

Please Remember to Vote on Tuesday, Nov. 8th.

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Pd. Pol. by Franklin County Republican Party

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11.2.22

REB auditor disputes Canida's 'declining revenue' assertion used to justify rate hike



PHOTO BY MICHAEL RICE

Teresa Streetman Nelson addresses the REB at its October 25 meeting.

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Russellville Electric Board Manager Charles Canida urged his board to increase electric rates eight months ago, Canida said the increase was necessary because of 'declining revenue.'

Canida's representation resonated with the board, which unanimously approved a 3.1 percent rate hike for all REB customers. That increase took effect in July 2022.

So when Chasity Sweatmon, a Certified Public Accountant from the Cullman firm of Fricke, Sweatmon & Co., Inc. addressed the board at its October 25th meeting, you might have guessed she would paint a bleak picture about the financial health of the REB.

Guess again.

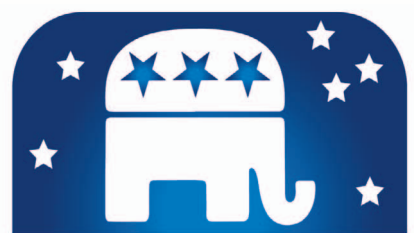
"We do believe the financial position of the board has improved over the last year," Sweatmon said. "And that looks different ways. We can look at the profit-loss and it may not look as good, but one way to look at it is cash flow statement.

"And cash flow for the entity increased \$1.3 million last year. That's a major improvement from prior years," she added.

An increase of \$1.3 million in cash flow would seem improbable for an entity having to saddle ratepayers with higher electric rates due to 'declining revenue.'

Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff shared his thoughts about the rate hike in light of the auditor's optimistic financial health report.

See 'REB,' Page 9



CAROL MURPHREE

Board of Education
District 4
November 8, 2022

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We are sad to announce the passing of Dr. Steven Hammack.

Please keep his family and staff in your prayers. The office will remain open.

Dr. Hammack requested to continue to treat all patients with the help of Dr. Lester Norvell.

Appointments with our hygienists (Shannon, Kelly and Cassidy) are still scheduled and they are looking forward to seeing you.

Dr. Norvell is a Florence native and has practiced for several years. We are thankful to have him helping out.

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Martha Jeanette Cantrell, 80, of Hodges, passed away on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at Burns Nursing Home. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Thomas A. Franks Jr. 97, of Russellville, passed away Friday, October 28, 2022. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.

Betty Ann Davis, 83, of Russellville, passed away on October 26, 2022. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



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Letter to the Editor: Reader supports Aderholt, Republican Party platform

Dear Editor:

I am voting for Robert Aderholt for representative for Congressional District 4. I am also voting for Katie Britt for Senator.

The definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a different result.

The Democrats have controlled both houses of Congress and the Presidency for the last two years and this is where the U.S. is today:

The world has seen the disgraceful exit by the U.S. from Afghanistan which resulted in the loss of 13 American servicemen and the abandonment of \$85 billion of high-tech military equipment to the Taliban. Don't think for one minute that the weakness and stupidity of this catastrophe went unnoticed by Russian President Vladimir Putin as he was deciding whether to invade Ukraine. Don't think for one moment that this went unnoticed by Chinese President Xi Jinping as he was stepping up pressure on the U. S. to abandon Taiwan.

Inflation is the highest it has been in 40 years and Ron Klain, President Joe Biden's Chief of Staff, stated that inflation is a problem of the rich. Mr. Klain should ask the average American family how they feel about paying an extra \$7,200.00 per year for basic necessities because of inflation. Biden blames inflation on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This inflation was actually caused by the \$3.8 trillion of spending in the last 2 years that he and the Democrat controlled Congress were responsible for and the decrease in energy supply due to his war on fossil fuels energy policy. Any explanation for inflation in the U.S. other than reckless, out of control spending and the war on fossil fuels energy policy is a lie.

President Biden and the Democrats own it.

In regard to President Biden's energy policy, the USA was energy independent when he took office.

President Biden's war on fossil fuel energy policy, which included the cancellation of the Keystone Pipeline, has made the U.S. energy dependent causing exploding gas prices at the pump. So now, instead of doing energy exploration and production in the United States of America, we are witnessing the humiliation of President Biden begging communist Venezuela or Saudi Arabia to increase their production. Saudi Arabia has so little respect for Biden that they not only turned down his request to increase production but decided to decrease production by 2,000,000 barrels a day. And why should Saudi Arabia help the United States? Saudi Arabia and every other country in the Middle East is against restarting the terrible Iran Nuclear Deal being pushed by the Biden Administration because it gives Iran a path to a nuclear weapon. No responsible foreign policy would ever want to give Iran a path to a nuclear weapon.

Because of the out of control spending by President Biden and his Democrat controlled Congress, the Federal Reserve has had to increase the interest rate the FED charges when it lends to banks. This has resulted in across the board interest rate increases which in turn has caused the stock market to tank. Make no mistake about it, the responsibility for this situation belongs with Biden and the Democrats. Every voter should ask themselves whether they are financially better off now, or before Biden took office.

The purpose of the United States Strategic Petroleum Reserve is to make sure that we have enough oil in the event of a national emergency. President Biden has been making releases from that reserve to mitigate the sharp rise in gas prices as the midterm election approaches. Only President Biden and his fellow Democrats would argue that winning the midterm elections for Democrats constitutes a national emergency. This is clearly a case of the Democrats putting the good of their party above the good of the country.

