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REB set to meet April 19th as petition to terminate manager circulates

John Pilati Franklin Free Press

The Russellville Electric Board will hold its April 2022 business meeting next Tuesday, April 19th, and the question remains whether board members will consider voting themselves a raise at that meeting.

The meeting will take place at the Electric Board Warehouse and will begin at 6 p.m. Several Russellville residents have told the *FFP* they requested to be placed on the agenda for that meeting.

Last month, board member Bill Jackson said at the March meeting that he had heard another local utility board had given itself a raise to \$600/month per board member. Russellville Electric Board members

receive \$400/month and the chairman, James McDuffa, receives \$450/month.

Board members also received 'performance and safety incentive' bonuses, authorized by REB Manager Charles Canida, that totaled \$5,000 each in 2021. In February, four board members returned \$28,800 in incentive bonuses they were not legally allowed to receive.

"I don't think it's fair for one to be drawing more than the other," Jackson said. "I've heard a rumor another board has gone up. I don't think we are any different than they are."

The REB meeting agendas do not itemize New Business items, so it is

See 'REB,' page 7

RHS graduate among more than 30,000 set to run in Boston Marathon

John Pilati Franklin Free Press

As the 30,000 or so participants gather to start the Boston Marathon next Monday, there will be at least one Franklin County native among them.

Scotty Aycock, who was raised in the Bethlehem community, qualified for this year's Boston Marathon. It will be Aycock's first time to run the famous 26.2 mile course.

Aycock, who works at Brown's Ferry and lives in Central, was an avid cyclist until four years ago. That's when his passion for running overtook his enjoyment of cycling.

"In the last four years, I've gotten more serious about running. I always liked it," Aycock said. "I just got away from cycling and wanted some other way to stay active." Aycock has completed four marathons, including the Walt Disney World Marathon, the Soldier Marathon in Columbus, Ga., and one in Gulf Shores and one last fall in Chicago.

Aycock, 45, had to meet qualifying thresholds in order to run in the Boston Marathon. For men 45-49, you must have a qualifying marathon time of 3 hours, 20 minutes or less since September 1, 2019.

Aycock's personal best time, 3 hours 10 minutes, opened the door for him to participate.

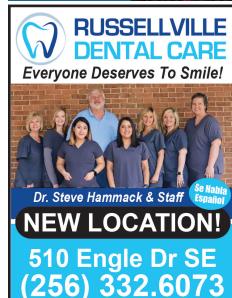
Even for an athlete as well-conditioned as Aycock, running 26.2 miles puts some serious wear-and-tear on the body.

"After a marathon, I'm sore for a couple days at least," Aycock said. "I

See 'MARATHON,' page 3









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Board of Education, District 2 May 24, 2022

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John R. Fretwell, 57, of Spruce Pine, passed away on Friday, APril 8th. Interment at Tharptown Cemetery.

Linda Kay Nix Petty, 74, of Vina, passed away on Friday, April 8th. Interment at Berry-Rae Cemetery.

Phillip Edward Wright, 76, of Russellville, passed away on Saturday, April 2nd. Interment at Liberty Chapel Cemetery.





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TAX LIEN SALE

Franklin County Revenue Commissioner Stratt Byars will be holding the 2021 Tax Lien Auction on May 3, 2022 at 10 am CST on the website www.govease.com. In accordance with Title 40, Chapter 10, Code of Alabama 1975 (§40-10-180 through 200), the Franklin County tax collecting official has authority to auction and sell tax liens on properties for which ad valorem property taxes are delinquent.

An updated list of delinquent parcels from the 2021 tax year is posted and can be found inside the Franklin County Courthouse on the first floor bulletin board and inside of the Red Bay office. All potential bidders are required to register at www.govease.com before the auction commences.

For more information about the upcoming tax lien auction, please contact the Franklin County Revenue Commissioners Office at 256-332-8841.

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'MARATHON,' from page 1

usually take a couple weeks off from running just to recover." Along with the New York City Marathon, the Boston Marathon is one of

the premier athletic events in the country. Aycock's trip to take part in the Boston Marathon is a bucket list experience for avid runners.

"It's kind of a goal for a lot of runners just to qualify," Aycock said. "I wanted to take part in something special like the Boston Marathon, and it would be nice to PR (personal record), too."

