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Huckaba completes three week crisis nursing assignment in New York City

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Luke Huckaba had never been to New York until he boarded a plane April 18 to embark on a 21-day crisis travel nursing assignment in America's worst COVID-19 hotspot.

And it didn't take the former Russellville resident long to realize today's New York was nothing like he'd seen on television and in the movies.

"It was kind of like a ghost town," Huckaba said. "In Times Square, there was hardly anybody even out. This was nothing like the pictures I'd always seen of New York City and definitely not what I expected. Everything was closed down. You don't see many people out. There were a few riding a bike or walking their dogs, but other than that there wasn't much going on."

Huckaba, a registered nurse in Huntsville Hospital's Intensive Care Unit, returned home May 10 after completing his nursing assignment at Brooklyn's Kings County Hospital. Huckaba signed up to spend three weeks in New York in response to an ad from Krucial Staffing, a company that provides clinical and non-clinical staffing to locations requiring urgent assistance.

Huckaba said his company alone brought approximately 400 new nurses into NYC every day.

"I wasn't getting much work in the ICU at Huntsville Hospital since they weren't doing any elective surgeries, so I decided to try and help out in an area where there was an urgent need," Huckaba said.

Huckaba and his team stayed



COURTESY PHOTO
Huckaba spent three weeks treating COVID-19 patients in New York City.

See 'HUCKABA,' page 3

County commission votes to reopen courthouse with new safety measures

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission voted to reopen the Franklin County Courthouse effective Tuesday, May 19th, at the commission's regular meeting Monday morning.

Probate Judge Barry Moore said the reopening came with conditions, including limits on the number of customers allowed in various courthouse offices. The courthouse will be open regular business hours from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

"We thank the citizens for their patience during this time. Patience is something we all need now and we continue to ask them to have patience as we move forward," Moore said. "We ask if you can conduct business over

the phone, online or through the mail, please do so as we expect lines to be long. The Revenue Commissioner's office has processed more than 4,000 tags over the phone, by mail and online already."

Courthouse visitors will notice several measures taken to protect citizens and employees, including:

—installation of clear barriers in the Probate Office, Tag Office, Property Tax Office, Circuit Clerk's Office and the Red Bay Tag Office. The barriers will temporarily be plexiglass, but tempered glass permanent barriers have been ordered and will be installed once delivered.

—marked six-foot distances on the floors to help maintain social distancing.

—thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all offices.

—hand sanitizer dispensers placed throughout the

See 'COURTHOUSE,' page 5

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Julia Bertha Black, 87 of Russellville, died on Thursday, May 14th. Internment at Jonesboro Cemetery.

David Larry Goines, 70, of Russellville, died on Wednesday, May 13th. A private burial was held.

Edward Mitchell, 86, of Russellville, died on Saturday, May 16th. Internment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Melanie Boberg Pennington, 52, of Russellville, died on Wednesday, May 13th. Internment at Hopewell Church of Christ Cemetery.

James Cleveland Robbins, 78, of Mount Hope, died on Friday May 15th. Internment at Bethsaida Cemetery.

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'HUCKABA,' from page 1

at the Marriott in Times Square and rode a bus to and from Kings County Hospital each day. He worked 12-hour shifts for 21 days in a row in a hospital that went from 40 ICU beds to more than 200 as a result of COVID-19.

"I didn't have a patient who wasn't COVID positive while I was there," Huckaba said. "My first impression was 'wow.' This is so much worse than I really ever thought it would be. Those people have been hit so hard with this.

"Their staff is so overwhelmed. They didn't have sufficient staff or resources without bringing in nurses from several different companies. They've been at it for weeks and weeks before I got there."

Huckaba said it wasn't just the patients who expressed their appreciation for the service of the nurses from across the country. It was also the staff at Kings County Hospital.

"They've been hit so hard in the beginning before anyone was there. They're just exhausted. They thanked us constantly while we were there. A lot of the staff was taking some time off, doing classes at the hospital, and some were just tired and needed a break," Huckaba said. "Several staff members had passed away. Basically, my unit consisted of all travel nurses."

Huckaba is in the midst of a two-week quarantine himself before he returns to Huntsville Hospital. While he never had any symptoms of COVID-19, he said the quarantine was a safety precaution.