When President Biden took office the southern border was secure. During fiscal year end 2022 a record 2.76 million illegal immigrants crossed the border. This broke the previous record by more than one million. In addition, a record 856 illegal immigrants died while attempting to cross the border during this same period of time. The unsecure border is also responsible for the deaths of 300 Americans per day due to the fentanyl the drug cartels are sending across the border. The U.S. government has an obligation to protect American citizens from MS13 gang members, terrorists and other criminals and it is not meeting that obligation when we do not know who is coming into the country. President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas keep telling us that the border is secure. What they are saying is just not true.

The politicization for the FBI and the Department of Justice must be brought to a stop and those responsible must be prosecuted and terminated. We can not have a functioning Democracy where the Justice System acts as an arm of the Democratic Party. The Democrats could have investigated all of the below mentioned abuses while they controlled both houses of Congress. However, they investigated none of these abuses since they were the beneficiaries of those abuses.

We now know that the FBI and Department of Justice interfered with the 2016 Presidential Election. In 2016 FBI and DOJ started an investigation into the Trump Administration based on a dossier which was completely false. This dossier was paid for by the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee. This investigation into the Trump Administration by the FBI/DOJ which was based on a lie, nevertheless resulted in the Mueller Investigation which certainly severely interfered with the administration of a duly elected President of the United States.

We also now know that the FBI interfered with the 2020 Presidential Election by telling Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson and Facebook before the 2020 election that the Hunter Biden laptop story was Russian disinformation, thereby stopping the investigation. Americans had a right to know before the election if the son of the President of the United States was involved in any criminal behavior and if his father, the President of the United States, was involved and compromised.

The FBI and DOJ are currently interfering with the 2022 midterm election. They have been investigating Hunter Biden for more than 2 years and the failure to bring this investigation to a conclusion is depriving Americans of information they should have before casting their votes this November. It is obvious that the DOJ and FBI are deliberately slow walking this investigation to protect Hunter Biden and President Biden.

We also now know that the FBI Anti Terrorist Unit has been investigating parents who don't like the woke indoctrination that their kids are receiving in school. The DOJ/FBI has no business investigating parents who don't like what their kids are being taught in school. The most reprehensible part of the woke ideology is the transexual indoctrination of children which is being done by educators who are being aided and abetted by the Biden DOJ and FBI. This is child abuse and it needs to be stopped.

We have now all been treated to the spectacle of the 30 FBI agents armed with automatic weapons raiding the home of a former President of the United States who, by the way, is the chief political rival of the current President of the United States. Anyone who truly cares about the survival of Democracy in the United States should be horrified by this spectacle, the likes of which is found in only in countries with totalitarian governments. This "Show me the man and I will find you the crime" system of justice



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Publisher

John Pilati

Executive Editor

Michael Rice

E-mail: franklinfreepress@yahoo.com

Sales Representatives

Michael Rice, John Pilati

Content Contributors

Gail Motes, Christian Medina

Graphic Design

Jason Hill

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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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Local amendment would allow Franklin County mayors to participate in state retirement system

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Voters will decide Tuesday whether mayors in Franklin County municipalities that participate in the Employees' Retirement Systems of Alabama (ERS) will be allowed to opt in to the RSA upon the same terms and conditions for other employees.

On November 8, 2022, all Franklin County ballots will include Local Amendment One, which states: Relating to Franklin County, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to allow mayors to participate in the Employees' Retirement System. (Proposed by Act 2022-185).

A "Yes" vote indicates the voter supports Franklin County mayors having the option to participate in the ERS. A "No" vote indicates the voter opposes the proposal and wants mayors to remain excluded, even though other full-time employees in their cities are already participating in ERS.

If the amendment is approved, Franklin County mayors would have the option to participate in ERS. Mayors would be able to purchase past service for each year they've been in office. That payment would be by the mayor only. No town or city would have to contribute for this past service.

The local amendment appears on the back of ballots as LOCAL AMENDMENT 1. There are 10 statewide amendments for voters to consider, but the Franklin County amendment is not listed with those on the ballot.

64 of Alabama's 67 counties have an amendment allowing public officials to participate in the Employees' Retirement System. Most of these allowed sheriffs and other county officials, like county commissioners, to participate.

There is a growing trend across Alabama to afford mayors this same option. Voters in Dallas and Montgomery Counties will also decide whether to allow mayors in those counties to opt into ERS.

Franklin County already has an amendment allowing elected county officials to participate, but it only applies to county-wide offices.

When Alabama's Constitution was written in 1901, mayors across the state were part-time. There are many Alabama cities, including Russellville and Red Bay, that have full-time mayors.

The amendment referendum for Franklin County mayors was approved unanimously by the Alabama House and Senate, clearing the way for local voters to consider it on November 8th.

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Letter to Editor: Support Amendment 2

Dear Editor:

Franklin County voters must vote "Yes" on Amendment 2 on November 8th. If for no other candidate or amendment, get out and vote so Franklin County can build broadband infrastructure throughout our entire county, specifically the rural portions of our great county.

Voting for Amendment 2 allows Franklin County to use federal funding from the Infrastructure and COVID Relief Acts for public and private entities, like Freedom Fiber, to build broadband infrastructure in our great county.

The Franklin County Commission has committed \$5 million of its COVID Relief funds for building broadband in Franklin County. But it can't spend the money until you and your fellow citizens vote "Yes" on Amendment 2.

Additionally, all of Alabama could receive between \$1.7 - \$1.9 billion in broadband funds from the federal Infrastructure Act. Franklin County could benefit from that too! But you must vote "Yes" on Amendment 2.

As Franklin County residents have known for years, the nationwide internet carriers ignore rural residents. But local internet providers, like Freedom Fiber, have been building affordable, reliable last mile fiber optic broadband in the southern and eastern portions of Franklin County. They could continue to build throughout our county if you vote "Yes" on Amendment 2.

Remember when our students, elders and you couldn't do homework, receive health care or work from home during the pandemic? Vote "Yes" on Amendment 2 so we can avoid that in the future.