Aycock attended Tharptown School through the ninth grade before attending Russellville High School, where he graduated in 1995. After he and wife Brittney married in 2001, the Aycocks lived in the La Grange community before moving to Florence a few years later.

Aycock's advice for someone who wants to start running is to take it slowly.

"There are several programs and apps you can use, like *Couch to 5K*, to get you started with a run/walk routine," Aycock said. "Just start slow and

tion and you've got to be consistent."

COURTESY PHOTO Aycock, above running in a half-marathon in Hartselle, will achieve a life goal next Monday by participating in the Boston Marathon.



said. "Just start slow and don't overdo it. Build up and pretty much anyone can do it. It takes dedica-



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APRIL 13, 2022

Letter to the editor

Submitted to the FFP

If the Russellville Electric Board has an issue with a news entity, organization, or an individual exercising the First Admendment Right to Speech, the REB should not be sending laminated letters of the issues that they have thru the U.S. Mail.

How much did REB spend on the laminated letter and postage?

If there is just cause for action by the REB on statements, verbal or written, insinuated or made about any activity, decisions, audits, or employees ,that is within the REB scope of oversight, jurisdiction, functionality, policies and procedures (I could not find them), should not be made public unless there are charges filed. Then the legal system should issue any legal statements. If false statements have been made, REB has a right to prove that in a court

Don't spend my utility payments to send me a complaint in the mail.

I don't think that the board members paid any cost of the letter out of their

personal money.

Was the decision to send the letter discussed at the board meeting?
I will be interested to find out how much money was spent and how it was accounted for in the expenditures.

I personally will look outside of Russellville to seek additional information on the most effective way to stop, in what seems to me, that the REB is not acting within the function of a board that should have the customers interest as their first priority.

In the case of REB, I believe that the Board of Directors at Tennessee Valley Electric will agree.

These are my thoughts. I take ownership of what I have written.

Wanda Wilson Otts Russellville

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Letters to the editor

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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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Award-winning books for your reading list

Lori Skinner Franklin Free Press

Awards season is in full swing for both movies and books. Given the popularity of many of the well-known awards, I thought we would take a look at the Alex Award and a few of the books that have achieved this award.

The Alex Awards began in 1998 and are awarded annually to 10 books written for adult audiences that also have broad appeal for youths aged 12 through 18. There are many well-known and bestseller titles on this list, but there are a quite a few that you or your young adult may not have encountered.

This year's winners include *Crossing the Line: A Fearless Team of Brothers and the Sport that Changed Their Lives Forever* by Kareem Rosser. Kareem Rosser, author and captain of the first all-black squad to win the National Interscholastic Polo championship, shares the story of how during a bike ride he and his siblings encountered a barn full of horses in Philly's Fairmount Park. The owner of the stables offered an opportunity for riding lessons which led to a passion for polo and provided opportunities that would allow him to expand his future beyond "The Bottom" of West Philadelphia.

A fantastic 2020 winner, A Boy and His Dog at the End of the World, by C.A. Fletcher features a dystopian future where the world's population can be counted in the thousands. When a stranger visits the remote island where Griz lives with his family, Griz wonders "At the end of the world, what matters more than loyalty?" after one of his beloved dogs is stolen. If you like post-apocalyptic fiction, be sure to give this one a try.

A winner in 1998 is a personal favorite of mine, *All Over but the Shoutin'*, by Rick Bragg. His memoir begins in 1959 Alabama and provides a moving and absorbing look at growing up poor in the South. Told in a way that makes you feel the red dust from the earth, Bragg does not shy away from the rough nature of his father and allows his love and deep admiration for his mother to shine through. Bragg went on to win a Pulitzer Prize for his work at *The New York Times* and is a prolific author of works that evoke deep emotion.

The Alex awards also appreciate books that have a sense of humor. In 2008, The Spellman Files, the first of a six-book series written by Lisa Lutz, received the award. Be ready to laugh as we see the twenty-eight-year-old daughter of Spellman Investigations try to exit the family business after becoming fed-up with her family's constant surveillance of her private life. This is definitely a cozy mystery and a delightful introduction to an eccentric family that will have you coming back for more.

