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Smith's faith strengthened through brain tumor diagnosis, surgery

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Rickey Smith knew he would have surgery some time this spring. The Russellville businessman's left shoulder needed a total replacement. Smith knew it would be a lengthy rehabilitation, but he'd been down that road before, having the same operation on his right shoulder two years ago.

As Smith was wheeled into the operating room at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital the morning of March 31st, the surgeon wasn't interested in his left shoulder, though.

Instead, this surgery would be to remove a meningioma, a tumor that grows out of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Although they may occur at any age, meningioma tumors are more common in older adults.

At 59, Smith is the picture of health. In addition to owning and operating Pilgrim's Place Barbecue with his wife Melinda, Smith does personal training for clients at Freemon Fitness. He stays in shape through regular workouts, so a shoulder injury seemed infinitely more likely than a brain tumor.

As 2022 began, Smith and his wife

See 'SMITH,' page 9

Hendrix Drive drainage improvements complete

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Residents on Hendrix Drive will soon have some relief from chronic flooding issues that have plagued the road in Russellville's District Two. Shotcrete of Florence is the contractor for the job that will see 60-inch diameter drainage pipes installed in a 100-foot section along Hendrix Drive. These will replace the smaller 18-inch pipes that were installed decades ago.

District Two City Councilman Darren Woodruff said flooding on Hendrix Drive was an issue raised by many residents along the road as he campaigned in 2020. Woodruff has video sent to him by residents of trashcans floating down Hendrix Drive in the makeshift river created



COURTESY PHOTO

The installation of drainage pipes on Hendrix Drive is currently ongoing and is expected to be completed by May 13.

by heavy rains.

The quote from Shotcrete was \$33,500 and the plastic pipe cost is

See 'DRAINAGE,' page 5

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Mary V Seal Bolton, 98, of Littleville, passed away on Thursday, May 5th. Interment at Colbert Memorial Gardens.

Dorothy Mae Thompson Davis, 85, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Friday, May 6th. Interment at Bethlehem Cemetery.

Dorothy Patrick, 62, of Russellville, passed away on Sunday, May 8th. Interment at Bethlehem Cemetery.

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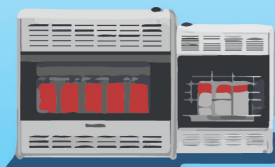
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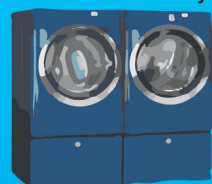


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Letter to the editor...

To the Editor:

During the past half century, having lived in seven different States, a vast array of candidates and politicians have been observed. There have been good and evil ones on both sides. Finally, at long last, here in rural Alabama, there emerges one that is truly worthy of our sacred vote.

It is understood that most voters in District 4 lean to the conservative side and tend to believe the lies spewed forth about the Democrats. However, just this once, it would behoove everyone to take a breather from all the nonsense, and get to know the Democratic Candidate for the United States House of Representatives in District 4. If you don't know anything about Rick Neighbors by now, take off your blinders and do your homework.

Mr. Neighbors enlisted in the Military during the Viet Nam era. He voluntarily served Three tours of duty in Viet Nam putting his life on the line to preserve Democracy and our way of life. For the same reasons, now, for the fourth time Mr. Neighbors is running for the U.S. House of Representatives. One must ask what kind of man would put himself through such a grueling sacrificial experience even more than once. Relentless Rick believes that our Democracy and the good people of District 4, deserve honest, sincere, and a much better representation than under the Aderholt regime of the past twenty years. Unlike either of his opponents he actually lives and works in District 4. Unlike either his opponents he has served in the Military. Unlike either of his opponents he is ready to debate them on the current issues at the drop of a hat. Unlike either of his opponents he is ready to roll up his sleeves, take off the gloves and go to work for us. He is one of us, and will work for us. He fully understands that a Representative works for the people, not the other way around.

