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## Moss named Tharptown High School principal

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As he watched his son's Tharptown High School varsity boys basketball team play at Deshler Thursday evening, Bart Moss received word he had been hired as the school's new principal.

True to his school, Moss, the parent and new principal, asked the reporter if he could return his call after the game, which he did.

"I really appreciate Mr. (Greg) Hamilton and the Board of Education for their support and confidence in me and providing me this opportunity," Moss said. "I'm also fortunate to have worked with the best adminis-

See 'MOSS,' page 3



COURTESY PHOTO

Moss was tabbed as the principal of Tharptown High School after Ann Scott resigned earlier this month.

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## Guinn showcasing 'elite' voice through state vocal competition

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Russellville High School choral director Emily Rush already knew her senior student Avery Guinn had an elite voice.

Now, the rest of Alabama is realizing his vocal talent.

Guinn, the son of Tim and Sandy Guinn, was named the District One Outstanding Choral Student (OCS) in the Tenor-Bass division as part of the Alabama Vocal Association's annual OCS competition. Guinn will compete next spring with other district winners to be selected as

Alabama's 2021 Outstanding Male Choral Student.

As with everything else, this year's competition was a bit different due to COVID-19 restrictions. Students submitted videos of a vocal solo, along with a resume, three letters of recommendation (including one from a choral director and one from another school official) and they took part in an interview by choral professionals, including the Choral Director from Mississippi State University.

The student's community involvement also plays a factor in selecting each district's winner. And when it

See 'GUINN,' page 8

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**Randall Eugene "Randy (Cotton) DeVaney, 59,** passed away on Saturday, November 21st. Interment at Jonesboro Cemetery.

**Willard C. Hovater, 76,** passed away on Wednesday, November 18th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

**Dylan Kyle Lane, 22,** passed away on Sunday, November 15th. Interment at Orange Cemetery.

**Edward Franklin Rogers, 88,** of Phil Campbell, passed away on Tuesday, November 17th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

**Gale Hoyt "Snuffy" Smith, 66,** of Russellville passed away on Thursday, November 19th. Interment at Taylor Cemetery.

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# 'MOSS,' from page 1

trator anyone could ask for in Ann Scott. I am forever grateful for her and what she has taught me in the year and a half we had together at Tharptown," he added.

Moss was hired as the school's assistant principal in July 2019, the same year Scott took over as THS principal.

When Scott resigned earlier this month to become the principal at Russellville's West Elementary School, Hamilton had six applicants for her position, but he had a track record to review with Moss.

"Mr. Moss has done a good job as assistant principal and filling in in the absence of Mrs. Scott, not just since she left but also when she was sick," Hamilton said. "We had applicants both in and out of our system, but I'm confident we selected the best choice."

The working relationship and mutual respect between Hamilton and Moss is impressive, especially when you consider they ran against each other for Franklin County Superintendent of Education in 2016.

Hamilton was impressed with Moss' dedication to Tharptown, both as a teacher and an administrator at Franklin County's fastest-growing school.

"Tharptown is a great community. They want their school to grow and succeed in academics and extracurricular activities. We are the fastest growing school in the county and will probably be the biggest school in the county soon, other than Russellville. And we have big expectations," Moss said.

Moss recalled his father Bill's tenure as Franklin County Schools Superintendent when Tharptown High School was constructed.

"My dad always told me that one day Tharptown would be the biggest school. He was right," Moss said. "I have been here as a teacher for 12 years with every graduating class except the first one. And my son (Hayden) will graduate from Tharptown in May, so it's very special to me."

"I want to thank my wife, Amy, and my two kids for their support and understanding. You can't do a job like this without their support and understanding with all that goes into it," he added.

As a former history, government and economics teacher, Moss developed a reputation with his students of 'going the extra mile' to make his class interesting and keeping them motivated to learn.

"I remember in government class he would bring in elected officials and candidates to explain their jobs and help us learn," FFP editor Brady Petree, a Tharptown graduate, said. "Mr. Moss always did a good job keeping everyone interested in his class and that's tough to do when you are teaching juniors and seniors."

As he begins his tenure as THS principal, Moss said he'll look to his parents (Bill and Nelda) for inspiration.

"I really wish my mom and dad were here but I know they would be proud. I just hope to halfway live up to the standard they set for what a dedicated educator should be like," Moss said.

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# Pilgrim's, Touchstone building positive community relationships

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When Kevin Touchstone was appointed to the Russellville Industrial Development Board last month, the Russellville City Council knew what it was doing.

Touchstone, the complex manager for Pilgrim's Russellville, is the face of Franklin County's largest employer, so he's a perfect fit for a board that works to recruit new industry and support expansion of existing industry.

But Touchstone's impact on Russellville and Franklin County goes well beyond his new board appointment. When he took over in February 2018, Touchstone took over a facility that, by the admissions of Pilgrim's employees, had a sharp divide between labor and management.

Additionally, even with the largest employee base (1,350 employees) in the county, there were some who believed that the company was not beneficial to the community, even with statistical data that showed otherwise.

Pilgrim's Russellville contracts with 236 local poultry farms with annual payment of more than \$41 million, along with \$40 million in payroll for the Russellville facility.

The company also contributes more than \$3 million to the local tax base and another \$3 million in utility payments.