Contributor Lori Skinner is the Head Librarian for Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC). For more information, she can be contacted at 256-331-6288 or lori.skinner@nwscc.edu. . NW-SCC Libraries are open to the public and look forward to serving your library needs.







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What's Happening

Storn Hill Cemetery -Decoration Day will be on May 7, 2022. The first Saturday of May has been observed as Decoration Day for well over 100 years. All old flowers will need to be removed off the graves. Please make plans for that special day to come to the cemetery. Also its time again for annual donations. If you would like to donate to the Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, please send your donations to: Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Lana Duncan 2330 Colburn Mtn. Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 305 Bethlehem Road, Russellville, has changed its Decoration Day to the first Sunday in May. This year that date will be Sunday, May st.

Recall LaGrange's Distillery Raid on the Mountain will include a period-correct, living history event centering on a Prohibition Era Raid on a "suspected moonshine still." A group of lawmen will descend on the pioneer village of LaGrange and will engage in a brief skirmish with the locals. The skirmish will be held at 2PM on Saturday, May 7 at the College Site Park. Living history presentations will be ongoing throughout the day and also tours of the near-by Dawson Distillery earlier in the day. Craft Vendors and Tours of the LaGrange's Pioneer Village will be open inside the park all day. The Event is Free. Donations are always appreciated for continued operations of the park.

Russellville Masonic Lodge #371 is selling Smoked Hams for Easter. Hams are \$35 each and may be ordered by dialing 256-810-1970. Pickup is Saturday, April 16, between 8-10 a.m., at the Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

It's that time again—Mowing Season. Time to remove all old flowers from graves and headstones at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Highway 724, Newburg. Donations are needed for the upkeep of the cemetery. If you have a loved one buried in this cemetery or want to help by contributing, please send contributions to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, 941 Highway 87, Russellville, Al. 35654.

Jerred Price will return to Russellville's Roxy Theatre for his Almost Elton John concert on Saturday, April 23 at 7 p.m. Reserved tickets are \$35, \$30, \$25 and \$20 and may be purchased by calling 256-577-9932. Proceeds benefit the Historic Roxy Theatre.

The American Legion Post #64 Russellville Chapter meeting is set for April 14, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., at North Highlands Church of Christ Fellowship Hall on North Jackson

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Don't miss The Hunt and The Hope, a special Easter weekend at Crooked Oak Baptist Church. Egg hunt will be Saturday, April 16 from 11-1, with prizes, games, lunch and fellowship. Easter Service starts with a Fellowship Breakfast at 7 a.m., and Easter morning worship at 9. The church is located at 3000 Frankfort Road, Tuscumbia.

Email your event information to us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



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'REB,' from page 1

not yet known whether board members will consider approving a raise. The April meeting comes as Canida and board members face increasing public scrutiny about expenses made by Canida and the board, ranging from the purchase of an \$83,000 luxury SUV for Canida's use to \$2,000 meals while Canida and the board attended a conference on the Gulf Coast.

Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff, a former REB member and chairman, started a petition last Thursday calling for Canida's termination. As of Monday morning, more than 550 people signed the petition in less than two days.

This came days after a mailer, signed by the Board Members of Russellville Electric, was sent to thousands of area residents, many of whom are not REB customers. The mailer explained that REB was responding to "certain individuals who have chosen to disseminate information regarding REB that is simply not accurate."

Board members stated they had the letter reviewed by their attorney. The writing of the mailer, printing of the mailer and postage for the mailer were not discussed or approved at any meeting of the REB Board, calling into question how or when it was approved outside of a business meeting.



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PAGE 8 PAGE 8 APRIL 13, 2022 APRIL 13, 2022

Neighbors announces Democratic nomination for District 4 Congressional seat

Submitted to the FFP

Decorated Army veteran Rick Neighbors has a long history of fighting for our He vows to bring that same fight to the U.S. House of

Neighbors will be on the Democratic Primary ballot for the District 4 seat on May 24 vying for enough votes to again take on the 13-term incumbent Robert Aderholt in November.

"I continue to have faith in the good voters of District 4 to choose a representative in congress who will fight for the things that matter to us all," said Neighbors. "Having served three tours in Vietnam, I understand that our veterans need better healthcare. As a long-time manager in the textile industry, I understand the need to fight for better wages and equal opportunities."

