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## City councilmen opposed to three-precinct polling center

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Two Russellville city councilmen attended a public hearing last week to voice their opposition to the proposed creation of a three-precinct polling center that would consolidate three Russellville voting districts into one location.

Last month, the Franklin County Commission approved a March 21st public hearing to receive input on a proposed polling center at Russellville First Baptist Church that would consolidate three precincts,

the Electric Board Warehouse, the Franklin County Courthouse Annex and College Avenue School.

The proposal, which was recommended by Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore, would not impact where residents in those districts vote in municipal elections. Instead, if approved, the changes would apply to all primary and general elections, as well as any runoffs for either primary or general elections.

Russellville's District Two councilman Darren Woodruff and District Five councilman Jamie Harris both

See 'POLLING CENTERS,' Page 7

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## Red Bay's Weeks presented with Hall of Fame Award

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Hall of Fame Award is presented annually to a citizen whose lifetime accomplishments are both outstanding and historically significant to Franklin County.

To those who know him, Red Bay resident J.C. Weeks epitomizes those criteria.

Weeks was presented this year's Hall of Fame Award at Thursday's Franklin County Partnership Awards Banquet, held at the A.W. Todd Centre.

Weeks, owner/pharmacist at Red Bay's Redmont Pharmacy, earned the respect of his customers

through the years making house calls for local residents and staying open before/after hours to serve his customers.



Weeks, left, with Chamber Board member Chase Sparks.

The Red Bay native is a member and deacon at First Baptist Church Red Bay and a member of the Red Bay Lions Club.

After he received the Hall of Fame award, Weeks' employees posted congratulations on social media to

See 'WEEKS,' Page 9

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**John Byron Allen, 45, of Russellville, passed away March 21, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.**

**Martha Carolyn Fleming, 79, of Russellville, passed away March 23, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.**

**Janice (Jan) Edna Logan Grissom, 81, of Spruce Pine, passed away Friday, March 24, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.**

**John White, Jr., 71 of Phil Campbell, passed away Friday, March 24, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.**

**Emmie Kay Mashburn Jones, 87, of Tuscumbia passed away on Thursday, March 23, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.**

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## Franklin Free Press

113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653  
256-332-0255

The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc.  
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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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Send your guest columns, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com)

**GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE**  
**STREET DEPARTMENT**  
Mike, build this in a black bordered box  
**EQUIPMENT OPERATOR II**  
Truck Driving Experience Preferred

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:** Drives and operates equipment to accomplish a full range of assignments and tasks. Operates heavy equipment on job sites, such as, but not limited to: back hoe, bobcat, loader and knuckle booms.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** The completion of High School Diploma or GED. Two years of work experience maintaining or constructing roads. Two years of work experience as an Equipment Operator I. The possession of a current and valid class B CDL. Work experience in the operation of knuckle boom truck.

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All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or any other non-merit factor.

Applications may be picked up at Russellville City Hall in the Office of the Mayor, 304 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, Alabama. Applications must be returned no later than April 21, 2023 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board  
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# My take on this... "Changes"

Gail Motes  
Franklin Free Press

Well, hello again!  
It's been a while since I've written. It sure isn't because I've had nothing to say because thoughts run around in my head like a marathon runner.

That might not be a good comparison for me to use. A runner has a stopping point and we all know that I don't.

I've found myself thinking about differences in my grandma's time until my mother, when she became a grandmother. By the time I was a grandmother, it was like centuries had passed.

There used to be a time when vegetables were planted in a garden. Weeds were chopped down between the plants to help them become stronger and bigger. Later, weeds were planted on purpose. Whereas, vegetables were grown to eat; the weed was grown to smoke. I've been told weed would give them a 'high.' I wouldn't know. I got high by climbing trees.

The past years have taken us from no phones to party lines and dial phones to touchtone. Touchtone phones have been replaced with a com-

puterized device that can be held in your hand and all you need to do is ask a human voice that is inside to call a person on a list of friends. This is a listing of your personal choosing, which deletes the use of a phone directory; that today's younger generation have never heard of anyway.

The days of new and improved have resulted in a lack of verbal communications.



Gail Motes

A person used to run from a camera because of 'not wanting' their picture taken. Now, a person runs to the cell phone to have a picture taken.

I know, I know! I'm hearing a lot of 'not me's!' If you don't like my story, I have a solution for you. Write your own. The Franklin Free Press will gladly publish your personal article.