He strongly believes in the enumerated, and un-enumerated rights guaranteed by our Constitution. Civil and Human Rights are under attack right now and he will work to participate in legislation that will stop the egregious erosion of those rights.

Neighbors has great ideas on how to attract Industry and Business with high paying jobs and benefits to our district. He is experienced and able to do the legwork to achieve those goals. He knows that we have inadequate health care, that hospitals are closing and the promised internet is non-existent for

SEE 'LETTER,' page 8

FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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Letters to the editor

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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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Here they go again: Russellville Electric Board, GM lack openness, accountability on bonuses

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

All employees of the Russellville Electric Board received the first of two 2022 'Performance and Safety Incentive' bonuses last week.

These incentive payments are nothing new—REB employees have received them for many years—and we at the *FFP* have no problem with employees getting them.

Board members, on the other hand, received these incentive bonuses illegally up until this year, when four board members paid back \$28,800 in bonuses that violated the maximum compensation amount for Franklin County utility board members as stated in the Code of Alabama.

Our concern (and that of many ratepayers) is the continued shroud of secrecy and complete refusal by REB General Manager Charles Canida and the board to be open and transparent about their business.

The incentive bonuses were approved at the April 19, 2022 business meeting of the Russellville Electric Board. Board member Bill Jackson made the motion to "approve the Performance and Incentive as we have done in the past."

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by the board with no discussion.

Through an Open Records Request, the *FFP* reviewed minutes from all Russellville Electric Board meetings for 2019-2021. For the past two years, the REB has approved a motion to pay Performance and Incentive bonuses in the amount of 80 hours, payable in May and October, for a total of 160 hours per employee. In previous years, the bonus was 60 hours, payable twice a year, for a total of 120 hours per employee. These specific hours were made part of the motions approved by the board. The *FFP* confirmed this with a review of the REB's 2020 and 2021 meeting minutes.

The *FFP* later learned that REB employees received the same 80 hour bonus again this month, and they will receive it again later this year. But Jackson's motion said nothing about 80 hours. In fact, it said nothing about how much the incentive bonuses would be at all.

How does a board approve an incentive bonus without quantifying how much the bonus will be? Why not make the motion to approve an 80-hour bonus as was done the past two years?

Of course the local newspaper wasn't present at those meetings.

Immediately after the April 19 meeting, the *FFP* asked Jackson how much each employee's bonus would be under the motion he made. Jackson responded that he wasn't sure and directed us to ask Canida, even though Jackson made the motion to start with.

Canida was asked if the bonus would be 1.5 or two weeks' pay, but his response indicated he either didn't know, or didn't want to disclose to the public, how much the bonuses would be.

"I'm not sure. It's based on a formula," Canida said.

A follow up question asking him to detail the formula was met with a similarly evasive response.

"I don't know. It's just based on the formula," he responded.

Canida is the highest-paid REB employee. His 2021 W2 shows his gross income topped \$177,000. He also receives this twice-a-year incentive bonus. Yet he's the one who calculates this mysterious 'formula' that determines how much the incentive bonuses will be. So he either didn't know, or refused to state, how the bonuses would be calculated.

It's the financial equivalent of the fox guarding the hen house.

The incentive has been 80 hours' pay, twice a year, for the past two years. And Jackson's motion was to approve the bonus "as we have done in the past."

And in the end, the incentive bonuses were the same as they've been for 2020 and 2021. But Canida referred only to some 'formula' that has never been provided to the public.

That's wrong on several levels.

Based on Canida's base salary of \$165,000, two 80-hour bonuses will put an additional \$12,692 in his pocket. That's a lot of money, particularly for a local power company that's supposedly dealing with 'declining' revenue, as Canida said in January.

There should be accountability and openness when a public board deals with public funds. Transparency is the best way for a board to avoid allegations of impropriety.

When a board approves an incentive bonus, each board member should know, *prior to voting on the motion*, how much that bonus will be.

That's information that shouldn't be limited to the one person who will receive the largest bonus, with that person also being the one who calculates the bonus.