"I've seen the discrimination against women and minorities. And it is heartbreaking to see our representative vote against every bill that would help women including the Violence Against Women Act," Neighbors added.

Neighbors also believes that everyone who wants an education should have the opportunity to get one. He cites Alabama's poor education system and the lack of proper funding to rural schools as an important priority.

Born in North Carolina, Neighbors was one of five children and was raised around small farming. He learned his work ethic from his parents. His father, a veteran of both WWII and the Korean War, quit school after a wagon turned over and killed Rick's grandfather. His parents were married during the war in 1942. His mother, Gladys Norris, also the daughter of a sharecropper, supported the war effort by assembling ammunition. Afterwards she worked "graveyard shifts" in spinning mills to care for their children while her husband was away in the Army.

Neighbors began his military service when he dropped out of high school after his junior year and joined the Army at age 17. He was fortunate to score high on his entry tests and was sent to the Signal School in New Jersey where

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he studied electronics for fourteen months. Initially deployed Germany as a communications specialist supporting our tactical nuclear defense strategy, he volunteered for Vietnam arriving in January 1967. He eventually served three tours, the last ending in the spring of 1971. His main duties involved tactical communications to include running contingency teams throughout the 3rd and 4th quadrants. was airborne qualified and was awarded the Army

As a veteran, Neighbors joined Bethel Baptist Missionary Church. In 1973 he was awarded a small scholarship from the Southern Baptist Association and enrolled in Campbell College as a ministerial student.

He switched his major frequently, going from religion to psychology, philosophy, and art. After his junior year he switched schools to attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, graduating in 1979 with a B.A. in Political Science.

After graduating from UNCC and intending to go to law school but needing to work, Neighbors took what he thought would be a temporary job with an apparel company. This temp job lasted thirty-five years. He trained in Greensboro, NC for six months, transferred to Oneonta, Alabama to mentor for a year under a sage practitioner, and transferred in 1980 to Hackleburg, Alabama as Division Quality Control Manager for Wrangler.

He met and married his wife Judy in 1981 and made Alabama his home. They have three children, six grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren.

His work in apparel took him to many states and he soon became an international businessman and negotiator. Then In 1993 he started his own appar-

el consulting firm, but the impact of NAFTA eventually led to Mexico where he was general manager of a maquiladora. He started and closed a manufacturing company during this period. The maquiladora closed in 2005 because of trade agreements with China.

Neighbors returned to Northwest Alabama in

Neighbors continues to support international trade and understands that trade is essential for rural Alabama to earn a middleclass income once again.

"However, our trade agreements must serve a Americans, not just a few," he said. "I'll fight for Neighbors will vie for the Democratic nominaall workers – for better wages, expanded health- District Four seat in the May 24th primaries. care and equal pay for

women. I'll put the working middle class, the disadvantaged, and the elderly in District 4 above the tax breaks for the rich. And I am committed to protect Medicare and Medicaid and to raise Social Security to help lift the elderly out

Neighbors also stressed the importance of fighting for better educational opportunities.

'We're selling our children short on the education they need and deserve. Our teachers are underpaid and often spend their own money for school supplies," Neighbors lamented.

Neighbors continued his education and earned his MBA from the University of North Alabama in 2015 He received a graduate certification in Project Management from UNA in 2017 and earned CAPM certification from the

See 'NEIGHBORS,' page 9







tion for the U.S. House of Representative

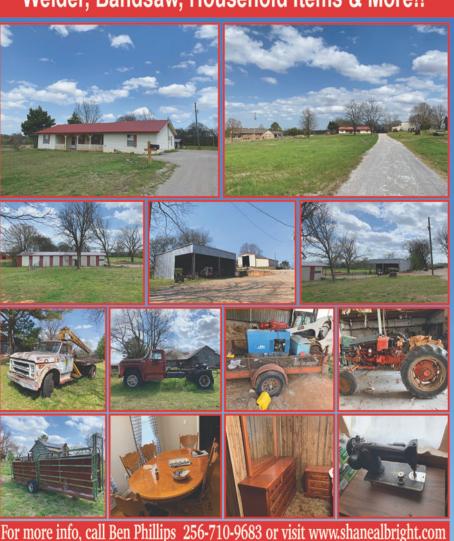
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ESTATION AMEN Franklin voters to decide if mayors may participate in RSA

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John Pilati Franklin Free Press

Franklin County voters will decide whether mayors in the county may participate in the Employees' Retirement System of Alabama (RSA) when they go to the polls November

House Bill 437, sponsored by Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville) and Rep. Proncey Robertson (R-Mount Hope) passed by a 57-0 vote on March 15th.

