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## School board changes plans for College Avenue School property

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After accepting bids for the purchase of the former College Avenue Elementary School property, the Russellville City Board of Education voted to pull the land off the market and pursue grant opportunities for the property.

Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes said the board voted to withdraw the sale after board members learned of possible Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) grant funding.

"Once we were made aware of the availability of funding, we decided to wait and see how that works and what happens, so the property will not be sold at this time," Grimes said.

The system accepted bids in June for purchase of the land and buildings located between College Avenue and Waterloo Road. Bid specifications called for bidders to submit their plan to demolish the existing building.

Grimes said one possible use for the property would be an additional park for city residents to enjoy.

"We are discussing the possibility of using it as a green space, as an additional park," Grimes said. "We don't have enough green space in our city so this would be an opportunity to do something with the Parks and Recreation Department."

The school system took over operations of the Russellville Parks and Recreation Department three years ago. If the property becomes a park,

See 'PROPERTY,' page 8

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## Littleville council appointment rescinded until next meeting

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

A vote to appoint former Littleville Mayor Scotty Howard to the Littleville Town Council did not comply with Alabama law, according to Littleville Mayor Ron Morrow.

At the council's June meeting, Place 3 Councilman Harold Malone announced his immediate resignation from the council due to health reasons, Morrow said.

Morrow said Malone's resignation was not on the agenda and he was not aware of Malone's intention to resign before he made the announcement.

According to Morrow, Malone immediately made a motion to appoint Howard to fill his council

seat.

That motion was seconded by Jack Mitchell and was approved by a 3-2 vote, with Morrow and Councilwoman Jenna Daniel voting no.

After the meeting, Morrow said he began researching the law and then contacted Littleville Town Attorney Nathan Johnson.

Code of Alabama Sec. 11-44G-1 outlines the procedure for a vacancy on a city council in a Class 7 or Class 8 municipality. Based on its having less than 5,999 residents, Littleville is classified as a Class 8 town.

The relevant portion of 11-44G-1 states: *A vacancy in the office of city council member in any Class 7 or Class 8 municipality shall be filled by*

See 'APPOINTMENT,' page 3

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**William Travis Brewer, 85**, of Russellville, passed away on Wednesday, June 30th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

**Elmer T. Hovater, 92**, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, July 2nd. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

**Billy Lee Shewbart, 84**, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, July 1st. Interment at Tharptown Cemetery.

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# 'APPOINTMENT,' from page 1

the city council at the next regular meeting or any subsequent meeting of the council. The person elected shall hold office for the unexpired term. Therefore, the council's action to appoint Howard at the same meeting where Malone resigned did not comply with Alabama law. Morrow said Johnson contacted council members to explain the procedure.

"It can't be done at the same time. All you have to do is look at the law. The citizens of Littleville who want to express an interest in the vacant council seat should have that right," Morrow said. "Everyone should have a chance. This type of back door politics goes against the best interests of our town."

The next regular meeting of the Littleville Town Council is set for July 22, 2021, at 6 p.m.

Morrow said any citizen who would like to be considered for the vacant council seat should contact the city clerk and have his or her name added to the list.

In order to be eligible for the appointment, you must be a *qualified elector of the municipality and shall present proof of identification to the pollworkers before casting a vote. The identification may be a valid Alabama driver's license or some other form of identification that confirms a permanent address in the city. Code of Alabama 11-44G-1(b).*

Howard did not return calls from the Franklin Free Press seeking comment for this article.



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# Hypnotherapy: Mind over fatter, or just another temporary weight loss fad?

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Her voice is a cocktail of empathy, calmness and tranquility. And that's a good thing, considering I'm totally focused on her words.

As the hypnotic treatment begins, my eyes are closed and I'm traveling in my mind to a wonderful place, all the while tuned into her voice.

Anna Carol Porter is Russellville's lone hypnotherapist, and she's working with me on a life plan to lose weight and get my lifestyle modified when it comes to food.

That will be no easy task, though. I've tried it all, having run the gamut from Nutrisystem to low carb to weight loss surgery. All have succeeded temporarily, but the story ends each time with the inevitable regaining.

Some reference it as 'yo-yo' dieting, but more often than not, the yo-yo stays up more than it stays down.

Enter Porter and Holistic Harmony, the name of her business. Hypnotherapy is the newest offering from Holistic Harmony, with a list of services that also include fascia stretch therapy, cranio sacral therapy and Qigong (a martial art practice used for whole body healing).