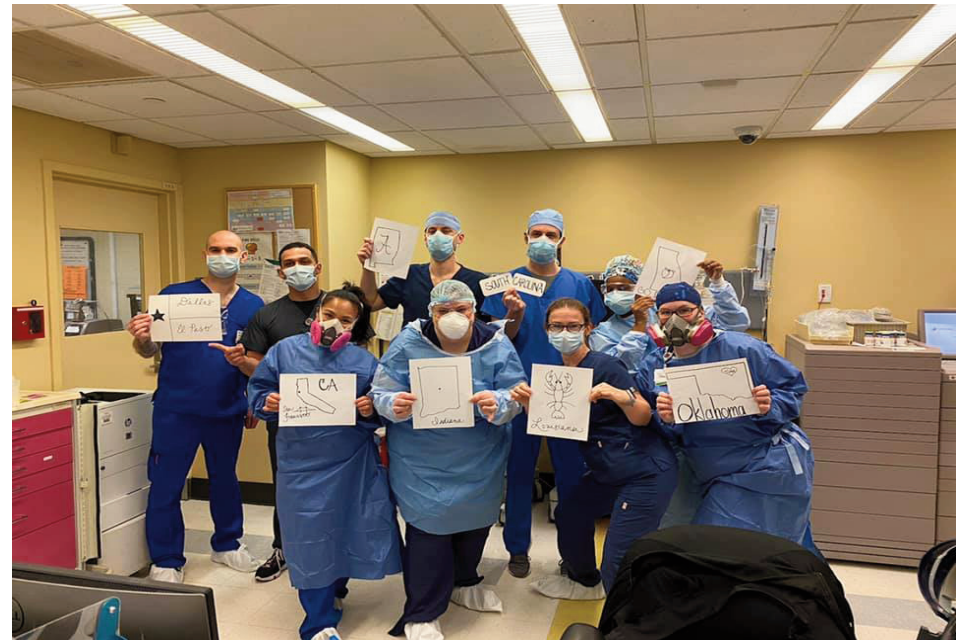
When he left on April 18, Franklin County had only a few positive COVID-19 cases. He returned to find his home county inundated with the virus.

"They are doing more testing so we're going to have more cases. I know people are mad about social distancing, store closings, but I definitely think that stuff helps," Huckaba said. "They are super strict about it in New York City. Everyone wears masks and the numbers are starting to decline. It definitely plays a big part of trying to slow down the curve and spread of the virus.

"In New York City, people literally live on top of each other. It made for the perfect environment for this virus. People packed into the subway every day and the virus spread like crazy," he added.

Huckaba said his stay in New York will help him become a better nurse and, if presented with another opportunity to work a crisis travel nursing assignment, he would go again.

"It was a good experience. I met people from all over the country. I got to do ICU nursing a little different than what we do in Huntsville," Huckaba said. "You get exposed to different things and it's really culturally diverse up there also, with lots of different food and people from all over the world."



COURTESY PHOTO

Huckaba and a team of nurses from around the country during their 21-day assignment in New York City.

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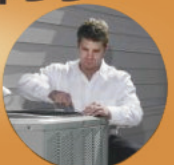
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Helen Keller Hospital releases Coronavirus numbers update

Submitted to the FFP

We have had numerous inquiries posed to our healthcare leaders regarding their perspective in reopening activities in northwest Alabama. While there is reason to be optimistic, there is also reason to be extremely careful, especially now.

Our area's journey with COVID-19 began on Friday, March 19th with the first confirmed positive case in northwest Alabama. The number of COVID-19 cases in northwest Alabama grew from one case to near 100 cases on April 30th.

Our trajectory at the time showed slow growth indicative of significant control of spread and tracked favorably compared to the rest of the state.

Then, May happened. Our number of confirmed cases increased from 124 to 441 in the first 13 days of May.

Although the Huntsville area is 174% more populous than northwest Alabama, yesterday, our total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale Counties combined surpassed that of Madison, Limestone and Morgan counties combined.

Likewise, in the most recent 13 days, we experienced a threefold increase in the number of patients who were admitted to local hospitals with COVID-19, several in critical condition.

Despite the broad clusters of home addresses of many of the newly discovered cases, most of our COVID-19 positive patients work, buy groceries, and have family connections throughout Franklin, Colbert and Lauderdale Counties, as we all would expect.

While we all want normalcy as soon as possible, we are concerned about a return to normal daily activity while our corner of Alabama encounters more

See 'KELLER,' Page 8

Email us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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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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My take on this... I should act my age?

I don't know about any of you, but I often wonder the meaning to the question of 'why don't you act your age?'

I have seen books about the "terrible twos" but not all two year olds are terrible. If a two year old doesn't act terrible, can he be considered two? He isn't going by the book. Is the book wrong or is the child wrong?

What about the expression 'he talks good for his age'? What age should that be referred to? Usually, it's around ten months to two years old, I think, but I talk good for my age too! Not only that, when I started talking I never shut up. Does that mean I don't act my age?

A young child of four was standing by a young man of eighteen. The four year old looked up at the teenager and said to him, "I learned to pull up my pants when I was two." Who is acting his age?

It sounds to me like the two year old is much more mature than the eighteen year old. But, I really can't be sure by the world's concept of acting your age. It's just too confusing.

Since 'age' is a terrible thing to waste or is that 'time'?

All I know is that I'm not wasting my time worrying about acting my age. I don't think I do by others' beliefs. I just do what makes me happy as



Gail Motes

often as I can.

I've even seen an older person driving by in a Corvette with the top down and lo and behold the person standing next to me said, "he's too old to be driving that kind of car!"

No way! Did I really just hear that?

If that wasn't enough, the very next day, I was standing around talking to an elderly friend when a young girl, who was around the age of twenty, was driving an older, mid-sized car. He watched the car drive by and said that car looked too old for her. It looked more like something her daddy should be driving. It's just too old for her! Really?

The times I've walked the car lots looking around at the different styles of cars, I've never seen a sticker implying the age of requirement of the driver. It did state the year and the model of the car, not the date of birth or if you needed to be a 'model' to drive.

I still don't have the answer to this 'age-old' statement. I still wonder what it implies. I have asked a few how I should act at my age but no one seems to know.