But previous management had come and gone, with some choosing not to make their homes in Franklin County. Beyond the issue of where management lived, the relationship between Pilgrim's and its community was, at best, subject to improvement.

Then came Touchstone, and all that changed.

He's only lived in Franklin County a few years, but Touchstone is a man who understands his community, and as the head of its largest industry, he's 'all in' when it comes to Russellville.

The Touchstone family lives in Russellville, and Kevin and Lea's children attend Russellville City Schools. The same night Kevin was appointed to the Industrial Development Board, Lea was named to the Russellville Library Board, hardly the most glamorous board appointment, but an important one nonetheless.

The Touchstones aren't looking for glory. Instead, they're working to make

their hometown a better place to live and work.

Pilgrim's wages have increased under Touchstone's leadership. Hardly a week goes by that Pilgrim's isn't making a donation to support Russellville City Schools or non-profit organizations in Franklin County.

In the middle of a pandemic, Pilgrim's made a \$2,500 donation to the RHS cross country team. Why? Because the team needed help. Coach Shawn Greenhill approached Touchstone to inquire whether the company could help, and the answer was a resounding 'yes.'

The donation was a major step toward allowing Greenhill's program to grow. There's nothing glamorous about a cross-country donation. You don't end up on the Jumbotron (although Pilgrim's is there too after a major sponsorship to the RHS Booster Club).

This spring, with health care workers on the COVID-19 front lines, Pilgrim's gave a 10-pound bag of chicken to every Russellville Hospital employee. That's more than a ton of chicken just to say 'thanks for what you do for us.'

Pilgrim's *Hometown Strong* program is a commitment from the company to inject \$50 million into the communities Pilgrim's serves. And they didn't forget Russellville.

The company recently announced a \$309,000 donation to the City of Russellville to fund construction of what will be Alabama's largest splash pad, something that was a vision for community leaders for many years.

Russellville Mayor David Grissom said Touchstone approached him asking for ideas of how they could help the city. It didn't take city leaders long to get back to him.

"I appreciate Pilgrim's investment in our local economy and their involvement in the Russellville and Franklin County community," Grissom said.

And the *Hometown Strong* support won't stop with the splash pad. With a \$580,000 commitment to Russellville, there's more to come from Pilgrim's.

"Home is where the heart is and Russellville is our home. I am honored and blessed to serve a community and company that shares my family's values," Touchstone said. "We look forward to many more years of service."

Decisions on when and how the money will be spent will come after conversations with local government, nonprofit and community leaders.

See 'PILGRIM'S,' Page 5

## Council restricts licensing for temporary business locations

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After a tent sale on Highway 43 was shut down by the fire marshal earlier this month, the Russellville City Council approved an ordinance that prohibits, with limited exceptions, the issuance of business licenses unless the business is housed within a permanent structure.

Xplore Liquidations, a subsidiary of Baymont Wholesale, Inc., set up a large tent on Highway 43 in Russellville in October. The company, based in Belmont, Ms., sells new items that have been returned or unsold at retail stores and offers them at substantial savings.

According to Thomas Thompson with Baymont Wholesale, his company obtained a business license to operate the tent sale and they collected the required nine percent taxes payable to the City of Russellville.

Xplore Liquidations conducted the tent sale for five weeks before Russellville Fire Marshal Justin Green ordered the tent closed in early November. Thompson said Green told him he had checked with the State Fire Marshal and since the tent was larger than 2,500 square feet, it was classified as a structure and had to be hardwired and needed an architectural layout with an exit plan and signs.

Thompson then conducted the sale outside the

tent and was again shut down by the fire marshal, he told the *Franklin Free Press*.

Thompson said his company was not refunded its cost for the business license, and they have now leased a building in Muscle Shoals to house their sales.

As of November 19<sup>th</sup>, all merchandise in and around the tent had been removed as the company prepared for its Muscle Shoals opening.

According to what city attorney Danny McDowell told the council at its November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting., the tent sale was shut down for "violations because it was considered a temporary structure."

The new ordinance prohibits the issuance of business licenses to "any business that is housed in a temporary structure, with the exception of a charitable, religious or educational institution, or to an existing licensed business at the site of, or adjacent to, said business' permanent structure, as approved by the license inspector."

Thompson said his company would have installed the required exit signs and escape plan, if they had known that was required.

"They issued us a business license and we operated for more than five weeks, with a great response from the community," Thompson said. "It's a shame (city officials) did this. The citizens of Russellville lost and the city lost additional tax revenue."

### FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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# 'PILGRIM'S,' from page 4

"Pilgrim's allocates *Hometown Strong* funds directly to causes and organizations that support needs resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and causes that will invest in Russellville's future," Touchstone said.

Pilgrim's has also invested heavily in COVID-19 safeguards inside its Russellville plant. Those include temperature scanning of all team members prior to entering the facility, health screenings for anyone entering the facility, employment of a COVID Superintendent to oversee compliance with safety protocol, distribution of extra personal protective equipment and more.

The company also sent home its most vulnerable populations of employees, including those over age 60, those with chronic conditions, etc., with full pay and benefits.

That's literally putting your money where your mouth is. Some companies offer lip service about taking care of their employees. Some take action, and that's why Pilgrim's relationship with its employees continues to improve.