The bill allows for Franklin County voters to consider a constitutional amendment on the November 8 ballot that, if approved, would make mayors eligible to participate in the state retirement program.

Any mayor would be allowed to purchase service credit in RSA for the amount of time he or she has served as mayor.

The specific language of the amendment as it will appear on ballots is as follows: Relating to Franklin County, proposing an amendment to the

Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to allow mayors to participate in the Employees' Retirement System.

Since the bill cleared the House with no opposing votes, it will appear only on Franklin County ballots, as opposed to having to be approved statewide.

Kiel said he received resolutions approved by the Russellville City Council and the Red Bay City Council that asked for legislation allowing their mayors to participate in RSA. Both resolutions were passed unanimously by the two city councils.

Kiel said he is not taking a position for or against the amendment.

"My stance is because both Russellville and Red Bay's City Councils did resolutions supporting and requesting this, the people of Franklin County should have the opportunity to vote on this amendment and decide if they want it to become law. That vote will happen in November," Kiel said.

'NEIGHBORS,' from page 8

Project Management Institute in the spring of 2017.

Unlike the incumbent, Neighbors will be an "open door" representative to the people in District 4.

"I want to hear their needs and concerns." he said. "I don't think that a representative can live in Virginia and stay in touch with the people."



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propels Bobcats to

county championship

Phil Campbell rode a pair of huge second innings to a county championship on Saturday, blasting Belgreen 14-0 and then routing Red Bay

Leading Belgreen 1-0 in a semifinal matchup, the Bobcats (19-6) sent 18 batters to the plate in the bottom of the second inning and scored 13 runs on seven hits, six walks and three errors. Hunter Baker had two hits in the big inning, and Phil Campbell also got a two-run single from Cole Pace, RBI singles from Jacob Barnwell and Cam Habada, and a single and a sac fly from Sage

That was more than enough run support for Kyle Pace (2-1), who needed only 61 pitches to throw a five-inning shutout. Pace held the Bulldogs to just two hits and one walk, striking out seven. He tossed an immaculate inning in the top of the third, striking out Cole King, Canaan Stough and

Raper finished 2-for-2 with an RBI and a run, recording his team-leading 10th multi-hit game of the season. Habada went 1-for-2 with a pair of walks, driving in three runs and scoring another. Baker was 2-for-3 with two runs, notching his sev-

Barnwell and Cole Pace each went 1-for-2 with

two RBIs and two runs scored. Mason Swinney

was 1-for-2 with a walk and a run, and Bryant

Anthony drove in a run and scored twice. Kyle Pace had two RBIs, and Bryant Hyde walked

twice and scored a run. Isac Hill stole a base and

scored a run, and Cody Quinn also scored a run.

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See 'BOBCATS,' page 13

Carson Cox on just nine total pitches.

enth multi-hit game of the year.

Staff reports

Monster second inning

Franklin County ch



After dropping their first game of the tournament by a final of 1-0, Belgreen went on yo outscore their opponents 40-10 across the next four games to win the Franklin County softball tournament.

Brady Petree Franklin Free Press

Battling back from losing your first game in a double-elimination tournament is hard enough.

But bouncing back to win five straight games en route to a tournament title? Well that's just relatively unheard of.

However, that's just what the Belgreen Lady Bulldogs did over the weekend to capture the Franklin County varsity softball tournament cham-

After dropping game one against Red Bay by a final of 8-3, Belgreen won their second game by a narrow final of 1-0 over host Tharptown as the Lady Bulldogs got five innings of shutout pitching from Lily Blackburn in addition to five strikeouts.

Following up their win in game two, Belgreen would go on to win their next four games in the tournament against Vina (11-2), Phil Campbell (14-2), and Red Bay (7-4) to set up a finals showdown against Red Bay for all the marbles.

