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### Grimes reflects on successful year at RCS

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

While Russellville City Schools continues to see unprecedented growth in enrollment, the out-of-district tuition had its intended effect of easing growing pains for the system this year.

Almost 250 students withdrew after a \$600-per-year tuition was imposed last fall for students who live outside the Russellville city limits. That number was lower than RCS officials anticipated but sufficient to remove the urgency of building a new school, something

that was a realistic need two years ago with the system's enrollment at an all-time high.

**"With instruction and data, our teachers know if they've been successful every few weeks instead of waiting to the end of the year," Grimes said. "That's been really exciting. Teacher growth and student growth have both been good this year."**

"Two hundred and fifty was less than we expected, but ended up being about right for

us," said RCS superintendent Heath Grimes.

"Obviously, some people were upset about it, but we didn't hear much after it was initially announced. For the board and myself, what it's done for the district is that we were talking about ten to fifteen million dollars in additions we simply could not do at the time.



"It's worked out for the school system. It's

See 'GRIMES' Page 9

### Free Press takes home 10 awards from APA

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

The *Franklin Free Press* has a reputation for outstanding writing in all categories, from news to editorials to sports.

Once again, the Alabama Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest results demonstrate that reputation to be statewide, as the *FFP* took home 10 awards for exceptional writing in the recently announced results.

This year, 74 newspapers submitted 2,753 entries in the annual contest. The Georgia Press Association judged the entries.

This year's awards bring the total number of

winning entries by the *FFP* to more than 70 in the last five years.

"I'm humbled to again have our newspaper judged as one of the top publications in the state of Alabama," said *FFP* publisher John Pilati. "The dedication of our staff, combined with their talent and passion for covering news and sports in northwest Alabama, is second to none."

Sports editor Mike Self received two first-place awards in the 2017 contest. The first was in the category of Best Sports News In-Depth Coverage, where Self took home first place for his preview of the 2016 high school baseball state playoffs.

Additionally, Self received first place in the

category of Best Local Sports Column for "Fright Night," a column previewing local area tournament action at the end of the 2015-16 basketball season.

"Mike is a tremendous talent, both through his writing and his play-by-play talents on the radio," Pilati said. "Not a week goes by that I don't receive a compliment on Mike's writing or broadcasting talents, and these honors are well deserved."

Pilati received eight awards from the APA this year, including two first-place honors. The first was in the category of Best Editorial for "Taking a stand for our nation's flag." Secondly, in the category of Best Editorial

See 'AWARDS,' Page 3

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**Jewell Brunice Hargett**, Belgreen, age 85

Died Wednesday, May 24, 2017. Graveside service held at Friendship Cemetery in Belgreen. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family.

**Thelma Vinson**, Russellville

Died Thursday, May 25, 2017. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. And for updates on news and sports all throughout the week, don't forget to check us out online at www.franklinfreepress.net!

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# RHS grads earn Presidential Scholarships to Alabama

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

More than 37,000 students attend the University of Alabama each year, and not too long from now, three recent Russellville High School graduates will join the large student body. However, unlike many of their soon-to-be classmates, these three Golden Tigers will likely leave the U of A with no debt.

RHS alumni Josh King, Caleb Mayfield and John Tyler Morgan each earned the Presidential Scholarship and, according to the University of Alabama Admissions, will receive the value of tuition, or \$10,470 per year.

In order to earn the title of Presidential Scholar, students must score a 30 or above on the ACT and have at least a 3.5 high school grade point average. All three accomplished the scholastic feat.

The trio also received an additional \$10,000 each from the university's engineering department. King, Mayfield and Morgan are all pursuing majors within the field of engineering. Because of Alabama's proximity to home and its distinguished engineering program, attending the university was not the toughest decision.

"My family has always had season tickets, so I've been on campus a lot in the past," said King, who achieved a 31 on the ACT. "I've always enjoyed visiting, and I know they have a prestigious engineering program."

Morgan, concurring with King, noted his long-standing fondness for the campus.

"My first experience there was my freshman year, and the summer after I was there for a Scholars Bowl camp," he said. "I was there for about a week, and it was something that I really enjoyed a lot. I fell in love with the campus and the atmosphere and the people."

While their reasons for attending the same university are similar, all three have their slightly differing reasons for pursuing engineering.

"There's a reward aspect in designing something and seeing it work," Mayfield said. "And the satisfaction that comes along with that is what I like."

For Morgan, who scored a 30 on the ACT, engineering provides challenges that need to be conquered.

"I really enjoy innovation and solving problems and thinking of better or new ways to accomplish a task," he said. "I like to think about things that maybe others haven't considered, and I think that's what really embodies engineering."

For King, the interest spawns from the idea of being able to break down and reconstruct objects in front of him.

"I've always had an obsession with pulling things apart and putting them back together and seeing how they work," he said. "That's something that's always intrigued me."

Even more different than their reasons for choosing the field are the specific areas of engineering the three are leaning toward studying.

King, who plans to also take on a music-related minor, is leaning towards studying aerospace engineering.

"That's something that's always kind of interested me," he said. "And to me, there's this excitement that comes along with doing something that's challenging."