I'll have more on the fascia stretch therapy (which I'm also doing) later this summer, and I'll chronicle my journey through hypnotherapy with a goal of losing 25 pounds by the end of September.

Before I elaborate on hypnotherapy, it's important to mention what it's not. This is not like a magician show where someone is 'hypnotized' into thinking they are a chicken, dog or cat. I haven't clucked, barked or meowed.



John Pilati  
Publisher

Hypnotherapy is about *therapy*. It's literally more than half of the word. The goal of hypnotherapy, as I understand it, is to reduce stress and anxiety through relaxation and visualization. Once that happens, the hypnotherapist uses positive words (some of them mine) to reach various goals. In my case, that goal is weight loss.

Two sessions into my hypnotherapy, I'm still keeping an open mind. I didn't come into this with a cynical tone. Instead, I told Porter I'd chronicle my journey through her treatment in the *Franklin Free Press* as honestly and fairly as I could. And that includes noting my failures as well as any shortcomings of the treatment provided.

When our first session began, it was readily apparent my therapy would be much more than hypnosis. She presented me with extensive information on recommended foods to eat, tips to improve the quality of my sleep, an exercise regimen and more. She even had us both sign a performance agreement, affirming my commitment to change my lifestyle as I work toward my goal weight.

There's much to be done to hold up my end of the agreement. My exercise routine has improved these first two weeks. I've made some small changes in my diet so far and I'm using an affirmation technique Porter taught me to combat binge eating and other excessive behaviors.

Will it all work? That remains to be seen.

So far, though, everything I've seen and experienced with my therapist indicates hypnotherapy will be an allied in this effort. The mind is a stubborn foe, so it won't be easy. Weight loss never is.

Can I use the subconscious mind to change how I view food and to reach the personal goal I've set? Time will tell. And so will I, and you'll be along for the journey every step of the way.

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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... something new and exciting to do on a Friday night!

Hi everyone!

I have some exciting news to tell you.

As you know, Phil Campbell and Littleville have closed their senior dances but you won't have to sit up with nothing to do anymore, oh no!

The Spruce Pine Community Center has taken care of that dilemma. Come on out every Friday night. The doors open at 5 p.m. and the music goes from 6 - 9 p.m. The price remains the same as the other two places at a \$5 charge at the door. That's one place a person will get more than \$5 worth of fun.

If that isn't exciting enough, the very popular and talented Joe King plays a variety of music. You know a person is a good musician, singer and entertainer when he has several who have followed him everywhere he plays. There is never a dull moment when Joe is in the house.

I would like to personally invite you to come out at least one time. If you come once, you will most likely be back. He is that much fun to be around. Everyone seems like family!

The best part is no partner is needed to dance with. Most women just all get on the dance floor



Gail Motes

and have fun and get that much-needed experience. I say that because too many stop moving at the age its needed more.

It's a good way to see friends you would not see otherwise. Of course, another advantage is being among nice people and even making new friends in the process.

You aren't allowed to bring snacks or drinks into the building but the community center sells drinks and a few snacks at a very reasonable price. The money received from those sales goes towards the expenses the center uses to maintain the center and the museum.

It also gives the workers a chance to meet people and make new friends. I am thrilled to say I've already made some new friends and have had the opportunity to see a few friends I graduated with.

So come on out and enjoy a few hours of music, fellowship and even a jig or two.

Since this has only been going on for a couple of weeks, it hasn't spread around yet. I don't want you to miss out! If something like this might be of interest to you, help us spread the word!

Several are working on it but you can never tell too many.

Hope to see you there!

And as always, until later...

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**T**he Welch reunion will be the 10th of July (second Saturday) at the Hee Haw Building. Starting at 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Mountain Valley Hee Haw, 5504 Hwy. 79, Phil Campbell, AL 35581. This is the address of Williams' mom next door to the Hee Haw. Each family will bring their favorite meat for sandwiches and bread and things you like on them. Please bring chips, tomatoes, drinks, desserts etc. for your own family. We will have lettuce, mayo, ketchup and mustard. Call Nancy at (256)-627-7635 for more information. All Welch's and Welch-related are invited to come!