Overall, my life is fun and full of adventures.

So with that in mind I hope I will continue to hear others say to me, "you will never act your age will you?"

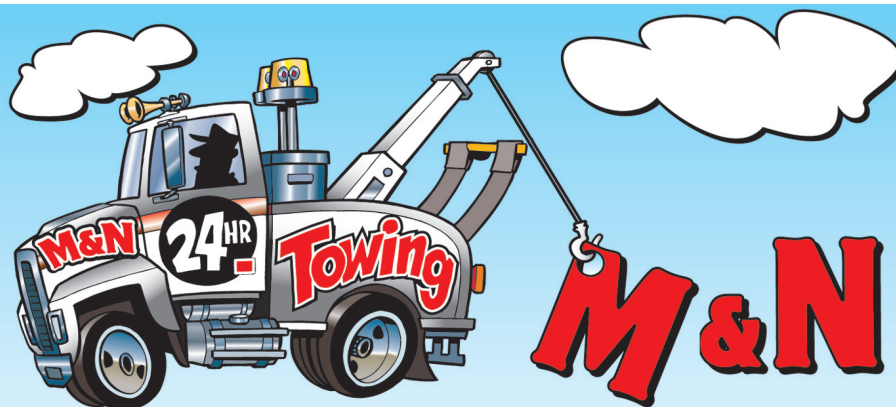
My answer will be, "I hope not!"

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'COURTHOUSE,' from page 1

courthouse.

Moore also asked that entry into the courthouse be limited to those persons essential to do the transaction needed.

The number of customers in each office will be limited as follows:

—Probate Office: three customers at the main counter with four customers in the record room.

—Tag Office: three customers at the counter for renewals and new registrations with a title application and two in waiting for title transactions by appointment.

—Property Tax Office: two customers at the counter.

Two customers will be allowed inside the Red Bay Tag Office at a time. Officers will be on site assisting citizens.

"Due to the limited number of customers being allowed inside the courthouse, there will be lines outside," Moore said. "You will be directed by a deputy to the appropriate line according to your business at the courthouse. We encourage everyone to maintain social distancing while standing in these lines. We will provide a bench and chairs for those who need them."

The Franklin County Circuit Clerk's Office is not processing passport applications at this time. If citizens need a passport for an emergency

situation, call 1-877-487-2778 or visit www.travel.state.gov. When the clerk's office begins processing passport applications, there will be an announcement in the *Franklin Free Press*.

In other agenda items, the commission:

—approved the resignation of Jason Tyson (effective April 20) and the termination of Matt Miller (effective May 4) from the Franklin County Solid Waste Department. Commissioner Jason Miller abstained from the termination vote.

—approved the low interest bid from Valley State Bank on a \$600,000 loan for the purchase of four Kenworth dump trucks for the Franklin County Highway Department. The note will be a six-year term with one annual payment. The interest rate is 2.125 percent.

—approved leave under the Family Medical Leave Act for Bill Cheatham, maintenance supervisor, for up to 10 weeks as a result of back surgery.

—approved the expense of \$4,400 toward the purchase of a transport van and stretcher for the Franklin County Coroner.

—authorized Moore to write a letter of appreciation to Jack Daniel's USA for its donation of hand sanitizer to Franklin County first responders and nursing homes.

RCS board approves 2020-2021 officers, other personnel moves

John Pilati

Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Board of Education elected its officers for the 2020-21 school year at the board's May 14 meeting.

Jerry Groce will serve as President and Greg Trapp as President-Elect. Additionally, a number of personnel moves were considered.

Four retirements were approved, including Sandy Evans, nurse at Russellville Elementary, Michelle James, West Elementary teacher, Mitzi McNutt, WES teacher and Donna Trapp, Russellville Elementary teacher.

Other personnel moves included:

—Transfers: Karen Mitchell, from WES kindergarten teacher to WES instructional coach.

—Termination of Supplement: Tony Buckhalter as strength and conditioning and assistant varsity/head B-team basketball coach.

—Employment in Position: Ana Maegan Knight, speech-language pathology; Mandy Odom, RES teacher; MaKenzie Holley, RES teacher; Emile Crummie, WES teacher; Jana Turbyville Hein, WES teacher; Melissa Kiel, WES teacher; Daylie Weeks, WES teacher; Angela Woods, WES teacher; Ella Burcham, Brayden Malone, Kage Malone, Callie Mayberry, Gracie Pounders, Lily Pounders, Kevin (Kade) Touchstone, Madalyn Warhurst, part-time student lifeguards for the Russellville Parks and Recreation Department; Sydni Franklin, RMS math teacher; Kaitlyn Richardson, English Language Arts teacher at RMS; David Langston, RMS history teacher; Luke Baker, RMS science teacher; Cassy Groce, System-Wide nurse; Cara Humphries, special education teacher at RES and Kasey Sparks, special education teacher at WES.

—Resignation: Carrie Mostellar, RES teacher and Meredith Dorroh, WES.

Facility use requests were approved for the following: RHS facilities on August 22, 2020, for the RHS Marching Hundred Auxiliaries to host Watermelon Run; RHS facilities on September 26, 2020, for RHS Band Parent Association to host Northwest Alabama Marching Classic.