Mayfield, who scored a 30 on the ACT, is deciding between electrical or computer engineering.

**"It's not just about what you can get in class but outside of the classroom, too," Morgan said of the University's honors program, of which all three students will be members. "There's a lot of different clubs and organizations geared towards people in the Honors College community. Obviously, it's a smaller group than the rest of the student body, so I guess it's more of an opportunity to meet people and be a bit more involved."**

"I like computers, and I was thinking about doing computer science," Mayfield said, "but I want to do something more hands-on. I think that aspect of designing something is what I like about it most."

Morgan, who was a member of Russellville's Envirothon team, is looking to study environmental engineering.

"I really enjoy talking about different things related to soil, to water, to trees and what we do day-to-day that affects the world around us," he said. "I feel really at



PHOTO BY KADIN POUNDERS

Russellville High School alumni (from left) Josh King, Caleb Mayfield and John Tyler Morgan each received Presidential Scholarships to the University of Alabama. In order to earn the title of Presidential Scholar, students must score a 30 or above on the ACT and have at least a 3.5 high school grade point average.

home talking and learning about those kinds of things. They say everyone has their own calling, and I guess that's mine."

At Alabama, King, Mayfield and Morgan will be members of the Honors College, affording them an even greater academic atmosphere conducive to learning.

"It basically provides a more advanced environment when it comes to studying, getting work done, smaller class sizes and better registration," King said.

At Russellville, all three students were members of various clubs and organizations. For example, Mayfield and Morgan were members of the Scholars Bowl team, and Morgan and King were members of the Marching Hundred.

At Alabama, they will have the opportunity to join in on both similar and completely new activities. Morgan said that an added bonus of the Honors program is that it also exposes students to extracurricular activities and clubs.

"It's not just about what you can get in class but outside of the classroom, too," he said. "There's a lot of different clubs and organizations geared towards people in the Honors College community. Obviously, it's a smaller group than the rest of the student body, so I guess it's more of an opportunity to meet people and be a bit more involved."

The three students graduated from Russellville High School on May 26, 2017. The next step will be moving to Tuscaloosa before the start of classes in the fall. With each other close by, it is a process the three friends seem more than apt to handle.

"Obviously, moving away from home and being there will be something different and something we have to adjust to," King said. "It's always good to have people around you that you've known for a while and trust, and I believe the three of us have that."

King and Morgan also received additional scholarships for use at the University of Alabama. On May 11, the night of Russellville's annual awards ceremony, King was awarded the Clarence and Grace James Memorial Scholarship, while Morgan received both the The R.C. Thomas Scholarship and the Robert M. Breland Memorial Scholarship.

## 'AWARDS,' from page 1

Column or Commentary, Pilati received both first- and third-place honors with "Special session all bark, no bite," and "Political pandering wastes time, money."

In the category of Best Spot News Story, Pilati took home two of the top three honors with a second-place award for "Tharptown to get new cafeteria," and third place for "PCRS Ambulance Service in peril."

In the category of Best In-Depth News Coverage, Pilati's series of articles covering the ambulance dis-

pute between Shoals Ambulance and the Franklin County Commission took home third place. In the category of Best Business Story or Column, Pilati received third place for his in-depth article on MS Industries' expansion into Russellville, "Renaissance in Russellville."

In the Best Humorous Column category, Pilati's "Super Bowl of dog shows a bucket list event," in which he detailed his trip to the Westminster Dog

Show, earned second-place honors.

"When people consider their newspaper options in Russellville," Pilati said, "we've always maintained that our level of professionalism and efforts to deliver the best product demonstrate the clear choice is the Franklin Free Press for advertisers and readers. These awards, which were earned after being compared to the best of the best across Alabama, are another way to show our success in those efforts."

# Honey Do: Air conditioners

The month of June is upon us, and with it comes the beginning of summer and those hot Alabama temps. We have already had a small dose of warm weather, but, as we all know, “we ain’t seen nothin’ yet.”

I have always said that I was born at just the right time. By the time I was potty-trained, the folks moved the bathroom into the house; when I started cutting the grass, Dad invested in a riding mower; and I can’t really remember not having an air conditioner in the house.

Many homes have central heat and air these days but window units are still common, whether for primary cooling or dedicated space cooling. For example, small units can be used for offices, bedrooms or sunrooms, while large units may cool the entire house.

The biggest mistake I see people make is buying too small. Window air

conditioners start out at about 5,000 btu’s. These may cool a very small bedroom (10’x10’ or less) at night, but don’t expect it to keep a daysleeper comfortable on a hot, summer day. I always recommend a minimum of 8,000 btu’s for any small room.



**Doug Green**

Window air conditioners generally range from 5,000 btu’s to 15,000 btu’s that will plug into a standard 110v outlet, while larger units require a dedicated 240v outlet. Some larger units may also require a 30-amp outlet that is larger than the common 20-amp outlet found in most homes. Be sure you know what your electrical outlet looks like before you pick out your A/C unit, or be prepared to have an electrician come out to install one for you.

Before going to the store, you should know three things:

- How much area do I want to cool?
- What type of power supply do I have to plug into?
- How big is the window where I will be installing the air conditioner?