Unfortunately, with Canida and the Russellville Electric Board, this is often the rule, rather than the exception.

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'DRAINAGE,' from page 1

\$16,134, making the project total \$49,634. Russellville Mayor David Grissom said the project will be paid for out of the District Two Paving-2019 Bond Fund.

Hendrix Drive flooding results from the large amount of water flowing downhill from the west combined with pipes that are too small to adequately flow the water through drainage ditches.

"Water backs up into yards from the street, which is often entirely flooded," Woodruff said.

Russellville Street Department workers will fill the ditches once the contractor's work is complete, according to Street Department Manager Shannon Wilson.

The project is expected to be completed by May 13, according to the contractor.

PUBLIC NOTICE

bid and the right to bid.

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 June 22, 2022, at M&N Wrecker & Service Center, 11833 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, Al, 35653. Seller reserves the right to reject any

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What's Happening

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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

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.

The NACOLG Seniorx – Medicine program is a program for free and low-cost medications for the uninsured, underinsured, Medicare coverage gap or disability waiting period. For more information, contact NACOLG Seniorx today. There is no charge for this service. 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) Paula Pardue 256-389-0529.

Franklin County Seekers of the Past will resume their quarterly meetings on Thursday, May 12, with a 5 p.m. meeting at the Franklin County Archives. Mary Carton will be the guest speaker with her program "Journey Down the Natchez Trace."

The Franklin County Cattleman's Association will hold a Steak Sandwich Sale on Friday, May 13, at the Franklin Shopping Center. Sales will begin at 9 a.m., and continue until sold out.

Orange Baptist Church will hold its Homecoming/Decoration Service on Sunday, May 15, at 10:30 a.m. The church is located at 8153 County Road 34, Russellville. Country/Gospel/Bluegrass singer Bradley Walker will be the special guest for this service. Everyone is invited.

Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Boston Butts during Memorial Day weekend. Butts are \$35 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup is Saturday, May 28, between 8-10 a.m., at the Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

Liberty Chapel Freewill Baptist Church will host Revival Services June 5-8, 2022. The church is located on Highway 81 in the East Franklin Community, just past the Fire Department. Evangelist will be Bro. Jeff Boyles. Pastor is Bro. Brian Galloway. Sunday night services begin at 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday services at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome! For more information contact Delmer Duboise at 256-324-8430.

Gateway Church Revival May 13th 14th and 15th with Rev. Floyd Lawhon. May 13th and 14th at 7:00. May 15th @ 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Purpose will be special guest singers on the 13th. Also: May 24: Special Service with Eddie James at 7:00 p.m. For more information please call 256-627-7935.

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

Bear Creek Lakes

Lake Clean Up Day

Saturday, May 21, 2022

10 A.M.-1 P.M.



Please join Timmy Horton, The Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, & the Bear Creek Development Authority on Saturday, May 21, 2022, from 10 A.M.- 1 P.M. for the Bear Creek Lakes Cleanup Day.

We will clean up trash from the shorelines and some will clean up trash from the lakes in workboats.

Meet at Elliott Branch Campground, 325 Elliott Branch Road, at 10 A.M. Supplies, including trash bags & gloves, will be provided.

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Secretary of State focused on eliminating ballot trafficking in Alabama

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

We often get nostalgic about how things were in the 'good ole days' and how we miss those days in Alabama.

Not all things from the 'good ole days' were better than how they are now, among them being absentee voting in our state.

For decades, absentee voting in Alabama was rampant with fraud and coercion, with absentee ballot 'brokers' applying for, and in some cases, actually casting ballots, for residents who were elderly or mentally incapacitated.

Alabama's laws have changed, and thanks to the efforts of Secretary of State John Merrill, we have our largest-ever number of registered voters in our state and instances of voter fraud have become the exception, rather than the rule.

Alabama Code 17-11-9 requires a resident who votes an absentee ballot to "forward it by United States mail to the absentee manager or hand it to him or her in person."