The Lady Bulldogs would once again turn to the reliable arm of Lily Blackburn to kick things off in the circle for Belgreen in hopes of returning for a second straight season as county champions with

Red Bay jumped out to an early 1-0 lead over Belgreen but it wouldn't take long for the Lady Bulldogs to climb back into the game.

In the top of the second inning, Belgreen got three runs to take their first lead of the game over Red Bay. The bottom half of the second saw Blackburn settle back into a rhythm and retired the Lady Tigers without allowing a run in the inning.

Both Belgreen and Red Bay scored one run each in the third inning, making it a 4-2 game in Belgreen's favor headed into the second half of the five inning game.

The Bulldogs broke out for another big scoring inning, plating three runs in the top of the fourth inning to extend the lead for Belgreen and inch closer to the finish line and a title.

Two runs is all Red Bay would score in the game as Blackburn would shut out the Lady Tigers in the fourth and fifth innings as the Lady Bulldogs plat-

See 'CHAMPS,' page 15

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'BOBCATS,' from page 11

Phil Campbell rode another monster second inning to a 17-1 rout of Red Bay in the championship game. Leading 1-0 after an RBI double by Swinney in the bottom of the first, the Bobcats sent 20 batters to the plate in the bottom of the second and scored 15 runs on seven hits, five walks, two hit batters and three errors.

Swinney had an RBI triple in the big inning, and Phil Campbell also got a

two-run double from Barnwell, a two-run single from Hunter Baker, RBI doubles from Hyde and Cole Pace, and an RBI single from Anthony.

Eli Taylor (3-0) earned the win on the mound with a four-inning complete game. Taylor held Red Bay to one earned run on four hits, striking out five and walking none.

Anthony finished 2-for-2 with two RBIs and two runs scored, recording his sixth multi-hit game of the season and the 21st of his varsity career. Swinney went 2-for-3 with three RBIs and a run scored. He now has eight multi-hit games on the year and 43 in his varsity career.



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Barnwell went 1-for-1 with two RBIs and two runs scored, and Baker was 1-for-2 with two RBIs, two runs and two stolen bases. Habada was 1-for-1 with two walks, two runs and a stolen base. Hyde was 1-for-2 with an RBI, and Cole Pace went 1-for-1 with an RBI and two runs scored.

Hill was 1-for-1 with a double and two runs scored, and Hyde went 1-for-2 with an RBI. Gage Baker was 1-for-1 with an RBI, and Raper scored twice. Kyle Pace drove in a run and scored another. Talon Rogers also scored a run. The Bobcats have now won five straight games and 11 of their last 12.

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the Alabama Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act, Alabama Code Sections 32-13-1 through 32-13-8, the following motor vehicle will be sold for cash at 10:30 a.m., on January 19, 2022, at M&N Wrecker & Service Center, 11833 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, Al, 35653. Seller reserves the right to reject any bid and the right to bid. 1995 Ford F150 XL 1FTEX15N5SKA88806

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I was appointed Police Chief in 2017 by the Town of Phil Campbell. I served the town in many roles, from Police Chief to Town Safety Officer, and occasionally rode the garbage truck. Leadership is about serving others and helping others around you rise.

have operated a business for 16 years and understand what it takes to recruit and retain quality employees.

am a Conservative Christian, and as Sheriff, I will be fair and impartial, and free from prejudice. I have grown a robust understanding while working in the correctional system and serving small communities to reason and be empathetic and compassionate while carrying out daily duties in these positions. I serve on the Franklin County Farmers Federation Board of Directors, the Phil Campbell Housing Authority, and the Franklin County Republican Executive Committee.

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'CHAMPS,' from page 11

ed an insurance run in the top half of the fifth inning to seal off the 8-2 victory and more importantly, reclaim their county championship crown.

Blackburn allowed just four hits and two runs (one earned) across five innings. Across the county tournament, Blackburn spun 25 innings (one in relief) allowing just seven earned runs, good for a tournament ERA of 2.52.

For Belgreen, Noelle Willingham led things off at the top of the lineup for head coach Susie Tverberg, going 1-4 with one RBI and two runs scored in the win. Morgan Vandiver went 1-3 with two RBI for Belgreen while MaKayla Willingham went 1-3 with a home run and three RBI.

The lone other RBI for Belgreen came courtesy of Bryn Scott who went 2-

Across the tournament, Belgreen had 63 total quality at-bats.

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