A contract with Brock Malone was approved for Malone to provide contract labor to clean the RHS campus during the months of June and July 2020.

The board approved the following bids: \$24,303 by BRESKO for a new pot, pan and utensil washer at RMS and a bid of \$396,000 from Hovater Metal Works for West Elementary School fire repairs.

The next regular meeting of the RCS Board of Education will be Thursday, June 18, at 8 a.m., with work session Monday, June 15 at 3:30 p.m.

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 **R**onnie McDowell returns to Russellville to celebrate his 70th birthday with a special show at the Roxy Theatre on Saturday, June 20 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.


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 **I**t's mowing season and time to remove old flowers from the Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Highway 724 in Newburg. Please do so by the end of May. Donations are needed for the upkeep of this historic cemetery and may be mailed to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Fund, 941 Highway 87, Russellville, AL, 35654.


 **T**he American Legion Post 64 in Russellville will postpone its May meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Grant Atkins.

 **D**ivorced? 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.

 **T**he family of Sid and Dore Hawkins invites you to the annual family reunion, Saturday, June 6th 10 a.m. at the Spruce Pine Community Center. Please bring your favorite covered dish and we look forward to seeing you!

 **E**veryone is welcome to worship services at Duncan Creek Baptist Church, 3925 Duncan Creek Road, Russellville. Service times are Sunday School at 10 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m. and Bible Study at 5 p.m. Pastor is Bro. Joe Thorn.

 **Y**ou 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.

 **N**ew 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.

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Nickels giving back to community with free car washes

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Lee Nickels wanted a way to give back to his community as a thank you for the support his State Farm Insurance office has received the last few months.

So Nickels is giving away 30 free VIP car washes at JoBabies Car Wash on Friday, May 22, starting at 3 p.m.

Nickels will be on site at JoBabies, 14378 Highway 43, serving soft drinks and bottled water to folks who come to get their car washed, and the first 30 people will receive a ticket for a free \$18 car wash.

"It's just a way to give back to our community that's helped my business so much during this pandemic," Nickels said. "We haven't been affected as much as others have recently and we've been blessed to we wanted to give back to others and at the same time, support another local business."

With people starting to get out more, Nickels thought free car washes would be a nice gift for folks heading into the long Memorial Day weekend.

JoBabies is located just north of the Lawrence Street/Hwy. 43 intersection.

Nickels asks those who are coming for the free car wash to wait to get in line until 3 p.m., so that other customers, including monthly subscribers, can still access the car wash.

The VIP carwash, the top package available at JoBabies, includes: Lava Bath, Lava Shine, Lava Seal paint sealant, the Waterfall Rinse & Cure, Underbody Blast, Super Soaker, Tire Shine and a Carnauba Hot Wax.



COURTESY PHOTO

Nickels is giving away 30 free VIP car washes as a way of saying thank you to the community for supporting his State Farm Insurance office.

Have an event we can help publicize? Call us at 256-332-0255.

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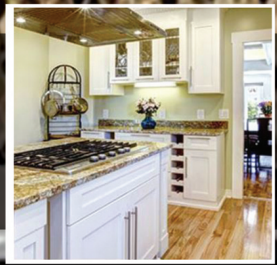
'KELLER,' from page 4

new COVID-19 activity than most Alabama communities this month. Based on this data, we urge everyone to use extreme caution in the coming days and weeks in order to prevent a severe outbreak in our local community.

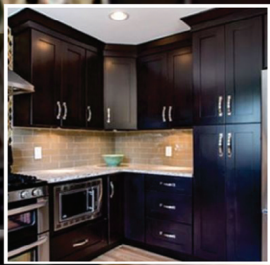
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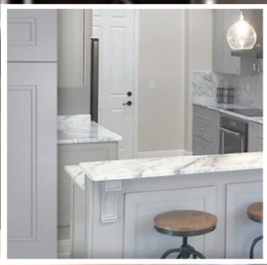
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BREAKING NEWS!



Dr. Steve Hammack is Back Open!

Dear Patients,

We hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. Our community has been through a lot the last few months, and all of us are looking forward to resuming our normal habits and routines. While many things have changed, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to your safety.

Infection control has always been a top priority for our practice. Our infection control processes are made so that when you receive care, it's both safe and comfortable. We want to share with you the infection control procedures we follow in our practice to keep our patients and staff safe.

We follow infection control recommendations made by the American Dental Association, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. We follow these activities of these agencies so we remain up-to-date on any new rulings or guidance that may be issued. We do this to make sure our infection control procedures are current and adhere to each agency's recommendations.

You may see some changes at your next appointment. We made these to help protect our patients and staff. For example:

- Our office will communicate with you beforehand to ask some screening questions. You'll be asked those same questions again when you are in the office.
- We have hand sanitizer that we will ask you to use when you enter the office. You will also find some in the reception area and other places in the office for use as needed.
- You may see our waiting room will no longer offer magazines, children's toys, etc., since those items are difficult to clean and disinfect.
- Appointments will be managed to allow for social distancing between patients. That might mean you're offered fewer options for scheduling your appointment.
- We will do our best to allow greater time between patients to reduce waiting times for you. You will be asked to stay in your car when you arrive and we will come out and get you for your appointment.