In other words, if the chain of custody for an absentee application is broken, then the law is violated and the ballot is tainted.

"It is illegal for any individual to return or mail another person's absentee ballot application or their absentee ballot," Merrill said. "This practice, known as ballot trafficking or ballot harvesting, is a dangerous practice that often leads to ballot traffickers stealing the votes of well-meaning and unsuspecting voters."

Absentee voting is ongoing for the May 24, 2022, Alabama primary election. May 17 is the last day absentee ballot applications can be returned by mail and May 19 is the final day absentee ballot applications can be returned by hand to Franklin County Circuit Clerk Anita Scott, the Absentee Election Manager.

May 23 is the last day to return absentee ballots by hand to the Absentee Election Manager and all absentee ballots must be returned by mail by 12 p.m., on May 24.

Merrill encourages anyone who witnesses ballot trafficking or has been a victim of ballot trafficking to report this activity to his office's Elections Division at 1-334-242-7210 or by visiting www.stopvoterfraudnow.com.

"Ballot trafficking will not be allowed in our state. It undermines the legitimacy of the elections process, and it leads to many Alabamians having their votes trafficked by paid political operatives," Merrill said.



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*Michael Hollander;
Event Technology Supervisor*

"I'm in total agreeance with Mike, Caleb has been doing a great job and we are happy to have him."

*Kim Koger;
Event Operations Manager*

Caleb applied for several jobs after finishing the program but with no previous work experience, it was a challenge to find the perfect fit. With support and encouragement from his job developer, Kanessa Bates, he never gave up. Their efforts paid off when in December 2021 he was hired as a Catering House employee. Since that time, he has continued to experience success, recently earning a raise of \$1.50 an hour.

The Employment Development Partnership is another example of how Easterseals of Northwest Alabama is helping people with disabilities become self-sufficient and "live their best lives!"



'LETTER,' from page 4

many of us. He is all about getting the things we all need and want.. He doesn't care about who you are or what you are, He doesn't care if you are rich or poor , live in a mansion on the hill or a shack by the river. He doesn't care where you might wish to worship or not. All he cares about is the YOU part and what he can do to help you and your community

The *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* slogan is no accident. During the recent pandemic when no masks were available, he passed out over ten thousand masks free of charge. He organized students to help Seniors get groceries and meet Dr. appointments.

He is actually been known to personally deliver cookies and garden produce to sick friends.

He truly believes that Government should act like a good neighbor, help when you need it and not interfere with your individual rights and freedoms. For more information check out neighborsforcongress.com

Rick Neighbors is not out for power, glory, attention or even a pay check. He just wants to serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Randi Gross, Russellville, Alabama

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'SMITH,' from page 1

noticed he was dropping things. He would work out, and the left side of his body would get 'a good pump' as he described it, but he didn't have that feeling on his right side.

"I started forgetting stuff and it got to the point where I thought I had dementia," Smith said. "Then it worsened and I thought maybe I've had a stroke since it was affecting the right side of my body.

"My speech got impacted. I knew what I wanted to say but couldn't get it out. I was having trouble writing and couldn't even sign my own name. It got to be a challenge flipping chicken tenders as I grilled them," he added.

As his symptoms worsened, Melinda said she wanted him to get a check up before his shoulder surgery. Smith went to see Dr. Albert Ridgeway in Sheffield. A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) revealed a tumor more than 25 percent the size of his brain.

The center line of Smith's brain had literally been pushed to the right, affecting his motor skills and speech. The problem had been diagnosed. Now the challenge was to find a solution.

A Birmingham native, Smith grew up around UAB Hospital and he knew right away that's where he wanted to go for treatment and/or surgery.

Through a friend, Melinda got her husband in to see UAB's Dr. Wink Fisher III, a nationally-respected neurovascular specialist. Dr. Phillip Schmalz, a member of Fisher's group, performed Smith's surgery.

Smith knew he was in excellent medical hands, but whether the tumor was cancerous wouldn't be known until after the surgery. That answer was in God's hands.

