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**'Cooking for Christ' – Chuckwagon Cooking Team a new and growing local ministry**

*John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press*

Sometimes, it's difficult to see God's plan for our lives. Whether individually, through a church or a specific outreach, God's plan may take time to come together. And we don't realize how it did so until after His work is done. That's exactly what happened with the Chuckwagon Cooking Team, Cooking For Christ, an outreach of the Cowboy Church of Franklin County. For Joe Lindsey, lay pastor at the Cowboy Church of Franklin County, he witnessed a confluence of several events coming together which resulted in a unique, and much-



**COURTESY PHOTO**  
 The Chuckwagon Cooking Team at a recent event at a nursing home in Red Bay.

See 'TEAM,' page 9

**Merry Christmas, neighbors.**



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**Roxy Christmas Spectacular returns to stage December 9**

*John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press*

After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Roxy's Christmas Spectacular will once again light up Russellville's historic Roxy Theatre December 9-12. The Christmas Spectacular is a musical written, directed and coordinated by Hillary Malone Hall. The Broadway-type production features a cast of local students and adults performing and dancing to some of your Christmas song favorites. The story centers around Fred the elf, who accidentally boards the

North Pole Express that travels from city to city across North America. At each stop, Fred gets involved with that community's holiday celebrations through dancing, singing and comedy. Avery Guinn plays the lead role of Fred. Guinn has played in numerous roles in Shoals productions and at Northwest-Shoals Community College, where he is a student on a music scholarship. Other cast members include First Baptist Church Youth Minister Joel Davis, Adison Farris (dancer), Russellville realtor Willodean Davis,

See 'ROXY,' page 3

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**Thelma Jean Gibson**, 87, of Spruce Pine, passed away on Wednesday, November 24th. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

**Kathy Darlene Taylor**, 71, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, November 25th. Interment at Dempsey Cemetery.

**Jennifer Dianne Wiginton**, 73, of Russellville, passed away on Tuesday, November 23rd. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.



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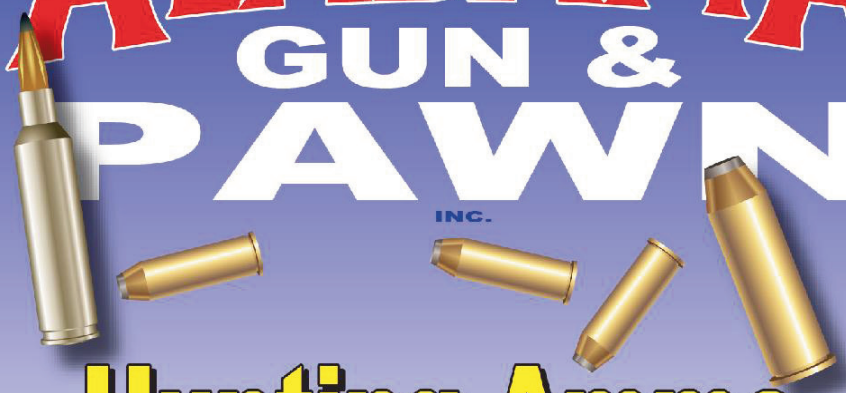
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## 'ROXY,' from page 1

Russellville Florist owner Chase Sparks and Gunner Lane, along with students from elementary school through college.

As an elf, Fred always believed Christmas was all about Santa. But in the end, he learns a lesson about the real meaning of Christmas.

The finale will include a manger scene performed to *The Holiest of Nights*, written and performed by Denise Davis, a Russellville native and former Miss Alabama.

Hall said she's made a number of changes for this year's show, so it will be unique and different from the 2019 version. There will be more speaking roles and more use of local talent.

"There will be lots of laughter and humor. It's going to be fun," Hall said. "It's time for us to bring Christmas back."

Jonathan Grimes will serve as Stage Manager and Ashley Grimes as Costume Director. The show will include more than 60 cast members.

"I'm so excited to be working with Jonathan again. Any time I pull out another idea I want done, he's willing to jump right into it and go for it. And Ashley is a wonderful Costume Director. It's great to work with them," Hall said.

There are five shows scheduled: Thursday, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 11 at 2 p.m., and 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 12 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now and going fast. They can be purchased on Facebook Messenger. Log onto the Roxy's Christmas Spectacular Facebook page and you can pay through Venmo. Tickets are also available Sunday afternoon at the Roxy from 1-3 p.m., and at the door the day of the show. All seats are reserved, with a cost of \$15 or \$10.



COURTESY PHOTO

The cast from the 2019 Roxy's Christmas Spectacular. This year's show will feature more than 60 cast members.

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# Prayer for Peace ceremony and Christmas Tree Lighting set for Thursday

Submitted to the FFP

The Cultura Garden Club has planned an outstanding Every Light a Prayer for Peace and Christmas Tree Lighting program.