Excuse me. I need to get back to my thoughts on 'my' article! The list is endless from generation to generation. You might enjoy talking with your grandchildren about the differences between your childhood and theirs. Ask them if they feel like they have had a good childhood up to now. Remember to listen to them. Watch their expressions. Don't interrupt. If they will tell you, all you need to do is learn.

Of course, it's better to choose a time when their cell phone is charging.

I need to go. So many different thoughts are running through my mind. I need to go catch one of them to write about next time.

I am often asked how I come up with things to write about. Coming up with them is not the problem. The problem is laying down my cell phone long enough to write. It's not because I'm taking selfies. I play games. I've been told it's a good way to improve the mind. I think it's helping.

Of course, there is always a person who disagrees. Guess what I tell them? Go write an article for the Franklin Free Press.

I hope you have half as much fun reading this as I had writing it.

As always,

until later...

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# RFD firemen rescue Massey family from blaze

Michael Rice  
Franklin Free Press

*You never what to expect when you go on a trip with Shane.*

That friendly warning was conveyed to Russellville Fire Department firefighter Michael Hall by Elisha Mansell, wife of RFD Acting Sergeant Shane Mansell before he and Mansell left town Tuesday morning.

And truer words were never spoken.

On the way to Anderson, South Carolina, March 21st, to pick up a boat, Mansell and Hall were driving through Massey, Alabama, at 5:30

a.m., when they thought they saw a storage unit business on fire.

When they got closer, the two men noticed it was actually a split apartment building ablaze.

Without hesitation, Mansell and Hall turned the truck around and went to help.

Hall was able to get the father and the son out of one apartment while Mansell rescued the other two children. The daughter of the family told Mansell their dog was still in the house, so Hall went back in to rescue the family pet.

An 18-wheeler was stopped on the side of the road and the driver called 911, but local responders were not yet on the scene when the two Russellville firefighters drove by the scene.

"It's our everyday job, it's what we do. We don't think nothing else about it," Mansell said.

After the local fire department arrived, Mansell and Hall left to make it in time to get the boat as if it was any other day.

"I've known these guys for several years now. Shane has actually been involved in several situations like this. In one instance, he gave CPR to someone at a fishing tournament. Michael is always trying to help people any way he can outside the fire department," Deputy Chief Randy Seal said.

Mansell has been a firefighter for over 21 years and Hall has been a firefighter for 20.

Hall downplayed their heroic action as just being part of what a first responder does.

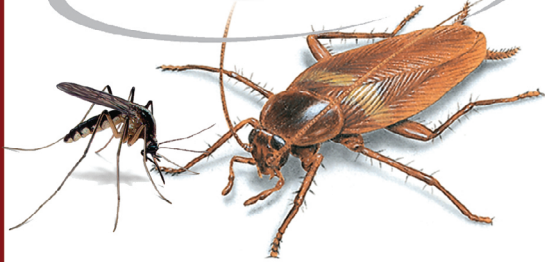
"We were just doing what we're trained to do. We didn't expect any recognition for what we did," Hall said.

And Hall will always remember the words of his friend's wife...You never what to expect when you go on a trip with Shane.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL RICE

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Mansell and Hall rushed in the house without any protective gear prior to the local fire department arriving to the scene.

"It's absolutely a God thing. He puts me in situations to help people," Mansell said.

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 **T**he next meeting of the Franklin County Community Development Commission will be Friday, March 31, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex. All grant requests must be submitted to a member of the commission by Friday, March 24, 2023, at 12 p.m. Commission members include Brad Bolton, Jeremy Campbell and David Grissom.

 **B**elgreen High School will hold Kindergarten registration on Friday, March 31, 2023, from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., in the Belgreen High School Library. Parents or guardians of children who are 5 years old on or before September 1, 2023, may register their child. Please bring child's birth certificate, Social Security card, proof of residency and updated immunization records. If you are unable to attend, please register your child through the online registration. It is preferable to register kindergarten students BEFORE the end of May to account for accurate numbers for the upcoming school year.

 **R**ussellville Masonic Lodge #371 is selling Smoked Hams during Easter weekend. Hams are \$35 each and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup is Saturday, April 8, between 8-10 a.m., at the Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

 **T**he Mom-Son Prom 2023 is set for Saturday, April 15, from 5-9 p.m., at the A.W. Todd Centre, 201 S. Washington Ave., Russellville. There will be food, great music and pictures. Church attire or formal wear please. \$25 for one mom and son. \$5/additional son. Please call Tammy west at 256-668-7649 for tickets or more information.

