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Franklin County restored to one House District with reapportionment

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

After Gov. Kay Ivey signed four new reapportionment bills earlier this month, Franklin County residents will once again be represented in the Alabama House of Representatives by one elected official—Rep. Jamie Kiel.

After the 2010 Census, the Alabama Legislature approved a reapportionment map that split Franklin County into two House Districts, District 18 and 7.

At the time, District 18, which included all of Franklin County west of Highway 43, was represented by Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, and the eastern portion of the county was in Rep. Ken Johnson's District 7.

After Morrow vacated his seat to run for State Senate, Kiel was elected in 2018. Rep. Proncey Robertson won the District 7 seat and has represented eastern Franklin County the past three years.

Many residents and elected officials voiced displeasure with Franklin County being split into two House Districts. The Franklin County portion of District 7 was small, as the majority of those represented live in Lawrence County.

Kiel, who advocated for Franklin County to return to single-member House status, said he had heard concerns from many residents about having split representation.

A series of public hearings were held earlier this year prior to the leg-

See 'REAPPORTIONMENT,' page 3

Woman charged with domestic assault with alleged use of motor vehicle as weapon

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A 19-year-old woman remained in jail Monday evening after being charged with felony domestic violence for allegedly running over her boyfriend with her vehicle.

Holly Michelle Flippo, 19, was taken into custody Friday afternoon at the Franklin County Jail. According to Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver, Flippo did not give a statement to investigators after she requested an attorney.

Flippo is charged with Domestic Violence, First Degree, a Class A

felony that carries a sentence of up to life in prison upon conviction. She remained in Franklin County Jail Friday evening waiting for the statutory 'cooling off' period before a bond will be set. Flippo will have a bond condition of no contact with the victim upon her release.

The victim was transported to Russellville Hospital and later air lifted to another facility. Oliver described the victim's injuries as 'serious, but not life threatening.'

The investigation indicates Flippo and the man had an argument at Payne Creek Trailer Park on

See 'ASSAULT,' page 3

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Lisa Jean Howard, 62, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, November 12th. Interment at Bethsaida Cemetery.

Rickey Keith Kimrough, 66, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, November 12th.

Maria Teresa Alfara Norris, 47, of Russellville, passed away on Sunday, November 7th.

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‘REAPPORTIONMENT,’ from page 1

islature voting on the redistricting bill. Kiel attended a public hearing held at Northwest-Shoals Community College.

“Our local public hearing was held at Northwest-Shoals Community College and the recurring theme was to get Franklin County back to one legislator in the House,” Kiel said.

“Before I was even elected, I never understood why Franklin County was broken apart to begin with. One of my goals when I took office was to get Franklin County back whole again in one district,” he added.

The new House District 18 also includes the majority of Colbert County, other than the eastern portion, which was split into House Districts 3 and 7.

Alabama Senate District 6, represented by Sen. Larry Stutts, was reapportioned to include all of Colbert, Franklin, Lawrence and a small southern portion of Limestone County. Stutts will no longer represent Marion County, which was in the former Senate District 6.

The State Board of Education District 7, which includes Franklin County, remained essentially the same. That district includes Lauderdale, Colbert, Lawrence, Morgan, Marion, Lamar, Fayette, Walker and parts of Tuscaloosa and Jefferson counties.

‘ASSAULT,’ from page 1

Highway 48. Flippo, the investigation showed, get into her vehicle and ran over the man, Oliver said.

Domestic Violence First Degree requires a showing that the defendant, a person who has or had a dating relationship with the victim, with intent to cause physical injury, caused serious physical injury to the victim.

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The Tiger Times: examining the nationwide shortage of goods

(In partnership with Russellville Middle School, the *Franklin Free Press* will publish certain news articles from RMS' student newspaper, *The Tiger Times*. We are proud to support aspiring young journalists and we hope you enjoy their articles.)