The program will be held on Thursday, December 2, starting at 4:15 at the Franklin County Courthouse and will conclude by 5 p.m. The public is invited. The annual Russellville Christmas Parade will begin at 6 p.m.

The Every Light a Prayer for Peace Ceremony began 70 years ago. This ceremony has been observed and sponsored by the Cultura Garden Club for over thirty years.

The program was adopted by the Federated Garden Clubs of Alabama and has been observed in towns all across Alabama and on the steps of the Alabama Capitol each year in December.

This year Pastor Chase Dowdy of First Baptist Church will present the Prayer for Peace Message.

Entertainment will be performed by the Russellville High School, Middle School Chorus and the RES Fifth Grade Chorus. The RHS Junior ROTC will present colors and Madeline Cooper, Franklin County Distinguished Young Woman, will sing the National Anthem.

Honorees of this event are Veterans, Active Military, Front Line Workers, First Responders, and EMS. They will be recognized for their valor, dedication, and service to our city, state, country, and internationally as duty calls.

The Lighting of the Candles will be coordinated by the garden club members as the combined choirs lead the congregation in the singing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth." The Taps will be played for Jeremy Willis, RHS Band Director, and closing prayer given by Bert Fowler, First Baptist Church Minister of Music.

The official lighting of the Christmas tree will conclude the program.

Our nation and the world continue to be in conflict today. So take a moment during the busy Christmas season to stop, say a prayer, and light a candle in honor of those who serve so that we may enjoy our freedom.



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### Correction Policy

The *Franklin Free Press* strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

### 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... A clean bill of health but I need a home!

I can remember when I was very young, I'd go outside in extremely cold weather to sit real close to my dog, Trixie, to keep her warm.

She would be sitting in a corner of the porch on the cold concrete shivering so bad. I couldn't stand seeing that, so out I'd go. It wouldn't be long until I was shivering along with her. That didn't matter to me. I knew I could warm up when I went inside and she would be even colder when I left her side.

Mother would come to the door to tell me I needed to come in; that I was going to make myself sick and my dog was fine. She couldn't be fine. We both were freezing to death.

It came to a point where I had to go in. It always broke my heart. I'd go inside but I would be crying my eyes out.

The first thing I'd do the next morning was hurry outside and hug Trixie's neck and apologize telling her how sorry I was I had to leave her.

We would always have so much fun together. She made every step I made.

When I was growing up, my mother was always saying she thought I loved my animals more than I did people. I remember telling her that animals didn't hurt people. She



Gail Motes

was close to being right though when she said that. I do love a few people more than animals and I was still right about animals not hurting me. Over the years, I've been hurt by a lot of people. Of course, only an animal lover would know what this means. Believe me, there is a big difference in an animal lover and someone who likes animals.

I was allowed to have cats, but they had to stay out of the barn. That means I spent a lot of time at the barn during the day. I loved my cat too! The bad part about that was when a cat had kittens, the momma cat would have those kittens in a dark place where you couldn't even see them to get them out to pet them. Having never been touched by a human, those kittens would hiss and spit and

SEE 'TAKE,' page 7



Willodean's  
on WGOL

Tune in to WGOL 100.7 FM to hear "Real Estate Tips with Willodean" weekdays at 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. Davis is the owner/broker of Davis Realty & Associates in Russellville.



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# JOB OPPORTUNITY

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All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political 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 December 10, 2021 by U.S. Mail to:

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

The average pay for this position is  
\$28,516.80 - \$43,929.60

The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.

# JOB OPPORTUNITY

GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT  
CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE  
STREET DEPARTMENT

## UTILITY AND VEHICLE TECHNICIAN

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:** Knowledge of safety rules including accident causation and prevention. Knowledge of skills to operate heavy equipment. Knowledge and skills of basic vehicle, heavy equipment and small engine servicing and repair. Knowledge and skills for welding and fabrication. Skills in the effective and safe use of hand and power tools and mechanical shop, equipment and machinery. Reading skills to comprehend operator manuals, directives, procedures and instructions. Verbal skills to communicate effectively with supervisor and co-workers. Writing skills to clearly and neatly complete routine forms and records. Math skills to perform basic calculation and measurement (add, subtract, multiply, divide). Ability to drive and operate heavy equipment, ability to see and read dials and gauges: ability to hear warning signals and mechanical sounds. Ability to weld and fabricate parts and items. Ability to safely use welding equipment. Ability to safely use welding equipment. Ability to work independently with minimal

supervision. Ability to provide oversight and direction to employees assisting in the shop. Ability to work well with co-workers. Ability to use personal protective equipment. Ability to work outside in extreme weather conditions. Ability to lift and carry heavy items.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Possess a high school diploma or GED. Possess a minimum of two years of vehicle mechanical work experience. Previous experience in welding and fabrication work. Possess and maintains a CDL - B license. Ability to be available for emergency call out 24.7.