It's important for Pilgrim's employees to remain safe as 1,350 people can have a significant impact on the health of a community during a pandemic.

"The well-being of Russellville is essential to our success at Pilgrim's, and we want to be a good neighbor," Touchstone said. "Through the *Hometown Strong* program, we are honored to help build a stronger community for us all."

And that's exactly what they're doing.

# Franklin County BOE approves bonus for employees

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

All Franklin County Schools certified and full-time support employees will receive a one-time bonus of \$50 next month, after the Franklin County Board of Education approved the \$31,000 expense at its November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

"In this difficult year, we appreciate more than ever our employees and the wonderful job they do," said Franklin County Schools Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton. "We are so pleased to be able to do something to show our appreciation to them."

The announcement came during Alabama's 'Thank AL Teachers' week. Hamilton said teachers received a special treat each day as a way to show appreciation for their dedication.

"Mission Medical fed every employee breakfast over two days this week. We just can't say enough about what our employees have done during this pandemic," Hamilton said.

In other agenda items, the board:

—approved the following personnel moves:

Employment: Jennifer West, Mental Health Services Coordinator, retroactive to August 19, 2020; Holly Hargett Renfrow, Social Worker, retroactive to October 7, 2020; Rebecca McGee, elementary teacher at Vina; Christopher Hargett, Tobacco Grant Educator at Red Bay School; Gary Stancil, bus driver, Phil Campbell School, retroactive to Oct. 16, 2020; Kendra James, Bookkeeper, Vina, retroactive to Nov. 9, 2020; Barbara Garrett, full-time Child Nutrition Program substitute at Phil Campbell; Derinda Chaney, full-time CNP substitute at Belgreen School; Kendall Turbyfill, Special Education Aide, East Franklin Junior High; Barry Jones, bus driver, Tharptown, retroactive to Nov. 9, 2020.

Transfer: Kim Trapp, from full-time CNP substitute at Phil Campbell to Child Nutrition Program Assistant at Phil Campbell; Donna Pace, from full-time teacher substitute at East Franklin to special education aide at East Franklin; Tonya Emerson, from special needs bus driver at Tharptown to bus driver at Vina.

Leave of Absence: Hannah Vincent, Tharptown Elementary, Family Medical Leave absence from Oct. 5, 2020, thru Jan. 19, 2021; Caitlin Majjala, Instructional Aide Phil Campbell Elementary, FML absence from Dec. 1, 2020-Feb. 9 2021; Lisa Franklin, FML absence from August 28, 2020 thru Nov. 20, 2020, then personal leave from Nov. 23, 2020-March 2021.

Resignation: Abbey Rea, special education teacher at Tharptown Elementary; Kelly Atkins, full-time CNP substitute at Belgreen; Karen Scott, Bookkeeper at Vina and Ann Scott, Principal at Tharptown High School.

Retirement: Myra Collum, bus driver at Vina, effective Dec. 1, 2020, and Joseph Micah Jackson, Guidance Counselor at Red Bay, effective Jan. 1, 2021.

Volunteer: Kristy Vandiver, volunteer assistant softball coach at Belgreen High School.

—approved out-of-state trips for the Red Bay varsity basketball program to Corinth (Nov. 28), Belmont (Dec. 8) and Savannah, Tenn. (Jan. 19, 2021).

—approved a bid from American Paper and Twine for copier/computer paper for 8.5" x 11" paper at \$31.90/case and 8.5" x 14" paper at \$45.90/case. The board previously accepted a bid from Quill, but Hamilton said that contract was terminated as a result of "Quill's failure to properly fulfill obligations in the quality of product and inaccuracies in invoicing."

—approved a contract for Psychometric Services with Counseling, Evaluation and Consultation Services for the period of Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021.

—approved the disposal of a number of electronic items having reached end-of-life and out of warranty. The items are part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center.

—heard a report from Hamilton about the status of COVID-19 cases in the system. As of November 19<sup>th</sup>, six students and one employee were positive for the virus. But mandatory quarantines remains the biggest challenge.

"There is absolutely no leeway on that or close contact," Hamilton said. "If you have positives in your Child Nutrition Program staff it's almost impossible to handle that. And if you have a student who tests positive and is an athlete and a bus rider, that is very problematic."

The next regular meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education will be January 21, 2021, with work session at 5 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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

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 **R**ussellville Masonic Lodge is selling hams for Thanksgiving for \$30 each. Curbside pickup will be Wednesday, November 25th between 8-10 a.m. The Lodge is located on Coffee Avenue in downtown Russellville. Call (256)-810-1970 for more information.


 **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.


 **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.


 **Y**ou are cordially invited to new service time at Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church on Highway 48 in Russellville, at 11 a.m., Sunday mornings. Social distancing practiced, mask optional. Pastor Roger Bond.

 **T**OPS 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.

 **T**he 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.

 **R**ussellville Al-Anon is meeting at Russellville First Baptist Church at 6 p.m., each Thursday. We are wearing masks and social distancing.

