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Bowling honored as DHR's top attorney in Alabama

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Going to court is never easy, particularly for employees of the Franklin County Department of Human Resources.

Whether it's a hearing to enforce a child support order, an order of protection in a domestic violence situation or a situation related to the welfare of a child, these court appearances can be intense.

That's why Franklin County Department of Human Resources

Director Amber Steward appreciates Russellville attorney Jeff Bowling so much. He makes what can be an uncomfortable experience for DHR employees with his patience and professionalism.

"Jeff just takes care of us. We have a lot of new workers and I don't have to worry about them going to court when he's there with them. They know they're going to be taken care of," Steward said.

And Bowling's dedication in enforcing child support orders recently earned him a statewide honor as the

See 'BOWLING,' Page 3

Stutts endorses DeSantis ahead of March 5, 2024 Republican Primary

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Since he was first elected to represent District Six in the Alabama Senate, Larry Stutts has never shied away from publicly expressing what he believes is right.

And there has been occasional backlash, as Stutts opposed Alabama's gas tax increase even in the face of strong pressure from Gov. Kay Ivey. Stutts voted against Alabama's Medical Cannabis Act, a bill sponsored by his neighboring Senator Tim Melson, who represents Alabama's District Six.

So when Stutts announced his endorsement of Republican Presidential candidate Ron

DeSantis one day after the Republican debate in Tuscaloosa, it raised some eyebrows in a state where former President Donald Trump received more than 62% of the votes cast in the November 2020 election.

For Stutts, he explained his decision as he's previously done with other controversial stances he's taken—he's going to stand by what he believes is right, regardless of any political fallout.

"I've never made a decision based on its political expediency," Stutts said. "I think Gov. DeSantis is the best candidate. He's done a remarkable job as governor of Florida. He's a former Naval officer and having a Commander in Chief with military

See 'STUTTS,' Page 5

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Henry Douglas “Doug” Streetman, Jr., age 81 of Phil
Campbell, passed away on Friday, December 08,
2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Paul Gifin Bingham, 79, of Russellville, Alabama,
passed away on December 8, 2023. The funeral serv-
ice will be held on Friday, December 15, 2023, at
2:00 P.M. at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville.

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'BOWLING,' From Page 1

2023 Alabama Department of Human Resources Child Support Attorney of the Year.

The award was announced during last week's Alabama Child Support Association Conference. Bowling was nominated by Sonja Reynolds, Franklin County DHR Child Support Supervisor.

Bowling has represented DHS since he began practicing law in Russellville in 1992. In recent years, he's transitioned into the department's main attorney in Franklin County, with fellow attorneys John McReynolds and Jamie Sumerel filling in when needed. Bowling has been a member of Bedford, Rogers, Bowling & McReynolds since 1992.

And through Sumerel's generosity, Franklin County's foster parents will enjoy a special Christmas dinner December 14th at First Baptist Church in Russellville.

Steward said Sumerel volunteered to sponsor the entire dinner as a way to show appreciation to Franklin County's foster families.

Our foster parents do a lot for us. They take care of our kids, take calls in the middle of the night, open their homes and give kids a place to stay and to be loved. It's a very thankless job," Steward said.

"And we very much appreciate Jamie Sumerel for generously sponsoring this year's dinner to honor our foster parents," Steward said.

Sumerel, a candidate in the March 5, 2024, Republican Primary for Franklin County District Judge, said he wanted to do something to remind Franklin County foster parents how much they are appreciated.



Franklin Free Press

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March 5, 2024 Republican Primary

RV Council renews annual contract with Brown to serve as RPD Chaplain

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council approved a 12-month contract for Russellville Police Department Chaplain Bobby Brown at the council's December 4th meeting.

Brown, whose duties with the RPD range from counseling employees to death notifications to families, will receive \$1,400/month, an increase of \$200 per month from his 2023 contract.

"We appreciate all that you do in the police department and we are adding an additional \$200 per month to your contract this time," Mayor David Grissom told Brown.

In other agenda items, the council:

--approved a resolution commending the Cotton

Flats Cruisers for their \$500 donation to the City of Russellville's Helping Santa Toy Drive.