 **Y**ou are invited to Women's Brunch 2023, Saturday, April 1 from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., at the A.W. Todd Centre, 201 Washington Ave. S, Russellville. There will be speakers, vendors and door prizes. A full brunch meal will be served. There will be singing and more! \$30 entry fee. Doesn't matter where you're from. Come join us! Call Tammy West at 256-668-7649 for tickets or information.

 **F**ood Giveaway - Groceries will be given out while supplies last Thursday, March 30, 2023 2:00 pm Please stay in your vehicle, have an ID handy and allow our volunteers to serve you! Russellville First United Methodist Church (Corner of Madison and Washington)

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# 'POLLING CENTER,' from Page 1

opposed changing the locations of the Electric Board Warehouse (which is District Five in City of Russellville municipal elections) and College Avenue School (which is District Two in City of Russellville municipal elections).

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Both precincts, the Electric Board Warehouse and College Avenue School, currently vote at a polling center at the A.W. Todd Centre.

Moore's proposal is to move the voting location for the Courthouse Annex to First Baptist Church Russellville, and consolidate it with the two precincts currently voting at the A.W. Todd Centre.

According to 2022 records, there are 905 registered voters in the Courthouse Annex precinct, 892 in College Avenue School and 1,107 in the Electric Warehouse.

Harris said his objection to the proposal is the risk of confusion to voters. "There is always some confusion that goes along with change. At the A.W. Todd Centre, we have a lot of older and/or disabled voters who can park under the covered driveway to vote. And there is enough room where it won't block traffic," Harris said.

Harris also expressed concern about candidates not being allowed to post campaign signs at a polling center located at a church. Harris suggest-

ed Moore look into using the Russellville City Hall to house the Courthouse Annex precinct (District Three in City of Russellville municipal elections) for primary and general elections, as it already serves as the District Three polling place in municipal elections.

Another option Harris presented was to move the Courthouse Annex precinct to the A.W. Todd Centre, which would then house all three precincts.

"I try to speak for the people in my district and I think it's in their best interest to stay where we vote now—at the A.W. Todd Centre," Harris said.

Moore expressed concern about parking limitations if the three-district polling center was housed at the A.W. Todd Centre.

"Parking is an issue, especially during the day when the CB&S Bank Operations Center employees are working. It gets crowded," Moore said. "Parking is much more plentiful at First Baptist Church and there are two handicapped entrances for voters to get into the building. And during city elections, we get calls about parking problems at City Hall and that can inconvenience municipal workers."

Gene Ellison, a member and deacon at First Baptist Church, said the deacons had approved use of the church as a polling center as long as campaign signs are not placed on church property. The deacons were not advocating for, or against, the proposal other than to say they would allow use of the church if requested.

Commissioners will vote on the proposal at their April meeting. Moore said if any precinct locations are changed, the Franklin County Board of Registrars would send cards to all voters notifying them of the change.

"None of this would change any district lines—just the location of where they vote," Moore said.

Woodruff said he receives calls every election from residents in District Two who don't know where to vote.

"We're in two spots already and I fear if we are moved again to another spot that will create that much more confusion," Woodruff said. "Also I'm concerned about three polling places in the same location. I'm afraid it will be too congested."

Moore explained that the commission can not simply move the Courthouse Annex to First Baptist Church because the church is outside the Courthouse Annex district lines. An exception under Alabama law exists for polling centers, which house multiple polling places. A polling center may be located outside the precinct that votes there.

Russellville City Councilman Gary Cummings represents District Three, which is the Courthouse Annex, said he respected the requests of the other two council members to keep their polling places at the A.W. Todd Centre.

As for moving the Courthouse Annex, though, Cummings said he was confident it would not be a problem for those he represents.

"I respect what y'all are wanting to do and understand you want to stay where you're at. But it's no problem for the people of District Three whatever you do," Cummings said. "I've got faith they will understand where to vote and it won't be a problem."

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# JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Franklin County Commission is accepting applications for the following position(s):

Deputy, Sheriff's Office

Roadway Maintenance Technician II, Highway Department

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County

Commission office until 5:00 PM on

Friday, March 31, 2023.