Speaking of the future, vote "Yes" on Amendment 2 so Franklin County can attract recreational and other safe healthy economic growth and development for our county and our younger generations can move back to Franklin County with affordable reliable last mile fiber optic broadband.

Finally, here is an action each of us can take to bring affordable reliable last mile fiber optic broadband to Franklin County. Don't skip or miss your opportunity to do so!

Get out and vote November 8th and vote "Yes" on Amendment 2.

Board of Directors, Franklin County Water Service Authority
By: Randy Schultz, Chairman and Scott A. Mugno, Vice Chairman

Confederate Railroad pulling into Roxy this Friday

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Confederate Railroad takes the stage this Friday at Russellville's Roxy Theatre, the band's music will take the audience through a gauntlet of emotions.

From rocking out to Trashy Women, to the memories elicited from Jesus and Mama to the reflective When You Leave That Way You Can Never Go Back, Confederate Railroad's music has passed the test with fans for more than 35 years.

Tickets for the November 4th show are \$50 for Gold Circle seats and \$35 for general admission. They may be purchased through the website at www.itickets.com. Tickets at the door will be \$55 and \$40.

Confederate Railroad has charted 18 songs on Billboard's Hot Country List and released seven studio albums. Their music hasn't changed, and neither has the band's name, even with pressure from outside groups who label the name as racially insensitive. In 2019, the band had two shows canceled by event organizers in Illinois and New York because of the band's logo, which features an old locomotive with two Confederate flags flying.

Shirley and the band resisted pressure to change the group's name, and have labeled such efforts as attempts of 'political correctness.'

"I did take a beating over that after the governor of Illinois got involved," Shirley said. "It wasn't an issue until he made it one. We never did anything but take the high road."

The group performed for years as the backup band for country legends David Allan Coe and Johnny Paycheck. When Atlantic Records signed them, Confederate Railroad released their debut self-titled album in 1992.

That album featured six charted songs, including multiple Number Ones, and a Grammy nomination for Trashy Women. The group was honored as the Academy of Country Music's Best New Group Award in 1993.



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 **T**he Phil Campbell Arts & Historical Society will host its Second Annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 5th from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Phil Campbell Community Center, 132 Sherry Bryce Rd., in Phil Campbell. For booth information, please call 256-810-4572. There will be Arts & Crafts, Homemade Treasures, Scentsy, Christmas Decor, Unique Gifts, Bake Sale and Food Truck on site. Proceeds will be applied toward the purchase of a building in Phil Campbell.


 **F**irst United Methodist Church will hold a Rummage Sale for Missions, Friday/Saturday, November 4/5. Friday hours 7-5, Saturday 7-11. There will be furniture, kitchen items, household goods, jewelry, books, baked goods and more! Sale will be at the church, located on North Jackson Ave in downtown Russellville.

 **T**he annual Russellville Veterans Day Parade will be Sunday, November 6, 2022 at 2 p.m. Line up will be at 1:30 p.m. at the A.W. Todd Centre.

 **T**he City of Russellville Helping Santa Toy Drive is now accepting applications for assistance. They can be picked up at the Russellville Police Department and must be turned in by November 25, 2022, for approval.

 **L**ittleville First Baptist Church Presents The Kent Curtis Family from McEwen Tn..for a night of Gospel Music. Sat. NOV. 5th, 6pm until..LFBC is located on Hwy. 43 Littleville AL. Going North toward the Shoals the Church is located on the Left coming South from the Shoals, Church located on the Right. LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT NIGHT OF WORSHIP.

 **T**he Community Thanksgiving Service will be Sunday, November 20th at 6:00. This year it will be at Gateway Church, 15988 Hwy 43 Russellville. There will be a Community Choir. If you would like to participate please be at Gateway by 4:45 for practice that day. We want to invite EVERYONE out to attend this special service!

 **T**he Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee is seeking donations for our annual "Cottons for Christmas". Donations requested are for new socks that will be distributed to residents in one of the county's nursing homes. Each year our committee picks a different nursing home in the county and we strive to provide all residents in that particular nursing home a gift of socks & lotion. We will have a donation/collection box at the annual Farm-City Banquet, Monday, November 14, 2022. Boxes will also be placed at 3 local businesses in Franklin County: Franklin County Courthouse/Extension Office (please leave your donations with one of the Courthouse security guards) , ALFA Insurance Office-Russellville and Red Bay.

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Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore reminds voters of Recent Polling Place Changes:

Frankfort: moved to Frankfort Missionary Baptist Church, 7676 Hwy 49, Russellville, AL 35653.

Jonesboro: moved to Jonesboro Baptist Church, 5061 Waterloo Road, Russellville, AL 35653.

Newburg: moved to Waco Baptist Church to create polling center with the Waco precinct, 31141 Hwy 724, Russellville, AL 35654.

Hispanic Heritage program honors growing Russellville City Schools demographic

Kaitlyn Balding
Student Writer
RCS Media Group

Russellville High School hosted the third annual Hispanic Heritage Program on Thursday, October 20, at the RCS Auditorium. Students from Russellville High School and Russellville Middle School were in attendance, and the program was organized by Stephanie Mayfield, Edmund Martinez, Alma Martinez, Ana Lopez, and Carley Andrews, along with many students from RHS who participated in the program.

In the lobby of the auditorium, where the program was held, there were posters of each country represented, drawings from Ms. Liza Scott's gifted class at Russellville Elementary School, and decorations that were donated by RES and West Elementary School.

The program was led by RHS senior Brian Santos, who said President Lyndon B. Johnson created Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 and President Ronald Reagan expanded it to Hispanic Heritage Month in 1988. He also explained the purpose behind the program.

"This program gives us an opportunity to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Pacific Island countries," Santos said.