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# JOB OPPORTUNITY

PATROL OFFICER - POLICE DEPARTMENT

**DEFINITION OF JOB:** Patrols a designated sector of the city of Russellville and responds to complaints. Serves warrants and subpoenas and testifies in court. Provides traffic control assistance. Performs dispatching duties. Performs other police related duties as required.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

**Knowledge of:** the city buildings and street system of Russellville; city, state and federal laws; court procedures; department rules, regulations and procedures; maintenance and use of weapons; radio codes, surveillance equipment and legal procedures involved with illegal drug cases.

**Ability to:** operate a motor vehicle; read; safely fire a weapon; communicate on telephone and radio; generate written documents such as reports and tickets; bend, crouch; stretch; stretch; walk; run; respond to emergency situations on short notice when off-duty; and do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description.

**Verbal skills to communicate** factual information to co-workers, supervisors, general public and court personnel. Reading skills to read and understand rules, regulations policies and procedures, writing skills to clearly, accurately, and neatly complete routine reports and other paperwork. Math skills to perform basic calculations. Listening skills to receive radio call, take complaints, and interview witness.

**Ability to use a computer** as needed for data entry, word processing reports and investigative strategies.

**Willingness to:** work overtime, irregular hours, weekends and holidays; travel and attend seminars and workshops.

Ability to do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description.

## QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED

Minimum of 21 years of age

Must meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the State of Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission

Possession of a valid Alabama Drivers License

Possess the ability to obtain an Alabama Police Academy diploma or its equivalent

Ability to wear appropriate uniforms and safety equipment.

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Ability to travel as required.

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Applications and copies of the Job Descriptions may be obtained at the Russellville City Hall, Office of the Mayor, 304 North Jackson Avenue. Applications submitted to the Russellville Civil Service Board less than one year ago remain active. Those individuals need not reapply in order to receive consideration for this appointment. Applications must be returned no later than December 10, 2021 by U.S. Mail to:

Pay Range is from \$31,951.92 - \$49,292.88.

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**F**lorence 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.

**N**orthwest-Shoals Community College's Music Department will hold a "Falling into Winter" concert Thursday, December 2 through Saturday, December 4 at 7 p.m., at the Lou B. Bevell Center on the NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus. The concert will feature the Show Choir, Vocal Point, directed by Jonathon Romero. Choreography of the show choir will be directed by April Smith Spencer. Admission for the concert is \$8 and children 12 and under are admitted free. NW-SCC employees and students will be admitted free with valid college ID. Show Choir members from Franklin County include: Amberly Brown, Avery Guinn from Russellville; Chloe Carpenter, Makenzie Galloway and Ari Gilstrap from Phil Campbell, Briley Mills from Red Bay.

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# Presenting the 2021 Belgreen High School homecoming court



COURTESY PHOTO

The 2021 Belgreen High School Homecoming Court from left to right: Cole King & Dulce Donagustin, Adrian Reeves & Emma Daniel, Jackson Galliano & Madison Vandiver, Kaley Chandler & Brodie Vandiver, Nora Castillo & Hadden Taylor, Maria Estrada & Collin Bonner.

## 'TAKE,' from page 4

scare the "hibbie-jibbies" out of me. After they crawled out, I could tame some of them; but most just ended up to be wild. If I even looked at them; they would run off.

I wanted to let y'all know just how much my animals mean to me, because I have a big favor to ask. I have a puppy that's about out of the puppy stage. I did say "about." I've had her since she was six weeks old. I've kept her in the house and she is potty trained. She will come to me and whine when she wants out. She is the first dog I've ever had in my house and training was not easy.

As she got older, I would let her stay outside to run. That was not good because she enjoyed chasing my cats.

Doing that turned out to be a mistake on my part because she decided she liked outside. So, I came up with the bright idea to feed my cats before I let my puppy out. While they ate their food, she could run around.

Then she discovered chasing cars was lots of fun. If that wasn't enough, she started going next door and chasing my son's chickens.

Well, she is part Catahoula and her mother loved hunting, but her mother has "shock-collar" on, so she knows where her freedom ends.

Since my cats were her first, I will need to let my puppy go. It breaks my heart, but she has too many bad habits and needs a big pasture or a place without cats or maybe a shock collar. Mainly, she needs a different home where she can get a lot of attention. I would like for her to be able to come inside, but she will probably adapt to outside at night pretty good if she has to.

I'm just asking if there is one of my friends might want a beautiful dog. I've put her pictures on Facebook, but no luck. Not everyone is on Facebook, so that's why I'm adding other resources.