We appreciate our first responders during these difficult times. For all your hard work, until August 1, 2020, first responders, nurses, doctors and teachers working from home get a FREE cleaning with X-rays. If you have insurance, you'll receive a special extra! This is our THANKYOU for all of your hard work!

To schedule an appointment, please call our office at 256-332-6073 or visit our website at www.russellvilledentalcare.com.

Thank you for being our patient. We value your trust and loyalty and look forward to welcoming back our patients, neighbors and friends.

Sincerely,
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- Through the Census Bureau's strong precautions, cybersecurity programs, and data encryption, your online responses are safe from hacking and other cyber threats.
- By law your responses and personal information cannot be shared with law enforcement agencies such as FBI, ICE or even local police.





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Multi-family yard sale. Saturday, May 23rd, 7:30 a.m.-until. 415 Hester Avenue, Russellville. Four blocks south of Frosty Inn. Large collection of records, two tractors, children's and adult clothing and much more! Cancelled if rain. (1)

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**LOOKING TO BUY/
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The management of WMTY television on Highway 24 West in Russellville is needing a

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Need Someone to do dirt work for a garden. Also need someone for roofing repairs. Please call 256-668-9391.

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Wrought Iron Mailbox post. Standard type, \$42.95. Standard deluxe \$55. Well built, look good, and will last. Will deliver to Tharptown and Russellville for free. Other areas \$7 fee. No texts. Call (256)-577-1632. (1)

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Open House. Saturday, May 16th. 12 p.m.-4 p.m. 231 Duncan Drive, Russellville. For more information, call 731-335-9995.

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Washington Ave., Russellville. \$395/mo. \$395/deposit. Must have first month's rent and deposit up front. Call 256-810-3998 or 256-460-5016. (6)

Franklin Free Press Classified Rates Yard Sale Rates: FREE, Deadline Monday at

Noon; Real Estate-Homes, acreage, lots for sale or rent. \$25 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 40 words per ad; Vehicles, Boats, RVs, Motorcycles for sale. \$15 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25 words per ad; Pets For Sale only \$10 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25

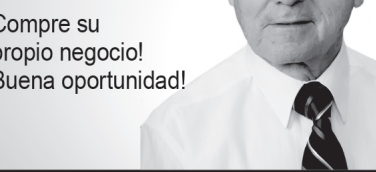
words per ad; Free of Charge: Lost & Found, Giveaways, and Items Under \$100 (Private Parties Only). 15-word limit; Commercial Classified Rates: \$25 for

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Longing for an escape from reality

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press



Brady Petree
 Sports Editor

As the book closed on the tenth and final chapter of *The Last Dance* documentary about the 1998 Chicago Bulls Sunday night, it was easy for sports fans to feel a small bit of longing.

Longing for more nostalgic footage of Michael Jordan hitting last second shots to lift the Chicago Bulls to a title once again.

Longing for the crack of the bat and watching Mike Trout drift back and make a snow cone catch just over his shoulder on the warning track.

Longing to watch Tiger Woods sink a putt to give him another green jacket at the Masters.

The plain and simple truth of the matter? We all just want sports back.

We're looking for something to give us an escape from what is going on in our world.

That's the beautiful thing about sports. Whether you enjoy watching high-flying dunks, 500-foot home runs, or even if you simply enjoy hearing the roar of the motors as NASCAR drivers head for the finish line every Sunday afternoon, there's something for everyone.

We use sports as a way to forget about our day-to-day problems and to give us a tiny bit of solace, even if only for a few hours at a time.

Now we need that solace more than ever.

We have gone two months without any major live sporting events in the United States and that's sent sports fans into a frenzy wondering when they might be able to get that much-needed escape. I am in that group of sports fans left wondering when sports will return.

However, it seems we may have an answer to that very question sometime soon. In fact it could be in the coming weeks that we start to see the major sports leagues mobilize in an effort to return to action.

The UFC was the first popular sport to return to action as they did so last week with a plethora of fights to entertain action-starved fans. By all accounts, the return was a major success with numerous safety and health precautions being implemented for athletes and trainers, including temperature checks.

While the UFC is undoubtedly growing in popularity and soon might overtake their combat counterpart boxing in the ratings, the real answer to sports returning lies within the four major sports (MLB, NBA, NFL, NHL) in the United States.

While other leagues continue to debate whether to come back at all or simply push back their seasons, Major League Baseball is being proactive in its effort to come back.

As Major League Baseball officials continue to meet with the players' union to discuss details for the sport's return, there is growing optimism that the league will be the first major U.S. sport back in action.

See 'ESCAPE,' page 13

A winning culture

After her first season as the head coach of the Tharptown softball program, Brooklyn Clark is ready to establish a new dynasty

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

THARPTOWN - In 2016 at a sports complex in Denver, Colorado, the UNA softball program captured its first national championship in school history after sweeping Humboldt State. One of the members of that historic team was Brooklynn Clark.

Fast-forward four years later and Clark is now hoping to replicate the same level of success she had at UNA, albeit at a different level and she's no longer donning a uniform.

Clark is trying to lead the Tharptown Lady Wildcats to their first ever state title, much like the UNA team that captured their first title when Clark was an integral part of the Lions title run.