"I just put my health in the Lord's hands and knew He was in control," Smith said. "I knew He was going to take care of me. I had good doctors at a good hospital. It was nerve wracking but we were able to get through it with faith.

"The doctor was able to remove all of the tumor with no problems or complications. And the pathology report came back a few days later and showed it was benign—no cancer. We have a great God. The Lord let Melinda know something needed to be done. I realized it too. But I'm glad she went ahead and made that appointment with Dr. Ridgeway," he added.

Incredibly, five days after brain surgery, Smith was released to come home. A small tear in his brain as it sprung back into normal position led to some bleeding and a few post-operative seizures two days after his surgery. But those stopped and doctors were confident enough in Smith's condition to send home April 5th.

Smith had to get used to a month of full rest. No driving and no working until he returned to see his doctor in May. The news was good at that appointment, so Smith has returned to part-time work at Pilgrim's BBQ. But he still must take it slowly as his brain and body recover from a major surgery.

"Everything checked out good. There was a void or hole where the tumor was, where my brain should be. The last couple CT scans showed my brain was back where it's supposed to be and it looks normal. All glory goes to God. He truly is a great God," Smith said.

Smith lost more than 25 pounds since his surgery, most of it muscle mass, so he's walking and doing everything doctors recommend to regain his strength while not overdoing it.

"When you go from 12-15 hour work days bouncing from here to there, the gym, the restaurant and home, to not doing anything, that is very difficult,"

Smith said. "I was able to watch a lot of baseball, and I got to go to my first Russellville High School baseball game a few weeks ago. I watched a few innings and walked back home."

With two sons (Jackson and Reed) who were part of the Golden Tiger baseball program, going back to watch a game was an emotional moment for Smith.

He's still learning to pace himself as he continues his recovery, and Smith often pauses to reflect on how many people, family and non-family alike, have been there for him the past few months.

From his father-in-law Fred Pilgrim filling in at the restaurant to his sister-in-

law Diann Pilgrim, a teacher in Winonah, spending her spring break doing the same, Smith is thankful for his family support.

He's also been blessed by friends bringing food, cleaning house, repairing his fence and doing yard work.

"That was tremendous. It's unbelievable the help we've received and we'll forever be thankful for it," Smith said.

The number one person on his list of thanks? His wife, of course.

"Melinda already **After having a tumor removed from his brain, Smith is in recovery and is finally able to get back to doing the things he loves, like watching baseball with his family.**

doubled what she has to do but hopefully I'll be able soon to get back to work full-time and start doing my share. My strength is building back, so I'm getting there," he said. "I'm taking my time and will build up slowly. I'm walking and doing everything they told me to do and nothing they say don't do."

As for his impending shoulder surgery? Chances are it won't seem too bad considering what Smith's already endured this year.



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SPORTS

5.11.22

Bobcats power past Elkmont to set up 3A semifinal rematch with Piedmont

Staff reports

There hasn't been too many times over the past two seasons where Phil Campbell has been pushed to the brink of elimination. But in their quarterfinal matchup against Elkmont last week, the Bobcats would have to win a pivotal game three if they wanted to set up a rematch in the 3A semifinals.

Game one Phil Campbell 5 Elkmont 3

Cam Habada spun seven innings of two-run ball for Phil Campbell as the Bobcats got the 5-3 win over Elkmont in game one of the series.

The Bobcats would have to work themselves out of an early 2-0 hole though. After a walk and a double were followed by a balk by Habada, Elkmont jumped out to a 1-0 lead. A sac fly extended the Elkmont lead to 2-0 before the Bobcats even took the plate.

It didn't take long for Phil Campbell to jump on the board as they got an RBI off the bat of Mason Swinney on a groundout to the Elkmont first baseman to make it a 2-1 game as Elkmont would go back to work.

Both Phil Campbell and Elkmont would go down scoreless in the second inning while Habada sat down the side in order in the top of the third inning.