If you know these three things, your purchase and installation should go very smoothly.

Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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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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# Bookworm...



.....A report from  
your local library

By Ashley Cummins  
For the FFP

The school year has officially ended, and that means one thing around here:

### SUMMER READING PROGRAM!

The library is offering a program for all ages throughout the month of June. So if you haven’t registered or haven’t gotten a chance to register your children, then stop by the library or call 256-332-1535.

Next Tuesday, June 6, the library will be remembering D-day with a guest speaker. Alabama historian Jim Phillips will speak about the little-known facts of the Normandy beach invasion, as well as some local veterans’ stories of service. Light refreshments will be served.

I’d also like to remind you all that, as part of the Alabama Bicentennial Celebration, the Russellville Public Library has a free subscription to Ancestry.com Library Edition. Anyone using the library’s computers or Wi-Fi network may do so without charge. This is a wonderful service and research tool, and we are extremely happy to offer this service to the community!

Recent library purchases include:

- Any Day Now* – Robyn Carr
- The Dark Prophecy* – Rick Riordan
- 16th Seduction* – James Patterson
- Option B* – Sheryl Sandberg

- March 3 – John Lewis
- The Plant Paradox* – Steven Gundry, M.D.
- Into the Water* – Paula Hawkins
- A Rather Haunted Life: Shirley Jackson* – Ruth Franklin
- Superunknown* (Audio)
- Badmotorfinger* (Audio)

**Next Tuesday, June 6, the library will be remembering D-day with a guest speaker. Alabama historian Jim Phillips will speak about the little-known facts of the Normandy beach invasion, as well as some local veterans’ stories of service.**

I normally like to include a book quote in everything I write, but my mind has been in a different place since hearing of the passing of one of my favorite artists. Chris Cornell was the lead singer of the rock group Soundgarden (also Audioslave) and one of the best performers to come out of the 1990s “grunge” scene. So, rather than a book quote, I leave you with this: “*And if you don’t believe the sun will rise, stand alone and greet the coming night in the last remaining light.*” – Chris Cornell

Contact us by calling 256-332-1535, or stop by 110 East Lawrence Street and check us out. As always, like Russellville Public Library on Facebook & follow us @RPLtweets on Twitter, @RPL on Instagram and @RPLsnaps on Snapchat.

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





Midlife adjustments?

Dear Dave,  
My husband and I are in our 50s, and we have just \$12,000 to pay off before we're debt-free. We've paid off almost \$70,000 in debt in the last two years. We would like to buy a house soon, but we know we also need an emergency fund. It would take us almost a year to build up an emergency fund, so should we make adjustments to the Baby Steps since we're getting older?

Dawn

Dear Dawn,  
No! It shouldn't take you two a year to build up an emergency fund, considering the rate at which you've been paying off debt. You need a fully funded emergency fund or three to six months of expenses set aside before you start saving for a down payment on a home.

You've been making great progress, and you obviously have a good income to be able to pay off debt that quickly. Maybe in your case you could lean a little more toward the three-month side with your emergency fund before you start saving for a house. Then, after you're all moved in, you could revisit the emergency fund and beef it up to six months.

Just stay on course and stick with the plan, Dawn. Fifty isn't old. You two have plenty of time to get your finances in order, find a great home and look forward to many great years ahead!

Dave  
Skipping to the altar

Dear Dave,  
My wife and I make good money, and our daughter's college education is pretty much paid for through pre-paid tuition and scholarships. We just started your plan to get out of debt and take better control of our finances. When we get to Baby Step 5, which is saving for college, can we substitute that with saving for a wedding?

Bob

Dear Bob,  
That would be fine. I'm glad you're thinking ahead. It's always a good idea to save toward a wedding if you have the financial resources to do so, because weddings are real, and they're coming.

The average wedding in America today runs around \$35,000. Of course, you don't have to pay anywhere near that amount to make it a beautiful occasion. Your household income, debt, savings and other factors will all play into how much you can afford.

Just remember to pay cash for the wedding, Bob. If you have to go into debt to make it happen, then you're talking about too much money. It's as simple as that. Crunch the numbers with your wife, and see what you two can handle.

And remember, there's absolutely no correlation between the cost of a wedding and the success of the relationship!

Dave  
*\*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 13 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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 The Franklin County 21st Century Community Learning Centers is in need of qualified nurses, either RN or LPN, to work in the TRACKS Summer program. This position is to provide for our students who have medical issues that require professional care. It will also include assisting the Site Lead Teacher as an aide in implementing the program activities. If you are interested in joining our team, please contact us! Franklin County Community Education, 14141 Highway 187 Russellville, AL 35653. Phone number: 256-331-0005.