"My first thought when I got the job was 'we are going to state'. And I tried to instill that in my girls and make them believe that not only in themselves, but this team as a whole," Clark said. "We had all the talent we needed to get us there this year I fully believe. I'm sad it got cut short, but everything happens for a reason and we just have to be ready to go next year."

Coaching is something that has played a key role in her life and Clark has known for a long time that being a coach was in the cards for her somewhere down the line.

"I've always wanted to coach because I wanted to make an impact on all of the young athletes on the field and in the classroom," Clark said. "I have had so many good mentor coaches in my life. I am so thankful for Coach (Ashley) Cozart at UNA for taking a chance on me because it was the best decision of my life to move to North Alabama and has opened so many doors for me. So it was never a question what career path I wanted to take."

Clark's first year coaching the Lady Wildcats was cut short once the announcement that school was being suspended across the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, Clark was not concerned about herself and her first season abruptly coming to an end. Instead, she turned her focus to her girls.

Understanding that this is an entirely new situation for her girls, and one that is out of their control, Clark attempted to spin a negative into a positive.



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Clark led the Wildcats to a .500 record of 9-9 before the season ended with victories over Fayette County, Dora, and Addison.

"I was heartbroken for them. I don't think I have felt such sadness for a group of girls before, especially the seniors. They worked so hard in workouts, they faced adversity, and they even practiced inside the gym when it was raining outside and I know it had to feel like it was all for nothing," Clark said. "But everything happens for a reason and God has bigger plans for all of us. And I just tried to let them know that they had much more in front of them."

Clark says she found out about the shortened season just 30 minutes before a game against county-rival Red Bay.

Knowing that the decision would undoubtedly stir emotions, Clark elected to let her team play one more game without the worry of their season being cut short.

"At the time we thought for sure we had at least one more day to play, but that just wasn't the

See 'CULTURE' page 12

Why? United States[®] Census 2020

Why is the Census important to me or my family?

The Census affects the amount of funding that Franklin County receives and how the community plans for the future along with representation in government. The data from the 2020 Census will be used for:

- Public services and funding for schools, hospitals and fire departments.
- Planning for businesses, new homes and improvement in neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats Alabama is all located in the House of Representatives.



David Palmer,
Franklin County Engineer

How is Census data used for infrastructure of roads and bridges in Franklin County?

The Franklin County Highway Department runs primarily off of fuel taxes as does almost all highway departments, street departments, departments of transportation, etc. Fuel taxes are collected at distribution points around the state and sent to a central depository in Montgomery. From there those funds are distributed back out to the local governments by a formula that is based largely on population. Many other sources of funding, including state and federal grants, have some population based metrics. A less than accurate census count will be very costly to any community.

Please list projects (roads and bridges) in Franklin County where federal funds were used?

We are responsible for maintaining approximately 800 miles of roads and over 300 bridges and culverts in Franklin County. In my 30 years we have replaced hundreds of bridges and culverts and resurfaced hundreds of miles of county roads. Some of that work was through local funding but much of the work was through federal and state funds. We have secured over \$50 million dollars in federal and state funding over the past 30 years. Those dollars are awarded through competitive grants that definitely include metrics for population.

If residents of Franklin County do not fill out their Census 2020 form how will this impact infrastructure of roads and bridges in the county?

Almost all local road and bridge funding is based, at least in part, on population. It is simple. If we do not maximize our census count, we do not maximize our funding. Worse than that, if we do not maximize our count and our neighbors do, we maximize their funding!

'CULTURE,' from page 11

case. I didn't tell them until after the game because I didn't want them to be emotional while playing," Clark said. "If anything, I just want them to know that their season being cut short does not define them. They are going to go off to college and live their lives and be successful in whatever it is they choose to do."

Of course, it can be difficult for a new coach coming in to implement their philosophy and strategies when a team is accustomed to a different way of doing things.

That thought proved to not pose any issues for Clark as she attempted to win her players over when she first arrived on the Tharptown campus.

"I know it's always hard to adjust to a new coach. Trust me, I have done it my whole life with travel ball, high school, and even college," Clark said. "But I am proud of how they adjusted. Of course you are going to have those first few days being kind of awkward with everyone trying to get used to everyone. But within a week it was like we were all one big family which is the kind of team I am trying to build."

Clark will have some retooling to do during the offseason as she is losing three key seniors after this season.

Brooke Daily, Olivia Ergle, and Shaylee Wieting are all set to depart the Tharptown softball program after stellar careers. Wieting has committed to play softball at Coastal Alabama beginning next spring.

Losing three players like Daily, Ergle, and Wieting won't be easy to replace, but Clark is confident in her younger players to step up and take the new challenge head-on.

"I really had a good group of seniors who all contributed so much to this team. Those three were all so fun to be around and worked hard everyday. Coming up we have players like Taylor Cameron who had a good season for us this year," Clark said. "We also have Kyndall Morgan, Morgan and Madison Vandiver and a few younger players who I expect to accomplish really big things in the years to come."

Looking back on the season, Clark was pleased with how her first coaching stint went and looks forward to being along for the ride as the Lady Wildcats pursue state titles in the future.

See 'CULTURE,' Page 14



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'ESCAPE,' from page 11

Of course this early on in the discussions there are too many moving parts to cast a prediction on how the league will be structured or how many games will be played.

The first thing that must happen is the players' safety must be the top priority, along with those around the teams.