--approved a Spend \$22 on December 22nd resolution encouraging City of Russellville residents to spend \$22 with businesses inside the city on December 22nd. If each city resident spent \$22 on this day, it could increase revenue for the city as much as 60 percent, the resolution stated.

--approved a construction contract change order for the Russellville Municipal Airport that will see the city's match for a portion of the contract reduced from \$2,500 to approximately \$1,000, according to City Clerk Belinda Miller.

--approved a leave of absence for Russellville Street Department employee Eric McKinney for up to 90 days as a result of recent back surgery.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Council will be December 18, 2023, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting to follow.



The Cotton Flats Cruisers presented the Russellville City Council a \$500 donation for the annual Helping Santa Toy Drive at the council's December 4th meeting.

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'STUTTS,' From Page 1

experience is important to me with all the issues going on around the world.

"You've got to be willing to say who you believe is the best man for the job. If Donald Trump is the Republican nominee, I'll support him. But having someone who's less than 80 years old and without all that baggage is important too. And I'll always stand up for what I believe in," he added.

Stutts was not the lone legislator to endorse DeSantis Thursday. Rep. David Faulkner (R-Hoover) also announced his support of the Florida governor.

Meanwhile, Trump was busy endorsing Congressional candidates in advance of the 2024 Republican Primaries, including Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Haleyville) who represents Alabama's Fourth Congressional District.

"Congressman Aderholt is doing a fantastic job representing the people of Alabama's Fourth Congressional District," Trump said. "Robert is an America First Conservative who is working hard to secure our borders, strengthen our military, stop the weaponization of justice, expand rural broadband and bring manufacturing back to the great state of Alabama."

Aderholt is campaigning on his proposal to return to 'Trump-era' spending in major appropriations bills.

"I am honored to have the endorsement of President Donald J. Trump. During his presidency, Donald Trump and I worked together to put the American people, and their interests, first in everything we did," Aderholt said.

Aderholt faces opposition in the March 5, 2024, Republican Primary from Justin Holcomb. Holcomb responded to Trump's endorsement last week.

"I stand with President Trump no matter what. When we win on March 5th, Alabama will be sending a fighter to Washington who stands in front of President Trump, not behind him," Holcomb said.

"We remain committed and resolute in our efforts to win this campaign and fight for President Trump in Washington," Holcomb added.

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 **A**shaKiran serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking across Alabama. Their vision is to be a 'ray of hope' by bridging the gap between service providers and culturally diverse communities. Their 24-hour crisis line number is 1-800-793-3010. Learn more about AshaKiran by visiting www.ashakiranonline.org. Consultations are free and confidential, and available in 45 different languages.


 **T**he Senior Center of Phil Campbell is under new management. Everyone age 60 and over are invited to come join us and be part of the group. This is for men and women. We meet at the Phil Campbell Community Center Monday thru Friday from 8-noon. A delicious lunch is served at 11 a.m. Meals are \$1 donation. Some come and play Rook. We also do Bingo when we have enough people. There are several games to play or just sit and socialize with other seniors.


 **P**astor Bro. Eric McKinney and the congregation of Crestview Missionary Baptist Church, 24131 Hwy. 24, Russellville, invite you to worship with them. Sunday morning Bible Study is from 10-Noon and Sunday morning worship from 11-Noon. All are welcome to our services! Call 256-324-0179 for more information.


 **T**ennessee River Bass Club is seeking members for our 23/24 season. Club fishes monthly on Tennessee river and Bear Creek lakes. We welcome boaters or non-boaters 16 or older of all experience levels to join. Club is based in Sheffield. For more information, contact Tommy 256-627-5662.


 **T**he Frog Pond Volunteer Fire Department is holding a fund raiser Gun Raffle with proceeds going to benefit the Frog Pond VFD. Tickets are \$10 or \$25 for 3 and may be purchased through Cash App or PayPal. Call 256-263-0825 for more information. One AR-15 and one Glock 19 Gen 5 will be given away. 16" AR-15 5.56/223 with 15" MHR. And Glock 19 Gen 5 9mm. Drawing will be held at the Fire Department on February 23, 2024, at 6 p.m.