Assistant County Engineer, Highway Department

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County

Commission office until the position has been filled.



## “A Night with The Burnells”

7 p.m. • Friday, March 31 • Roxy Theatre

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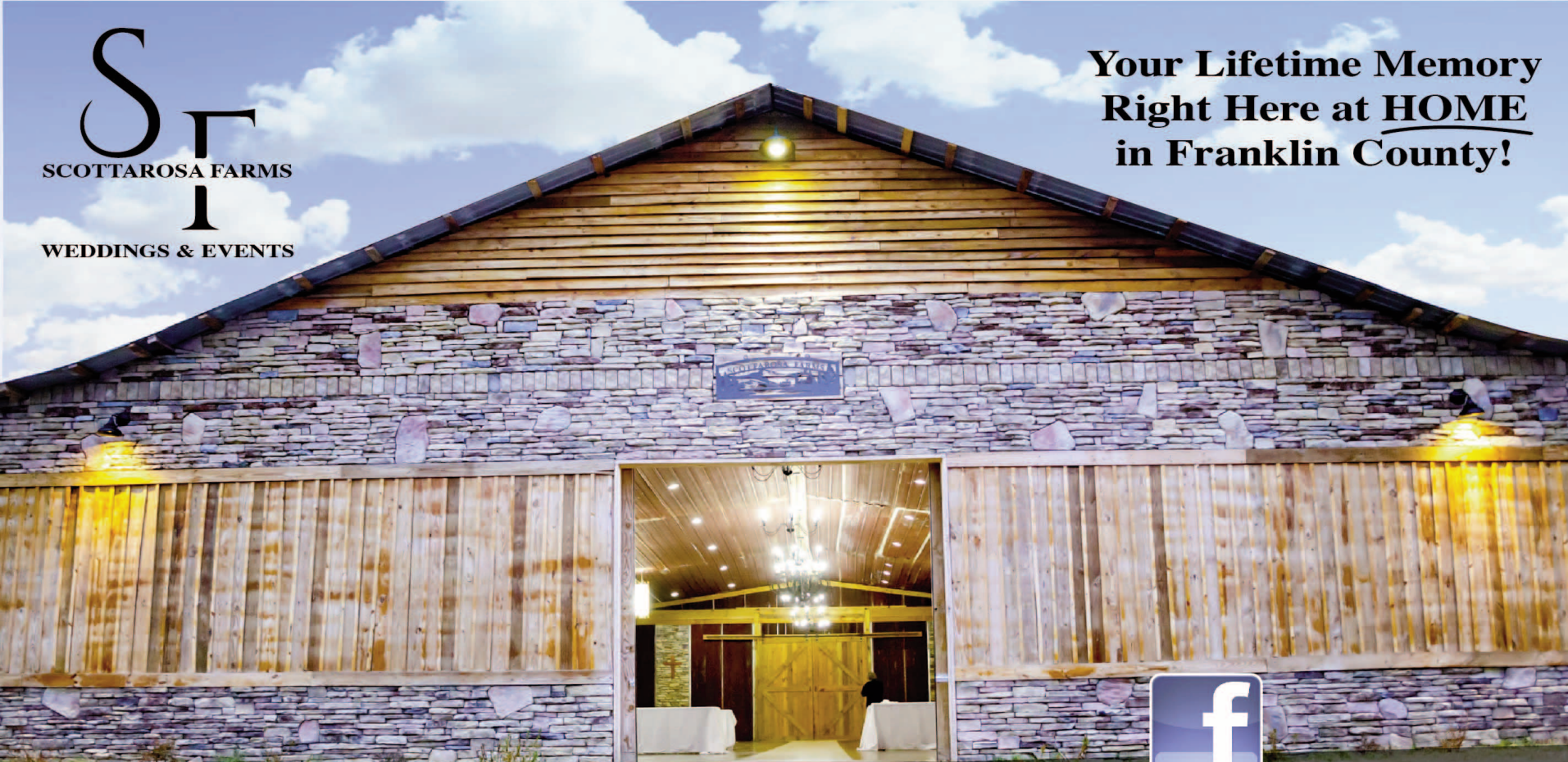
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# TAX LIEN SALE

Franklin County Revenue Commissioner Stratt Byars will be holding the 2022 Tax Lien Auction on May 2, 2023 at 10 am CST on the website [www.govease.com](http://www.govease.com). In accordance with Title 40, Chapter 10, Code of Alabama 1975 (§40-10-180 through 201), the Franklin County tax collecting official has authority to auction and sell tax liens on properties for which ad valorem property taxes are delinquent.