Socrates Fonseca
For the FFP

Some examples of items that are going up in prices in the U.S. are gas, food, and cars, but there are so many more things that are in shortage or are becoming more expensive.

The reason why everything is facing shortages is mainly due to bottlenecks, which are when production of an item experiences delays or stalling in the manufacturing process.

The stuff trying to get through, in this case, would be all the food trying to make it to either restaurants or to grocery stores.

The food industry does not have enough people to transport, market, and produce the food. Cars are another example of a bottleneck that the United States is currently experiencing. There are not enough people to ship the parts in and nobody is producing cars.

Rental cars are hard to come by and cost a lot where the manufacturers cannot make any more because of the limited supply. Even though the price for crude oil, a component of gas, is down, the demand for gas is going up. Another reason gas prices are going up is because there is no one who is getting the resources to make the gas and the process of making gasoline is costing too much for anyone to mass produce.

Food prices are up because of labor shortages and lack of people producing the food. The highest gasoline has ever cost was \$4.11 in 2008, also known as the Great Recession, and right now the national average is \$3.38.

The rising prices for everyday items is posing huge problems for everyone in the U.S., and the end is still nowhere in sight.

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 You are invited to a Book Signing with local author Dianne Wages Pace at Maggie J's, 13720 Highway 43 in Russellville, on Friday, November 19th, from 9:30-Noon and 2-5:30. Pace will sign copies of her newly-released children's book, "Too Many Santas."

 The Russellville Fire Department is now accepting applications for the 2021 Helping Santa Toy Program. Applications may be picked up at the Russellville Police Department or the Russellville Fire Department. They must be filled out completely and turned in by the November 19, 2021, deadline for consideration. All forms must be filled out completely to be eligible for assistance.

 Tharptown Elementary School Ambassadors are taking monetary donations for the 2021 Angel Tree. Angels will also be available for adoption November 18th. You may send your checks to TES 145 Highway 80, Russellville, AL 35654 ATTEN: ANGEL TREE. To adopt an angel, call Monica Elliot or Lisa Gann at 256-332-3404 ext. 7028. Gifts will need to be delivered December 13th. You will truly be blessed.

 Tharptown High School will host its first annual Miss Merry Christmas on Saturday, December 11. Deadline to register is Friday, November 19th. Categories include Baby Miss (0-23 months), Toddler Miss (2-4 years), Mini Miss (5-7 years), Tiny Miss (8-10 years), Little Miss (11-12 years), Junior Miss (12-15) and Teen Miss Merry Christmas (15-18 years). \$30 pageant entry fee and \$10 Miss Photogenic fee. Registration forms are available at any Franklin County School office, or the Franklin County Board of Education building in downtown Russellville. Money raised will benefit Tharptown High School's baseball program, with 10 percent of the overall proceeds going to First Priority Missions.

 Florence Lauderdale Animal Services and local rescues are working with Franklin County to help save many abandoned animals to give them a chance at a new life. Save Our Strays needs donations called into Russellville Animal Clinic, to pay for veterinary services, spay/neuter and medical treatment for everything from heartworms to Parvo. There are also boarding expenses for the animals due to their medical treatment. No amount of donation is too small. This group has saved many cats and dogs, and they need the community's help. Call Russellville Animal Clinic and tell them you're donating to the Save Our Strays Account. Their phone number is 256-332-2254.

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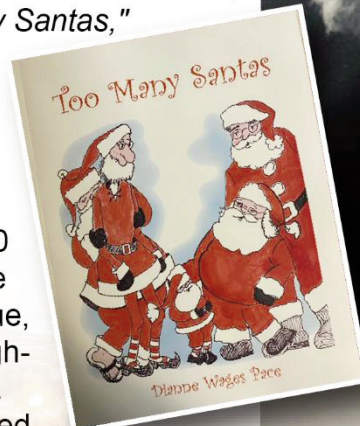
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Local author Dianne Wages Pace will hold a book signing for her new children's book, "Too Many Santas,"

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Cox an 'open book' when it comes to future plans for NW-SCC

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Since his arrival two months ago, Northwest-Shoals Community College President Dr. Chris Cox has been an 'open book' when it comes to media access.