 **M**Y FATHER'S HOUSE MINISTRIES, RUSSELLVILLE, AL, 104 E. Lawrence St., Pastor Pearl Shelton, would like to invite you to our weekly Prayer Meeting every Monday evening at 5:30 p.m. Come join us as we pray together in unity and power! Anyone needing prayer please be sure to join us! Everyone is welcome!

 **T**he Frog Pond Volunteer Fire Department is holding a fundraiser sale of Boston Butts and BBQ ribs smoked by William Bishop. They are pre-selling Boston Butts and ribs with all proceeds benefitting the Frog Pond VFD's expenses for new equipment. Whole smoked butts are \$35 and full rack of BBQ ribs is \$25. You can pay with Cash App, Paypal. Must be paid when order is made. Cash App is \$FROGPONDVFD and Paypal BINGHAM899. To order call 256-263-0825 or 256-856-0476. Pick up is December 16, 2023, at Frog Pond VFD between 3-6 p.m.

 **N**ew Ground will be in concert at North Russellville Baptist Church on Sunday, January 21, 2024, at 4 p.m. Everyone is invited. A love offering will be taken up. Church is located at 1401 Waterloo Road.

 **R**ussellville Masonic Lodge #371 is selling Hams for Christmas. Hams are \$35 Reach and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup is Saturday, December 23rd from 8-10 a.m., at the Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

 **R**ONNY HINSON WILL BE IN CONCERT THIS SUNDAY at RED BAY HARVEST FELLOWSHIP CHURCH RED BAY, ALABAMA TIME 10:00 AM ADDRESS: 607 10TH AVE NW, RED BAY, ALABAMA.

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Council votes to handle business licenses in-house with new program

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Phil Campbell City Council took time at its December 5th meeting to recognize the accomplishments of Phil Campbell High School 7th grader Melodie Riley, whose essay recently won the Patriots Pen Essay Contest, an annual event sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars.

VFW Post 5184 of Russellville solicited entries into this year's contest, which had the theme of 'How Are You Inspired by America?'

Riley's essay won the local contest and scored well in the Patriots Pen District contest. She was presented a \$100 check from the VFW Post 5184 and a plush stuffed animal at the council meeting. Several members of Post 5184 attended the meeting as well. Eric Reason, Post Commander, said Riley's essay was outstanding and she should be proud of making the top four essays at the District contest. Riley said Reason was the one who encouraged her to enter.

"Mr. Reason told me about it and I thought 'what do I have to lose?,' Riley said. "I already knew how great America was and how special our freedoms are, but as I was researching for my essay, I didn't realize how many other countries don't have those freedoms."

Riley is the daughter of John and Rachael Laynan. In other agenda items, the council: --heard a report that an \$11,500 offer for timber on a 12-acre tract the city owns along with land near the sports complex. The offer was from Land Management. No action was taken on the offer.

--heard a report from Councilwoman Lynn Landers who said the Park and Recreation Department will host a Christmas themed movie at Phil Campbell Memorial Park on Friday, December 15th, at 7 p.m. The event is free and popcorn and drinks will be sold.

--approved purchase of two new sets of tires for two police vehicles.

--authorized repair of a dump truck in the Phil Campbell Street Department to correct rear end issues. Wayne Welborn said he had contacted Rick McClintock in the Union Community about repairing the vehicle.

--approved spending the town's remaining COVID-19 funds (approximately \$22,000) to purchase five new sets of fire gear for the Phil Campbell Volunteer Fire Department, at an expected cost of \$4,000 per set. Councilman Eddie Marbutt said the department's current gear is outdated and the new uniforms will allow safer entry for fire fighters. Marbutt and Mayor Mike McQuary abstained from the vote. --approved a quote of \$2,100, including a \$2,000 set up fee and \$100/month support agreement with ETA Data Direct that will allow the city to issue its own business licenses. Additionally, the council authorized the Alabama Department of Revenue to collect the town's sales tax beginning in the new year. --approved \$5,600 for dues payable to the North Alabama Council for Local Governments for the Senior Meals Program at the Phil Campbell Senior Center for the coming year.