 Franklin County Community Education is gearing up for an exciting summer for students! The Summer T.R.A.C.K.S. program begins Tuesday, May 30 and runs Monday-Friday from 6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. There will be field trips, various enrichment activities, STEM and Robotics activities, and much more! Each site is staffed with experienced personnel to keep students safe and happy and keep them learning over the summer! Students may be brought or picked up at their parent's convenience during those hours. Breakfast, lunch and a snack are provided each day. Field trips are taken throughout the summer, and there is a small charge for some field trips. The Summer T.R.A.C.K.S. program will be located at each of the county schools: Red Bay, Belgreen, Tharptown, Phil Campbell and East Franklin. Students can attend at any T.R.A.C.K.S. site during the summer, regardless of where they attend during the school year. There is a \$20 registration fee per student. Weekly tuition rates are \$50 per week for the first child and \$40/week for each additional sibling. Registration forms may be obtained at any T.R.A.C.K.S. site, at the Community Education office, at the Board of Education office or on the Franklin County Board of Education website ([www.franklin.k12.al.us](http://www.franklin.k12.al.us)). For more information, please call Franklin County Community Education at 256-331-0005 or your local school's Site Lead Teacher.


 Members of the Shoals Area Chapter of the Order of St. Luke will be available to pray for you in the meeting room at The Rock Christian Bookstore at 310 N. Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield this Thursday, June 1 from 4-5:30 p.m. We believe God heals spiritually, physically and emotionally. All prayer requests are confidential.


 If you are interested in the study of the Civil War and have an ancestor who was in the Confederate Army, join the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month (except January and July) at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center. Next meeting will be June 1. The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, VA in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the period from 1861-1865 is preserved. Membership in the SCV is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate Armed Forces. Membership can be obtained through either direct or collateral family lines, and kinship to a veteran must be documented genealogically. We hope you can join us for the celebration of our heritage! The minimum age for membership is 12. Call 1-800-MYDIXIE or 256-324-2317.


 The Primitive Quartet will perform at Liberty Chapel Church this Friday, June 2 at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. The church is located at 10780 Highway 81 in the East Franklin community. Love offering will be received. For more information, call 256-324-8430 or 205-486-3026.


 Community members are encouraged to participate in "Build a Better World," the Russellville Public Library's summer reading program, from June 2-30. All ages from newborns to senior citizens are invited to come to the library and read for prizes, as well as to take part in special events offered throughout the summer. Special events this summer will include a new Lap Baby (Read to Me) program for ages 0-3, our regular summer reading program for ages 4-11, a new teen read program, and special events for adults and seniors. You can register now to attend these free events at the circulation desk of the Russellville Public Library or by calling 256-332-1535. The "Build a Better World" teen summer library program is sponsored by the Friends of the Russellville Public Library and local businesses.

 Mars Hill Church of Phil Campbell will hold Decoration and an all-day service on the first Sunday of June, June 4. Everyone is invited!

 American Legion Post 64 meets the second Thursday of each month at the Chamber of Commerce office on Jackson Avenue. Meal served around 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Next meeting will be Thursday, June 8.

 The family of Rev. Sid and Dore Hawkins invites family and friends to the Hawkins Family Reunion. Bean dinner will be held Saturday, June 10 at 11 a.m. at Hawkins Church on Railroad Avenue in Phil Campbell.

 The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Russellville on Saturday, June 10 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Group discounts available! Call 256-335-4356. Profits go directly toward the renovation and restoration of the historic Roxy Theatre.

 For anyone with the courage to be honest about life's hurts, habits and hang-ups, First United Methodist Church of Russellville will host *Celebrate Recovery!* on Tuesday nights with supper at 6 p.m., worship at 6:30 and groups at 7:30. Free childcare provided. Church is located at 311 North Jackson Avenue. Come and join us!



# Haleyville Area Chamber of Commerce and 9-1-1 Festival

presents...



**FRIDAY, JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup> • 9:30 P.M.**

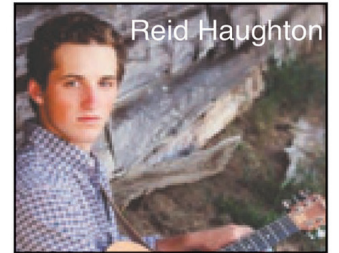
## 9-1-1 Festival Events

**Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> & Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

### Friday Events

**1:00 p.m.** Arts/Crafts/Food Vendors Set-up on Main Street & blocked to thru traffic

**3:00 p.m.** NASCAR #88 Show Car & Race Simulator compliments of Haleyville Insurance Center and Nationwide Insurance  
*Departs at 10:00 p.m.*



**5:00 p.m.** Kids' Zone Opens...Moon Jump, Slide, Obstacle Course and More!

**5:15 p.m.** Music Stage...Parking lot behind Dixie Theatre and Library  
Reid Haughton...Kicks it Off!

**6:00 p.m.** Handshake Promise

*First Responder Awards*

**7:00 p.m.** The Band Steele

**8:00 p.m.** Sweet Tea Trio

**9:30 p.m.** DIAMOND RIO



### Saturday Events

**6:00 a.m.** Encore Rehab/SportsFit 5k Fun Run - *Registration at Downtown Park*

**7:00 a.m.** Encore Rehab/SportsFit 5k Color Fun Run

**8:00 a.m.** Classic Car Show benefitting Haleyville High School Automotive Technology  
*Registration opens in Haleyville City Hall Safe Center Lot*

Antique Tractor Show sponsored by Cox Farm Supply  
*Registration opens on Quinton St. beside Guthrie's*  
*Donations to FFA Welcome*

**9:00 a.m.** Open Mic hosted by We Are The Branches in Main Street Amphitheatre  
Arts/Crafts/Food Vendors on Main Street and Kids' Zone Opens

**10:00 a.m.** Parade...Haleyville Alumni & 9-1-1 Festival Units

**11:30 a.m.** Haleyville Alumni Luncheon at School

**1:00 p.m.** Classic Car Show Awards  
Antique Tractor Show Awards



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# RCS Board approves personnel moves

*John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press*

The Russellville City Board of Education approved several personnel moves at last Thursday's meeting, including accepting the resignation of Russellville High School boys varsity golf coach Ryan Brewer.