 **T**he Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee, a division of Alabama Farmers Federation is seeking donations for our annual "Cottons for Christmas". Donations requested are for new socks that will be distributed to residents in one of the county's nursing homes. Each year our committee picks a different nursing home in the county and we strive to provide all residents in that particular nursing home a gift of socks & lotion. Unfortunately, this may be the only gift some of our local residents receive and we want to let them know we care about them! Traditionally we have a donation/collection box at the annual Farm-City Banquet, however; due to COVID the banquet will not be held this year and donation boxes will be placed at 4 local businesses in Franklin County: Franklin County Extension Office (please leave your donations with one of the Courthouse security guards) ALFA Insurance Office-Russellville, ALFA Insurance Office-Red Bay & Kiel Equipment, Hwy. 43, Russellville Cottons for Christmas is one of the many community efforts the Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee works on each year to "give back" to the community. Please take your sock donations to one of the above locations by Friday, December 11, 2020. If you have any questions please call Carol Glass @ 256-810-5446 or Shannon Murray @ 256-668-3893.

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

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# Mays promoted to Community Spirit Bank executive management team

Submitted to the FFP

Community Spirit Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Emily Mays to Chief Administrative Officer. Emily joins the bank's executive management team bringing fifteen years of financial industry experience to her role.

Previously serving as vice president/senior marketing director, she is passionate about community banking and works enthusiastically to promote and support the communities we serve. We are excited for Emily to take on this new position and wish her much success as she begins the next step in her community banking career.

Mays earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of North Alabama in 2003 and attended the Barret Graduate School of Banking in Memphis, Tennessee – graduating in 2017. Recently accepted into the Alabama Bankers Association's Executive Leadership program, in December, Emily will begin the 18-month advanced executive program.

She was named one of The Independent Community Bankers of America 40 Under 40 and one of Business Alabaman's 'Franklin County Movers and Shapers.' She is presently in her fifth year of serving on the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and currently serves as past-president.

Community Spirit Bank's president and CEO, Brad M. Bolton commented: "On behalf of the Officers, Directors, and employees of Community Spirit Bank, I congratulate Emily on the promotion to Chief Administration Officer that was approved at our November board meeting and welcome her to our Executive Management team.

"Emily has been dedicated and focused on any duty or responsibility assigned to her. She has kept our core values of integrity, dedication, knowledge, innovation, and providing WOW moments, both internally and externally, for many years. This promotion better aligns her talents and abilities with current and future roles to continue a broader range of project management responsibilities. We are grateful for her service to our customers, communities, and fellow employees."



Emily Mays

# Phil Campbell Town Council to allow public comment sessions at future meetings

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

In an effort to encourage citizen input, the Phil Campbell Town Council voted to allow a public comment session at all council meetings, with anyone in attendance able to speak without having been placed on the agenda in advance.

The council approved the measure at its regular meeting November 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was discussion among council members whether to place a time limit on each person who speaks, but the council declined to set a specific limit, other than to say everyone would be allowed a 'reasonable amount' of time to address the council.

At its November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, council members voted to advertise for a full-time police officer and a pay rate of \$15/hour. Currently, only the chief, Joe Fike, works full-time. The city has four other officers employed on a part-time basis.

"We definitely need to have another full-time officer," said Mayor Mike McQuary. "We will need to advertise for this position. As far as the pay, Hackleburg is paying \$14.50/hr., and Bear Creek \$15.50/hr., so we will be in line with those departments at \$15/hr."

In other agenda items, the council:

—approved James Atkinson as city attorney and municipal court prosecutor and Cliff Wright as municipal court judge. The retainer for Atkinson's duties as city attorney will be \$1,500 and the municipal prosecutor receives \$175 for each court session while the judge receives \$185.

The council voted to reduce the frequency of municipal court from once a month to once every three months, subject to Town Clerk Jenny Burks confirming with the Alabama League of Municipalities that holding court quarterly is permissible.

From January 1, 2020, through November 17, 2020, officers in the PCPD have written a total of eight citations that have been certified by the town clerk. With those low numbers, council members requested to reduce the frequency of court.

—tabled the appointment of a fire chief as no one from the Phil Campbell Fire Department was present at the meeting. Burks was asked to contact the department and make sure they have someone present at the next meeting.

—appointed councilman Eddie Marbutt as the mayor's appointee to the Bear Creek Development Authority Board of Directors. Marbutt replaces Peggy Fowler.

—appointed Rodney Kuykendall and Daniel Taylor to the Phil Campbell Zoning Board.

—heard a report from the town clerk about expenses from the COVID-19 Relief Fund to convert all bathrooms on city property to touchless. Two bids were received, with the lower bid being \$19,000. This would include touchless sinks, towel dispensers, toilets, etc. The funds will be spent by the city only if they are approved as fully reimbursable through the Relief Fund. Expenses through the fund must be approved before the end of the calendar year.

—tabled discussion of the purchase or lease of a new printer until Burks can contact Printers & Stationers in Florence for a quote.

—tabled a request from resident Danny Tompkins to set up a travel trailer on a temporary basis on his property until he purchases a manufactured home and sets it up. Council members want to know how long Tompkins is requesting to have the manufactured home in place.

—tabled the issue of hiring an additional part-time worker in the Street Department.

—approved having the Phil Campbell Christmas Parade on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020.

—authorized city employees interested in speaking with a representative from Colonial Insurance about purchasing life insurance to do so.

The next regular meeting of the council is set for December 3, 2020, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting at 7 p.m.

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For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net). Send your letters to the editor and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

For news updates throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)!