Cox, who started August 17, 2021, is no stranger to serving as an interim president. He's done it at Beville State Community College and Lurleen B. Wallace Community College, so NW-SCC is his third stint.

Known as a fixer, Cox has developed a reputation for coming into less-than-ideal situations and making improvements to pave the way for his successor.

The same thing is taking place at Northwest-Shoals, where Cox announced a \$30 million infrastructure project for the school's two campuses last month. That announcement was followed by last week's news that NW-SCC would reinstate athletics starting next fall. Big changes, small time frame.

There are mixed opinions about what the state of NW-SCC was when Cox arrived in August. One faction of the school's faculty stood by former President Dr. Glenda Colagross. Others said it was time for a leadership change.

Either way, Cox had no part in the decision to relieve Colagross of her duties. And he met with NW-SCC faculty, staff and administrators within days of his arrival to let them know he was there solely to support them and the institution. Cox has not, and will not, be a candidate for the permanent president's position at NW-SCC.

Cox also immediately addressed concerns about the future of the NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus, something he was asked about from the first day he took over. He says the \$30 million investment for both the Phil Campbell and Shoals campuses demonstrates the school's commitment to Franklin County.

"There will be more money poured into the Phil Campbell campus since it was built. We'll have that campus looking like new in the next few years and we hope that settles concerns about whether we are looking to shut down in Franklin County," Cox said.

Although the baseball and softball programs will be housed solely on NW-SCC Shoals campus, Cox said when basketball and volleyball return, likely in 2023, the two campuses will share hosting games.

So far, he's a man of his word, so when Cox says Phil Campbell will host Patriot basketball and volleyball games, we'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton, a former Northwest-Shoals baseball player, said he's found Cox to be committed to working with local school systems to partner with the college.

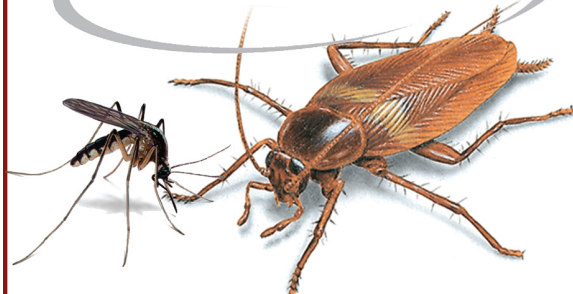
"I was very impressed and pleased to see his support of Northwest-Shoals Community College and our local school systems," Hamilton said. "He met with local superintendents as soon as he took over and we appreciate him working to grow the partnership between Northwest-Shoals Community College and Franklin County Schools."

When contacted by the *Franklin Free Press*, Cox has been candid and accommodating when it comes to interviews. And that hasn't always been the case with former NW-SCC presidents. Northwest-Shoals Community College will be forever connected to Franklin County, dating back to when it opened its doors in 1963 as Northwest Alabama State Junior College, Alabama's first junior college.

Franklin County folks still consider it 'their' school. The name may have changed after a controversial 1993 merger with Shoals Community College, but local residents want and need to know what's happening with their college, and Cox has responded.

It's fair to describe Dr. Chris Cox as an 'open book.' Unfortunately, though, that book won't be around much longer.