An updated list of delinquent parcels from the 2022 tax year is posted and can be found inside the Franklin County Courthouse on the first floor bulletin board and inside of the Red Bay office. All potential bidders are required to register at [www.govease.com](http://www.govease.com) before the auction commences.

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

## 'WEEKS,' from Page 1

their boss and friend.

"We get the honor of working with this amazing man and seeing first hand all he truly does for his community. He's one of the most selfless individuals with a true servant's heart," the Facebook post read.

The annual Partnership Awards are hosted jointly by the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and the Franklin County Development Authority.

There are seven categories of awards presented by the Chamber and four awards presented by the FCDA.

This year's honorees through the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce included:

--Beautification Award: Gigi's Unique Finds, Phil Campbell. Blue Boys, LLC, Red Bay. Russellville High School, Russellville.

--Business of the Year Award: CB&S Bank.

--Franklin County's Best Kept Secret Award: Shelby Grissom Memorial Fashion Show at Phil Campbell High School.

--Distinguished Service Award: Wayne Welborn, Phil Campbell. Betsy Green, Russellville. Sue Raper, Franklin County at Large.

--Volunteer of the Year Award: Natalie Bendall.

--Roger Bedford Unsung Hero Award: Northwest-Shoals Community College.

Franklin County Development Authority award recipients included:

--Excellence in Industrial Growth Award: Leisure Creations.

--Industrial Support Award: Russellville Municipal Airport.

--Industry of the Year Award: G&G Stell.

--Educator of the Year Award: Trevor Allison, Franklin County Schools. Niki Watts, Russellville City Schools.

### GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE STREET DEPARTMENT

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**QUALIFICATIONS:** The completion of High School Diploma or GED. Four years of work experience maintaining or constructing roads. Two years of work experience as an Equipment Operator II. The possession of a current and valid class A CDL. Work experience as a construction contractor is preferred.

THE CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or any other non-merit factor.

Applications may be picked up at Russellville City Hall in the Office of the Mayor, 304 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, Alabama. Applications must be returned no later than April 21, 2023 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board  
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## Snead States takes 3 of 4 from Patriots

Michael Rice  
Franklin Free Press

The Northwest-Shoals Community College Patriots played a Alabama Community College Conference doubleheader against Southern Union State Community College on Saturday, March 18th. The Patriots lost game one 2-0 and SUSCC also won the nightcap, 4-2.

The Patriots swept the teams' first doubleheader on Thursday, March 16th, with NW-SCC winning 4-3 and 13-3.

Game one was a pitcher's duel between the Patriots' Bryce Sanders and Southern Union's Camden Diamond. The game was scoreless through five innings.

Sanders threw six innings, allowing only four hits and two runs. Diamond shined with a 5.2 inning performance where he allowed no runs on four hits with three strikeouts.

Alex Wilson went 2-4 at the plate.

In game two, the Patriots trailed 3-0 after three innings. NW-SCC would rally for runs in both the fourth and fifth innings, but it wasn't enough to catch SUSCC.

Cason Henry threw six innings for the Patriots. Henry allowed six hits and four runs.

Grayson Thorpe was 2-3 and had one RBI. Cole Strachan went 1-2 with one RBI.

The Patriots started last week with a win over Columbia State Community College, 11-1, on Tuesday, March 21st.

Cade Prestegard threw two innings, allowing one hit with one strikeout.

See, 'NW-SCC,' page 12

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## McCrary tabbed as Russellville OC

Michael Rice  
Franklin Free Press

On March 23rd, the Russellville City Board of Education approved the hiring of Kevin McCrary as a physical education teacher at Russellville Middle School and offensive coordinator for the Russellville High School varsity football team.

McCrary replaces Brett Voss, who served as the Golden Tigers' offensive coordinator through 2022 before taking the RMS head football coaching position after last season.

McCrary has over twenty years coaching experience and most recently served as offensive coordinator at Decatur High School the past five seasons. He was part of the Red Raiders' coaching staff for 12 years.

Last season, McCrary's offense averaged 35 points per game in one of Alabama's toughest regions. Decatur quarterback Ellis Hickman set school records for passing yards and touchdowns under McCrary's guidance.

