Star Chapter 256 meets every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Russellville Masonic Lodge. Spruce Pine Masonic Lodge #608 meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge #880 meets the first and third Thursday of each month. Burleson Lodge #143 meets the second and fourth Monday of each month. Belgreen Lodge #428 meets the first and third Monday of each month. All meetings start at 7 p.m.

The American Legion Post 64 in Russellville will postpone its April and May meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Grant Atkins.

You are welcome to all services at Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church (Hwy. 48 in Russellville). Sunday service times: Sunday School at 10 a.m., worship service at 11 a.m., Sunday night service at 6 p.m. Wednesday night Bible Study is held at 6:30 p.m. Pastor is Bro. Roger Bond. DivorceCare, a special help seminar and support group for people experiencing divorce and separation, will be held on Sunday evenings at 5 p.m. at First Baptist Church Colbert Heights. DivorceCare features nationally recognized experts on divorce and recovery topics. Seminar sessions include "Facing My Anger," "Facing My Loneliness," "New Relationships," "KidCare" and "Forgiveness." Meetings will be held at 6000 Woodmont Drive, Tuscumbia, AL. For more information, call First Baptist Church Colbert Heights at 256-383-8016.

New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and for worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.

Divorced? Separated? We can help. Divorce Care is a weekly seminar/support group that will help you heal from the hurt. It's a warm, caring environment led by people who understand what you are going through. Learn practical information and gain hope for your future. Come join us at First Baptist Church, Colbert Heights, every Wednesday night from March 15 through June 7 from 6-8 p.m. Church is located at 6000 Woodmont Drive, Tuscumbia, AL 35674. For more information, call 256-383-8016 or go online to www.firstcolbertheights.com.

Red Bay Garden Club honors Cashion for decades of service

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The biggest challenge for those on the program at the Red Bay Garden Club's Arbor Day celebration honoring Barbara Weatherford Cashion wasn't finding something nice to say about the long-time Red Bay resident.

The challenge came in condensing their many words of praise and respect to fit into a one-hour program.

Before a tree was planted at Red Bay School in Cashion's honor Sunday afternoon, a ceremony at Red Bay City Hall included tributes to Cashion from Rosalyn Fabianke, LaVale Mills, Scotty Kennedy, Katrine Moore, Johnny Mack Morrow and Joyce Davis.

Cashion, who died on September 12, 2019, was a Vina native who taught Business Education at Red Bay High School. Cashion served as Red Bay City Clerk from 1956-1961 and was active in the operations of Cashion Thermoplastics from 1996 until her death.

She was the daughter of John Thomas and Mary Francis Plaxco Weatherford. Cashion was preceded in death by her husband, C.S. "Spot" Cashion.

Cashion's three children, Charles T. "Chuck" Cashion (Cris), Linda Markham (David) and Susan McRight, and her five grandchildren were present Sunday afternoon to hear an emotional tribute to their mother/grandmother.

"Barbara Weatherford Cashion was more than just a powerful name," Red Bay Mayor Charlene Fancher said. "She had a positive impact on so many lives and on our community. Whatever task Barbara undertook, she represented Red Bay with

dignity, pride and she always motivated others."

Fabianke drew an analogy between Cashion and the tree planted in her honor Sunday.

"Barbara Cashion, like a tree, had a strong foundation and branched out so many ways to benefit our community. She was my teacher, mentor and most of all, my friend," Fabianke said.

The Red Bay Garden Club hosts the annual Arbor Day celebration and plants a tree in honor or memory of someone who left a lasting legacy on Red Bay. The Shumard oak tree honoring Cashion was planted at Red Bay School, where Cashion taught for more than 30 years. An additional 1,000 trees were distributed free to the public after Sunday's celebration.

Cashion's family donated some of her school books, an old typewriter and some other personal items to be part of a display in her memory at the Red Bay Museum. The Red Bay Civitan Club presented the Cashion family with a plaque in Barbara's honor that will be permanently displayed at the museum.

Scotty Kennedy recalled Cashion's efforts in working on a book about Red Bay's history with former U.S. Representative Carl Elliott, Sr.