**P**leasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church, 1570 Hwy. 48, Russellville, will resume full-time services on Sunday, July 11. Sunday School at 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m., Evening Service 6 p.m., Wednesday Night Service 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

**V**olunteers are needed with Kindred Hospice. Come and serve your community in a way that meets your goals and time availability. Contact: Kay Holt, LBSW,VC or Kimberly Mansfield, VC @ Kindred Hospice 256-764-0873.

**T**he Why Knot Diner will sponsor a Car Show on Sunday, July 11, from 12-6 p.m., in downtown Russellville. Jackson Avenue, from Lawrence St. to Montgomery will be closed for cars to line up. There is a \$10 entry fee for those who want their vehicle to be judged. Categories include Best All Around Car, Truck/SUV, Bike (will get a plaque). There will be door prizes for those who enter their vehicles. Anyone who wants to display a vehicle but not enter it is also welcome to do so. Contact Dustin at 256-668-2585 for more information and to reserve a spot.

We love to hear from you! Please send your guest columns, cartoon panels, letters to the editor, recipes and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

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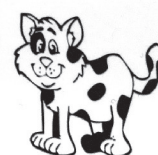
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# RCS board approves plethora of personnel moves

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Personnel moves consumed the lion's share of the Russellville City Board of Education's June 16 meeting.

The board approved a contract with former Alabama State Trooper Rick Itter to become a School Resource Officer effective August 1, 2021.

The lowest responsible bid for a pot and pan dishwasher at West Elementary School was accepted from Hotel & Restaurant Supply in the amount of \$35,990.

Personnel moves included:

—Resignation in Position: Jeremy Clemmons, Russellville High School assistant principal, Rachel Watkins and Channing Wright, West Elementary School teachers and Rachel Lawrimore, Russellville Elementary School special education teacher.

—Voluntary Transfer: Jake Ward, from at-risk teacher at RES to physical education teacher at WES, Emily Rush, from music teacher at Russellville Middle School to music teacher at WES, Hannah Bendall, from RHS history teacher to instructional data coach at RHS, Sara McDill, from instructional remediation aide at RMS to math teacher at RHS and Larsen Plyler, from RMS history teacher to RHS history teacher.

—Leave of Absence Request: Rachel Willis, RES teacher, from September 9, 2021, through December 17, 2021.

—Employment in Position: Scott Wigginton, CTE Director, Cindy Bailey, WES instructional aide, Lee Brownell, RMS science teacher, Lidia Angela Castillo, EL teacher at RMS, Christina Baker, RES special education teacher, Jodie Boyles, RES nurse, Aaron Freeman, RMS music teacher, Chasity West, WES teacher and Brianne Roberts, RMS science teacher.

—Resignation in Supplement: Madison Thompson, assistant softball coach and Brittany Flanagan, JV softball coach.

—Temporary Employment in Position for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Summer Program: Delany Roberts, Marlena Young-Jones, Jake Ward, Tyrone Wilson, Cassie Goodwin, teachers (part-time and as needed).

—Temporary Employment in Position for Summer Learning Program: Gina Kiel, nurse.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Board of Education is set for Thursday, July 22, at 8 a.m., with work session July 19 at 3:30 p.m.

## 'PROPERTY,' from page 1

it would be maintained and operated by that department.

Grimes said there were no bids received as of the time the bid process closed, which was more than a week before the original deadline to bid.

"We canceled the bid process and did not have any received at that point. Most of the time in preparing bids, people wait until the final week or so to submit them," Grimes said. "When we talked with our attorney about the possible grant monies, he advised to cancel the bid process."



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

The former College Avenue Elementary School has become a dilapidated eyesore.

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## Officials investigating illegal dumping site in Tharptown

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver is investigating the origins of an illegal dumping site that recently formed on the side of Highway 48 in Tharptown.

Just south of Tharptown School, the makeshift dump includes discarded furniture, broken auto parts, a cooler and other items piled on the side of the road.

After being contacted by a resident concerned about the growing pile, Oliver said his deputies are investigating who may be responsible for the illegal dumping. Deputies spoke with tenants of a triplex located across the road to see if they knew who may be responsible.

In order to prosecute someone for criminal littering, which is governed by the Code of Alabama Section 13A-7-29, there must be proof that the defendant knowingly discarded litter on public or private property with no right to do so. Oliver said the most difficult part of that language deals with determining who piled the items on the side of the road.