Once those issues are settled, everything else will soon fall into place. Of course there are other issues, including where to play the games, financial details, etc.

But on both sides of the argument, whether it be the players or owners, there is a tremendous downside to not having a season at all.

Because of this downside, it stands to reason that a season will inevitably happen. There is just simply too much to lose by not doing so.

If things go right, and that is a very big if, once baseball returns you will start to see other sports come back to life.

Obviously this is not going to be the same sports structure that we are accustomed to seeing.

But at this point, we will take sports, as long as they're safe, in any capacity, so that we might have that solace and escape from reality once again.



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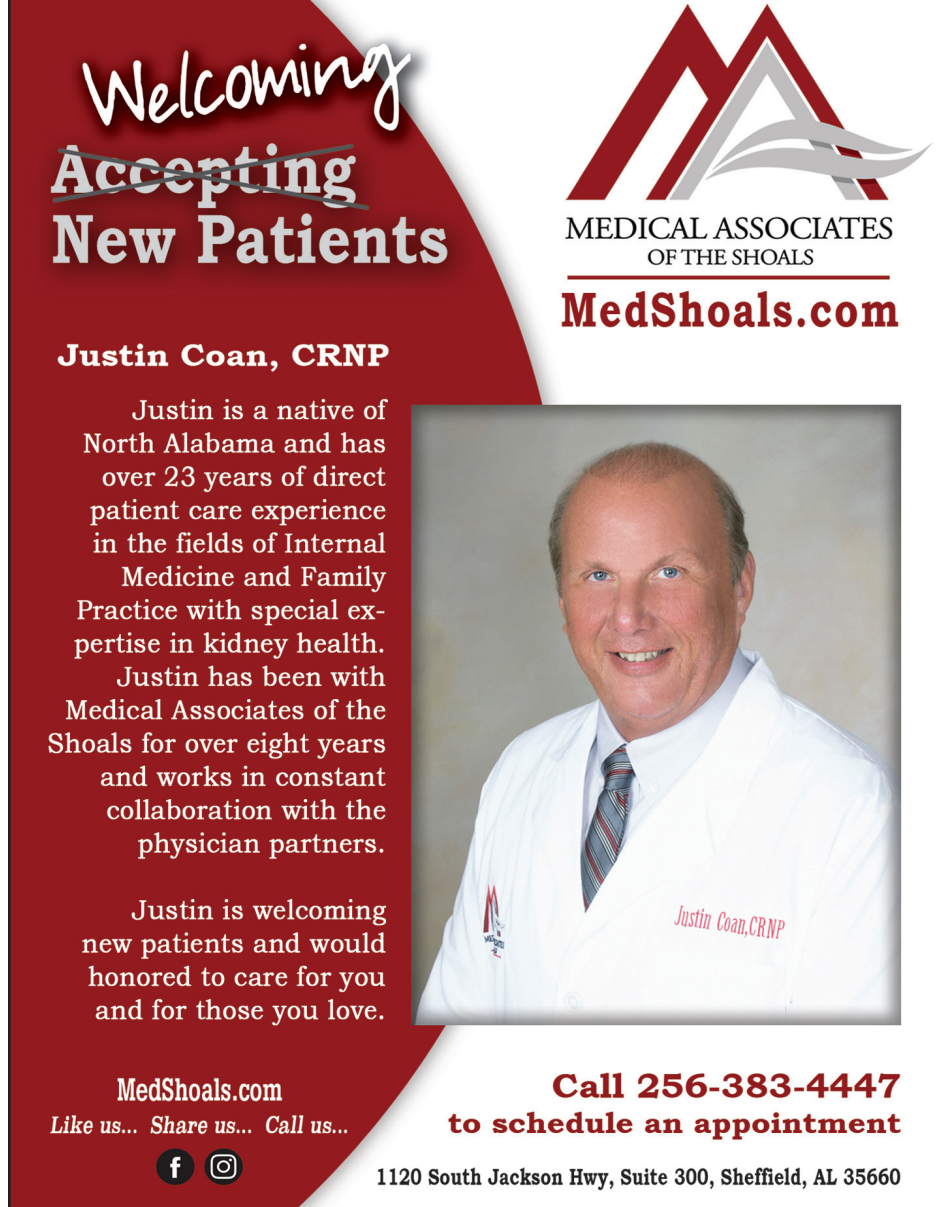
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'CULTURE,' from page 12

"I loved this season. I came to practice everyday in such a good mood because not only did they work hard when they were supposed to, but they are all so funny and just a joy to be around. It's hard not to have a good time when you're around them," Clark said.

"I have really high expectations moving forward so I'm still gunning for a run to state. With the right mindset we can accomplish anything if every player is onboard and if anything that this pandemic has taught us it's not to take anything for granted and hopefully my girls come out stronger and hungrier to have a strong season."

Send your guest columns, photos and other creative submissions to us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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A public notice from the Russellville Gas Board

RUSSELLVILLE GAS BOARD
1296 Walnut Gate Road
Russellville, AL 35654

The Russellville Gas Board is required by Federal Law to implement and maintain a Damage Prevention Program and a Public Awareness Program. The following information is provided in compliance with those requirements.