Brewer and the Golden Tigers advanced to the state tournament in each of his three seasons as head coach, winning the school's first-ever golf state championship in 2015. Brewer, who also served as offensive coordinator for the Russellville football team, has accepted a job at Haleyville High School. Brewer, along with his wife Katie, a teacher at Russellville Middle School, both resigned last week, as did Cody Sellers, RHS teacher, and Alice Kimbrough, RMS teacher.

Other personnel moves approved by the board at last week's meeting included:

- Reinstatement of sick leave for Judy Putman, CNP worker at West Elementary, for an on-the-job injury.
- Retirement: Rhonda Lier, RHS teacher; Regina

Woods, RMS teacher; Nancy Meeks, RMS teacher and Carole Fowler, RHS Aide.

- Resignation in supplement: Angela Crittenden, RHS Majorette sponsor.
- Employment in supplement: Roxanne Bowles, RHS Majorette sponsor.

• Employment in Position: Wayne Wilkes, drivers education teacher RHS; Jess Smith, social science teacher RMS; Mason Willis, career prep teacher RMS; Whitney Glover, science teacher at RMS.

• Transfers: Cassie Goodwin, from technology facilitator at RES to library media specialist at WES; Malory Kincaid, instructional coach at RES to teacher at RMS; Monica Farris, EL teacher/parent/school resource specialist at RES to RES/WES; Paige Hargett, RES teacher to attendance aide at RHS.

• Involuntary transfer: Sommer Pounders, media specialist at WES to teacher at RES.

• Athletic consultant: Jess Smith to be a pro consult for the JV, ninth-grade and RMS baseball teams. Maximum payment shall be \$700, payable by the base-

ball booster club.

In other board action:

• Bret Gist was elected president and Judy Pounders president-elect.

• Trip requests were approved for the RHS baseball team to attend team camp at Auburn University June 12-15 and RES fifth-grade students to travel to Washington, D.C., May 2-5, 2018.

• Facility use requests were approved for RHS facilities on August 19, 2017, for the Watermelon Run. Request by RHS Marching Hundred; RHS facilities on Sept. 30, 2017, for Northwest Alabama Marching Classic. Request by RHS Marching Hundred; RHS Fine Arts Center and Auditorium on January 12-13, 2018, for Northwest Alabama Honor Band. Request by RHS Marching Hundred; RHS Fine Arts Center and Auditorium on Feb. 16-17, 2018, for ABA District III Honor Band. Request by RHS Marching Hundred.

The next regular meeting of the RCS Board will be Thursday, June 29 at 3:30 p.m., with work session set for Monday, June 26 at 3:30 p.m.

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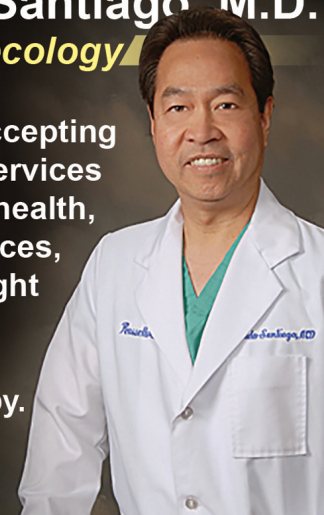
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# Extension teams up with CB&S Bank on piggy bank project

Submitted to the FFP

On April 18-20 and April 25-27, the Franklin County Extension teamed up with Carla Hutto, the parenting educator and curriculum developer of Franklin County Schools, and CB&S Bank for a project that allowed students to make their own piggy banks. The project's purpose was to make the students aware of Saving Month and the importance of saving money.

**The project's purpose was to make the students aware of Saving Month and the importance of saving money.**

Vanessa King, the regional marketing coordinator from CB&S Bank, also made this possible with her staff. They talked about saving money and asked the kids why they think saving money is important.

"It was really a neat lesson, and the kids had some really crazy answers," said Jennifer Pickens of the Franklin County Extension Office. "It was very fun and educational."

Representatives from CB&S Bank met with students at six Franklin County Schools, visiting Red Bay on April 18, Vina on the 19th, Phil Campbell on the 20th, Belgreen on the 25th, East Franklin on the 26th and Tharptown on the 27th.

For more information about programs offered by the Franklin County Extension Office, please call 256-332-8880.