The guest speaker was Shoals-area native Ruby Villalobos-Adams. Villalobos-Adams is a member of the Alabama State Bar, attended the University of North Alabama for her undergraduate degree, and attended Cumberland Law School for her law degree. She spoke to students about life's defining moments and advice about what to do when you're in those moments.

In her own life, Villalobos-Adams' defining moments were finding out that she and her husband were pregnant with their first child while she was in law school but still pursuing her law degree and her winning a case against an older lawyer.

Villalobos-Adams then encouraged students to find their "why" and pick a career that motivates them to get up in the morning, and then she reminded students "you are what you think." She said not to let your mind dictate what you can do or be."

Once Mrs. Villalobos-Adams finished, the cultural displays began, which

'Letter,' from Page 3

used by comrade Beria who ran the NKVD for Stalin should never be tolerated in the United States of America. Biden accuses the Republicans of being fascists but he himself uses the tactics of communists and fascists.

We now also know that there have been multiple arrests of Pro Life activists involved in peaceful protests at abortion clinics. These arrests were each carried out by 30 FBI agents armed with automatic weapons at the homes and right in front of the wives and children of those arrested. This is one more example of using the machinery of the justice system prosecute your political opponents.

The DOJ and FBI chose not to arrest and prosecute those people demonstrating in front of the homes of Supreme Court Justices who supported the leaked Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade, notwithstanding the fact that the demonstrators where in violation of obstruction of justice statutes.

The DOJ and FBI even continued to allow these demonstrations to continue even after the suspect in the attempted assassination of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh was apprehended. Every American should be appalled at this selective application of the law which allowed the attempted intimidation of Supreme Court Justices of the United States of America.

While the DOJ and FBI are busy investigating and prosecuting political adversaries of the Democrats, such as former President Trump, parents who don't like the woke indoctrination their kids are receiving and Pro Life advocates involved in peaceful protests, the FBI and DOJ seems to have no interest in investigating and prosecuting the individuals responsible for the violent protests during the summer of 2020 which resulted in \$2 Billion of property damage and the deaths of 30 people. In addition, the DOJ and FBI declined to prosecute Hilary Clinton, a Democrat, for having an unsecure email server in her home, deleting 33,000 emails and destroying cells phones with a hammer all while under subpoena. The DOJ and FBI also seem to have no interest in concluding the investigation into Hunter Biden, son of Democrat President Joe Biden. If you like the humiliating way we exited Afghanistan, the humiliating way that the President of the United States was begging other countries to produce more oil, paying more for basic necessities including and gas for your car or truck, massive illegal immigration from an uncontrolled border, deaths of your fellow Americans from fentanyl that comes from Mexican drug cartels and a two tiered justice system where innocent Republicans are prosecuted and guilty Democrats and their allies go unprosecuted, you need to vote Democratic. However, if you have had enough of this gross incompetence and massive corruption you need to vote Republican. The majority party in the House and Senate controls what gets investigated and the only way any of this will ever get investigated and stopped will be if the Republicans gain control of both Houses of Congress.

I am proudly voting for Robert Aderholt for U.S. House of Representatives and Katie Britt for the U.S. Senate.
Robert Grant, Russellville

started with Santos explaining the Day of the Dead, a tradition that takes place on Nov. 1 and 2 where the lives of the family and loved ones that have died are celebrated. To go along with this explanation, the RHS Drama and Chorus departments, directed by Patrice Smith and Aaron Freeman, performed "Recuerdame" from Disney's Coco. During the song, pictures of famous Latinos were displayed on the screen along with a memorial for Hispanic students from Russellville High School who have passed away in recent years. RHS senior Mylene Martinez performed "Como la Flor" immediately after the drama and choral students' performance.

Next was the "Latin Countries at RHS" portion of the program, which started with Mexico and an explanation of the meaning behind the flag and some cultural aspects of the country, followed by three different types of cultural dances performed by 20 members of the Hispanic community from RHS.

Guatemala was next, and after the flag explanation and cultural facts, a traditional Guatemalan folk dance was performed, followed by a Marimba dance from Guatemala. After Guatemala came Puerto Rico, Honduras, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba with information about the meaning behind their national flags and about the country and culture that can be found in each. For Nicaragua there was a traditional Nicaraguan dance that was performed.

The next portion of the program focused on the Quinceañera, which is one of the most important parts of a Hispanic girl's life. The program explained what happens at a traditional Quinceañera and six ladies came on stage to show what the dresses look like for this celebration.

The finale for the program was "Los Chinelos," a traditional Mexican dance with elaborate costumes. Once the dance started, all of the students that had a part in the show came on stage and danced with the music in a moment that showed the togetherness of their cultures.

Abigail Jimenez-Vargas, a RHS senior, talked about the impact of celebrating Hispanic heritage.

"The Russellville school system is 56 percent Hispanic," she said. "That represents a large portion of our student body. The Hispanic students can sometimes feel left out, so the program allows for them to feel like they are a part of something. It also allows for other people to know about our culture."

'REB,' from Page 1

"Since the auditor said they were in good shape financially, tell me again why did they raise our rates?," Woodruff said after the board meeting. Sweatmon was a last minute addition to the board's agenda, which was revised the morning of the meeting. This came after a local pastor, who called Canida's Executive Assistant Sherry Smith Monday morning asking to be added to the agenda, was denied and told he was 'too late' to be included. North Russellville Baptist Church Pastor Jason Swinney said he received the utility bill for his church Saturday morning, so Monday was the first business day he could have called and requested to be added to the agenda. The church's bill included a \$950 charge for new deposits, in spite of the church's clean payment history and the REB's policy that states no account will be activated until a deposit is received.

