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NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus celebrates 50 years of nursing

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

As the former Chief Nursing Officer at Russellville Hospital, Belinda Johnson hired a lot of graduates of Northwest-Shoals Community College's Nursing program. So many, in fact, she's not sure how all those jobs would have been filled if it weren't for nursing program, which has been the anchor of NW-SCC's Phil Campbell campus for five decades. It was 1972 when Northwest Junior College, as it was known,

started a nursing program to help alleviate the shortage of nurses in Northwest Alabama. Ironically, 50 years later, there remains a shortage of nurses but Johnson said it's not nearly the problem it would be without the NW-SCC program. "Most people I hired were from that program. We had many absolutely great nurses I was blessed to work

See 'NURSING,' Page 5



Republican tsunami hits Franklin County in Nov. 8 general election

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Almost 39 percent of Franklin County's registered voters cast ballots in the November 8th general election, but a majority of them didn't take long to complete the voting process. Of the 7,487 ballots cast, 4,306 voted a straight party Republican ballot, compared to 461 straight party Democratic ballots and 27 straight party Libertarian ballots. There were no surprises, save one, in Tuesday's results. Republican candidates received overwhelming support from Franklin County voters. In the only contested local race, Republican nominee Carol Murphree

defeated incumbent Shannon Oliver in the Franklin County Board of Education District Four race. Congressman Robert Aderholt (R-Haleyville) won a 14th term representing Alabama's Fourth Congressional District. Aderholt's support in Franklin County was strong, as he garnered 87% of the votes cast. Franklin County resident Rick Neighbors, the Democratic nominee, received 11% and Libertarian Johnny C. Cochran two percent. Aderholt released a statement thanking voters for their support. He also took some shots at the Democratic Party which went into the November 8th election in control of the House and Senate in

See 'ELECTIONS,' Page 8

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Bobby Lee Glasgow, 81, of Phil Campbell, passed away Sunday, November 13, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Jerry Arlen Baker, 68, of Florence, passed away November 11, 2022. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

Anna Bell Lawler Haithcock, 75, of Phil Campbell, passed away November 3, 2022. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

Irra Dell Horton Pinkard, 81, Phil Campbell, passed away on November 12, 2022. Pinkard Funeral Home 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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My take on this: A 'Dear Gail' column? No thanks

Gail Motes
Franklin Free Press

I find it amusing that a friend suggested I have a 'Dear Gail' column in the Franklin Free Press.

Yes, I'd be perfect for it. No relationship and not one to take a lot of things seriously. She said people would love it!

I can imagine someone asking a question concerning the heart and they receive a humorous response. Oh wait! I do that most of the time anyway.

That did get me to thinking about what a young woman of around 25 told me years ago and how that conversation went.

She had been in a couple bad relationships, but that was all in the past then. She was happy and in love. Her very words were, "He's the one!"

Of course, I just had to ask her how she knew he was the one. I even added, "Didn't you think the others were the one? How do you know this is the one?"

Her logic was simple. She just knew because she could just feel it. I walked away not understanding. Didn't she just feel it every time? I did enjoy her enthusiasm and the way she said the words—just feel it.

I guess my radar is off because I've felt that warm fuzzy feeling before he paired up with my neighbor's wife from next door. Me? I still wear fuzzy warm socks.

A male friend told me a woman came home with him one night and now she wouldn't leave. Now, that had to be hard to deal with, don't you think? Call me heartless, but I laughed and told him he didn't want her to go because you can get rid of a nuisance if you choose to.

Do you realize the unlimited number of businesses that pride themselves in eliminating pests from your home?

So, what do you think? Would I make an entertaining 'Dear Gail'?

I certainly wouldn't make one if all answers were a product of my warped sense of humor. I'm also known to get serious from time to time. I'd have to mix it up.



Gail Motes

The more I think about that the more exciting it becomes. Dear Gail sounds too formal for me. I'd prefer 'Ask Gail.'

I've always said as long as there is life, there is hope.

Don't take life too seriously. You'll drive yourself and others crazy if you do. The main thing we need to realize sooner than later is saying 'no' keeps you from being overused and under appreciated.