"She was instrumental in the book about the 100-year history of Red Bay. And she served as adviser for the *Tiger Times* school newspaper at Red Bay, so we found an old copy and that will be displayed at the museum as well," Kennedy said.

Moore, who taught with Cashion and proudly considered her a close friend, recalled Cashion's impact on just about every person she met.

"Through her laughter and conversation she was a genuine lifter of spirits. I doubt you could find someone who was more of a people person,"

Moore said.

Davis recalled two of the many character traits she respected about Cashion.

"The two things I think on the top of my list were how much she loved her family and friends," Davis said. "I've never known anyone who enjoyed her family more than she did.

"The other thing was Barbara was the most resilient person I have ever known. She bounced back from everything so quickly. She loved meeting with her students, past and present, and talk-

See 'CASHION,' Page 8

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'CASHION,' from page 7

ing to them. She always loved seeing the people she had taught," Davis added.

Red Bay is a member of Tree City USA, a program that recognizes cities for outstanding achievement in urban forestry management. The Red Bay Garden Club has been an integral part of that since its inception in 1939. During the club's first year, the trees that form the 'tunnel of trees' as you leave downtown Red Bay on Main Street were planted by Red Bay Garden Club members.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Rosalyn Fabianke with the Red Bay Garden Club welcomes everyone to the club's Arbor Day Celebration, which honored Barbara Weatherford Cashion.

The Hunt for the Golden Egg is underway!

FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

Golden Egg Contest

The Franklin Free Press is sponsoring an exciting contest where one lucky person will receive a Easter gift basket with cash and prizes worth more than \$600!

We'll post daily clues that will help you find the location of our Golden Egg.

Clues will be posted daily on our website, www.franklinfreepress.net. Click the 'news' link and read the article on the Golden Egg. Additionally, we'll post special clues in the April 1 and 8 editions of the FFP.

Contest rules: Must be 18 or older to win. No past or present employees or their family members are eligible. The FFP and Pilati Investments, Inc., does not assume any liability for injury that may be incurred in the course of searching for the egg. If you find the Golden Egg, bring it to our office at 113 Washington Ave. NW, to claim your prize.

Here are this week's bonus clues:

To find the egg, don't look up or dig down. For the Golden oval lies directly on the ground... It's not easy, but find it if you can. For the Golden Egg will fit right in your hand....

'LETTER,' from page 4

who loves everyone and wants us to get through this. Watch our data, listen to the experts, and STAY HOME! Praying a lot will definitely help and not hurt!

Just a fact, while writing this letter, the death toll in the United States, went from 2000 to 2043 that quickly. If not for yourself, do it for the people you love! PLEASE STAY HOME! My prayers and thoughts are with you!

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'HABADA,' from page 1

described it as a way to draw closer to her fellow competitors.

"As I walk across this platform vying for the title of Dream Girl, my one wish would be to grow from this learning experience while getting better acquainted with the other participating young ladies and making some lasting memories," Habada said.

"I think this has definitely been a fun-filled event that has taught each one of us self-discipline and brought us closer together, and I can proudly say that we all have the potential of representing our school to the fullest as positive role models," she added.

Grace-Lyn's father, Richie Habada, wasn't left out of the evening's festivities. When asked the person she most admired, and why, Grace-Lyn answered it was her dad.

"He has a big heart filled with love. He is a family man that hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things," Habada said. "He never fails my brother and I with discipline. He lets his yes mean yes, and his no mean no. Still he is humble and kind. He is my hero. Thank you dad for your love and support."

Habada's school activities include varsity cheerleading, junior varsity cheerleading for three years, junior varsity basketball for three years, Junior Civitan, Students Against Destructive Decisions, the History Club, Access Club and she's part of the school's yearbook staff.

Habada is a member of the National Honor Society, vice-president of the sophomore class, a Student Council representative, and past Dream Girl contestant.

Her career plans are to pursue a professional degree in the field of

ophthalmology.