If Canida could add their private accountant to the agenda, why couldn't a local pastor also have five minutes to speak? Earlier this year, the REB voted to limit any public comment to five minutes and limited any member of the public to one five-minute appearance before the board every three months.

Only two members of the public spoke at the October 25th meeting, taking up 10 minutes of the board's time for a meeting each board member received \$600 for attending.

Sweatmon told the board she was asked to discuss the recently closed 'hidden' savings account at Alabama Central Credit Union. Bank records show cash withdrawals and gift card purchases totaling \$8,700 were made from the account over a four-year period.

Additionally, Canida withheld records of the ACCU account from his responses to an Open Records Act request filed by the Franklin Free Press last December.

Every cash withdrawal and gift card purchase was made days before Canida and board members attended beach conferences or days before the REB's annual Christmas party at the Shoals Marriott, an event that annually costs ratepayers anywhere from \$7,000-\$10,000.

Sweatmon confirmed that when the ACCU account was closed in March 2022, the remaining balance of \$16,546.18 was transferred into the REB general fund account.

Sweatmon also said she spoke with Canida and the 'REB accounting staff' and was told they closed the account 'just to consolidate.'

What Sweatmon never mentioned was where the \$6,675 in cash withdrawals went or who withdrew it and for what reason. Sweatmon also didn't address where the more than \$2,000 in gift cards went and who authorized their purchase.

As for the recent letters sent by REB to certain churches and businesses demanding large deposits, Sweatmon acknowledged that all policies regarding deposits are made by the Russellville Electric Board, not the Tennessee Valley Authority as was stated in the letters sent to churches and businesses.

"The customer deposit policy is a policy adopted by this board. They get to decide what the policy will be. But it must fall within the parameters of TVA," Sweatmon said.

Those TVA 'parameters' are simply that whatever policy a local power company implements, it must be fairly applied to all customers in a non-discriminatory manner.

Scott Fiedler, with TVA Media Relations, confirmed this to the FFP in a recent email.

"TVA is the regulator for the service practice policies of our local power companies. This role is important because TVA ensures that LPC's (Local Power Companies) apply their policies in a fair and non-discriminatory manner for the benefit of all their electric customers," Fiedler said.

"To be clear, TVA does not have a 'universal' deposit policy," he added.

Ricky Young, who operates Seal Tax Service in Russellville, addressed the board at its October 25th meeting.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL RICE

Ricky Young addresses concerns to REB.

Young provided records where his business paid a \$100 deposit for electricity in 1995 to Russellville Electric Board. 10 years later, that \$100 deposit was refunded to Seal Tax Service pursuant to REB policy at that time. Seal Tax Service has never missed a payment or been late on a payment to REB, Young said.

Two weeks ago, 17 years after refunding the deposit, REB Accountant Tiffany Holt sent Seal Tax Service a demand letter for a new larger deposit of \$350. That letter, Young said, stated the deposit was a requirement of TVA.

"Either you misrepresented or lied about it. Three people I talked with (with TVA) I asked the same question—does TVA require a deposit. And each time I heard 'no,' 'no,' and no," Young said. "They stated if the Russellville Electric Board requires that, it must be within the framework of the guidelines of TVA. But TVA does not require a deposit as your letter said.

"What has caused this? Why rewrite it to include another deposit that's astronomical. Where are you losing money? Obviously, from what we just heard you're not. Are you foreseeing a future where everyone walks away and doesn't pay a bill? That's not going to happen.

"Nobody is going to forget this. You've got the opportunity for this board to kick this around and change the process. Something's got to give. Thank you for your time," Young told board members.

Teresa Streetman Nelson, secretary for Heritage Fellowship Church, said her church received a demand letter this month for \$900 in deposits for the two church accounts. The church is located on Highway 43 South just inside the REB service area.

"When we got our building I went down to the utility office to pay the deposit. I was told we don't have to pay a deposit and that they don't charge churches deposits," Nelson said. "That was in 2010. Now in 2022, we get a letter now saying we need a deposit for \$900."

Nelson asked the board for a copy of the minutes of the board meeting where the new policy regarding deposits was approved.

According to TVA, the REB recently revised its deposit policy, yet there is no record of any discussion or agenda item in the past 11 months reflecting such action.

"I came to the office trying to speak with Tiffany Holt several times and I never got to speak with her," Nelson said. "I have a letter from TVA saying you have the right to make your own policy and you need to look at the community and see what it's doing to the people here."

The FFP reached out to Canida for comment and he did not respond.

Job Opening

Franklin County Water Service Authority is accepting applications for the position of Meter Reader/Laborer until 4 pm on Tuesday, November 15, 2022. Applications may be obtained via email request to beverlyscott@fcwsa.net or picked up at the drive-up window at the office in Belgreen.

No telephone calls, please.

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Letter to Editor: Sad attempt at humor: Post by Canida's daughter no laughing matter to reader

(Editor's Note: April Canida Hendon, daughter of Russellville Electric Board Manager Charles Canida, made a social media post recently that showed a photo of a beach with "Thank you rate payers!!," written at the top.)

Dear Editor:

I thought this should be brought to everyone's attention that with all the talk going on about (Russellville Electric Board Manager) Charles Canida and his secrets, his family went to Florida this past weekend and his daughter is smug enough to thank the Russellville Electric Board ratepayers for their little trip.

Meanwhile, the ones she claims to be thanking are still here struggling to figure out how we will pay our outrageous light bills!

But I just wanted to send this and maybe this will help bring them off their pedestal they seem to think they are on.

Laci Matthews
Russellville



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Miller, Hughes urging voters to support Amendment One (Aniah's Law)

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Aniah Blanchard was abducted from an Auburn gas station three years ago and subsequently murdered, the man accused of the vicious crime was already facing kidnapping and attempted murder charges, but had made bond on the earlier charges.