I would appreciate your help with this. Please help me find her a good home. And as always — until later.

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



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# Thank you

I want to extend a heartfelt

Thank You to my patients for your love, care and concern during my extended illness. You can be confident your prayers were heard and answered. You will never know how much each of you mean to me.

I also want to thank Dr. Bruce Thompson, Dr. Aaron Fletcher and Dr. Kyle Eaton for staffing my office and caring for our patients during my absence. That's much more than professional courtesy and I will always be grateful.

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~ Dr. Rick Wooten



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## Helping Santa program now accepting donations of new toys

Submitted to the FFP

The City of Russellville is sponsoring its annual Helping Santa program with toys for boys and girls of Russellville this Christmas.

Their goal is that no child in the city of Russellville will go without Christmas gifts this year. During these rough economic times, an increasing number of children will go through Christmas without food, clothing or toys.

If you want to donate, they will be accepting new toys only for age groups between newborn and 15 years of age.

Monetary donations may be made at Alabama Central Credit Union, First Metro Bank, Valley Credit Union, CB&S Bank (all locations), Valley State Bank, Listerhill Credit Union and Community Spirit Bank. All money raised will be used to purchase toys and clothing for needy children.

Last year's donations allowed more than 350 children to have a more enjoyable Christmas!

There will be donations boxes throughout the city at participating businesses. If you or your family would like to help, please donate in any way possible. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Donation boxes will be at the following locations: Russellville Fire Department Station #1 and #2, Russellville City Hall, Russellville Park and Recreation Bishop and Mullins Centers, Russellville Police Department, Family Pharmacy Group locations in Russellville, Miller's Affordable Furniture, 306 Barbecue, Green's Dependable True Value Hardware, Country Cottage, Auto Zone, Parker Merchandise, O'Reilly Auto Parts, 43 Grill, CVS Pharmacy, American Health and Fitness, Jack's Restaurant, Huddle House, Hibbett Sports, El Patron Restaurant, Tires and More, State Farm Agent Rhett Bradford's office.

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## 'TEAM,' from page 1

needed, outreach.

"My family has been to Mule Day in Columbia, Tenn., for 36 years," Lindsey said. "I started barbecuing 30 years ago and have always loved it. We participated in a youth rodeo last year in Colbert County with six or seven other cowboy churches. We didn't have a chuckwagon, so I carried my John Deere wagon and we took sawhorses and big boards and made a table and started cooking.

"We raised more money than any other team and after that, I saw how the Lord was showing me this is a ministry and an outreach and I was all excited. The next week the pandemic hit and nobody could go anywhere," Lindsey added.

But Lindsey and his wife Beverly set up in their yard and practiced cowboy cooking for two months. His son Zack and his wife Amanda were also interested in being part of the cooking team, as were Rick and Dana Argo, two new members of the Cowboy Church. Other church members, including Debbie Calhoun, Dewanna Jackson and Michelle Landers, committed to help, and the Chuckwagon Cooking Team, Cooking for Christ, was born in the midst of a COVID-19 shutdown.

"Each of these people were heaven sent. They're super people and will do anything that needs to be done. We've got an excellent team and they can bring a variety of food to feed hungry people, both spiritually and physically," Lindsey said.

Lindsey found a 120-year-old chuckwagon for sale on Facebook Marketplace, so he and Beverly traveled to Tennessee to look at it. Once the owner found out how the Lindseys would be using the chuckwagon, he dropped the price dramatically and suddenly, the Chuckwagon Cooking Team had a real working chuckwagon, complete with memorabilia from the era when it was used on a working cattle ranch.

Lindsey said the chuckwagon itself often serves as a conversation starter at events.

"To see that wagon and trailer, it's something that brings back memories to people. They can pull something out of their past they can reflect on and know something about. Now, you've got a conversation starter," Lindsey said.

The Chuckwagon Cooking Team cooks and serves food not only to the public, but to nursing home residents and other groups.

Earlier this year, the team went to a nursing home in Red Bay to cook and serve a meal to residents as part of the facility's Western Day. The team also prepared some small gifts for the residents and had a horse and pony on hand to allow them to interact with the animals.

Lindsey hopes to take the chuckwagon to locations dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters like hurricanes or tornadoes. Whatever it takes to lend a helping hand and share the message of Jesus Christ.

"We went last year to the American Federation of Cowboy Churches annual gathering in Texas. They have cooking crews that go out and feed people who have been displaced from their homes. It's just a way to help others in a time of need," Lindsey said.

The Chuckwagon Cooking Team doesn't sell the food it makes, but, as Argo explained, they keep a donation jar for those who want to support the ministry.