For now, I'm moving on to something else. Y'all make me happy, but I don't need y'all to make me happy. That sounds harsh, but is really the master key to happiness.

Just let that soak in a while.

As always,

Miranda Decker, M.D.

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Correction Policy

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

Letters to the editor

The Franklin Free Press is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The Franklin Free Press reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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Letter to Editor: Celebrate Farm-City week

Dear Editor:

This Thanksgiving Day, as we gather with family and friends to count our blessings, let us give thanks for the bounty we enjoy not just on this holiday, but every day. The safe, plentiful food that is available to us and the products used to produce the clothing, housing, medicines, fuel and other products we use on a daily basis did not just appear at a store. They got there thanks to a tremendous partnership of farmers and ranchers, processors, brokers, truckers, shippers, advertisers, wholesalers and retailers.

Rural and urban residents are "Partners in Progress" who produce the products, consume the products, and make them readily available through an efficient production and marketing chain. Farmers and ranchers are just the beginning of that chain. Farm workers, researchers, processors, shippers, truck drivers, inspectors, wholesalers, agribusinesses, marketers, advertisers, retailers and consumers all play important roles in the incredible productivity that has made our nation's food and fiber system the envy of the world.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let us remember the vital farm-city partnerships that have done so much to improve the quality of our lives. Rural and urban communities working together have made the most of our rich agricultural resources, and have made significant contributions to our health and well-being and to the strength of our nation's economy. For this, we give thanks.

Sincerely,
The Franklin County Farm-City Committee
The Franklin County Extension Office

"Russellville resident Ann Hill is a frequent contributor to the Franklin Free Press with her poetry submissions. We appreciate her willingness to share her talents with our readers."

"A Senior's Plea"

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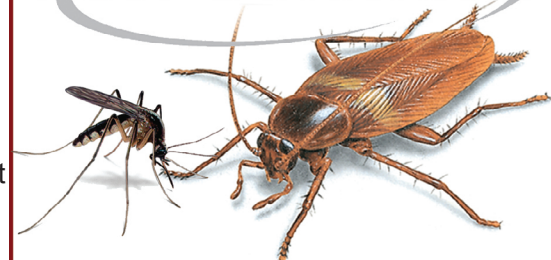
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We're not lazy-just tired.
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“NURSING,” from Page 1

with over the years from the Northwest-Shoals nursing program,” Johnson said. It is absolutely essential for the nursing homes, hospitals and doctors’ offices and for our health care in general in our area. And it’s even more evident how valuable it is in this post-COVID situation with our health care and the demand for health care workers and the shortage of health care workers across our country.

“We are very fortunate to have this program at Northwest-Shoals Community College,” she added.

The college will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its nursing program with an even on Friday, November 18th in Building 305 (SUB Addition) of the NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus. Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP by calling 256-331-6279 or by emailing nursingdepartment@nwsc.edu.

The college offers several different programs of study in nursing, including a certificate program in Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), a certification program for Nursing Assistant, a Pre-Nursing (BSN) Associate in Science degree and a Registered Nursing Associate in Applied Science (ADN) degree.

The college’s first nursing class in 1972 had 30 students. That number now averages around 100 students, according to Trent Randolph, Director of Public Relations and Marketing for NW-SCC.

School administrators are hoping to see alumni of NW-SCC’s Nursing program attend the anniversary celebration.

“We want to reach out to alumni and community members who have benefited from our nursing program over the years and welcome them back to campus,” said Dr. Jeff Goodwin, NW-SCC President.

In recent years, there have been concerns by some Franklin County officials about the future of NW-SCC’s Phil Campbell campus, and whether it fits in to the school’s long-term plans. The nursing program remains the anchor of the Franklin County campus and the school’s commitment of a \$15 million renovation indicates the Phil Campbell campus should remain a priority for school administrators. That comes as good news to Johnson.

“Having that campus in our county is a tremendous asset. I’m all about Franklin County and we need to quit losing things here. It’s actually kind of scary where we’d be at for nurses in 2022 if we didn’t have the program at the Phil Campbell campus,” Johnson said.

Rep. Jamie Kiel, a NW-SCC graduate, said he’s optimistic about the future of the school, and that optimism relates to both the Shoals and Phil Campbell campuses.