For Fayette County Commissioner Shane Hughes, the idea of a violent felon out on bond having the opportunity to commit another violent offense didn't sit well with the retired police officer.

And the crime was personal to Hughes, who knew Aniah and her parents, who were from the Winfield area and attended school with him.

While he can't undo the tragedy of what happened, Hughes has been proactive in trying to prevent a similar crime by a defendant already charged with a serious felony.

That's why Hughes, and Franklin County Commissioner Jason Miller, are actively working across the state to encourage Alabama voters to support Statewide Amendment One, called "Aniah's Law."

Amendment One is one of 10 amendments voters across Alabama will decide on Tuesday, November 8th.

If approved, the amendment would give judges discretion to set bail, or deny bail, to defendants charged with certain violent felonies. The Alabama Constitution currently requires reasonable bail for all offenses except capital murder. This amendment would change that by adding certain violent offenses to the list of charges for which bail may be denied.

The relevant language of Amendment One reads as follows: Proposing an amendment to create Aniah's Law, to provide that an individual is entitled to reasonable bail prior to conviction, unless charged with capital murder, murder, kidnapping in the first degree, rape in the first degree, sodomy in the first degree, sexual torture, domestic violence in the first degree, human trafficking in the first degree, burglary in the first degree, arson in the first degree, robbery in the first degree, terrorism when the specified offense is a Class A



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felony other than murder, and aggravated child abuse of a child under the age of six.

"This would apply to Class A violent felonies," Hughes said. "These types of violent felons don't need to be out. Many of them have no reason to be on the street. They are dangerous. (Aniah's Law) would give judges discretion to hear evidence from prosecutors and cross-examination by defense attorneys as to why a defendant shouldn't be able to make bond."

Hughes and Miller met after both were selected as one of 11 county commissioners to take part in the PLAN 2022 program. PLAN 2022 is a 20-month Passion, Leadership, Accountability and Networking (PLAN) program, designed to develop practical and service-oriented leadership skills in its participants so they may become change-makers in their communities and beyond.

Hughes said part of PLAN 2022 curriculum was for each member to select a 'passion project.' The subject of this project could be anything the member is passionate about. And Hughes is passionate about Amendment One. He addressed the Alabama County Commissioners Association this summer about Amendment One and how commissioners can support the effort in their home counties.

Seeing how committed Hughes is about the proposed amendment inspired Miller to get involved as well.

When I saw someone showing that much passion as Shane did, I wanted to get on board and help as much as I can to support Amendme

Hughes said Miller has been a tremendous advocate for Amendment One. to take part in PLAN 2022 and he's been a big help on supporting Aniah's Law.

Miller said if Amendment One is passed next Tuesday, he and Hughes plan to organize free classes around the state that teach safety tips to young women and college/high school kids through an organization called Aniah's Heart. Aniah's mother, Angela Harris, founded Aniah's Heart, a non-profit organization created to increase awareness and safety issues to young women and children.

Aniah's Law reached the ballot after passing the Alabama House with a 104-0 vote. Governor Kay Ivey has already signed the bill into law, but it can't take effect until voters approve it.

It's the very first amendment on the ballot on the back side of the ballot. So I encourage anyone voting a straight party ticket

For more information on the organization, visit www.aniahsheart22.com.



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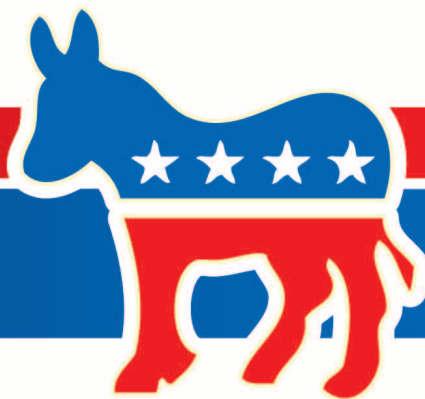
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A Message from the Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee

Let's face it. Our country is in trouble.

Both political parties have their problems. In the past, members of opposing parties could be friends and still work together for the common good. But today, members of opposing parties are almost like enemies and won't vote for a great idea if it is sponsored by a member of the other party.

They can't even go out to eat together.

The only way for America to survive is to start electing people who we know are good, Godly people and who will represent the ideals that we feel are important. So if you know someone personally and agree with their morals/standards, then please vote for them, whichever party they claim. But by all means, vote. It's that important.

Just as a reminder—you can support a particular party in general but then vote for the people you know personally even if they are on the other party's ticket. Just mark by their name individually and it will be counted for them. For example, if you want to vote for all Democrats but love Governor Ivey, then mark the Democratic box at the top, but vote for Governor Ivey by marking her individual box. It's that simple.

Let's take our country back. If someone is running for reelection and they have done a good job, re-elect them. If you think the current office holder has forgotten who they are supposed to represent, then vote them out. It's that simple.

May God Bless America, and on Tuesday, November 8th, please VOTE!

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2022 is Election Day! Please Vote!



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Tigers head to Fyffe for playoff opener

*Michael Rice
 Franklin Free Press*

After losing 30-24 in double overtime to the Phil Campbell Bobcats, Red Bay head coach Heath Childers wasted no time starting to prepare for his team's next opponent, the Fyffe Red Devils. Childers' review of the Phil Campbell game with his team was brief and focused. "We watched our game film against Phil Campbell to note and correct our mistakes heading into this game against Fyffe," Childers said. Fyffe is the gold standard for Class 2A football, as the Red Devils have won four state championships in the last seven years. Fyffe finished the regular season with a perfect 10-0 record. The Red Devils outscored their opponents by a staggering 489-59 margin. But for Childers and his team, it's business as usual as they prepare for Friday's game. "We're approaching this game like we do every week. We want to represent the school, the community and the football program well," Childers said. "I've been very fortunate in my career to get off charter buses at UMS-Wright, Demopolis and Briarwood. I've had the opportunity to go around and see tons of great programs. This is the first time I've been to Fyffe. I'm excited to go to Fyffe and see where Red Bay stands as a program and how far we can go," Childers said. Red Bay finished its regular season with a 6-4 record, 3-3 in Region 8.