## The Write Stuff



**COURTESY PHOTO**

Cultura Garden Club each year promotes an essay contest to encourage Russellville High School seniors in their appreciation of the outside world. This year's winner is Tristan Patrick. He wrote an essay entitled, "Stolen Hives," concerning why we need our pollinators. Tristan plans to attend the University of Alabama in the fall, with a goal of eventually working with a government agency. He is shown here receiving a \$25 check from Debbie Beason, left, Cultura president, and Debbie Nale, right, club member and recently retired RHS librarian.

## 'GRIMES,' from page 1

also enabled us to control some of the numbers by determining how many out-of-district students we allow to enroll each year."

Grimes said the decision whether to enroll an out-of-district student sometimes comes down to the student's behavioral history at his or her former school.

"We want to educate as many students as we can in Russellville City Schools," he said. "We want to educate those in the city and those outside the city limits to the extent we can, but that comes with a standard. We have a tradition of excellence, and that's important to us."

"If students come into our system from outside, they need to be positive contributors to the school system and not making us expend extra resources by going to truancy court or having to hire additional ISS teachers. We don't expect those things from someone wanting to attend from out-of-district."

Grimes said there were limited instances last year where enrollment requests were denied, but the bottom line comes down to what's in the best interests of Russellville City Schools.

"We have to approach it that way and do what's best for students who are in Russellville City Schools," Grimes said.

As the 2017-18 school year approaches, the lone capital improvement project is a major one involving the construction of six new classrooms at Russellville Middle School, including a special education suite and a science lab and classroom. The projected completion date is November, but Grimes said portable buildings would not be utilized in the interim.

"The November date bothers me, but it's the fastest they can complete it," he said. "We'll have space, but it will be crowded. We have about fifty more students coming over from fifth grade than what we're losing to the high school. There's no extra classroom space at

West Elementary, Russellville Middle School or Russellville High School."

With 250 fewer students, you might think some classrooms opened up, but Grimes explained that it reduced class sizes a small amount, but every classroom still remains utilized.

In Alabama, teaching units are based on the school's enrollment the previous year, so Russellville City Schools faced the reality of having to cut some positions for the upcoming school year due to the decreased number of students last year.

**Grimes said there were limited instances last year where enrollment requests were denied, but the bottom line comes down to what's in the best interests of RCS.**

**"We have to approach it that way and do what's best for students who are in Russellville City Schools," Grimes said.**

"Between retirements and resignations, we were able to lose only two or three people due to the decreased units," Grimes said, explaining that certain teachers who retired or resigned simply did not have their positions filled.

Another move in response to the lower enrollment was the elimination of instructional coaches for the upcoming school year.

"We're shifting people back into other places, and that's how we are able to save most everyone's position," Grimes said. "Instructional coaches work with teachers to help them be more effective in the classroom. They're tremendously important, but last year instead of hiring more classroom teachers, we put some people in those coaching positions because we didn't want to lose classroom teachers."

"We didn't want to have to cut people's jobs, and we're fortunate to have been able to minimize that."

As far as long-term capital and strategic planning, Grimes wants to see renovations at the high school, including expansion of the career tech into a freestanding building. That would free some classroom space at RHS.

"The next goal we have is to control the number of students at West Elementary so we can make sure we don't get back into a problem situation," Grimes said, "and we want to expand facilities at the high school. If we're able to do something relating to career tech, we'll use that as classroom space."

The system's career tech program will undergo major changes in the upcoming school year, with the goal of better preparing students to be immediately prepared for the work force after high school, should they choose to enter it.

"We'll have a very different career tech next year," Grimes said. "We're reaching out to local businesses and industry, and we want to meet the needs of businesses in the community. That way, if they say we need these three programs, we can find a way to create those three programs so we can have career-ready students or where they can further those skills at junior college."

"It's important to us to give students an option to stay at home and live and work and raise their families in Russellville."

Grimes' review of the current school year is a positive one. He said the system has seen academic growth, improved student test scores and academic success, and teachers grasping onto new ideas in learning.

"With instruction and data, our teachers know if they've been successful every two to three weeks instead of waiting to the end of the year," Grimes said. "That's been really exciting. Teacher growth and student growth have both been good this year."

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**GIVEAWAYS**

Free Kittens. Six weeks old. Some bobtail, some longtail. Call 256-332-4037. (1)

**YARD SALES/ ESTATE SALES**

Woodridge Estates Community Yard Sale this Friday and Saturday, June 2-3. 7 am-5 pm Friday and 7 am-noon Saturday. Left past cemetery on Waterloo. Furniture, clothes, glass-ware & much more!

Yard Sale this Friday & Saturday, June 2-3 from 8 am-until 100 Ingle Plaza. Sale indoors.

Yard Sale this Friday and Saturday, June 2-3. From Russellville, 243 to Hwy. 79, turn right. From Haleyville, 243 to Hwy. 79, turn left. Most clothes \$1 each. Way

too much to mention!

Three-family yard sale this Friday and Saturday, June 2-3 from 7 am-until in A.B. Hester Subdivision. 460 2nd Street, Russellville, AL 35654. Going south past Frosty Inn, turn left onto 2nd Street. If raining, will be following weekend. Baby clothes, boy and girl clothes, toys, lamps, TV, Dirt Devil, coolers, lady's and men's clothes, some furniture, glassware, tool boxes, tools, four Wrangler tires, lawn mower trailer, grandfather clock, appliances, collectible soda bottles, lots of misc. items!