In 12 games last year, Hickman had 2,247 passing yards and 24 touchdown passes. Senior wideout Jayden Brown also set a school record with 12 touchdown receptions and 885 receiving yards on 46 receptions.

RHS head football coach John Ritter said McCrary's resume stood out because of his extensive experience as well as two top-flight rec-



COURTESY PHOTO

McCrary with son Preston.

ommendations from recently retired Decatur head coach Jere Adcock and former Decatur assistant coach Kenny Morson, now head coach at Florence High School.

See, 'McCrary,' Page 14

## RHS girls varsity tennis enjoys 3-0 week

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville High School girls varsity tennis team continued through its tough spring schedule with back-to-back wins Monday and Tuesday over Wilson and Deshler High schools. A Thursday victory over Brooks completed a 3-0 week for Russellville.

Russellville rolled over Deshler 7-2 in a team match held March 21st at the Russellville Tennis Complex.

Coach Charlotte Dollar's team took five of six singles courts and two of three doubles matches.

Peyton Parrish won No. 1 singles over Reagan Dickerson 6-1, 6-1. Playing No. 2 singles, Sofia Tiffin defeated Deshler's Josie Beckman 6-1, 6-0. Russellville's Addie

Strickland defeated Rosie Thompson 6-3, 6-4 on No. 3 singles and Kinsley Palmer took No. 4 singles for the Golden Tigers, 6-2, 6-1 over AK Johnson.

Kaitlin Speck won No. 5 singles for Russellville, 6-3, 6-4 over Lillian Gamble. Deshler's Abby Wright won No. 6 singles over Russellville's Lily Cate Pace, 7-5, 6-1.

In doubles play, the Golden Tigers took two of three courts. Parrish/Tiffin swept No. 1 doubles over Hester/Thompson, 6-1, 6-0 and Palmer/Pace defeated Johnson/Wright on No. 3 doubles, 7-5, 2-6, 10-7.

Deshler's No. 2 tandem of McCalpin/Gamble defeated Strickland/Kiel 6-2, 6-4.

The day before facing Deshler, the Lady Golden Tigers defeated Wilson also by a 7-2 margin.

Singles winners for RHS included Parrish

See, 'TENNIS,' page 13



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## 'NW-SCC,' from Page 11

Landon Leslie pitched one inning, allowing one hit. Ethan Muncher threw two innings. Muncher allowed two hits and one run.

Samuel Pace earned the win for the Patriots. Pace threw two innings and allowed one run.

Logan James went 3-4, scoring one run and Eli Gipson went 3-2, scoring two runs.

On Thursday, March 23rd, the Patriots split a conference doubleheader with Snead State Community College.

The Patriots won game one 13-2.

On the mound, Michael Pfeiffer threw five innings, allowing six hits and two runs. Pfeiffer also walked three and struck out five batters.

Wilson went 3-4 at the plate, scoring two runs and driving in four runs.

Prestegard went 2-2 and scored three times.

The Patriots lost game two, 17-1, as Snead State scored all 17 runs in the first four innings.

Sanders started for NW-SCC, going 1.1 innings, giving up seven hits and eight runs. Leslie pitched one inning and allowed one hit and struck out one batter.

Jacob Little pitched 1.2 innings allowing five hits and four runs.

Emitt Green threw one inning allowing four hits and five runs.

Wilson went 2-1 at the plate and scored once.

Snead State swept a doubleheader the following day, as the two teams played in Arab, Al.

The Patriots were defeated in game one 11-1.

Prestegard pitched one inning allowing five hits and three runs.

Henry pitched 3.1 innings and allowed eight hits and eight runs.

Strachan went 1-1 and scored one run.

Snead State's offense remained hot in game two, as the Patriots lost 9-5.

Prestegard and Drew McBurnett each had home runs for the Patriots, McBurnett's in the sixth and Prestegard's in the seventh inning.

Northwest-Shoals will travel to Hanceville to play a doubleheader against Wallace State Community College on Thursday, March 30th. The teams will play another doubleheader Saturday, April 1st, with first pitch set for 1 p.m., in Muscle Shoals.

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# 'TENNIS,' from Page 11

(No. 1), over Reagan Dickerson, 6-1, 6-1, Tiffin (No. 2) over Josie Beckman, 6-1, 6-0, Palmer (No. 4) over Katie Robertson, 6-4, 6-1, Pace (No. 6) over Mollie Buerhaus 7-5, 6-1.