--heard from Cheryl McDuffa, manager of the Phil Campbell Texaco located on Hwy. 237, concerns about a warning she was served on behalf of the business alleging the sale of drug paraphernalia prohibited under the town's ordinance. McDuffa told the council her business doesn't sell prohibited items. Instead, hemp-based products are sold which McDuffa says are legal under Alabama law. "There is nothing listed in the ordinance that we sell. I'm confused as to what we have to take off the shelf," McDuffa said. "We sell Delta 8, 9 and 10 products and those are legal in Alabama. We should not have received a warning because we're not selling drug paraphernalia."

McDuffa said she believes the warning notice was served on her in retaliation.

McQuary said he believes the council and police department should meet to discuss what should be included in the town's ordinance. McDuffa asked to be included in that meeting but McQuary said he first wanted to speak with the council and police and then a meeting could be held that will include the three retailers selling these types of products in the city limits.

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Guidry taking baseball skills to Blue Mountain

Michael Rice
 Franklin Free Press

Belgreen High School senior Alex Guidry is ready to take his baseball skills to the next level.

Last Monday, Guidry signed with Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, Mississippi.

Guidry has been a pivotal part of the Belgreen Bulldog baseball program. Last season, Guidry batted .328. Guidry finished second on the team with 19 singles and finished second in RBIs with 17.

From his freshman to junior season, Guidry had a 3.56 ERA on the mound.

"Guidry is the first guy that I've coached to sign a scholarship. His signing is great for our program. It shows our guys that it's possible to move to the next level when you put the work in. Guidry worked hard even in the off season," Belgreen varsity baseball coach Nathan Vincent said.



Signing with UNA a 'dream come true' for Parrish

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

As Russellville High School varsity tennis coach Charlotte Dollar addressed the crowd gathered in the RHS Fieldhouse Wednesday afternoon to see senior Peyton Parrish sign her tennis scholarship letter with the University of North Alabama, the emotion came through in Dollar's voice.

A quick look at Parrish's statistics during her varsity career shows how successful she's been on the court, but as Dollar described the type of person Parrish is, she paused several times as that emotion came through.

"As amazing as Peyton is as a tennis player, she excels as a person. Peyton is generous, kind, humble and respectful," Dollar said.

"And I'm so happy to have this



COURTESY PHOTO

See, 'PARRISH,' page 13

18 Golden Tigers earn All-Region 8 football honors

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

After a season that saw the Russellville varsity football team go 9-3 and post a perfect 6-0 record in Class 5A Region 8, it's no surprise to see plenty of Golden Tigers in the Region 8 All-Region Team.

12 Russellville players were named 1st Team All-Region and six more were named Honorable Mention All-Region. Not bad when you can field a team with just your All-Region honorees.

Coach John Ritter announced his All-Region honorees last week. In addition to 18 1st Team and Honorable Mention award winners, Russellville players also earned four Special Region Awards and Ritter was named Co-Coach of the Year for Region 8. Of the 18 All-Region Golden Tigers, 13 are seniors.

The 2023 Region 8 Honorees include:
 1st Team:

--Harrison Burch, Senior QB. The Kentucky Wesleyan College bound Burch completed 118 of 207 attempts for 1,766 yards, 15 touchdowns with only three interceptions.

--Nick Pounders, Senior H-Back. A standout, unselfish player who opened up holes in the running game and was an outstanding pass blocker as well, Pounders had five receptions for 46 yards and one TD. But his All-Region honors come from doing the things that don't always show up in the box score.

--Matthew James, Senior DL. A versatile defensive player who excelled at four different positions his senior season after primarily playing noseguard before last fall.

--Malachi Duncan, Senior LB. A player who excelled on defense, special teams and also had eight rushes for 120 yards and two touchdowns as a running back. He had 92 tackles, with 20 for a loss, along with four sacks and three interceptions this season.

--Devin Green, Senior LB. A standout season with 97 tackles, including 10 for a loss and a sack.