"We serve food at no charge but we do accept donations," Argo said. "100 percent of the money collected through donations is donated back to charities. In July, we combined our donations with the Colbert County Cowboy Church and gave more than \$2,500 to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

"All the food and materials used in and on the chuckwagon are funded by Joe and Beverly Lindsey. Church money is never used. It's Joe's personal outreach he uses to promote the Cowboy Church of Franklin County and he works closely with our pastor Brian Welch in reaching out to the community," Argo added.

Lindsey is passionate about spreading the word of Jesus and he gets emotional sometimes as he reflects on past events his cooking team took part in.

"At the nursing home, there were two ladies who hadn't been out of their room for more than a year during the pandemic," Lindsey said. "When they saw the chuckwagon and the horse and pony, we got them to come outside. I knew right then we have something here. It's a tool from the Lord that allows us to go and serve others."

The Cowboy Church of Franklin County is a nontraditional church that offers a 'come as you are' service.

"The main thing is if you're not in church, we want you to find one. We have welcomed people who were rejected at other churches. You won't find that here. Everyone is welcome at our church. We just want to spread the word of Jesus. That's something we all need," Lindsey said.

The Cowboy Church of Franklin County is located at 25100 Highway 24 West in Russellville. Sunday School begins at 9:30 a.m. Worship services are Sunday at 10:30 a.m., and Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., with Bible study and youth service at 7 p.m.

To inquire about the Chuckwagon Cooking Team, Cooking For Christ, coming to your event, contact Lindsey or Argo through Facebook.



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 CASE NO.:  
 8739  
 STATE OF ALABAMA }  
 COUNTY OF MADISON }  
 NOTICE TO: SKYLER SHANE VANDIVER  
 FATHER OF S.I. VANDIVER, DOB MAY 21ST, 2020  
 Please be advised that a Petition for Adoption, in the above-styled matters have been filed in the Probate Court of Madison County by Timothy and Andrea Ewart and that on the 10th day of February, 2022 at 1:30 p.m., these matters have been set for a hearing on the same in said Probate Court in Madison County, Alabama. Should you intend to contest this adoption, you must file a written response within thirty (30) days of the date of the last publication herein, with counsel for said Petitioners, whose name and address are shown below and with the Clerk of the said Probate Court.  
 Coby McEachern Boswell, Esq.  
 Attorney for Petitioner  
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## Bobcats jump out to 3-1 record with wins over key rivals

Staff reports

The basketball season is still in its early stages as the calendar flips to December. But that hasn't stopped the Bobcats from getting into midseason form with a few resounding wins to kickoff their season.

With a huge win over a county-rival and two more wins on their resume, the Bobcats are sitting pretty as a new month of games opens up.

### Phil Campbell 89 Vina 17

Four Bobcats scored in double digits to lead Phil Campbell's rout of their county rival, Vina.

Outscoring the Red Devils by 20 points in the first quarter behind six points apiece from Canaan Clay, Cam Habada and Quentin Hyde who knocked down a pair of three-pointers, the Bobcats were able to jump out to a quick 26-6 lead entering the second quarter.

The Bobcats matched that scoring total in the second quarter while improving on the defensive side of things, allowing just a single point for the Red Devils in the quarter.

Habada added five points in the quarter to bring his scoring total to 11 points in the first half while Cole Pace got on the board with five points.

Carrying a 52-7 lead into the third quarter, the Bobcats got more of the same in the quarter. John Randell Herring and Kyle Pace led the way in scoring in the third quarter with four points and seven points, respectively to help the Bobcats outscore Vina 24-5, bringing the score to 76-12 entering the fourth quarter.

Knocking down a trio of three-pointers, Clay scored nine points in the quarter to finish the night leading all Bobcat scorers with 19 points.

Phil Campbell would get a three-pointer from Bryant Hyde in the fourth quarter to cap off a 13-5 scoring run to seal off the dominant victory for the Bobcats.

See 'BOBCATS,' page 13

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

PLEASANT GROVE - The paths that coaches take to end up where they are oftentimes ends up just boiling down to a few simple factors. Quality of the program, window of contention, financial implications and other things are usually the predominant reasons for coaches taking up jobs in certain places.

And while the success of the Pleasant Grove High School Spartans certainly hasn't been anything to sneeze at, a friendship dating back over two decades brought two coaches together to a school seeking its first state football title in school history.

Russellville Golden Tiger fans may have heard of Pleasant Grove as the Spartans currently reside in class 5A and were on the opposite side of the playoff bracket this season.

Although the Golden Tigers football season came to an end three weeks ago, Russellville will be well-represented at the 5A state championship this Thursday night.

Former Golden Tiger standouts Matt Stockton and Ty Cox, who both coach for Pleasant Grove, will be on the sidelines as the Spartans take on Pike Road in Birmingham.