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Phil Campbell's fishing team finishes first in the state of Alabama.

Colbert Heights senior John Pierce receives multiple scholarships.



## Have a Sports Story?

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PHOTO BY KADIN POUNDERS

Supporters of all ages turned out last Tuesday evening to help Cody Greenhill (above, signing a baseball for a young fan) and the Golden Tigers celebrate a third straight state championship.

# Motes signs with Huntingdon

## RHS star realizes dream of playing college hoops

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Last Tuesday on the top floor of the Russellville High School field house, Golden Tiger senior Bailey Motes signed a scholarship offer to play basketball at Huntingdon College in Montgomery.

Motes was one of eight RHS seniors in the Class of 2017 to sign an athletic scholarship.

"It feels great," said Motes. "I had a couple Division II offers like Spring Hill, but I felt I had a better relationship with Coach [Caleb] Kimbrough and Coach [Ben] Strong, and I felt like that was more important."

Academics also played a role in Motes' decision to sign with Huntingdon, a Division III school.

"I'm wanting to go into pharmacy, and they have a pharmacy track," he said. "I can start my degree there, and then after four years I can go on to Auburn and continue my academics. Or, after two good years at Huntingdon, I could transfer."

As thrilling as last Tuesday's ceremony was for Motes and his family and friends, Motes' head coach at Russellville was just as excited.

See 'MOTES,' page 16



FILE PHOTO

Motes (23) topped the 20-point mark 13 times last season, helping the Golden Tigers win 18 games and an area championship.

# Community honors RHS baseball team

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Family, friends, fans and school and local government leaders gathered at the Russellville Baseball Stadium last Tuesday evening to celebrate the Golden Tiger baseball team, the back-to-back-to-back AHSAA Class 5A state champions.

The community-wide celebration kicked off with remarks from Russellville City Schools superintendent Heath Grimes. The celebration gave the board, the commission and the city council the chance to simultaneously congratulate and honor the team in one night and get the community involved in one night, instead of on multiple, separate nights, according to Grimes.

Following Grimes, Russellville Board of Education president Greg Trapp, Franklin County Commission chairman Barry Moore, and Russellville mayor David Grissom also gave remarks and congratulated the team on its accomplishments.

On behalf of the team, Russellville head coach Chris Heaps accepted a resolution by the county commission honoring the Golden Tigers' 2017 title. Grissom and the Russellville City Council also presented a resolution and provided framed copies of the resolution to each individual player and coach.

"This is a big night for our players and the coaches, but also for the entire Russellville community," Grissom said. "It's special to win one state championship, and when you win three back-to-back-to-

See 'BASEBALL,' page 15

# Spring Football Review: Golden Tiger offense picks up the pace

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

JACKSONVILLE - Mark Heaton has always been a fan of playing fast, but if this month's spring game against Saks was any indication, Russellville is kicking things up a notch or two for 2017.

Saks, which led 23-20 when the three quarters of variety action were finished on Friday, May 19 at Jacksonville State's Burgess-Snow Field, may have held on for the win, but the Golden Tigers kept their foot on the gas all night and eventually wore down the Wildcats with their frenetic pace.

"One thing was, we played so fast, and our kids were in great shape, even for a spring game," said Heaton, now in his fourth year as Russellville's head coach. "I felt like we wore them down. Every time we got a big play, they would take a timeout to regroup, because we were going a little too fast for them. They used up all their timeouts in that third quarter, so they would have been in trouble if they'd had to play another quarter."

Trailing 23-7 late in the second quarter, Russellville cut into the lead right before halftime when rising junior quarterback Devin Buckhalter found rising senior slot receiver Bernard Phinizee streaking down the left hash for a 34-yard touchdown. The Golden Tigers then controlled the third quarter, shutting out Saks and closing the final margin to three points when Buckhalter made an acrobatic grab on a fourth-down pass from rising freshman quarterback Luke Barnwell for a 26-yard touchdown in the final seconds.

"I was very pleased, very optimistic," Heaton said. "I think the main point I took from it all was the way our

guys competed. We were down sixteen points, I think, and our defense came back and got two big turnovers for us, and we scored twice. That last drive, we told our kids to approach it as if we were trying to score to win a game, and that's what they did. I was very pleased with how well we competed.

**"Being able to get [Luke] Barnwell in with that first group in the third quarter and get Devin back out on the perimeter was big," Heaton said. "The more guys we can get on the field in situations where they can make explosive plays for us, we want to do that. I think that third quarter of the spring game gave us a great indication of the direction we need to head."**

"We got a lot of things from the film that will help us focus on stuff going into the summer, as far as where we really need to get better. We got a good idea personnel-wise of how guys will fit in and how we need to maneuver them around to put our team in the best position."

With that in mind, the Golden Tigers deployed Buckhalter at quarterback for the entire first half and then moved him out to wide receiver in the third quarter. The 5'11, 170-pound dynamo ran the ball effectively in the first half and also hit on a couple of impressive throws, hooking up with rising freshman Cole Barnett on a comeback route for a big third-down conversion and then finding Phinizee in the end zone a few plays

See 'PACE,' page 18

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## Quite a haul



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

The Phil Campbell fishing team placed first at the Alabama Student Angler Bass Fishing Association Classic in early May. The Bobcats also won the overall state championship for the season.