Some of the Dream Girl 2020 awards included:

- Evening Gown: Katie Thomas.
- Best Interview: Cypress Quinn.
- Most Photogenic: Madison Vickery.
- Poise and Appearance: Julianna Reeves.
- Academic Award: Karlee Faust.
- Prettiest Hair: Grace-Lyn Habada.
- Prettiest Smile: Khloie Simpson.
- Miss Congeniality: Abigail Hunderman.
- 9th Grade Representative: Julie Warhurst.
- 10th Grade Representative: Harley Cummings.
- 11th Grade Representative: Katie Thomas.
- 12th Grade Representative: Karlee Faust.

Junior Division awards included:

- Evening Gown: Harmony Gaisser
- Best Interview: Macy Welborn.
- Most Photogenic: Regean Misner.
- Poise & Appearance: Lydia Garrison.
- Academic Award: Regean Misner.
- Prettiest Hair: Tori Mather.
- Prettiest Smile: Caitlyn Demartin.
- Miss Congeniality: Harmony Gaisser and Macy Welborn.
- 7th Grade Representative: Lydia Garrison.
- 8th Grade Representative: Macy Welborn.

The Phil Campbell Dream Girl Pageant began in 1968. Grace-Lyn was the 53rd winner to be crowned Dream Girl.

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- After first Sunday in May, cut grass every two weeks, preferably first week and third week of the month
- During months of July and August, use discretion in determining if a rotation may be skipped if drought conditions are present.
- The month of October will be at the discretion of the committee, based on a will call status, giving a 10-day window to cut.
- Committee will have the right to cancel agreement at anytime committee is unsatisfied with work of contractor.
- Before mowing, all loose flowers on the ground will need to be picked up and disposed of.

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THS, Vance hopeful for future after strong first season for soccer programs

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

As head coach Scott Vance geared up to take control of both the boys and girls soccer teams at Tharptown High School for their first seasons as a program, the expectations were simply to get their players accustomed to competitive soccer.

For most of the students playing, the most competitive soccer matches they had played up until this point had been neighborhood games or matches during physical education class at school.

Vance would see that his players were more than up to the task.

However in the first season for any sport, there are always some question marks both on and off the field.

One concern for the new THS soccer programs was how well they would connect with the student body as well as the surrounding community.

Ultimately, Vance says he was very pleased with the reaction the community and students at Tharptown had towards the program.

"There were some questions about how much support we would have and I will say we had a ton of support from everyone from the very beginning," Vance said.

"We not only got tremendous support from the staff and administration early on, but the students were right there into it the whole time as well. The community was also locked into the program and following our games and kept up with it. It's encouraging to see that kind of support in just the first year and it means good things for years to come hopefully."

Looking back on the inaugural season for the Tharptown High School soccer programs, there is much to be happy with and also excited about for the future. While head coach Scott Vance is very pleased with how the season went overall, it's how it ended that didn't sit well with himself and the team.

"I was very disappointed with the way our season came to an end. We still had four or five more matches scheduled and we were excited to get to play the rest of those matches but then the announcement of schools closing came down and that was it for us," Vance said.

"We believe we were absolutely on the way up and we wanted to get a chance to prove that and sadly we won't be able to this year."

Due to AHSAA rules regarding new programs not being postseason eligible, this season was essentially an exhibition one for the boys and girls programs at Tharptown but enabled both teams to get much needed experience in hopes for a deep playoff run in the near future.

For a boys team that will graduate three seniors
 See 'SOCCER,' Page 13

A new challenge

After ten years coaching at Tharptown, Susie Tverberg is ready to establish a new dynasty at Belgreen



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

In her first season at the helm of the Lady Bulldog softball program, albeit a shortened one, Tverberg (pictured left), has Belgreen on the right track as they sported a 9-1 record before the season was halted.

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

When you spend ten years coaching at one school and then make the move to coach a county and longtime area rival, there is the slight possibility of a rough transition.

Who wouldn't have anticipated somewhat of a rocky start for someone in Susie Tverberg's situation?

After all, Tverberg, the longtime Tharptown softball coach, was making the move in-county to Belgreen High School to coach softball and volleyball.

Tverberg had led county-rival Tharptown for ten seasons and along the way built a dynasty that clinched multiple regional tournament berths, watched numerous players go on to play at the collegiate level, and even a clinched a state tournament appearance.