“The Phil Campbell campus, along with its Nursing Program, will remain an integral part of NW-SCC,” Kiel said. “I’m excited about the upcoming renovations and improvements that will make the NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus a more modern and technologically advanced location.

“There will come a day when the 100th anniversary of the NW-SCC Nursing Program will be celebrated,” Kiel added.

Teresa Thornton, Helen Keller Hospital’s Director of Critical Care Services, was part of the NW-SCC Nursing Class of 1988. Both Teresa and her sister, Debbie Jackson, bridged into the NW-SCC RN program as they already had their LPN certification.

Thornton said both she and her sister lived in the Hurricane Creek area and both were full-time employees at Russellville Hospital, along with being married with children. Those obligations kept the sisters from returning to school full-time, so the RN Program at NW-SCC’s Phil Campbell campus was the most feasible option.

“Had we not had that local campus there, it would have been much harder for us to go back and may have factored into our decision whether we would be able to go back and get our RN degrees at all,” Thornton said.

Debbie passed away 10 years ago and Thornton, Johnson and some family and friends present a scholarship in Jackson’s name each year to a NW-SCC nursing student.

Thornton said Keller accepts a lot of NW-SCC nursing students into their preceptor program, which provides clinical hours the students need to complete their degrees.

Many of those students go on to accept full-time jobs at Keller Hospital after graduation from NW-SCC.

“Most of the students who go to Northwest-Shoals already have families and a job, so their work ethic and their location and ability to stay in this area are greatly increased,” Thornton said. “The University of North Alabama has a good nursing program but a lot of those students are here for their education then they go north to larger cities or relocate back to where they came from once their education is complete.”

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 **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.


 **C**ommunity 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!


 **R**ussellville Masonic Lodge #371 is selling hams for Thanksgiving. Pickup is Wed., Nov. 23, 8-10 a.m., at the Lodge on Coffee Av. Hams are \$35 each. Pre-orders may be made by calling 256-810-1970.


 **T**he Senior Center at Phil Campbell is under new management. The Town of Phil Campbell would like to invite and encourage everyone in our area that is 60 years and older to come be a part of the group. This is for men and women. They meet at the Phil Campbell Community Center Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00. A delicious lunch is served around 11:00 a.m. Come on out and join in on the games or just sit and have a cup of coffee and socialize!! So if you, your parents, grandparents or your neighbor is 60 or older, pass the word and come out and enjoy a morning of fun & lunch!

 **R**esound Quartet will be singing at Siloam Baptist Church in Russellville on Sunday, Nov. 20, at 1:30 p.m. Church is on Highway 60 near King Drive-In.

 **T**he Town of Littleville announces a change in its garbage pickup schedule for the upcoming holidays: They will be picking trash on November 23rd.-28th and on December 2nd. The mayor and council added an extra pickup to give more services to their citizens. They have also added an extra pickup during Christmas and New Years holidays.

 **A**ll Russellville City Schools retired educators are invited to a ARCS Retired Educators Breakfast this Friday, November 18, from 8:30-9:30 a.m., at the Russellville Middle School Library Media Center. You are encouraged, but not required, to RSVP by calling 256-331-2120.

 **T**he annual Russellville Christmas Parade will be Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 6 p.m. There are applications available for participation at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. This year's theme is "Christmas Past." Line up will be 5:15 p.m., at Big Star parking lot. Entry deadline is Monday, Nov. 28, at 4 p.m.

 **D**on't miss the 3rd Annual Santa Fly-In and Toy Drive Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., at the Russellville Municipal Airport. Come experience the magic of Santa's arrival with your family! Bring a toy to donate and your camera for a pic with Santa!

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RFD donates \$2,178 to Russellville Hospital fund used to provide no-cost mammograms

FCSO Reserves host state conference

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Matthew Waldrep attended the Spring 2022 Training Conference for the Alabama Sheriff Reserve Association (ASRA), he had no intention of returning to Franklin County with a project.

But the association, which holds two conferences each year, needed a Fall 2022 host organization, so Waldrep, who serves as President of the Franklin County Sheriff's Reserve, discussed it with Sheriff Shannon Oliver and with Oliver's support, he contacted ASRA President Marty Bowden. The Fall event in Franklin County.