While they haven't suited up in the black and gold in quite some time, the connection that they feel to their hometown is still strong.

And the support they feel from the Golden Tiger community hasn't gone unnoticed.

"Our time at Russellville was some of the best times of our lives and it's still a special place to us. We still have a lot of family there and we still visit there fairly often," Stockton said. "We want to win this thing really badly. But we have a lot of people in Russellville really pulling for us. Coach Ritter has reached out to us as well wishing us luck and congratulating us and it's just been a really cool connection to have."

An Athens State University graduate who teaches business at Pleasant Grove, Stockton is in his second stint with the Spartans as he was previously hired out of college as the eighth grade middle school head football coach with the Spartans followed by a bump up to the varsity coaching staff the next year.

In his first season with the varsity coaching staff, the Spartans reached the state title game in 2014; their first title appearance in program history which ended in a loss to St. Paul.

After stops at Shelby County and Holt High Schools, Stockton is back at Pleasant Grove High School as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

Before the 2018 season began, the Spartans were in need of an offensive line coach. And when presented with a question from head coach Darrell LaBeaux (who coincidentally squared off against Cox and Stockton in 2002 as a wide receiver when the Golden Tigers took on Pleasant Grove in the playoffs) as to who should fill the role, Stockton had no hesitation in his answer.

"When Coach LaBeaux took over in June of 2018, we went to the second round that year and we lost

# Forever Golden



**COURTESY PHOTO**  
 Once competing for state titles as teammates with the Golden Tigers, Stockton and Cox are now vying for state championships together as coaches for Pleasant Grove High School.

our offensive line coach that spring. And so he came to me and asked me if I had any ideas as to what we were going to do for an offensive line coach next season. And I told him that if I was the head coach, my first call for an offensive line coach would be Ty Cox," Stockton said. "Ty and I had actually been close and in touch for years and I had always tried to lure him to come down here and it just never really worked out. And so I'm 2018 we worked it out and got him down here and it's really worked out. Coach LeBeaux has treated us amazing and words can't describe how awesome it's been"

Graduating from the University of Alabama where he served as a student assistant for three years before going into the insurance industry, Cox always felt as though coaching was his true passion.

Then in 2013, the itch to get back into coaching made its way back around to Cox as he latched on at New Hope High School for three years before coaching at Huntsville High School for two years and ultimately ending up at Pleasant Grove where he currently teaches history.

Cox's father Don is a former head coach with the

See 'GOLDEN,' page 12

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# 'GOLDEN,' from page 11

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Golden Tigers and was a longtime administrator, so Cox has long bled black and gold.

With his father's leadership combined with the coaching influences such as Ted Ikerd, Perry Swindell, Larry Gllmer and others, inevitably set the tone for the values that both Cox and Stockton have carried throughout their coaching careers.

"My dad was the coach at Russellville and was in the administration so from the time I was walking, I was a Golden Tiger and I don't take that for granted. Seeing my dad from an early age, one thing he instilled in me was to strive to perfection. I never saw the man take a day off so at an early age, that work ethic and paying attention to detail was something I picked up on," Cox said. "I believe that a lot of the experiences that Matt and I had growing up from elementary through high school and all the coaches that we had, had huge influences on our lives. They set a foundation for us that showed us how to be successful and the right way to do things and how important tradition was. They really showed us what it meant to be from Russellville."

Stockton echoed Cox's beliefs and accredits Russellville for establishing the kind of tradition, winning, and embracing culture that has attributed to their coaching styles and mentality over the years.

"I never left a practice at Russellville where I didn't feel loved and I felt like a coach would do anything in the world for me. We try to do that here at Pleasant Grove with our kids. We stay on them a lot but we also don't let them leave without telling them how much we care about them," Stockton said. "When you think of Russellville and you think of Golden Tiger football, the first word you think of it "tradition". There's way too many people to thank individually because so many people played a part in getting us to where we are today but the values and things that people taught us is something that we both cherish."

Both Cox and Stockton are no strangers to the state championship stage. Stockton appeared in two state championship games with the Golden Tigers in 2002 and 2003 and Cox appeared in three straight state championships from 2002-2004.

Then making the transition into coaching, neither Cox nor Stockton have skipped a beat as Stockton has coached in three (his fourth appearance will come on Thursday night) state championships while Cox will have coached in three straight state title games from 2019-2021 with the conclusion of Thursday nights game.

"Coach Cox and I are very thankful to coach LeBeaux for giving us an opportunity to coach and work here at Pleasant Grove. He treats us great, he is a great leader of men and we have learned a ton from him as well," Stockton said. "We also are thankful for our parents making all the sacrifices for us to get to this point as well and I am thankful for my wife Kristin for all her sacrifices that she has made as well. Having a two year old son (Rawlins), she understands the hard work and long hours that go into coaching and I am very thankful for everything she does and the support she has given me."