# Oak, Harding intersection stop sign a 'welcome sight' for residents

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When it comes to concerns about excessive speed on Oak Street in Russellville, Jimmy Landers' persistence has finally paid off.

Landers, who lives on Oak Street just west of Harding Avenue, has spent the last five years contacting city officials about vehicles traveling at high rates of speed up and down Oak Street.

So when stop signs were installed at the Oak/Harding intersection earlier this month, it was a welcome sight for Landers.

"This all started about five years ago. People just come through here wide open. Then I call the police and they just ride through and don't stop anyone. I've called and called and it's still a big problem," Landers told the *Franklin Free Press* in May.

So when Darren Woodruff began his campaign for Russellville City Council District Two, it didn't take Landers long to reach out to him.

"Jimmy and other Oak Street residents have been concerned about excessive speed on Oak Street for a long time. He asked me if I got elected to have stop signs installed at the intersection of Oak and Harding, and I promised I'd do everything I could to make that happen," Woodruff said.

"This is a safety issue that affects not only residents on Oak Street, but everyone who uses Oak, and it's a heavily-trafficked street," he added.

Workers from the Russellville Street Department installed stop signs for eastbound and westbound Oak Street traffic at the Harding intersection on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, stop ahead warning signs were erected in advance of the intersection both ways on Oak.

Woodruff said city regulations required the stop signs to be covered for a period of days before the covering was released. As of last week, the intersection is now a four-way stop.

Russellville Police Department Chief Chris Hargett said his department would be patrolling the intersection in the coming

weeks and writing warning tickets to motorists who fail to stop. "We try to give people a reasonable warning period in case they aren't aware or don't notice the signs, but after a few weeks, those warnings will turn into tickets," Hargett said.

Woodruff said he hopes to have flashing red lights installed on top of the new stop signs to provide additional notice and visibility to motorists.

Oak Street slopes downhill significantly from Waterloo Road east to Jackson Avenue, something Landers believes contributes to the speeding problem.

Oak is one of the main thoroughfares from Waterloo Road to Jackson and is heavily trafficked during morning and afternoon school drop-off and pick-up times.

"This was an issue of safety that was presented to me by residents who live on this road and it needed to be addressed," Woodruff said. "I promised the residents of District Two that I would answer their calls about concerns in our district, and this was near the top of the list."



COURTESY PHOTO

Concern over excessive speeding ultimately led residents to reach out to local officials which culminated in a stop sign being placed at the intersection.

# 'GUINN,' from page 1

comes to community involvement, Guinn was second to none.

While some folks in his hometown might not know his name, they immediately recognize Guinn as "Fred the Elf" from his headlining part in last year's Roxy Theatre Christmas Spectacular. Guinn also participates in Golden Tiger BIGS, a school-based mentoring program where upperclassmen work with younger students to help them achieve their maximum potential.

All of these are part of the competition, but it eventually comes back to vocal talent, which Guinn has plenty of.

"This competition is kind of like the Holy Grail of awards a choral student can win in high school,"

Rush said. "They pick a bass/tenor and an alto/soprano, and they also offer a music education scholarship for those who want to major in that.

"If COVID-19 let's us, we'll go down to All-State competition a day early in March, perform his song, and he'll do his interview up against the other district winners," she added.

Rush said six students competed for the District One Tenor-Bass OCS, including kids from Muscle Shoals, Florence, Hartselle and Decatur High Schools.

RHS junior Morgan Jenkins competed in the Alto-Soprano category, and Rush said she's looking forward to Jenkins' return to the OCS competition next year.

Guinn's talents go beyond music. He is a fixture in the RHS Performing Arts program, led by Patrice Smith. Both teachers worked with Guinn through the tryout process, offering feedback on his performances. He plays the melophone in the RHS Marching Hundred and he's active in the National Honor Society. Guinn is making a name in the Shoals music scene, too, playing different venues on the weekends. He's focused on song writing recently, and Guinn is doing a solo EP at Cypress Moon Studio with Eddie Martin and Grant Walden.

And if he wasn't busy enough, Guinn was recently hired for a part-time position with the Russellville Park and Recreation Department.

By the way, Guinn, who doesn't speak or understand German, performed his tryout song, *Der Wanderer*, completely in German. He recorded his tryout vocal at First United Methodist Church, with accompanist Tyler Woods.

"I don't know much German at all, but after so many repetitions of the song and learning what it means, and learning the English translation, that helped a lot with performing it in German," Guinn said.

Guinn hasn't decided on a college yet, as he waits for scholarship offers, but he plans to pursue performing and music on a pathway he hopes leads him to teach theater after graduation.

Guinn may still be in high school, but Rush says his voice has moved on from that level.

"He doesn't hold back at all when he performs," Rush said. "And the level of performance he gives, both vocally and in dramatic performances, is actually several years ahead of his age."



COURTESY PHOTO

Guinn will participate in the Alabama Vocal Association's annual OCS competition with a chance to be selected as Alabama's Outstanding Male Choral Student.

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

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## Simpson signs letter of intent with Calhoun Community College

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - If you ask Russellville head softball coach Josh Graham to describe senior pitcher Kailee Simpson in one word, the word comes to mind almost immediately.