Active shooter training was held in the new RHS addition.

Bowden quickly accepted the offer, and for the first time, an ASRA conference was hosted by a department north of Cullman.

Additionally, Waldrep was elected as ASRA Secretary, and Rhonda Bullion, another Franklin County Reserve Deputy, was named ASRA's North Regional Director. Waldrep has been part of the FCSD Reserves since 2011.

Waldrep, who works for the Franklin County Sheriff's Office as a dispatcher, said the conference included two days of active shooter exercises (thanks to Russellville City Schools allowing the new high school addition to be used for the drill), building clearance and firearms qualifying on the FCSD range.

The school training event involved different scenarios designed to allow first responders to improve their skills and decision-making in crisis response situations.

Madison County Reserve Deputy Joe Saxon was awarded the 2022 Alabama Sheriffs Reserve Association All-Around Reserve Deputy, the top honor presented during the two-day event.

In addition to Franklin County Sheriff's Reserves, several sheriff's deputies and employees volunteered their time for different activities over the weekend. Lt. Ryan Zedrow served as Range Master for the qualifying portion of the conference.

Waldrep said hosting the Fall conference was a true team effort. "We want to say 'thank you' to everyone who helped in any shape, form or fashion from helping with the event or with donations," Waldrep said. "We are working to get our reserve program active again in our community and we look forward to having more events."

Oliver said he supported the idea when Waldrep came to him about possibly hosting the Fall event.

"It's an honor to be able to host so many other agencies and to promote not only our department, but our community and county as well," Oliver said.

Bowden said a majority of Alabama's 67 sheriff's departments have reserve programs. There were approximately 40 reserve deputies who attended the Franklin County event.

"We really appreciate Franklin County putting this on. Everyone I've met has been friendly and nice. It's a beautiful area of the state and we are glad to be here for our fall event," Bowden said.

The ASRA was formed in 1978. It serves more than 1,200 reserve deputies across Alabama. ASRA provides training opportunities for reserve deputies, many of whom have limited training options in their home counties.

Reserve deputies serve an important supporting role for their departments and Oliver said many of his deputies started their law enforcement careers in the reserve program.

FCSD Investigator Richie Michael is over the reserve program. Michael said the more visible the reserve program is in the community, the more interest there will be for new members.

"We want this program to grow. This weekend was a great training experience for these guys. We're trying to get a lot more people on board and involved and hosting this event is a major step toward doing that," Michael said.



RFD Deputy Chief Randy Seal presents Russellville Hospital CEO Stephen Proctor with donation from t-shirt sales.

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

It's something we've done over the years and it's something we believe in. That's how Russellville Fire Department Deputy Chief Randy Seal describes the department's annual t-shirt sale fund raiser that funds screening mammograms to local residents who are unable to pay for the screening themselves.

Representatives from the RFD were on hand Friday morning to present a check for \$2,178.40 to the Russellville Hospital Firemen's Fund. That fund is used to offer free mammograms to individuals who are either uninsured or have no resources to pay for this important screening.

The annual fund raiser began 12 years ago as a partnership between Russellville Hospital and the Russellville Fire Department. Statistics prove early detection of breast cancer allows for the greatest opportunity for successful treatment.

"It's so important to have these screenings and this fund raiser makes it available to people right here in our community," Seal said.

Russellville Hospital CEO Stephen Proctor calls the Firemen's Fund a blessing for the local community.

"We are extremely blessed and thankful for the continued partnership with Russellville Fire Department and their generous donation," Proctor said Friday.

Funds are raised through the sale of pink t-shirts. The shirt design changes each year and community support of the t-shirt sales grows each year.

For more information on the Firemen's Fund and how to apply for a no-cost mammogram, contact Russellville Hospital or ask your health care provider to make a referral to the hospital.

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'ELECTIONS,' from Page 1

Washington.

"I'm confident Republicans will have a majority in the U.S. House. Our focus will be the economy, fuel prices, securing the border, strengthening our military and holding the Biden Administration accountable," Aderholt said.

Franklin County's legislative delegation in Montgomery both won easily, and received strong support locally. Sen. Larry Stutts (R-Tuscumbia) and Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville) both faced Libertarian Party challengers but no Democratic opponents.