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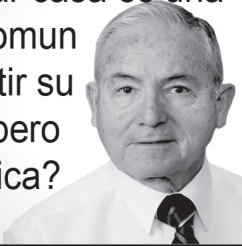
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Phil Campbell's Swinney signs with University of Alabama

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Mason Swinney has known for a long time that baseball was his calling. And while any player's dream is to play the game for as long as father time allows, Swinney's dream wasn't just to continue playing for as long as he could. He knew where he wanted to go play and was determined to turn that dream into a reality. With plenty of offers in hand and a long-standing knowledge that his game was good enough to take him to the next level, Swinney was patient with his approach in the recruitment process. He was waiting patiently on that highly sought after SEC offer to come through that he had been waiting so long for. And in May of this year, the dream finally culminated for Swinney in the form of a scholarship offer from the University of Alabama. And with that scholarship offer, Swinney finally was able to realize a goal that has been on his mind for as long as he can remember: playing SEC baseball. "It's been one of my dreams to play SEC baseball and today is just a dream come true for me. I'm just really excited to get down to Tuscaloosa and get to playing," Swinney said. "I had a few smaller schools interested in me for a while but I wasn't going to rush it. I wanted to wait for an SEC offer because one of my dream schools was Alabama so when they offered me, I took the offer because I knew that's where I wanted to be."

For someone who has had quite the extensive baseball career already (including winning a state title and playing games at Tropicana Field, home of the Tampa Bay Rays), it wasn't until last summer when Swinney was playing travel ball that he finally realized that his game just might be good

See 'SWINNEY,' page 14

A first place finish



COURTESY PHOTO
 The RHS varsity cheer squad took home first place in the AHSAA North Super Regional 5A Gameday which consists of competitions in Band Chant, Sideline, Crowd Leading and Fight Song.

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

After years of not competing in the Alabama High School Athletic Association's state cheerleading competition, the Russellville High School varsity squad voted to take part in this year's competition. That proved to be a good decision, as RHS came home with a first place finish at the AHSAA North Super Regional 5A Gameday, held November 1st at Huntsville's Von Braun Center.

The Golden Tigers varsity squad competed against 5A high schools across a nine-county region in north Alabama. Coach Stephanie Mayfield's team finished first and advanced to the AHSAA State Finals, set for December 6th in Birmingham.

The competition saw squads judged in categories including Band Chant, Sideline (Situational), Crowd Leading and Fight Song.

Mayfield said it was the first time for Russellville to take part in the AHSAA competition, a decision not taken lightly by her athletes. Mayfield told her girls the state competition would mean a lot of extra practices and added fees to pay for the competition. Mayfield also used cheerleading funds to purchase new props and signs needed

for the event. "Everyone voted yes so we wanted to take it to the next level," Mayfield said. "We graduated some cheerleading athletes to cheer or dance at the collegiate level, and that really helps build the program. If we can expose them to this kind of competition, that builds them up to be able to cheer at the next level."

The 2021-22 varsity cheerleading team includes: Ella Burcham (Captain), Tori Tiffin (Co-Captain), Madeline Cooper, Sophie Hill, Emily Gipson, Keshie Allen, Silvie Miller, Sarah Morgan, Maggie Bishop, Danica Graham, Stella Hill, Kinsley Palmer, Caylin Pinkard, Chloe Sheffield and Annie Willis.

Hailey Mitchell, aka 'Champ,' also competed with the team in Huntsville.

"Champ helps bring up the spirit level for us. She is excellent. Her excitement and energy keeps us all pumped up," Mayfield said. "I can't tell you how much practice time this team puts in. We've had Sunday practices, late night practices and it's something we've all been dedicated to so we could bring back trophies."

Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes said he was proud of the way the varsity

See 'FINISH,' page 13

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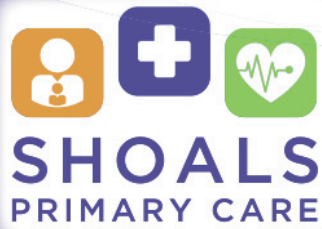
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'FINISH,' from page 11

cheer squad represented the school and how well the team did at the Super Regional.

"It's always good to see our students succeed whatever they're doing. It portrays that level of excellence we strive for," Grimes said. "Mrs. Mayfield does a good job with the girls and they really wanted to participate this year. It's a very talented bunch and they wanted to showcase that talent and compete."