Committed. That commitment paid off for Simpson in the form of a scholarship offer from Calhoun Community College, which she signed her letter of intent with last Wednesday afternoon.

"Calhoun is getting a really, really committed player. As soon as COVID hit last year, Kailee went to work on her own and started doing things to improve. She's an extremely hard worker and is very dedicated to what she's doing," Graham said. "She's probably put in more hours after practice than she has during team practices and she's just always fully committed to doing whatever she needs to do to improve and get better everyday."

For Simpson, the magnitude of the moment of signing on to continue her athletic and academic career at the next level doesn't go unnoticed by the Golden Tiger senior.

"It really means a lot to me because I've gotten pushed down before and heard negative things and I'm so thankful to be here doing this. I'm also thankful for my parents pushing me hard enough to be here and go to college to play. I'm just so blessed to be able to continue playing softball after high school," Simpson said.

In her junior season that was cut short due to

See 'SIMPSON,' page 14

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# The 1,000 point man

Will Bonner has had quite the basketball career during his time with Russellville and Belgreen. As the junior guard surpassed the 1,000 point mark for his career in a win against Addison, one thing is apparent: he's just getting started.



COURTESY PHOTO

Unlike most high-scoring players, Bonner (1) focuses more on getting his team involved as opposed to focusing on putting up points. That mindset has played a vital role in the Bulldogs success early on in 2020.

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

ADDISON - As Belgreen cruised to a 79-49 victory over Addison to improve to 2-0 on the year, all eyes were on junior guard Will Bonner as he crept closer and closer to a historic milestone for his career. Needing just 17 points to eclipse the 1,000 point mark for his basketball career, the question for Bonner wasn't "if" he would pass the mark, it was "when" he would do so.

After putting up 15 points in the first quarter against Addison, it looked as though Bonner would surpass the milestone before the first half came to a close. Then after going scoreless in the second quarter, he would have to wait just a tad bit longer for his historic moment.

But it wouldn't take long for Bonner to hit 1,000 as he would score his 17th point of the night, and the 1,000th of his career, early in the third quarter.

Once it was all said and done, Bonner realized the significance of the moment and the help he had along the way to get to this point.

"It was a great feeling and accomplishment and I couldn't do it without my team. My team was really helpful in helping me get here and also my parents, coaches and the community as well,"

See 'BONNER,' page 13

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# Sticking with the black and gold: Russellville's Amaya commits to University of Colorado

Brady Petree  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - When Edgar Amaya reopened his recruitment after decommitting from Kansas earlier just last month, all options were on the table. Those options were quickly whittled down to just a handful of schools that Amaya would choose between to continue his football career at.

Once the dust settled, Amaya announced in a social media post last week that he would be taking his talents to the University of Colorado once his senior year at Russellville comes to a close.

The decision for the 6'4, 320-pound offensive lineman ultimately came down to one thing: a connection with the coaching staff.

"It just came down to coaching. The coaches at Colorado called me everyday and we just kept in contact with one another and they made me

feel like this is the place where I wanted to spend the next four years," Amaya said. "The culture just felt like it was for me at Colorado. They have a world-class education and they really take education seriously. Because at the end of the day I know I'm going to need a degree and not just football and they understood that and are a really top program."

As the recruitment process for Amaya was getting underway, he says that he was more focused on his upcoming senior season with the Golden Tigers. Once the season progressed and things started to come into focus, he realized that he wanted to open his recruitment back up.

And the battle to land Amaya began all over again.

"At the beginning of my recruitment I just told myself I wanted to focus on my senior season and I'm just going to get into it. And then I felt like I rushed things and I felt like Kansas just wasn't producing on the field and I thought that the culture there might not have been for me," Amaya said. "I wanted to go somewhere where I could win and play early and so I decided to reopen things and I'm very happy with my decision now."

While Amaya also had offers from other schools, such as the aforementioned Kansas and the much closer-to-home Mississippi State, it will be the Buffaloes who will get the four-star offensive lineman to suit up for them next fall.

Most incoming football recruits tend to need a year and sometimes two to get accustomed to the pace of college football. However, don't be surprised if you turn on your TV one Saturday next fall and see Amaya lining up on the offensive line for Colorado.

"When the coaches and I were talking, they always told me I can come in and make an impact early because I'm not far off from where their starting guards are at and making an impact," Amaya said. "The way I look at it, is that I'm just going to come in and compete and let everything else just work itself out because as long as I keep my head down and work, everything will work out for the best."

As the Golden Tigers season came to an end last Friday night after a loss to Ramsay in the 5A quarterfinals, Amaya was able to reflect on his career with the Golden Tigers and is hopeful that this is just the beginning of a long and successful stretch for his soon-to-be alma mater.

"It was very special. Coming in as a freshman and going 3-7 and seeing a coaching change, the program and the culture just turned around into something to be proud of. Being a part of that foundation is something special," Amaya said. "It's obviously not where we wanted things to end because we wanted to win a championship and get that blue map. But as far as laying a foundation and starting something special, I feel like we did just that."

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By virtue of an execution issued out of the Alabama Department of Revenue of Franklin County, Alabama, and to me directed whereby I am commanded to make the amount of a certain judgment recently obtained against Trevor H. Hardy in favor of Alabama Department of Revenue out of the goods, chattels, land and tenements of the said Trevor H. Hardy. I have levied on the following property, to wit:

One acre of land in the NW corner of the SW ¼ of NW ¼ to Section 29, Township 6, Range 10, said acre lying in a square block; Together with the appurtenances thereunto belonging.