Kiel received 6,713 votes to 312 for Talia Shimp, a Russellville resident who was the Libertarian nominee. Stutts received 6,137 votes to 796 for Libertarian Kyle Richard-Garrison.

Several local candidates were unopposed. Jeff Barksdale will be sworn in this January as District Attorney for the 34th Judicial Circuit. He follows Joey Rushing, who served three terms and did not seek reelection in 2022.

Shannon Oliver was elected to another term as Franklin County Sheriff with no general election opponent. This was Oliver's first time to seek office as a member of the Republican Party.

Charles Adcox won a second term as Franklin County Coroner and Terry Welborn was unopposed for his reelection bid to the Franklin County Board of Education District Two.

Franklin voters approved all 10 statewide amendments, with the largest vote in support of Amendment Two, which will allow county and city governments to use federal, state and grant funds for broadband expansion.

In a bit of a surprise, though, the one local amendment, Local Amendment One, was defeated by a 3,075-2,672 majority for no.

The amendment would have allowed Franklin County mayors to opt-in to State of Alabama Employee Retirement Systems in towns where full-time city employees already participate in state retirement.

Voters in Red Bay supported the local amendment by a 414-294 vote, but it failed 315-231 in the Russellville High School precinct, and was rejected by substantial margins in Churntown and Tharptown.

On Wednesday, the Alabama Republican Party released a statement that demonstrated how strong Republicans are in Alabama.

Once again, Republicans won every statewide race. Republicans maintained large majorities in the Alabama House and Senate, and picked up more than a dozen local and county positions across Alabama.

Meanwhile, the Alabama Democratic Party again demonstrated how dysfunctional it's become.

Just days before the general election, Alabama Democratic Party Chair Randy Kelley sent all state Democratic Executive Committee members, along with county party chairmen, a letter alleging that Vice Chair Tabitha Isner, who ran for Chair but lost, was "doing everything at her command to frustrate, undermine, interfere and prevent the Democratic Party from moving forward."

Kelly directed all state committee members and county chairmen to "ignore, disregard, and reject any communication" sent by Isner.

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Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade began as a way to attract new customers



COURTESY PHOTO

Alexa Gault
RMS Tiger Times Reporter

As the United States prospered during the Roaring Twenties, so did New York City's iconic department store—Macy's.

After going public in 1922, Macy's started to gain competitors.

To showcase the opening of the "World's Largest Store" and its one million square feet of retail space at the start of the busy Christmas shopping season, Macy's decided to throw New York a parade on Thanksgiving morning!

In spite of its timing, the parade was not actually about Thanksgiving at all but the next major holiday on the calendar, Christmas. Macy's hoped its "Christmas

Parade" would attract the attention of customers for a holiday shopping spree.

Today, this event has many famous guests and viewers, and people are invited to be a part of this tradition.

This parade is now a tradition for many families in the United States to either visit or play on the television while cooking their Thanksgiving feast!

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Murphree 'humbled and excited' to win seat on Franklin County Board of Education

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

"Humbled and excited."

Carol Murphree used those words to describe being elected to the Franklin County Board of Education District Four seat.

Murphree, the Republican nominee, defeated Democratic incumbent Shannon Oliver by a 857-276 margin in Tuesday's general election.

In May, Murphree defeated Heath McKee in the Republican Primary to move on the November 8th general election in what was her first run for public office.

"I was very surprised and very pleased," Murphree said. "I want to thank the voters of District Four for having confidence in me and I'm looking forward to serving them."

There are five districts across Franklin County, with the City of Russellville excluded. District Four includes all or part of the following voting precincts: Frankfort, Belgreen, Rockwood, Mountain Star, Saints Crossroads, Halltown, Waco and Jonesboro.

Murphree, a retired educator with more than 30 years' experience in the classroom, won each of those eight precincts, along with absentee votes. Murphree, as was the case with all Republican candidates on the ballot, benefited greatly from straight party ballots.

Of Franklin County's 7,487 ballots cast in Tuesday's election, 4,306 were straight party Republican votes, compared to 461 straight party Democratic votes and 27 straight party Libertarian ballots cast.

Oliver was elected in 2010 and again in 2016 to represent BOE District Four.