--Reece Carson, Senior LB. At his outside LB position, Carson had 88 tackles, including 11 for a loss, two sacks and an interception.

--Braxten Goodson, Senior SS. A hard-hitter who made opposing receivers think twice about going over the middle. Goodson had 85

See, 'ALL-REGION,' Page 12

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'ALL-REGION,' From Page 11

tackles with five for a loss.
--Neyland Baker, Junior OL, Jah Williams, Junior FS/KR, Cash Crumpton, Junior WR, Manny Martinez, Junior K/P and Cam Phinizee, Sophomore RB.
Honorable Mention All-Region Golden Tigers included: JT Hill, Senior DL, Martin Tomas, Senior LB, Logan Lindsey, Senior OL, Tait Barnes, Senior OL, Bralynn Vincent, Senior WR and Michael Scofield, Senior WR.

Special Region Awards:
--Overall Most Valuable Player: Cam Phinizee, Sophomore RB. 266 carries for 2,389 yards, 40 touchdowns with only two fumbles. He also hauled in 11 pass receptions for 129 yards.
--Co-Offensive Skill Most Valuable Player: Harrison Burch, Senior QB. --Defensive Skills Most Valuable Player: Malachi Duncan, Senior LB.
--Kicker of the Year: Manny Martinez, Junior K. Martinez made five of eight field goal attempts and 56 of 57 PATs to account for 71 points this season. He also punted 22 times for a 34-yard average with a long of 60-yards.
--Co-Coach of the Year: John Ritter. In his six years at Russellville, Ritter has compiled a record of 52-19, a Region 8 record of 35-3 and a playoff record of 5-6.

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opportunity to celebrate Peyton and her many accomplishments.” That kind of praise should have UNA tennis coach Olaya Garrido-Rivas excited to see Parrish joining the Lions' program next fall. Parrish's record in tennis singles matches for RHS is an eye-popping 84-14, most of that playing Number One court for the Golden Tigers. She's won Number One Singles at Sectionals three times. She's the first female tennis player at Russellville to reach the state finals in singles. And Parrish teamed with Sofia Tiffin to win Number One doubles twice at Sectionals and the duo was state runner-up for Number One doubles. Parrish was named the Times-Daily Player of the Year for 2023 and she was invited to participate in the Alabama High School Athletic Association's North-South All Star Week last summer. The Golden Tigers' girls varsity has qualified for state each year Parrish has been on the team. And the good news for Dollar is Parrish still has one varsity season remaining. With the decision to sign with UNA behind her, Parrish said she can now focus completely on helping her team reach the state finals once again this spring.

“That's such a relief going into this spring,” Parrish said. “Leading up to this point I was always scared wondering if I could play in college and go to the next level. Now I can relax and work hard to prepare to be successful this season and at UNA.”

Parrish is the daughter of Ralph and Suzanne Parrish of Russellville. Other schools she considered to continue her tennis career included Birmingham Southern, Center College in Kentucky, Montevallo, West Alabama and Wallace State Community College in Hanceville.

Ralph Parrish expressed appreciation to a number of people who helped his daughter along her tennis journey, including Dollar, Chris Miller, Harold and Peggy Myers, Mike Claiborne, Brice Bishop, Kevin and LeAnn Strickland and the staff at Russellville High School and her teammates.

Ultimately, she chose UNA because it's close to home and she was already familiar with the school and its tennis program.

“I've seen people go to UNA and talk about what a great school it is, so I wanted to be part of that. And I wanted to go somewhere not far off from my parents, but far enough to have my own college experience,” Parrish said.

“UNA has been a goal of mine for a long time so this is a dream come true,” she added.

And meeting goals is something Parrish knows well.



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Congratulations to 'Ramblin' Rodney McCarley, our Week 15 winner in the FFP Football Contest with 9/10 correct. It's now Bowl Season, and everyone's invited to submit your picks for a chance to win a \$100 grand prize along with a \$25 Pilgrim's BBQ Gift Certificate. Simply email your predictions by December 23rd at 10 a.m., to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. Include your name, phone number, game selections and tiebreaker.

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