Over 15 years removed from their playing days at Russellville, Cox and Stockton there's still a certain family feeling that they get anytime they think of Russellville.

And while they have their own squad to tend to, once those lights shut off on Friday nights in Pleasant Grove, both Cox and Stockton are checking up on how their alma mater turned out.

"They've got that saying in Russellville "Forever Golden", and it means a lot to us that people in Russellville still keep up with us and follow us," Stockton said. "And we still follow Russellville as well. That's one of the first scores we check for on Friday nights."

"There's lessons that I learned on the football field from Russellville that I couldn't have learned anywhere else. I would give the shirt off my back for the coaches that we had growing up and I know Matt would do the same," Cox said. "There's a saying in football, "coach them hard, love them harder" and that's the environment that we had at Russellville and just always preparing enough to go into every game thinking that you were going to win."

While both Cox and Stockton both envisioned a coaching career after their playing days came to an end, neither could have envisioned the path that would have led to them coaching alongside one another.

"If you had told me in 2003 as a senior and Cox being a junior, that 15 years from now that I would be coaching quarterbacks and he would be coaching the offensive line for Pleasant Grove, we would have called you a fool," Stockton said. "I knew we both wanted to go into coaching but we've just been blessed to be in good situations. . ."

Of course it's unknown how long Stockton and Cox will be coaching together on the same sidelines. After the successes of the previous few seasons, it's entirely possible that head coaching jobs could appear for both Stockton and Cox in the not-so-distant future.

After all, the Spartans offense has been one of the most dynamic offenses not just in class 5A, but in the state this season after setting a school record for points in a season with 583 (44.8 PPG) and eclipsing the 40 point threshold in ten of their 13 games so far this season. And that production is thanks in part to the coaching work including Stockton and Cox.

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## 'BOBCATS,' from page 11

Habada finished with 13 points on the night while Pace and Hyde finished with 12 and ten points in the win.

Conner Davidson scored seven points to lead all Vina scorers.

**Phil Campbell 48 Belmont (MS) 63**

The Cardinals outscored the Bobcats 14-8 in the first quarter to set the tone to hand the Bobcats their first loss of the 2021-22 season.

Canaan Clay knocked down a three-pointer while Blaine Goodson and Cam Habada added two points each in the quarter.

The second quarter was more favorable to the Bobcats as they outscored the Cardinals 14-12.

Kyle Pace led the Bobcats in scoring for the quarter with five points while Habada chipped in with a three-pointer and Clay, Goodson and Bryant Hyde scored two points each.

Belmont was able to extend their lead, outscoring the Bobcats 37-32 en route to the win.

Hyde scored ten points in the fourth quarter to finish the night with 15 points, leading all Bobcat scorers. Clay (nine points), Pace (eight points), and Habada (seven points) chipped in.

**Phil Campbell 75 Phillips 60**

It was a cliché "team effort" from Phil Campbell in their 75-60 win over rival Phillips as five different Bobcats scored in double digits.

Kyle Pace dropped nine points in the opening quarter of the Bobcats win, while Phil Campbell trailed the Bears after the first quarter, 18-17.

Phil Campbell outscored Phillips 20-14 to take a 37-32 lead going into half-time behind six points from Blaine Goodson and five points from Cam Habada.

The third quarter is where the Bobcats extended their lead wide enough to close out the rest of the game. Outscoring Phillips 21-8 in the quarter, Bryant Hyde scored 11 of his 19 total points on the night in the third quarter, leading Bobcat scorers.

Despite being outscored 20-17 in the fourth quarter, the Bobcats were able to hold on for the win to improve to 2-1 on the season.

Kyle Pace ended the night with 15 points while Canaan Clay added 14 points. Blaine Goodson and Cam Habada each scored 11 points in the game.

**Phil Campbell 59 Sulligent 47**

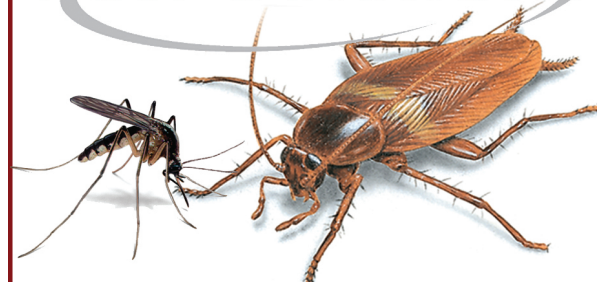
With their 59-47 win over Sulligent, the Bobcats improved to 3-1 on the young season.