Now Tverberg is looking to do the same thing at

Belgreen.

However, there were some question marks on Tverberg's side as to how easy this transition would be.

That rocky start and the question marks were dismissed almost immediately according to Tverberg.

"This whole transition has been very smooth. Going into it I wasn't really sure what to expect. You go from coaching a school that's not even 20 minutes away to coaching a rival school, it's kind of up in the air how it will go," Tverberg said. "Everything has been great here. The girls have really adapted well and welcomed me with open arms and it's just been awesome."

Of course expecting a team to immediately buy into a coach's way of thinking is being very optimistic.

However, Tverberg says that her team almost immediately adapted and took her coaching to
 See 'CHALLENGE' Page 12

'CHALLENGE,' from page 11

heart.
"Getting them to buy into my style of play and philosophy is one of the things I was worried about," Tverberg said.

"I like to play small ball and advance runners through bunting and things like that, which is the opposite of what they are accustomed to doing. But they have really bought into the process and were really accepting of me and what I was trying to do and we were able to make that pay off on the field."

Tverberg left for Belgreen to pursue not only a new coaching job, but also take on more in her professional career as well.

In addition to coaching softball and volleyball, Tverberg now teaches a dual enrollment class for Northwest-Shoals Community College, a Career Prep class for freshmen and sophomores, and four classes of Physical Education.

Before her move to Belgreen, Tverberg was very familiar with the Lady Bulldogs even after all of those years at the other end of the county.

A majority of the time, Tverberg and Tharptown would end up squaring off against Belgreen in area and county tournaments over the years.

Fast-forward to this season where Tverberg has taken over a Lady Bulldog team that hit the ground running over the first few weeks of the season compiling a 10-3 record with wins over Phil Campbell, West Limestone, and Elkmont.

Also on their list of wins includes two victories over Tharptown, Tverberg's old stomping grounds.

Unfortunately, that would be where Tverberg's initial season as head coach of the Belgreen soft-

ball program would come to a screeching halt.

On March 16th, just two days after Belgreen's 5-3 win over Tharptown, the Franklin County Board of Education would suspend school for two weeks at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Just ten days later, school would be suspended for the rest of the school year after an order from Governor Kay Ivey declared all schools in the state were to be closed. With the closing of schools meant no more athletic events as well.

Tverberg says that while they knew the possibility of the season being suspended was there, the feeling was surreal when the final word came down regarding the suspension of all AHSAA athletics.

"It was a shock. At the beginning we kind of thought that this whole thing would just blow over. Then next thing we knew we were getting out of school early and got the word that our season was suspended and it was just like a punch to the gut," Tverberg said.

"It just left us with a feeling of "what-if?" We felt like we were good enough to make a deep run in the state tournament with the talent we had and it just feels bad that we won't get that chance."

The first thought that came across Tverberg's mind as the news about their season came in was to check on her players and let them know what was going on.

"I immediately picked up my phone and sent a message in our team group message letting everyone know what was going on. I then called each player individually starting with my seniors and working my way down," Tverberg said.

"I just had to tell them I was sorry their season

had to end this way but that they held a special place in my heart and the Belgreen community's heart too. I just wanted them to know that I care for them and if they needed anything or even just to talk that I was there for them. It's just sad that this is how their season came to an end."

Tverberg is undoubtedly upset that her first season at Belgreen ending due to something outside of their control as opposed to on the field. Anyone would rightfully be upset by that. And while there

See 'CHALLENGE,' Page 14

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'SOCCER,' from page 11

not be able to finish out their season. However, Vance hopes that the seniors can take some solace in knowing that they have laid a solid foundation for the future of Tharptown soccer.

"It's disappointing for these guys and girls that are seniors. I know they desperately wanted to finish out this season and see how much better they could get and I hate it for both teams," Vance said.

"The bright side is that they both made some significant strides from the beginning of the season until the very end and it's got everyone at Tharptown excited for the future of the soccer programs. Hopefully they can take some peace in knowing that they got this program started and up off the ground for future students because there is absolutely pride in that."