Murphree's experience as an educator will bring a different perspective to the Board of Education, as she explained.

"I definitely understand the classroom atmosphere as a former educator. I'm able to deal with the parents to try and diffuse and solve issues," Murphree said. "I also see the other side more clearly and that's what teachers told me they wanted."

"I realize what pressures they are under and I can relate to the educator's perspective, but I can also relate to the parents. That gives me confidence I can help solve problems with our school system," she added.

Although Murphree and her husband Jimmy served as poll workers for many years, campaigning for office was something new. It turned out to be something she found enlightening and enjoyable.

"It's a totally new experience for us. But I really enjoyed it, mostly meeting people, listening to their views of Franklin County Schools and seeing what's important to them," Murphree said. "I've always wanted to serve and I found campaigning to be a very positive experience."

Murphree expressed her appreciation to Franklin County Republican Executive Committee Chairman Jerry Mays for his assistance and support.

"This was a new process to me. I had to learn how to qualify and what to do next and Jerry was a lot of help to me," Murphree said. "Now, it's time to listen, learn and do what's best for our students in Franklin County."



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Letters to the Editor

We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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SPORTS

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Local martial arts studio fares well at Region 6 tournament

*John Pilati
Franklin Free Press*

Students of the Russellville Tang Soo Do martial art studio recently traveled to the World Tang Soo Do Association Region 6 Tournament, and several competitors came home with medals.

Region 6 is comprised of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. Students from across Region 6 competed on October 1st at Lee High School in Huntsville.

Students who participated in the tournament could medal in different aspects of Tang Soo Do ranging from weapons forms to empty hand forms and even sparring.

Tang Soo Do is a Korean martial art taught for self-defense, good health and self-improvement through endurance and hard work.

Seven students from the Russellville Tang Soo Do studio brought home hardware from the Region 6 Tournament. Those students and their awards are:

- Deryll Banning: 1st in Weapons, 3rd in Forms.
- Joy Brown: 3rd in Forms, 2nd in Sparring and 2nd in Weapons.
- Landon Gerstman: 3rd in Forms.
- Stephen Strickland: 3rd in Weapons.
- Shaler Stone: 2nd in Sparring, 3rd in Forms, 3rd in Weapons.
- Jonathan Brown: 1st Forms, 1st Weapons, 1st Sparring.
- Jacob Hartsell: 1st Forms, 1st Weapons, 1st Sparring.

Several Russellville Tang Soo Do students recently completed their Black Belt tests on the

See, 'LOCAL,' page 14

*Have an opinion?
Story idea?*

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Spartans end Golden Tigers' playoff run

*John Pilati
Franklin Free Press*

There was plenty of bad news for the Pleasant Grove Spartans in the first half of Friday's 5A second round playoff game at Russellville..

Coach Darrell LeBeaux' team committed a litany of mistakes, including snaps over the quarterback's head, missed defensive assignments and costly penalties that caused two touchdowns to be called back on the same drive.

The bad news for Russellville? Even with Pleasant Grove's multiple miscues, the Spartans still led 22-7 at halftime.

Pleasant Grove went on to advance to the third round with a 37-14



WARHURST

road victory.

Coach John Ritter's Golden Tigers moved inside the Pleasant Grove 20 yard line twice in the first quar-

ter, but one drive ended with a sack. The next Russellville possession stalled at the Spartan 11, but Manny Martinez' field

goal attempt was blocked and returned 89 yards for a touchdown by Camren Wormley.

What could have been a 7-3 game late in the first quarter turned into a 15-0 Pleasant Grove lead on one play.

"We felt good about Manny from 45 yards in so we decided to kick the field goal and get some points on the board," Ritter said. "The Wormley kid is one of the fastest kids we've ever played against, and the fastest I've seen in the last 15 years. He came off the edge, bent just right and made a big play. It changed the momentum of the game."

The Spartans sacked Russellville quarterback Harrison Burch four times in the first half, and two of those

See, 'RHS,' page 13

Stidham honored as NFF Scholar-Athlete

*Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press*

Troy University's Austin Stidham picked up one of the most prestigious honors in major college football as he was selected as a member of the 2022 National Football Foundation (NFF) National Scholar-Athlete Class and is a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy.