Jumping out to a convincing 36-23 lead through the first half, Cam Habada and Bryant Hyde paced the Bobcats scoring with nine and eight points in the half.

The second half saw Sulligent outscore the Bobcats 24-23. However, the Bobcats were able to hang on to win thanks to their high-scoring first half.

Hyde scored eight points in the second half, giving him 16 and the highest scoring total on the night for Phil Campbell. Habada scored 12 points for the Bobcats while Kyle Pace scored ten points.

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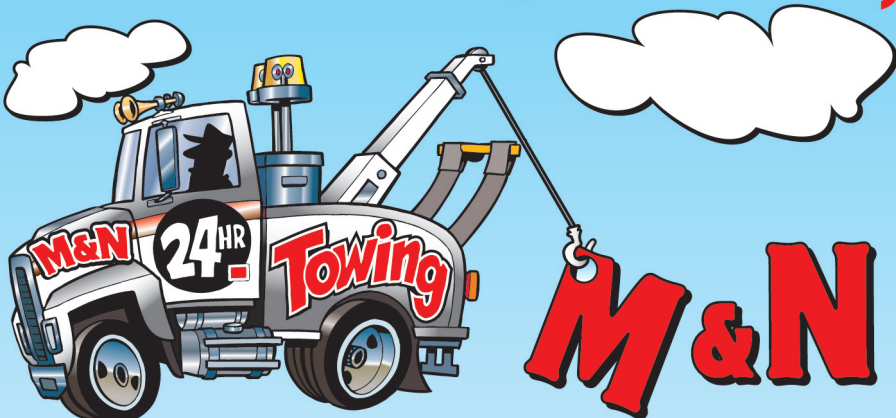


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**'GOLDEN,' from page 12**

Not to mention over 3,000 rushing yards and 2,000 yards passing on the season.

"We've got great players here and we've also got great coaches here at Pleasant Grove," Stockton said. "It comes with being prepared. Coach LeBeaux does a great job of preparing us and he does a good job in trusting us if he ever needs anything opinion-wise but we lean on him a lot too. He's one of the hardest workers I've ever been around as far as coaching goes. So it's a full team effort with our success this year."

"It's about paying attention to small details and making sure that we don't overreact to anything and staying on an even keel. I tell my kids that if something good happens early, so what? If something bad happens early, so what? You have got to keep striving and keep pushing for consistency," Cox said. "We've been fortunate to be very balanced this year both running and throwing the ball."

But for now, the two friends are enjoying the experience of being around the sport they love while teaching the next generation of athletes both on and off the field.

And neither one of them are taking a single minute of the experience for granted.

"It's kind of been a fairy tale. I thank the lord everyday for the success that we have had. We may coach another 15-20 years and not have the opportunity to have a run like this ever again," Cox said. "I had one other opportunity where I was able to coach with a buddy of mine but to be able to experience everything that we've experienced alongside one of your best buddies is very special."

*Shoals Primary Care*

*welcomes*

**Dr. Zaman Shah**

**to the practice in Sheffield**



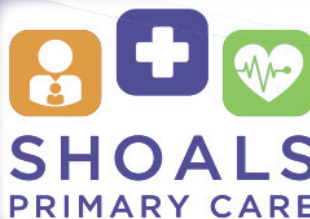
**Board certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Shah is an exceptional physician and a close family member of Dr. Syed.**

**He will be continuing Dr. Syed's legacy of excellent and compassionate patient care with Shoals Primary Care.**

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Congrats to Week 13 winner **DEREK GANDY**, who correctly picked **EIGHT** games and also won the tiebreaker between **BYU** and **USC!**

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



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**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 14 must be postmarked by Friday, December 3rd, and picks submitted by email for Week 14 must be received by Saturday, December 4th 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.**

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## Franklin Free Press Football Picks Contest

Week 14: December 4th **Bailey's Pick** Your Pick

<b>Baylor vs Oklahoma St.</b>	<b>Oklahoma St.</b>	_____
<b>Western Kentucky at UTSA</b>	<b>UTSA</b>	_____
<b>Kent St. vs. Northern Illinois</b>	<b>Northern Illinois</b>	_____
<b>Utah St. at San Diego St.</b>	<b>San Diego St.</b>	_____
<b>Georgia vs. Alabama</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	_____
<b>Houston at Cincinnati</b>	<b>Cincinnati</b>	_____
<b>Michigan vs. Iowa</b>	<b>Michigan</b>	_____
<b>Pittsburgh vs. Wake Forest</b>	<b>Wake Forest</b>	_____
<b>USC at California</b>	<b>USC</b>	_____
<b>Oregon vs. Utah</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	_____
Tiebreaker Score:	App St.	Louisiana
<b>Your Name:</b>	_____	_____
<b>Phone number:</b>	_____	_____



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