Therefore, according to said command, I shall expose for sale at public auction, all the right, title and interest of the above named Trevor H. Hardy on the 30th day of November 2020, at 10:00 A.M. on the Franklin County Courthouse steps.

This property will be sold on the above date unless this civil case has been settled. For information regarding this sale you may call 256-332-8811.

Dated this October 28, 2020.

Shannon Oliver, Sheriff of Franklin County

## 'BONNER,' from page 11

Bonner said. "Everyone did a great job and we all really buy in to what our coach tries to get us to do and it just happened to work out that I could hit 1,000 that night. It was a really exciting moment."

Perhaps what separates Bonner from most of the prolific scorers that come through the high school ranks, is his mindset when it comes to getting his teammates involved. Oftentimes the players that are in the highest percentile for scoring tend to want to take most of the shots and have a knack for scoring as well.

While Bonner certainly has a knack for scoring, the idea of getting his teammates more involved while going for the win night in and night out is what separates the junior from other high-scoring players.

"I really try to get my team more involved in the game. At Russellville I was more of a facilitator there and when I got to Belgreen, I was put in a position to be able to score more often and I love scoring but I'd much rather my team be more involved in the game," Bonner said. "I'd much rather win the game with zero points and ten assists than win the game with 35 points and zero assists."

That unselfishness and willingness to spread the ball around to his teammates undoubtedly has played a large part in the Bulldogs success last season and early on this season.

And when everyone on the team gets involved, the effect that it has spreads beyond those on the court according to Bonner.

"We try to get our team more involved in the game and when we get the entire team involved, the community gets involved in what we're doing and so it makes for a better atmosphere at the end of the game when we come out on top," Bonner said. "Because we're not one of those teams where when one guy scores 40 points one game, that's the thing everyone is talking about for the next week. We want everyone involved and for it to be a big team win for us."

Of course with this season being unlike any that Bonner, or any player for that matter, has been a part of before, one might think that some goals might be skewed due to circumstances.

However, Bonner still has his sights set on a few goals. One of which is becoming more of a facilitator and as for the team as a whole, the Bulldogs are gunning for a title.

"I want to keep getting my team involved. I mean I love scoring the basketball but it's about more than that. It's about the team as a whole. We're trying to make everyone else proud of us more than we're trying to make ourselves proud," Bonner said. "We want to get back to Wallace and get to Birmingham and try to bring a blue map back to Belgreen."



COURTESY PHOTO

Bonner (pictured with coaches Marty and Jennifer Cooper) surpassed the 1,000 point mark for his career in a 79-49 victory over Addison.

Have a community event you'd like us to help you promote? Give us a call at 256-332-0255, fax to 256-332-7430 or email us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

# Miranda Decker, M.D.

## INTERNAL MEDICINE Comprehensive Adult Health Care



### Russellville Internal Medicine, P.C.



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## JOB OPPORTUNITY

GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT  
CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE  
STREET DEPARTMENT/HEAVY  
EQUIPMENT DRIVER/OPERATOR,  
SOLID WASTE

HEAVY EQUIPMENT  
DRIVER/OPERATOR

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

**Solid Waste Collection Truck Driver:**  
Drives and operates heavy automated  
trash and roll-off trucks and equipment  
to collect and dispose of solid waste  
throughout the City.

**Heavy Equipment Operation:** Drives  
and operates equipment to accomplish  
a full range of assignments and tasks,  
including the most complex projects.

**Department Operations.** Supports the  
work of the department to contribute to  
the appearance and safety of the City  
streets and properties. Serves as an  
experienced, heavy equipment opera-  
tor.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

Possess a High School Diploma or  
GED. Two years of work experience  
collecting and disposing of solid waste.  
Work within a city environment is pre-  
ferred. Four years of work experience

as a Heavy Equipment Operator.  
Possess a current and valid CDL-  
Class B license is required; maintain  
insurability for the duration of employ-  
ment. Possess and maintain a safe  
driving record. Work experience in  
general road and sidewalk repair and  
maintenance is preferred. Experience  
interacting with general public is pre-  
ferred. Ability to respond to emergen-  
cies 24/7. Ability to pass a pre-  
employment drug and alcohol test and  
random drug screening.

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cal affiliation, disability, or any other  
non-merit factor.

Applications may be picked up at  
Russellville City Hall in the Office of  
the Mayor, 304 N. Jackson Ave.,  
Russellville, Alabama. Applications  
must be returned no later than  
November 30, 2020 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board  
P. O. Box 308  
Russellville, AL 35653

The average pay for this position is  
\$30,971.20 -47,746.09

The successful candidate will be  
required to successfully complete a  
complete physical examination includ-  
ing drug screening prior to employ-  
ment.

## 'SIMPSON,' from page 11

COVID-19, Simpson went 3-1 with a 2.80 ERA to go along with 28 strike-  
outs.

Calhoun head softball coach Bart Stephenson, who was on hand for  
Simpson's signing, was familiar with Simpson from their training camps and  
jumped on the ability to offer her a scholarship.