The Campbell Trophy is college football's premier scholar-athlete award that annually recognizes an individual as the absolute best in the nation for his combined academic success, football performance and exemplary leadership.

As a NFF Scholar-Athlete, Stidham, a product of Russellville High School, will receive an \$18,000 postgraduate scholarship and will travel to



Bellagio Resort & Casino in Las Vegas for the 64th NFF Annual Awards Dinner on December 6, where his accomplishments will be highlighted in front of one of the most powerful audiences in all of sports.

Stidham is a two-time College Sports Communicators Academic All-American and a three-time All-Sun Belt Conference selection. Stidham had a 3.9 GPA an undergraduate Biology major, and has a 4.0 GPA graduate in his post-graduate studies in Education.

"I describe it as the Heisman trophy of academics," Stidham said, "It's a big honor and I am really excited to travel to Vegas."

If Stidham is selected Dec. 6 as the winner, Stidham will join Tim Tebow, Peyton Manning, and former Alabama offensive lineman Barrett Jones as a winner of this prestigious award.

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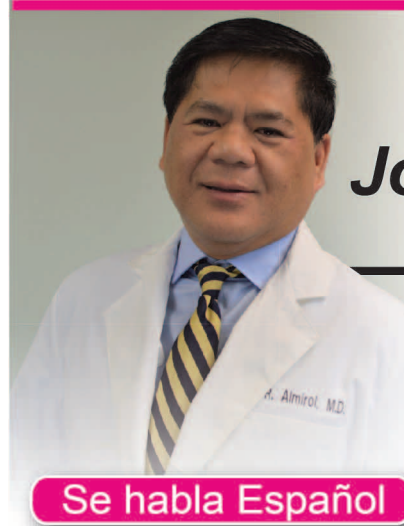
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'RHS,' from Page 11

came on third down plays. After a Russellville punt, Pleasant Grove took over at its own 29 with 8:50 left in the half.

The Spartans needed only five plays to score their third touchdown. Eric Handley's screen pass to Kyron Burroughs went for 40 yards down to the Russellville 12. On the next play, Handley hit Rashad Sager for another touchdown, and Pleasant Grove led 22-0 with 7:04 left.

The next Golden Tiger drive ended with a bad snap on a fourth and one from the Spartan nine-yard line. But Russellville's defense forced a three-and-out, and the Golden Tigers took over at the Spartan 42.

On third down, Burch found a wide open Tilmon Baker for a 42-yard touchdown. The PAT made it 22-7, and that's how it went to halftime.

To start the second half, Russellville recovered an onside kick at the Pleasant Grove 49. Two plays later, Burch appeared to connect with Randell Johnson in stride inside the Spartan 20, but Johnson dropped the pass and the Golden Tigers punted one play later.

What could have been a game-changing play with the onside kick was erased and Pleasant Grove's offense soon took advantage.

We got a score right before the half and we told our guys to get a stop at the end of the half and we were going to try an onside kick to start the second half and try to steal a possession," Ritter said.

"Manny works on it every day and we executed it and recovered. But we just couldn't punch it in. It was almost like we labored all game long. We just couldn't sustain anything. Pleasant Grove was an athletic, rough talented team and very well coached. We struggled up front on both sides. We couldn't get pressure and we couldn't establish the line of scrimmage, and that causes you problems," he added.

Sager hauled in a slant from Handley and raced down to the Russellville 24. Three plays later, Collin Moore scored and the Spartans led 30-7 after Clarence Taylor hauled in the two-point conversion with 7:40 remaining in the third.

After a Russellville fumble gave Pleasant Grove good field position at the RHS 48, the Golden Tiger defense stopped a fourth-down play and the offense returned to the field for a drive starting at the Russellville 39.

Three plays later, the Spartans recovered another Golden Tiger fumble and Derrick Davis Jr., found the end zone from 12 yards out three plays later. The PAT was good and Pleasant Grove led 37-7.

With 8:02 left, Burch again found Baker wide open for a big play down to the Spartan three. Two plays later, Baker caught his second TD as he was all alone in the left corner of the end zone. Martinez' PAT made it 37-14.