Email us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

*Have an opinion?
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RHS playoff quest starts with Boaz Pirates

*Michael Rice
 Franklin Free Press*

For the fourth time in five seasons, Golden Tiger Stadium will be the site of the start of what fans hope will be a long playoff run for the 5A Region 8 champion Russellville Golden Tigers. Taking on Boaz High School this Friday, November 4th, the Golden Tigers will look to kickoff a postseason filled with high expectations and optimism. But before they could fully turn their attention towards Boaz, the Golden Tigers first had to try and wrangle a win over their final regular season opponent, 6A Athens. Athens came into its season finale an uncharacteristic 4-5, with losses



Warhurst

to teams familiar to past Golden Tigers' schedules, including Muscle Shoals, Cullman and Hartselle. Russellville led 28-7 at halftime, but was

outscored 25-3 in the second half as Athens came back to win 32-31. In order to win region titles, clinch playoff spots and make deep runs into

the playoffs, teams have to have a short memory in some regards. Letting last week's game go and focusing on the week at hand is something that is key for teams and programs with dreams of making deep playoff pushes. While Russellville (6-4, 6-0) would have liked to have capped off its regular season with a victory, the Tigers feel as though the quality of football they played in the second half of the game was not to their expectations. "I did a poor job making adjustments in the second half to Athens," Russellville Head Coach John Ritter said, shouldering much of the blame for the loss.

See, 'RHS,' page 15

Bobcats set for Madison Academy road trip

*John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press*

It was 2005 when the Phil Campbell Bobcats last defeated the Red Bay Tigers. And for most of the second half Friday night, it looked like that streak would continue into 2023. With a 16-8 lead late in the fourth quarter, Red Bay drove to the Bobcat three-yard line. Facing a fourth and goal, with 2:29 remaining, a touchdown would lock up another win for the Tigers against their in-county rival. But Brayden Tabbs' pass fell incomplete and Phil Campbell had a pulse, albeit a faint one. With no time outs remaining, the Bobcats started from their own three, needing a touchdown and two-point conversion to tie, all with a little north of two minutes left. Suddenly a Phil Campbell offense that ran the ball 37 times on the night had to go hurry up through the air, and quarterback Kyle Pace and his receiving corps delivered. Big completions to Robbie Robinson, Bryant Hyde and Sage Raper helped the Bobcats drive to the Red Bay nine. With :42 remaining, Pace hit Robinson for a touchdown to make it 16-14. Coach Kevin Barnwell then turned to Gage Baker, who barreled his way into the end zone for the two-point conversion to make it 16-16. On the ensuing kickoff, Ak Cleveland recovered

a Kyser Jackson fumble at the Red Bay 16. Phil Campbell had :26 remaining to score. But a Kyle Pace pass into the end zone fell incomplete and the teams moved to overtime. Both teams had one possession from the 10 yard line. The Bobcats went first, and Sage Raper scored on a 10-yard run, followed by Baker's two-point conversion, to give Phil Campbell a 24-16 lead.

See, 'BOBCATS,' page 18

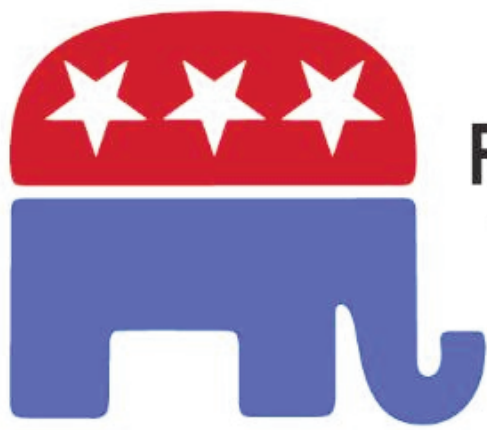
Friday Night Football Playoff Schedule

November 4th, 2022

Russellville vs. Boaz

Phil Campbell @ Madison Academy

Red Bay @ Fyffe



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‘RHS,’ from Page 13

losing the last game of regular season would normally be something to forget about, but for Ritter, remembering the mistakes you made might help his team in the future.

“I don’t think you kick the loss to the wayside. We should use it as a learning experience and there were multiple things we could have done differently to not be in the situation we ended in,” Ritter said.

Russellville finished 6-0 in Class 5A, Region 8, earned the 1st seed and the right to host Boaz this Friday night.

The Golden Tigers could be without their leading rusher, senior Conner Warhurst, who suffered a high ankle sprain against Athens. Warhurst has almost 1,200 yards rushing and 18 touchdowns this year. Ritter described Warhurst’s injury as ‘day-to-day’ and said no decision has been made about his playing status this Friday.

The Boaz Pirates finished 4-6, 3-3 in 5A Region 7. The Pirates are riding a three game win streak that landed them, somewhat surprisingly to some, in the playoffs.

Boaz knocked off region opponents Sardis and Douglas to finish 3-3 in region play, and a 21-20 win over Lee last Friday gave the Pirates some solid momentum as they travel to Russellville.

“Boaz’s Coach (Jeremy) Sullivan does a good job. They are a solid team and have very talented players. We have to play well and not make mistakes. It’s the playoffs and everyone we play from here on is good,” Ritter said.