With the Bobcats looking for something - anything - to get their offense back up and running, a dropped third strike in which Jacob Barnwell reached, provided just the spark that was needed.

Bryant Anthony doubled down the left field line to put a pair of Bobcats in scoring position in front of

See 'BOBCATS,' page 14

Swinging into the final four



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Brockway, above, blasted two home runs in Russellville's game one win over Leeds and followed that up with an RBI double in game two to send the Golden Tigers to the 5A semifinals.

*Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press*

In the second round of the playoffs, it took Russellville almost five full innings to plate their first run of the series against St. Clair County.

Fast-forward to the quarterfinal round against Leeds and the Golden Tigers wasted no time in getting the offense going.

With Banks Langston on the mound, the Green Wave scored a lone run after a trio of singles gave Leeds an early lead.

But that would be the last time on the day that the Golden Tigers would trail.

In the bottom of the first inning, the Golden Tigers got a single from Eli Gipson followed by Canyon Pace reaching via error and a two-out walk to Reed Hill loaded the bases.

Nathan Brockway would then proceed to *unload* the bases.

The senior right fielder for Russellville launched a moonshot over the right field fence for a grand slam to give the Golden Tigers a 4-1 lead and they would never look back.

Langston would hold Leeds scoreless in the top of the second inning as Russellville would continue their scoring barrage in the home half.

A walk and a pair of singles loaded the bases for the second time in as many innings for Russellville.

Casen Heaps would then proceed to score on a wild pitch, extending the Golden Tiger lead to 5-1. Just one pitch later, Pace would ground out to the right side and bring the sixth run of the game home. Leeds would score a run in the top of the 3rd to

make it a 6-2 game.

A scoreless Russellville third inning followed by a one-run fourth inning for Leeds would cut the Russellville lead to 6-3.

A leadoff single off the bat of Andrew Hatton, (more on him later), was followed up by a walk to Casen Heaps and another single to Grayson Thorpe would load the bases for Eli Gipson.

The senior shortstop would fly out to center field but it would be deep enough to get the run home to extend the Russellville lead to 7-3.

For the second time of the game, Casen Heaps would score on a wild pitch, making it 8-3. Ethan Oliver, who has been one of the hottest hitters in the postseason in Alabama, singled home a run to give Russellville a six-run lead.

Heaps would single and get an RBI in the bottom of the 5th inning to put Russellville into double digit territory with a 10-3 lead.

Leeds would score a run on a fielder's choice, to cut the Russellville lead to 10-4.

Needing four runs to run-rule Leeds, the Golden Tigers got a pair of timely hits in order to make that happen.

Back-to-back singles were followed up by *another* monster home run from Brockway, to give him two home runs and seven(!) RBIs in the game.

Brayden Spurgeon would find his way into the hit column with a single following the home run to set up Andrew Hatton for something he hadn't done all season.

The senior second baseman would launch a 3-1 pitch over the left field wall for his first home run of

See 'SWINGING,' page 13

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'SWINGING,' from page 11

the season and would walk off Russellville for the game one victory by a 15-4 final.

Every Golden Tiger except for Pace and Hill recorded a hit in the win. However, Pace did get an RBI in the game and Hill would walk and score a run.

Langston would go all six innings and get the win while allowing eight hits, four runs (one earned), while walking two and striking out seven.

Game two
Russellville 11 Leeds 0

After a massive showing on offense, the Golden Tigers wanted to get right back out there and get through game two, without any interruptions, to continue pouring it on.

Things did pour on... just not in the sense that the Golden Tigers had initially hoped.

After jumping out to a 5-0 lead through the second inning thanks to a pair of RBI singles from Casen Heaps and Ethan Oliver and a fielder's choice off the bat of Eli Gipson, Russellville and Leeds were forced to sit through an hour rain delay.

But once the sky cleared and the tarps were removed, things picked back up for Russellville.