Wilson's Makayla Carter defeated Strickland on No. 3 singles, 6-4, 1-6, 12-10 and Wilson's Emma Darby defeated Lakin Derrick 6-3, 6-0 on No. 5 singles.

The No. 1 doubles team for Russellville, Parrish/Tiffin, won 6-3, 6-1 over Dickerson/Carter and No. 2 doubles, Strickland/Sarah Kate Kiel, defeated Darby/Buerhaus, 4-6, 6-3, 10-7.

Russellville's No. 3 doubles team of Palmer/Pace handled Beckman/Robertson 6-1, 6-2, to complete the sweep of doubles courts.

Dollar said she's pleased with her team's quality of play so far this season, particularly considering some of the setbacks her players have been forced to deal with.

"We have had several lingering illnesses and injuries, but we are still on track to have a successful season," Dollar said.

On Thursday, Russellville defeated Brooks 8-1, as the Golden Tigers won five of six singles matches and swept the three doubles courts.

### Brooks Results for Singles Play:

1. Parrish over Maggie Junkin, 6-1, 6-0.
2. Tiffin over Darby Clark, 6-2, 6-3.
3. Anna Lee Hall (Brooks) over Strickland, 7-5, 6-2.
4. Palmer over Madeline Walton, 6-1, 6-3.
5. Speck over Madelyn Brink, 6-0, 6-0.
6. Pace over J.K. Keelon, 6-3, 6-4.

### Doubles results for the Brooks match:

1. Parrish/Tiffin over Junkin/Clark, 6-0, 6-0.
2. Strickland/Speck over Walton/Brink, 6-2, 6-0.
3. Palmer/Pace over Hall/Keelon, 6-2, 6-3.

The Golden Tigers will resume play after Spring Break with an April 4th match when they host Lauderdale County, and an away match April 6th at Hartselle.

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## City officials address condition of Northside Grocery building

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

It's been more than five months since the Northside Grocery caught fire and City of Russellville officials are growing impatient with the delay in the building being repaired or demolished.

Russellville Fire Marshal Justin Green said he spoke with Bhupinder Cheema, the contact person on file for the property, about necessary repairs or safeguards to secure the property more than three weeks ago. Northside Grocery is located at 1328 Waterloo Road.



COURTESY PHOTO

There were pieces of plywood placed over the exterior doors, but some of those were blown off during the March 3, 2023, storm. The front door of Northside Grocery remained unsecured as of March 27th.

The property owner has not yet decided whether to sell, repair or have the building razed, city officials said.

The fire, which began around 8 p.m., caused extensive damage to the building's interior. Preliminary investigation by local fire department officials indicated the origin of the fire appeared to be an electrical accident, possibly in the break room/bathroom.

According to a source familiar with the situation, an independent investigation as to the cause of the fire led to a finding inconsistent with an electrical accident. That investigation remains ongoing.

Meanwhile, the property has a border of yellow police tape around it, but remains open and accessible, creating a risk of danger to those who may enter.

If the building is not soon secured, repaired or razed, the City of Russellville could file a nuisance abatement and seek authority to take whatever steps are required to safeguard the property. That process would include filing a request for abatement which would be presented to the Russellville City Council for consideration.

## 'McCravy,' from Page 11

"He brings a lot of experience having coached at Decatur for 11 plus seasons," Ritter said. "I know what he's about and any time Jere or Coach Morson recommend someone, that's worth its weight in gold. I have a lot of respect for those two men. Coach McCravy definitely brings experience of success having coached in Class 6A Region 8."

McCravy also coached and taught at Danville High School, Northwest High School (Clarksville, TN), and served one season as a student assistant for the University of North Alabama football team.

"I talked with Coach Ritter and knew this was the right spot for me. The community seems to be very supportive and it's a program I am excited to be a part of," McCravy said.

McCravy also mentioned he was impressed with the school's facilities as well as the athletic complex.

McCravy has one son named Preston.

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# Two PCHS students, one PCHS graduate, earn honors at SE Livestock Exposition

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Colt Thomas may have graduated from Phil Campbell High School last year, but the young man continues to bring accolades to the school and its AgriScience program.

At the Southeastern Livestock Exposition, held March 18th in Montgomery, Thomas was named one of 13 students presented with the Randy Owen Showman Scholarship Award. Those students received a \$1,000 scholarship to be used at a university in Alabama.