I. Damage Prevention Program

A. The Russellville Gas Board (RGB) is to notify parties who periodically excavate in areas where RGB's natural gas lines are located and to inform those parties to request that RGB's natural gas lines be located. Requests for line locations may be made by calling Alabama Line Location Center at 1-800-292-8525 or the Russellville Gas Board at 1-256-332-2020. A 48 hour notice is required.

II. Public Awareness Program

- A. Natural gas has no odor, therefore, in order to identify possible leaks, the Russellville Gas Board (RGB) adds a foul smelling substance to natural gas. If you detect a foul smell near appliances, apparatus, equipment or at any other location near natural gas lines call the RGB at 1-256-332-3850 or after hours at 1-256-332-2230. If the odor is strong, proceed as follows.
- 1) Leave the structure.
 - 2) Do not flip light switches.
 - 3) Do not use electrical equipment.
 - 4) Do not create a spark or flame.
 - 5) Notify the RGB.
- B. Repairs or alterations to any natural gas facility should be performed by a licensed and bonded pipefitter.
- C. It is unlawful to attempt to repair or alter natural gas pipelines or facilities owned by RGB.
- D. The RGB's natural gas pipelines are located underground throughout the area of service. In order for the public to identify the approximate location of underground pipelines, the RGB incorporates the following measures:
- 1) Bright yellow markers identify the existence of underground natural gas pipelines.
 - 2) Above ground facilities are painted silver. Fences have signs attached identifying RGB facilities.
 - 3) An on-site location of natural gas pipelines is available by calling Alabama Line Location Center at 1-800-292-8525 or the RGB at 1-256-332-2020.
 - 4) Detail maps are available at the RGB office located at 1296 Walnut Gate Road, Russellville, AL, 35654.
- E. In the event of damage to RGB's natural gas facilities the affected public should leave the area and the party causing the damage should:
- 1) Leave the equipment and premises immediately.
 - 2) Do not create a spark or flame.
 - 3) Notify the RGB immediately.

Natural gas is a safe and reliable form of energy. By implementing the Damage Prevention Program and Public Awareness Program, the Russellville Gas Board is committed to ensuring that it stays that way.

Russellville Gas Board

La Comisión de Gas de Russellville
1296 Walnut Gate Road
Russellville, AL 35654

La Comisión de Gas de Russellville por requerimiento de la ley Federal tiene que implementar y mantener un Programa de Prevención de Daños y un Programa de Conciencia Pública. La siguiente información va de acuerdo a dichos requerimientos.

I. Programa de Prevención de Daños

A. La Comisión de Gas de Russellville (RGB) deberá notificar a las partes que periódicamente excavan en áreas en que la RGB tiene líneas de gas natural e informar a dichas partes que piden que las líneas de la RGB sean localizadas. Para pedir la localización de las líneas puede hacerlo llamando al Centro de Localización de Líneas de Alabama al número 1800-292-8525 o en la oficina de la Comisión de Gas de Russellville al teléfono 1-256-332-2020. Se requiere notificar con 48 horas de anticipación.

II. Programa de Conciencia Pública

- A. El gas natural no tiene olor, por lo tanto para poder identificar posibles fugas, la Comisión de Gas de Russellville (RGB) le agrega una sustancia de olor fétido al gas natural. Si usted detecta este olor cerca de algún aparato o equipo o en cualquier otro lugar cerca de una línea de gas natural llame a la RGB al teléfono 1 256-332-3850 o después de horas de servicio al 1-256-332-2230. Si el olor es fuerte, haga lo siguiente:
- 1) Aléjese del recinto.
 - 2) No prenda luces o apagadores.
 - 3) No use equipo eléctrico.
 - 4) No cree una chispa o flama.
 - 5) Notifique a la RGB.
- B. Reparaciones o alteraciones a cualquier instalación de gas natural deberá ser hecha por un tubero con licencia y certificado.
- C. Es contra la ley intentar reparar o alterar una línea de gas natural o instalación propiedad de la RGB.
- D. Las líneas de gas natural de la RGB se localizan bajo tierra en el área de servicio. Para que el público pueda identificar la localización aproximada de líneas enterradas, la RGB incorpora las siguientes medidas:
- 1) Marcadores de color amarillo brillante identifican la existencia de líneas subterráneas de gas natural.
 - 2) Servicios sobre el suelo están pintadas de color plateado. Las cercas tienen señales identificando servicios de la RGB.
 - 3) Se encuentra disponible un servicio para localizar líneas de gas natural llamando al Centro de Localización de Líneas de Alabama al teléfono 1-800-292-8525 o a la RGB al 1-256-332-2020.
 - 4) Hay mapas detallados disponibles en la oficina de la RGB localizada en 1229 Walnut Gate Road, Russellville, AL, 35654.
- E. En el caso de daño a los servicios de gas natural de la RGB el público afectado deberá alejarse del área y la parte que cause el daño debe:
- 1) Dejar el equipo y el lugar inmediatamente.
 - 2) No provoque una chispa o flama.
 - 3) Notifique la RGB de inmediato.

El gas natural es una fuente de energía segura y confiable. Implementando el Programa de Prevención de Daños y Conciencia al Público, la Comisión de Gas de Russellville esta comprometida a asegurar que siga de esa manera.

Comisión de Gas de Russellville