Logan White, who got the start on the mound for Russellville in game two following his dazzling performance in game two against St. Clair County the week prior, would strike out a pair of Leeds batters in the bottom of the second inning once the rain delay subsided in a scoreless frame.

Andrew Hatton continued his excellent day at the plate with a two out single and Heaps was hit by a pitch to put Hatton in scoring position for Grayson Thorpe.

Thorpe then lined a single into left to plate Hatton and extend Russellville's lead to 6-0.

Russellville and Leeds would both go scoreless in the fourth inning.

Hatton tallied another single to leadoff the top of the 5th inning and Heaps would follow that up with an RBI triple over the centerfielders head to make it 7-0.

Grayson Thorpe would then draw a walk.

Making a living off of scoring on wild pitches, for the day at least, Heaps would score on one in the same inning (his third run scored in such fashion over the two games) to extend the lead to 8-0.

Thorpe would then score on a sac fly from Gipson, putting Russellville one run away from run-ruling Leeds for the second and final time.

The final runs of the game would come off the bat of the Golden Tiger who had the biggest day at the plate, Nathan Brockway.

Brockway would double home Reed Hill and Brayden Heaps to give Russellville a dominating 11-0 lead.

Needing just three outs to seal the win, Russellville would turn to Sam Pace to lock down the final inning.

The flamethrowing right hander would get a fly out and a pair of strikeouts to send the Golden Tigers to the 5A semifinals for the second straight season.

Thorpe, Oliver, Brockway, Hatton and Heaps each tallied two hits in the win for Russellville. Heaps (three RBI), Brockway and Oliver (two RBI each) led the way on the run production for Russellville with Thorpe and Gipson knocking in one run each.

White only allowed two hits and two walks on the day to go along with four strikeouts and Same Pace would toss one perfect inning with a pair of strikeouts.

Russellville will host Madison Academy in the 5A semifinals in a rematch of last years 5A semifinals beginning on Thursday with game one set for 4:30 and game two to follow at 7. If necessary, game three will be played on Friday at 5.

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'BOBCATS,' from page 11

Sage Raper.
The Bobcat centerfielder followed that up by reaching on an error and Phil Campbell was able to cash in a pair of runs to give them their first lead of the game to make it a 3-2 lead.

A scoreless frame in the fourth for both sides was followed up by Habada sitting Elkmont down with a pair of strikeouts and a flyout to maintain the Phil Campbell lead heading into the home half of the fifth.

A leadoff walk to Cole Pace was followed by a fielder's choice by Barnwell to move Pace to second. Anthony then walked to put two runners on in front of Mason Swinney.

The senior shortstop then promptly launched a triple off the right centerfield fence, just narrowly missing a three-run homer, to score Barnwell and Anthony to make it a 5-2 lead for the Bobcats.

Phil Campbell would need three outs in the top of the seventh inning, after both teams went scoreless in the sixth inning, to take a one game advantage in the series.

Elkmont would be able to scratch across a run on a lineout to Swinney to cut the Bobcat lead to 5-3.

However, Habada would get the following batter to flyout to left field to cap off the win.

The Bobcats only tallied three hits in the game but still managed to scrap out a win.

Anthony, Raper and Swinney all notched hits for the Bobcats as Raper (two RBI) and Swinney (three RBI) were the lone run producers for Phil Campbell.

Habada went all seven innings on the mound for Phil Campbell, giving up five hits, three runs (two earned) and three walks in addition to seven strikeouts.

Game two Phil Campbell 2 Elkmont 6

The Bobcats would drop game two to Elkmont, forcing a deciding game three on Thursday.

Playing as the away team in game two, Phil Campbell would go down scoreless in the top of the first inning as Elkmont wasted no time in putting up their first run of the game after Pace (who got the start on the mound for Phil Campbell) walked the first batter he faced and was then advanced via error to put a runner in scoring position. Elkmont then moved each runner up a base on a fly out and one batter later drove home a run on a groundout.

A slow start offensively for Phil Campbell saw them go scoreless in the second inning while Elkmont plated two more runs on a passed ball and a single, making it a 3-0 lead for Elkmont.