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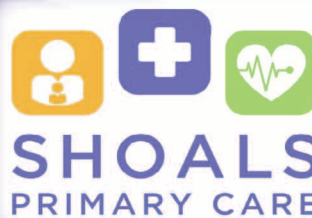
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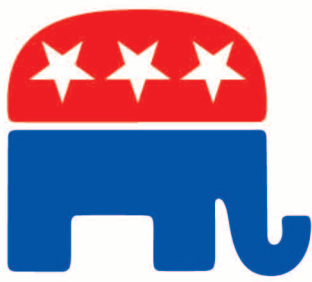
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Amendment 1: Gives judges discretion to not
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Amendment 2: Would allow local
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Amendment 3: Notice required to victim's
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Amendment 7: Would clarify authority of
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For our children and their future

For our county and its future

For broadband in Franklin County



**VOTE “YES” ON
AMENDMENT 2
ON NOVEMBER 8TH**

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'Bobcats,' from Page 13

But Red Bay wasn't done. Brady Hardin scored on a six-yard run and he punched in the two-point conversion to make it 24-24.

Red Bay started on offense in the second overtime. On second down, Hardin fumbled and Phil Campbell's Mason Weeks fell on the loose football.

On the next play, Baker scored his second touchdown to give the Bobcats an improbable 30-24 comeback victory.

Baker finished with 120 yards on 20 carries to lead Phil Campbell. Hardin was a beast for the Tigers, with 39 rushes for 172 yards, three touchdowns and two two-point conversions. Cody Carnes also converted a two-point try for Red Bay.

The teams combined for 520 total yards of offense, with most of that on the ground. Pace finished 9-17 for 108 yards, most of that on the final drive in regulation. Tabbs completed one of his two pass attempts for seven yards for the Tigers.

When Phil Campbell started its game tying drive late in the fourth quarter, it was only the second possession for the Bobcats in the entire second half. Red Bay, holding a lead after a third quarter TD and two-point conversion, stuck to a ground attack that moved down the field steadily, but not rapidly. Possessions were at a premium in a game that was 8-8 at halftime.

Both teams face daunting tasks next Friday in the opening round of the state playoffs (6-4 Red Bay at 10-0 Fyffe and 7-3 Phil Campbell at 7-2 Madison Academy), but Barnwell couldn't ask for a better springboard than how his team delivered in the final minutes against Red Bay.

"It speaks volumes about our kids' character," Barnwell said. "The odds were against us and our kids found a way. We do the two-minute drill very week in practice. It's kind of a conditioning thing and finally it was a factor in a game. Our guys knew what to do and we executed it well.

"We didn't play well, but when you have five starters out you just do what you have to and our guys did that and found a way to win," he added.

As for Friday's playoff game, Barnwell planned to watch video starting Saturday morning.

"We talk all the time about being where your feet are. And this week our feet were in Red Bay. Late tonight or in the morning is when I'll start looking at film and preparing for Madison Academy," Barnwell said.

"I'm Jason Miller,
County Commissioner
for District Two.
Please join me in
supporting
Amendments 1, 2

and 7 on the November 8, 2022, general
election ballot."

AMENDMENT ONE would give judges discretion whether to grant or deny bond for defendants charged with violent Class A felony offenses. Bail could be denied for charges including rape

first degree, sodomy first degree, burglary first degree, terrorism and other violent Class A felonies. Amendment One would create Aniah's Law, named after Aniah Blanchard, who was murdered by a man out on bond for attempted murder.

AMENDMENT TWO would allow a county, city or town to use federal or state funds for expanded access to high-speed Internet.

AMENDMENT SEVEN would expand counties' and cities' ability to use public funds to sell public property, lend their credit or become indebted for economic development purposes.

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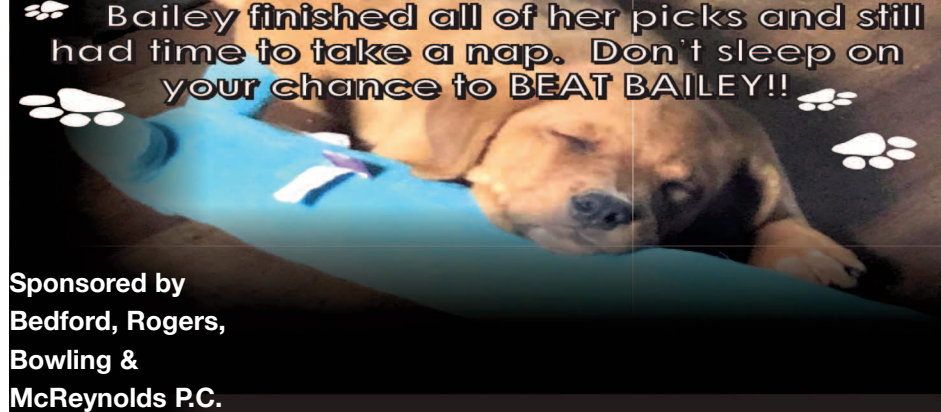
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A terrible 3-7 week for Bailey! A much better week for our winner, Barry McCarley, who went 7-3 on a tough slate!

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 9 must be postmarked by Friday, November 4th and picks submitted by email for Week 10 must be received by Saturday, November 5th, 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.

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SEC Football Contest

Week 10 Nov. 5th Bailey's Pick. Your Pick

Oklahoma State at Kansas	OK St	
Texas at Kansas State	Kansas State	
Kentucky at Missouri	Missouri	
Florida at Texas A&M	Texas A&M	
Baylor at Oklahoma	Oklahoma	
Tennessee at Georgia	Tennessee	
Alabama at LSU	Alabama	
Houston at SMU	Houston	
Clemson at Notre Dame	Clemson	
Auburn at Mississippi St.	Mississippi St.	
Tiebreaker Score:	Alabama	LSU
Your Name:	_____	
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