"Kailee attended some of our camps and I watched her during the summer  
and kept up with her as much as I could and her work-ethic is outstanding,"  
Stephenson said. "The willingness to get up and work everyday speaks vol-  
umes. Her velocity on her fastball went up over the summer. Our girls know  
they've got to be gritty and compete. We live by the "CCC" (character, com-  
mitment and class) and she fits every single one of those."

The choice to continue her career at Calhoun was a rather easy one for  
Simpson. She credits the campus environment and familiarity with some  
within the program as the primary reasons for selecting Calhoun.

Former Golden Tiger softball standouts like Madison Murray, Krista Sikes  
and Alivia Clemmons all don uniforms for Calhoun and Simpson will be join-  
ing them next fall.

"When I went on my visit, I really just fell in love with the campus and the  
community and I had already gone to a few camps there so I was already  
familiar with a lot of people involved with the program at Calhoun," Simpson  
said. "Everyone at Calhoun was very nice and supportive of me during the  
whole process and so it was just a really nice fit for me."



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Simpson will get the opportunity to reunite on the field with multiple former  
teammates as she signed her letter of intent to play softball at CCC.

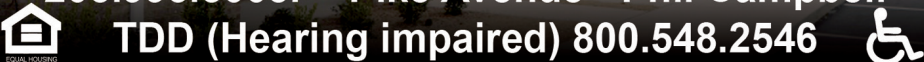
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# Red Devils take home Vina Invitational Tournament title

Staff Reports

The Vina varsity girls basketball team defeated Brilliant 56-38 and Shoals Christian 41-36 to clinch the Vina Invitational Tournament championship last week.

Abbie Mitchell led the Red Devils in scoring in both matchups, putting up 23 points to go along with ten rebounds, three assists and two steals against Brilliant and 13 points,

three assists, two steals and six rebounds against Shoals Christian.

Abbie Petree scored nine points against Shoals Christian to go along with two points against Brilliant. Kaitlyn Atney put up 15 points over Brilliant and added five against Shoals Christian while teammate Sara Scott scored 12 points against the Bears in addition to her six points against the Flame.

Vina is 2-0 to begin the season.



**CORRECTION:** In last weeks Legacy Chevron Athlete of the Week, the Franklin Free Press printed that Ashaad Williams blocked a Leeds punt which was returned for a touchdown when Ashton Boyd was the correct player who blocked the punt. The FFP regrets the error.

Congrats to Week 11 winner **SCOTT PRINCE**, who correctly picked 8 out of the 10 games that were played!

**BEAT BAILEY finished all of her picks and still had time to take a nap. Don't sleep on your chance to BEAT BAILEY!!**

Sponsored by Bedford, Rogers, Bowling & McReynolds, P.C.

**BEAT BAILEY IS BACK!** Submit your picks to us each week in one of two ways: Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. **Picks sent in by mail for Week 10 must be postmarked by Friday, November 27th, and picks submitted by email for Week 10 must be received by Saturday, November 28th at 10 a.m.** Each week, the contestant who correctly picks the most games will win a free T-shirt and the chance to pick in the grand-prize final-week contest. If multiple contestants correctly pick the same number of games in a given week, the tiebreaker score will be used to determine a winner. Contestants are only eligible to win the weekly contest once. No multiple winners allowed. ONE entry per telephone number. Thanks for playing, and good luck!

**Bedford, Rogers, Bowling & McReynolds, P.C.**

303 N. Jackson, Russellville  
256.332.2880

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers

**Legacy CHEVRON PRESENTS ATHLETE of the WEEK**

Open 24 Hours

## Winston Nolen Guard, Tharptown Senior

The Nolen family has an extensive history within the Tharptown basketball program. Riley and Max Nolen shined during their times with the Wildcats and now it's time for Winston to get the spotlight. The senior guard put up a career-high 34 points against county rival Phil Campbell and then 25 points against Deshler. Nolen also shined off the court as a member of the cross country team for Tharptown finishing 8th in the 1A-2A state tournament.



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### The Largest and Freshest Salad Bar in Franklin County!

**Franklin Free Press Football Picks Contest**

Week 12: November 28th

	Bailey's Pick	Your Pick
Colorado vs. USC	USC	_____
Maryland vs. Indiana	Indiana	_____
Kentucky vs. Florida	Florida	_____
Minnesota vs. Wisconsin	Wisconsin	_____
Auburn vs. Alabama	Alabama	_____
Georgia vs. South Carolina	Georgia	_____
LSU vs. Texas A&M	Texas A&M	_____
Oklahoma vs. West Virginia	Oklahoma	_____
Texas Tech vs. Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	_____
Northwestern vs. Michigan State	Northwestern	_____
Tiebreaker Score:	Pittsburgh _____	Clemson _____
Your Name:	_____	
Phone number:	_____	

# BLACK FRIDAY SALES EVENT

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**Holiday Wonderland®**  
**100 ct. Starry Micro LED String Light Set** 16.5 ft. lighted length. Continuous-on or twinkle. Choose warm white, multicolor or pure white. T 251 503, 504, 508 B12  
**300 ct. Starry Micro LED String Light Set, 17.99** T 251 509, 510, 511 B4

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 30 in. x 72 in. polyethylene top. Lightweight and easy to carry. For indoor and outdoor use. W 682 536 1  
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