The Bobcats wouldn't score their first run of the game until there was one out in the top of the fourth inning as Kyle Pace doubled home Habada, cutting the Elkmont lead to 3-1.

A wild pitch in the bottom of the fourth inning allowed for two runners in scoring position for Elkmont and was soon thereafter followed up with an RBI single, extending the lead to 4-1.

Getting a sac fly in the bottom of the fifth inning would bring home the fifth run of the game for Elkmont as an RBI single in the bottom of the sixth inning would give Elkmont considerable breathing room at 6-1 heading into the final frame.

Kyle Pace would scamper home on a passed ball to make it a 6-2 game but it would be too little, too late for Phil Campbell who fell in the second game.

Cole Pace went all six innings on the mound for Phil Campbell allowing six runs (five earned), four walks and striking out four.

Kyle Pace and Mason Swinney had the only two hits for Phil Campbell in game two as Pace had the single RBI.

Game three Phil Campbell 10 Elkmont 0

Needing to pull out all the stops in game three to prevent an earlier than anticipated exit on the season, the Bobcats once again got off to a bit of a slow start offensively... at least for the first two innings.

Mason Swinney got the start on the mound and held Elkmont at bay, striking out five Elkmont hitters through the first two innings, as the offense was looking to find its footing in the decisive game three.

Much like game one, the Bobcats were looking for any way possible to break the ice and get on the board.

Then, it happened.

Bryant Anthony singled into left field and stole second just two pitches later. With heads up baserunning, Anthony then was able to take third on a passed ball, putting the leading run just 90 feet away with nobody out for the Bobcats.

Swinney then hit a hard ground ball to the Elkmont second baseman that ricocheted off the glove and allowed Anthony to score on the error to give the Bobcats the first lead of the game 1-0.

And Phil Campbell wasn't done scoring yet in the inning.

See 'BOBCATS,' page 15



JOE FIKE SHERIFF

Republican Primary May 24

My name is Joe Fike. I am the Republican candidate for Sheriff of Franklin County.

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'BOBCATS,' from page 14

Kyle Pace later singled home Mason Swinney, and two batters later, Bryant Hyde walked home a run to make it 3-0 Bobcats through the third inning.

Swinney continued to cruise through the fourth inning, picking up two more strikeouts to his total.

Another bases loaded walk for Phil Campbell, this time courtesy of Kyle Pace, plated the fourth run of the game.

Needing six runs to put the game on ice and win via run rule, it seemed as though the Bobcats might have to just let the seven innings play out.

But they had no intentions of letting game three get to seven innings.

A leadoff walk to Hyde followed by an error off the bat of Kyle Pace allowed Hyde to advance to third. Then, Barnwell singled on a ground ball that made its way into the left field grass, scoring both Hyde and Pace to make it 6-0 Phil Campbell.

Back-to-back walks to Anthony and Raper loaded the bases once again.

After Swinney flew out to centerfield, where Barnwell was gunned down at the plate trying to score, and a strikeout to Habada, the Bobcats needed a little two out magic to get to where they needed to be.

Kyle Pace came to the plate and sent a double into centerfield, unloading the bases and making it a 9-0 lead for Phil Campbell.

Hunter Baker, who had been looking for his first hit of the series, managed to line a single into center field, scoring Pace and sealing the 10-0 victory and sending the Bobcats to the semifinals.

Kyle Pace went 3-3 with four RBI in the win while Barnwell (two RBI), Hyde (one RBI), Baker (one RBI), Swinney (one RBI) and Anthony (three runs scored) each notched a hit.

Swinney was lights out on the mound, going five strong innings allowing just two hits and one walk while striking out 10 batters for Elkmont.

Phil Campbell will play host to Piedmont in the 3A semifinals starting this Tuesday at 5 P.M. with game two to follow at 7 P.M. If necessary, game three will be played at 4 P.M. on Wednesday.

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