The day before the announcement of schools across the state closing came down; Tharptown's boy's squad was squaring up with 6A opponent Muscle Shoals.

Competing with the likes of a large school like Muscle Shoals was simply about getting better, regardless of what the outcome was.

However, by the time the last second had ticked off the clock, Vance and his team looked up at the scoreboard and realized that they had ended the game at a 1-1 tie against the Trojans.

A tie against one of the larger schools in Northwest Alabama is no small feat, especially for a 2A school. Overall the boy's squad at Tharptown would finish their season at 1-1-1 including a loss to Haleyville early in the season and a victory over Clements.

While the Lady Wildcats weren't quite able to notch their first victory in program history, Vance is encouraged by the things he saw from his girls team.

"Our girls finished 0-2 but they're definitely improving. I fully believe that if we had been able to get the rest of our games in this year we would have gotten that signature first victory. We were improving that fast," Vance said.

"We're only losing two seniors this year so we are a very young team. But we were able to get in a few games and get their feet wet in some competitions and hopefully this year will be kind of a building block and our girls can take that next step next year and get that first win."

As he begins to think and plan towards next season, Vance is optimistic of both teams outlook for not only next season, but for future years as well.

"We're unsure about what our status will be in terms of playoff eligibility next year but if we're able to compete in the postseason we feel pretty good about our chances," Vance said.

"Dixie Chavez helped with our girls team and Carlos Perez helped with our boys team and they were a very big reason why we made the progress that we made and they deserve a huge thank you. We hope to have both of them back with us next year along with all the guys and girls we had this year minus the seniors. If we can get all of those people back with us and are actually able to get in more games next year, we feel awesome about our chances to make a push for a blue map and bring one to Tharptown."

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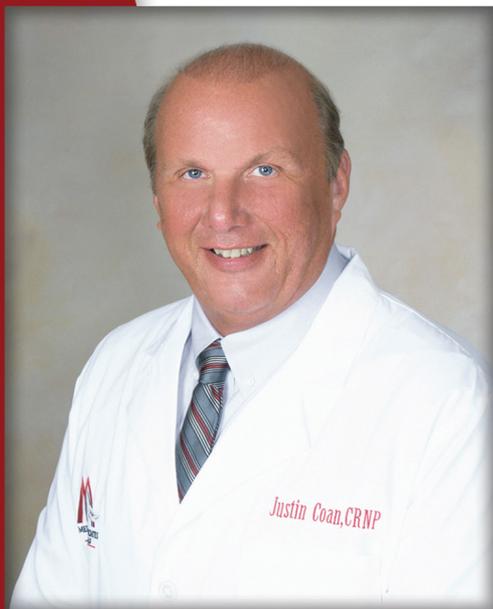


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'CHALLENGE,' from page 12

may not seem like there are any silver linings in situations like these, Tverberg hopes that her seniors look at the final season that was unjustly taken from them and use it as inspiration to grow as a person off the field.

"I love softball more than anyone I feel like. But there are things bigger than the game. We have to protect people and make sure people are healthy. That comes first," Tverberg said.

"It's hard to say this early on exactly what the good things come out of a situation like this. But I do hope that it helps my senior girls realize that they can grow as individuals outside of softball and that they can overcome adversity and be stronger because of this. Don't let this drag them down and that they will be better because they faced this. There is life outside of softball and softball isn't always going to be there. I hope they use this time to grow as a person use this to propel them forward somehow."

As it will be almost a full year before the first pitch of next softball season and the feeling surrounding the sport is at the moment is a bleak one, there is reason to be optimistic and hopeful for the future of Belgreen softball according to Tverberg.

"We are losing a lot of seniors this year but we do have a ton of young talent as well. These girls have been totally committed to the process. They play ball at home, they practice without anyone telling them to do so, and they play travel ball. They're doing all the right things to take that next step," Tverberg said.

"All of that is exciting not only for a coach but for the community as well because that's your future. They've been successful playing as they've grown up over the years and they have a ton of potential and it is going to be exciting to watch these girls get their chance to step up and make their mark."

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