"We're aware of the location where this happened and we are investigating it," Oliver said. "First you have to determine the person responsible. Then we must verify they had no permission to dump the items if they're on private property."

"On the side of the road, though, with no county pickup other than the plastic garbage cans, that's never an appropriate place to leave items," he added.

Oliver said illegal dumps have been a problem for years around Franklin County.

"If someone wants to report an illegal dump, please call us. The concern I have, though, in sending someone out there to pick up the litter is that tells the person who dumped it that it's okay to do that," Oliver said.

Another problem with illegal dumps is that once a pile is started, it tends to grow rapidly.

"It's definitely an eyesore. That's another reason we are working to determine who was responsible," Oliver said.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

A makeshift dump on the side of County Road 48 near Tharptown School.

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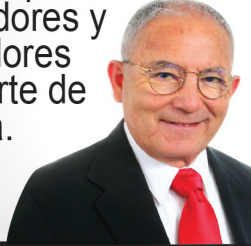
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## Former Golden Tiger standout Baird hired on as Colbert County head baseball coach

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

Dating back to his days as a Golden Tiger, Torey Baird has been crazy about the sport of baseball. That passion for the game is what led the former Russellville standout (in both baseball and football) and 2008 graduate to earn a spot playing college baseball for Snead State Community College and eventually Mississippi College once his high school playing days were over.

And after a few coachings stops including stints at his alma mater as well as a stop at Deshler High School, Baird then took over as the head baseball coach at Holtville High School near Wetumpka, where he led the Bulldogs to two elite eight appearances.

Baird has known for years that after his playing days were finished, he wanted to find a way to stay connected to the game. Whatever capacity it might be in, he knew he had to stay close to the game he loved.

"I think I've always wanted to be in coaching. It's sort of a way for me to still be involved in the game on some level. I love every part of baseball. The games, the practices and everything in between so it really made sense for me to go into coaching," Baird said.

And after spending a few years in south Alabama on the coaching scene, Baird will make his return to northwest Alabama as he will take over the Colbert County varsity baseball program beginning this upcoming season.

While Baird is certainly expecting big things on the field for the Indians in his first season, the timing in which his hiring came along certainly could-

See 'BAIRD,' page 14

# Shooting for the stars



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

The 4-H trap shooting team performed well enough to earn the top spot in the junior trap team competition while claiming third place overall as a team in the 4-H state juniors tournament.

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

On a hilltop near Cedar Creek, you can often hear shots ringing out in almost a rhythmic pattern. It's not hunters that you hear (at least not this time of year), but it's the 4-H trap shooting team getting in practice rounds at the Cedar Creek Trap shooting range.

Practicing one Saturday a month, the team's practice has paid dividends as the team recently competed in the Alabama 4-H state junior tournament in things like sporting clays, skeet and trap team competitions. And once the dust had settled, the team came away with quite a bit of hardware.

The team has five members ranging from the fifth grade all the way to sophomores and includes students from East Franklin Junior High School, Russellville City Schools, Phil Campbell High School and Colbert Heights High School.

Levi Baker, Nathan Richardson, Lane McGuire, Eli Willis and Davis Lindsey are all members of the team that is sponsored by Franklin County 4-H extension agent Vanessa Roberts.

Roberts, who recently celebrated her first full year at the helm of the program, says that this group has performed extremely well and it may be in part to the amount of passion that this group has for what they do.

"This group dedicates a lot of time to what they

do. They make sure they get out here for practice and they really care about it and I think that makes a big difference in how they've been able to be successful," Roberts said. "At the state shoot they do trap, skeet and sporting clays, which we're not able to practice on skeet and sporting clays but they still went down to the tournament and did a really good job."

The team managed to take the top team spot in the junior trap team competition while placing third overall in the state juniors tournament.

While every sport or hobby has its challenging aspects whether it be crowd noise, end of game pressure or some other factor, the challenges that go into a sport like trap shooting are fairly different.

Baker, who has been a part of the 4-H program for many years, says that the challenges that go into trap shooting are some that cannot be found in a lot of other places.

"In fourth grade, 4-H came in and gave us a pamphlet and told us to pick an activity that we thought we might enjoy and I saw trap shooting and wanted to try it and I've been doing it ever since then," Baker said. "It's challenging. It's a different mindset than all the other sports because you have a gun that's kicking you in the shoulder and you're out in the summer sun while it's beating down on you. One thing that people may not

See 'STARS,' page 15

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# 'BAIRD,' from page 11

n't have come at a better time for Baird and his family. "It means the world to me because my wife and I are expecting twins and with both of us being from northwest Alabama and getting back home around our family is huge for us," Baird said.