Pleasant Grove improved to 10-1, with its only blemish a 21-14 Week Three loss to Ramsay, another team still alive in the 5A playoffs.

Russellville finished 7-5, including a 6-0 record in Region 8.

It was the final game for a talented group of Golden Tiger seniors, including running back Conner Warhurst. Two weeks from suffering a high ankle sprain, the senior had several tough runs against a talented Pleasant Grove defense. Warhurst finished the year with an average of 143 yards per game and 21 touchdowns.

"(Conner) was about 80-85 percent, but that kid is a warrior," Ritter said. "He's been a warrior since he was a freshman and got thrown out there against the Number One team in the state (Jasper) and had 14 tackles. He's been fun to coach."

In the past four seasons, the Golden Tigers have won three consecutive Region 8 championships, with a 23-2 Region 8 record.

The Golden Tigers' overall record the past four seasons is 34-14.

While not a large group of seniors (11), Ritter said he admired their workmanlike effort and commitment whether coming off a close loss to Mars Hill or riding a three-game win streak.

"There was never an issue with our seniors not working or practicing hard, and that's very refreshing from a group of guys who are pretty talented," Ritter said.

As for his team's final record of 7-5, Ritter said Russellville's non-region schedule was difficult by design. It included the always tough rival in Deshler, 7A Grissom, the very talented Mars Hill Panthers and 6A Athens. Even though Athens did not make the playoffs, Ritter said their talent level would have been enough to propel them into the post season in any other 6A region.

The Golden Tigers' losses to Deshler, Mars Hill and Athens were by a combined nine points. In the season opener, Grissom defeated Russellville by 13.

"Our goals since I've been here are not only to represent our community, our school and our tradition of Golden Tiger football, but to put a good product on the field," Ritter said.

"The product on the field is what I'm most concerned about and we were two points and eight seconds away from being 9-3. Does that change what I think about our team or our outlook? For me, it doesn't. That is reflected in the way we played," he added.

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'LOCAL,' from Page 11



PHOTO BY MICHAEL RICE

Russellville Tang Soo Do students excelled at the recent Region 6 Tournament, competing against students from Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana & Mississippi. day before the Region 6 Championships. Black Belt candidates from All-American Tang Soo Do included Landon Gerstman and Karlee Faust (testing for Second Degree Black Belt) and Jonathan Brown, Shaler Stone and Jason Boyles (testing for First Degree Black Belt).

Studio owner and instructor Tom Jones said classes are held in Russellville at American Health and Fitness on Mondays and Thursdays, with the basic/youth class from 3:30-4:30 and the adult/advanced class from 4:30-5:30.

Students may enroll for classes starting at age 6.

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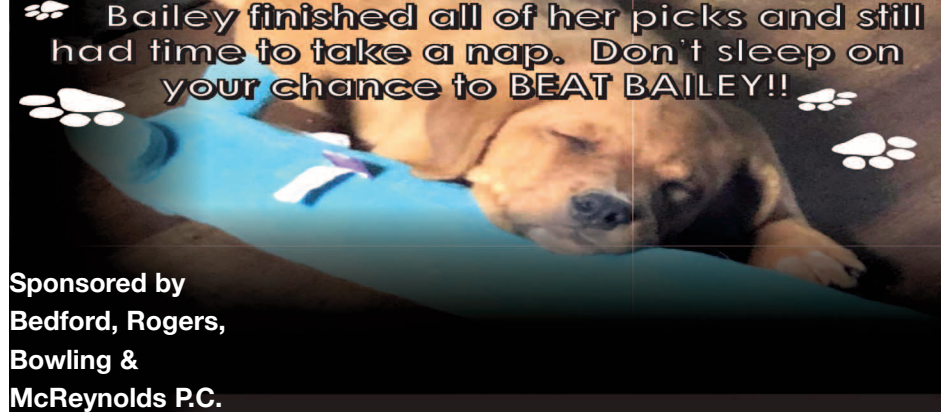
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Bailey bounced back to go 7-3 this week. But Jordan McCarley bested that with a 9-1 record to become our Week 11 winner!

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 12 must be postmarked by Friday, November 18th and picks submitted by email for Week 12 must be received by Saturday, November 19th, 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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