Additionally, Thomas exhibited the Champion and Reserve Champion Feeder Steer during the Junior Livestock Expo held in conjunction with the Southeastern Livestock Exposition. He also exhibited the Champion AOB British heifer. Each award includes a cash stipend as well as a banner.

It's not the first time Thomas has taken home top honors. He also showed the Champion in the same category at last year's Junior Livestock Expo.

All students who took part in the Southeastern Livestock Exposition were eligible to apply for the Randy Owen Scholarship.

Owen, the front man for Alabama, was on hand to present awards to the winners.

High school graduates can still participate and exhibit livestock until age 19, so this will be Thomas' last year to show.

Thomas, a student at Northwest-Shoals Community College, plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to pursue a degree in Animal/Dairy Sciences. He hopes to work in the area of animal or bovine nutrition after graduation.

"He is a tremendous standout young man who is well recognized, well known through his hard work and dedication, and that's allowed Colt to make a noticeable name for himself in cattle farming," Beason said.

Thomas wasn't the only past or present Phil Campbell student to be honored at the Expo. Freshman Sadie Hill and junior Justin Wade both received \$250 awards as the Franklin County nominees for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Scholarship. The stipend is to be used by the students to carry on their agricultural projects.

Phil Campbell AgriScience teacher Caleb Beason said both students exhibit work ethics and leadership skills that stand out among their peers.



COURTESY PHOTO  
Colt Thomas with his prize winning steer.

Hill "displays a deep interest for the livestock industry and is on the livestock judging team," Beason said. She holds the office of Reporter in the Future Farmers of America Chapter at Phil Campbell.

Wade is the FFA Secretary. He grew up around cattle and from a young age worked in his family's cattle operation. "He displays great interest and a desire to grow within his projects and these funds will help grow his operation," Beason said.

Wade's plans after graduation include continuing his education but he doesn't expect to pursue an agriculture-related degree. But he will continue working on his family farm and keeping the family business growing.

Wade shared his appreciation to Beason for motivating his students to go beyond the classroom walls when learning about agriculture.

"You have to have a purpose with what you're working toward," Wade said. "Agriculture is a very important part of our civilization and society. It ties into so many things. And (Mr. Beason) motivates you to do these things and keep working harder."

Hill, on the other hand, does not come from an extensive family farming background. But she's taken to agriscience and sees herself working in the agriculture industry professionally.

"It's been very good to be involved and I really enjoy it," Hill said. "There is work involved, but I definitely want to pursue a career in agriculture. It's growing on me and I'm really enjoying experiencing all the activities I'm involved in."



COURTESY PHOTO  
Justin Wade and Sadie Hill (third, fourth from left).

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# *Find Your Way Back Home* **Easter Sunday**

There is a story in the Bible about a son who decides he wants to leave his Father's house and take his inheritance with him! He uses up all his inheritance money on riotous living or what we call today 'the party life.' He ends up friendless, hungry, in poverty and without family while he is working for a stranger who cares nothing about him.

It was at this point of despair that he remembered the love of his father and the family life he left behind and realized it was time for him to go back home! Thinking his father was angry with him for wasting his life, he set out for home to eat bread at the servant's table, only to have his father run anxiously to meet him! The father sent his servant to get a ring, robe and sandals to put on his son along with instructions to kill the fatted calf for a homecoming celebration in honor of the son who had returned home!

To the father, the price of the fatted calf was worth everything he paid to be able to celebrate his lost son's return. Has it ever occurred to you that we are all just like that son who left home, wasted his life and was separated from the Father's love and care by wrong decisions and sins we committed? God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to pay a price for our sins through His death on the cross of Calvary. The merciless beating He endured, the crown of thorns piercing his brow, the abandonment of His disciples, the mocking of the crowd, the plucking of his beard from His face, the nails through His hands and feet, the puncture wound of a spear in his side, the sins of mankind laid upon him were all a part of that price!

You might ask the question, 'Why would God be willing to send His Son to pay such an incredible price for us?' His love is a love that goes beyond our limited understanding and can only be fully understood when we realize the Father prepared the way home for us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His Resurrection three days later!

This Easter the greatest thing you can do for you and your family is to take them to church to hear the timeless message of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Father hasn't forgotten you, ignored you or turned His back on you, so it's time for you to bring your family back to church and...Find your way back home!



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