Of course after spending a few years in south Alabama so far away from home would naturally bring an itch to return to a familiar area. But it needed to be the right place at the right time for Baird and his family.

Then, the perfect opportunity fell into his lap. "We had a Zoom interview and then I went and met with coach Mask and everything just felt right to me. I had a few of my mentors throughout my coaching career and kind of just told me about the job," Baird said. "And I then talked it over with my wife and the opportunity just to move back home was huge for us and it just felt like the perfect scenario. There are some great people at Colbert County and they want to win and they have a tradition of winning."

The Colbert County High School baseball program has seen its fair share of success over the years.

Getting the program back to that level of competitiveness is something that Baird will undoubtedly look to do from day one.

"When I had my first meeting with the players we talked about the fact that I'm not here to rebuild. I'm here to build on what they've already done and take the next step," Baird said. "They possess a lot of tradition with their baseball program and I'm just excited to be a part of it."

Having been around the Russellville baseball program (as he was an assistant coach on the 2015 5A state title team under head coach Chris Heaps), Baird has picked up on quite a bit of baseball knowledge. And while he will bring his own coaching philosophy into the equation, Baird will certainly rely on some of that aforementioned baseball knowledge that he picked up during his days working with Heaps and the Golden Tigers.

"Being with coach Heaps for as long as I was as an assistant coach, I take a lot of things from him and coach (Jay) Stanley as well. Just being alongside those two guys and seeing how things are supposed to be run and just the knowledge that I got from them helped me along in my coaching career," Baird said. "Having watched them while I was down in south Alabama and being from Russellville and being a Golden Tiger has been awesome to watch and unbelievable to see."



COURTESY PHOTO

Baird's last coaching stop was at Holtville High School where he led the Bulldogs to two quarterfinal berths as the head coach.

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# 'STARS,' from page 11



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know about trap shooting is that it's harder than it looks. People think that it's just pointing and shooting but there's more that goes into it," Baker said. "You have to accommodate for the wind, rain and all the other elements when you shoot so there's a lot that goes into it."

Coming home with an astounding six medals from the tournament was Richardson who placed first in the individual skeet, trap overall and sporting clays while also bringing back medals for placing first in the team trap and third place in team overall.

"I just came up here to the range one day and tried it and loved it. So I kept coming back and I really enjoyed it," Richardson said.

For some on the team, joining was as simple as turning a backyard hobby into a competition to feed their competitive side.

"I was out in my yard one day shooting clay pigeons and it was really fun. So I figured I'd try doing it for a competition," Willis said.

And for others, competing and practicing alongside family members was enough to convince them to join in on the fun.

"I first saw my brother competing and thought that it would be fun to try it so I picked it up and started practicing on it," McGuire said.

Wade Willingham owns the Cedar Creek trap shooting range and allows the 4-H team to have their practices there while also lending a helping hand in teaching and coaching about trap shooting to both team members and first-timers.

"I enjoy the sport and we've finally got someone now in Vanessa that really cares about it and wants to run with this so I'm going to support it any way that I can," Willingham said. "Most of these guys trap shoot here anyways and I've worked with them since they were younger. We would love to have some more kids come out and join the program because it's a really good thing we've got going here and we enjoy working with them on things like this."

Of course the 4-H program isn't just for those interested in trap shooting and things of that nature. The program offers a plethora of activities and other programs that students can partake in and Roberts says that finding out about what all 4-H offers is as easy as contacting the Franklin County extension office.

"If anyone wants to join, feel free to contact the Franklin County extension office. Practices typically start up in October and we'll have the competitions next spring," Roberts said. "We also have archery as well. And even if they've never shot before, Wade is up here a lot and doesn't mind working with them one-on-one and get them some practice in as well."



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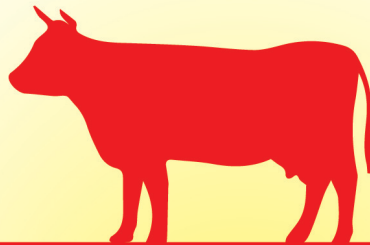
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