Mayfield expressed her appreciation to the families and friends of the varsity cheerleaders for turning out in large number during the Super Regionals. She's also appreciative of her husband, Mike, for his love and support of her team.

"Crowd effectiveness is scored and our crowd showed up big," Mayfield said. "That included the junior varsity squad and their parents, and the parents and families of our varsity team, along with friends and boyfriends. We hope to get that kind of support at state. It makes a big difference."

Mayfield had some preparation of her own in advance of the state competition. She completed a USA Cheer course that she described as 'extensive,' in order to be on the floor with her team.

In addition to practices every day, the varsity cheerleaders also still have the job of supporting the football team during its 5A state playoff run. Add preparing for basketball season on top of that, and you realize it's a busy time for their team. "A lot of times cheer is not looked at as a sport and that makes me see red. I don't know of any other sport where you're six or eight feet in the air balancing yourself on one foot," Mayfield said. "There's a gymnastics element and a lot of other athletic elements involved."

Two days before the Super Regionals, the varsity cheerleaders competed in a Multi-State 5A Gameday competition. With a short-handed squad (one team member was out with an illness), Russellville still finished in second place after revamping their routine two hours before competition.

Mayfield hopes the varsity squad's success will be noticed by her JV and middle school cheerleaders.

"My whole goal is to try and build this program so the middle school will look at the varsity and say that's what we want to do," Mayfield said. "We are working every day to make this team, and this program, the best it can be."

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'SWINNEY,' from page 11

enough to stand toe-to-toe in the SEC.
"The summer before I committed, I played ball all over the place with a bunch of talented guys and I hung with them and saw where I was at and after that I really knew that I could play at the next level," Swinney said.

Swinney's head coach Jonathan Raper has watched the senior shortstop's development firsthand over the years. So the fact that Swinney was able to snatch up a scholarship offer from one of the up-and-coming baseball programs in the SEC was no surprise.

And what makes Swinney stand out, other than his elite talent, has been his willingness to help the team win at all costs. Even if that means dropping down a bunt from time to time instead of swinging for the fences.

"It's a great accomplishment and opportunity for Mason. He's a hard worker and he's worked for this since a very young age and it's just a really great accomplishment for him. Mason really goes above and beyond with lifting weights and hitting extra even when we've finished up," Raper said. "In the second round against Geraldine, we hit into several different plays in a 1-0 game where we were getting beat. And we have Mason at the plate who is arguably our best hitter with runners on first and second and we give him the bunt sign. And he takes it in stride and does it. He does what you ask him to do because at the end of the day he wanted to win and he is willing to do whatever it takes and I think that speaks volumes to the kind of kid he is."

Phil Campbell has become sort of a baseball hotbed for the college ranks in recent years with multiple players continuing their baseball careers at the next level.

Add Swinney into the mix as the latest signee, combined with a few players expected to do the same in the coming months, and it's clear to see just how the Bobcat program became so dominant in recent years.

"We were very blessed to have kids that can really play very well and were able to continue playing after they left here and I still feel like we have a few more guys this year that could do the same thing. So it's really a great time for our program," Raper said.

The bond that Swinney and the rest of his Bobcat teammates from last year's state title winning team will be one that will forever be unbroken and the memories made last season are surely ones that Swinney will carry with him after his time at Phil Campbell finishes in May.

Combine the schools first state championship in any sport since 1947 and signing a scholarship offer to play the game he loves at his dream school and it's going to be pretty difficult for Swinney to top this year anytime soon.

"Coach Raper is a great coach and he's like family to me. The team last year was so special because we had all grown up together and talked about winning state championships and we were able to accomplish that together," Swinney said. "I was able to win a state championship and commit to playing at Alabama so it's been a pretty good year for me."

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Texas at West Virginia	West Virginia	_____
Florida at Missouri	Florida	_____
Auburn at South Carolina	Auburn	_____
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