# Phil Campbell fishing team takes state title

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As the ten young men representing Phil Campbell High School entered day two of the Alabama Student Angler Bass Fishing Association (ASABFA) state classic, they thought they trailed the first place team by 30 points.

Day one on Lake Eufaula brought rain and high winds, and a sub-par result for the five Phil Campbell boats. But the team decided to go out fighting, and spirits were high for day two. As it turned out, team adviser Elisha Mansell didn't have all the scores from the previous day, and her Bobcats were actually in first place.

The parents kept that information from the team, though, and that turned out to be a good idea as Phil Campbell fished its way on day two to maintain first place in the state classic held May 5-6.

The result was a team championship for that tournament and the overall state championship for the season, both firsts for a team in its fourth year of competitive fishing.

Team members include Levi Rodgers, Joshua Burcham, Isaac Cummings, Dakota Mansell, Easton Cummings, Cade Baker, Eli Jackson, Eric Allen, Seth Hall, Trey Benford, Pierce Dolan, Rhett Benford, Trent Gonzalez, Brent Gonzalez, Logan Hill, Ashleigh Berry, Tyler Weeks, Abby Davis, Kendrick Baker, Jo Morgan, Bynum Franks, Joshua Morgan, Ryan Rackard and Harrison Riley.

A special congratulatory dinner was held for the team last Tuesday evening. The young anglers received certificates from Phil Campbell mayor Steve Bell and the town council, as a crowd of 125 showed up to support the team's title. Last Tuesday's cookout was hosted by Johnny Bowen, along with several community members and businesses.

According to its website, the ASABFA has as its mission "to promote the sport of bass fishing among Alabama's youth in a supportive, positive, and educational environment in which every student angler may develop angler skills, a healthy sense of competition, ethics and an appreciation of Alabama's natural resources in a team environment."

Mansell said team members must do more than just fish to be active on the team. The kids take part in several community and civic events throughout the year and receive points for each event they participate in. These include the Beast Feast and Tim Horton's Fishing for Kids. Students also earn points fishing in the qualifier tournaments and district tournaments. The students with the top points are selected to fish in regional and state tournaments, Mansell explained.

See 'FISHING,' page 15

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## 'FISHING', from page 14

"Community service is part of it. They have to show dedication to their community," Mansell said. "You don't just show up at state and fish. Being active and giving back is part of being on this team."

The team won its first regional tournament earlier this year on Neely Henry. The Bobcats also took home fourth place in the Smith Lake Regional Tournament.

Professional angler Tim Horton spoke to the team last Tuesday evening and told them their state title will be a lasting memory in their lives.

"I'm honored to be here tonight," Horton said. "This is something you'll remember all your lives. That's the cool thing about our sport—it's about what's in your heart and how hard you work for something. When you come together as a group, you can accomplish great things."

Mansell also expressed her apprecia-

tion to the 15 boat captains who work with the team.

"They are very important. Without them, there's no team," Mansell said.

Community members and businesses who supported last week's cookout included Piggly Wiggly, Dr. Keith Morrow, Barry Ponders and Ambulance Billing Service, Greg "Animal" Williams, Tony Cole and Tony's Diesel & Gas Repair, Randy Lindsey and Rick's Produce, Ray Smelser, Billy Wilson, Mike and Craig Madden and Inside Stone, Heath Ayers, Sue Bowen, Dennis Sherer, Paul Swinney, Danny Brown and CB&S Bank, Tim Horton, the Town of Phil Campbell and the mayor and council, Franklin County Schools, Amy Gunderman, Elisha Mansell and David Wyatt.

## 'BASEBALL', from page 13

back, it just makes it even more special."

Grissom, who was given an autographed batting helmet by the Golden Tigers, said it is important to recognize what the team's achievement means to the community.

"This is something that these young men, right now, may not realize what they've accomplished, but it's huge," he said. "We, as a community, are proud of the hard work they've put in and how they've represented Russellville, and we're grateful for all of the people that helped make it possible."

After receiving their resolutions and hearty handshakes from officials, the players and coaches were greeted on the field by fans, who brought memorabilia, clothing and baseballs to be autographed. Pitcher/first baseman Skylar Holland said this was a chance for the players to give back to the fans who had supported them all year.

"The community has meant everything to us this season," said Holland, who was 7-for-9 in the championship series against Faith Academy and got the win on the mound in the decisive game three. "When we play at home, visiting teams are scared to come here. They pack out this place, and that was huge for us."

Towards the end of the regular season and into the playoffs, seating at Russellville Baseball Stadium (where the Golden Tigers went 16-1 this year) was standing room only, and the huge attendance numbers forced fans into the fields behind the outfield wall. Occasionally, not even the mayor could find a seat inside the stadium.

"I had to stay in the outfield for the last two [home playoff games] because it was so crowded," Grissom said. "It's just great that the entire community comes out and supports them, and the support they've shown is incredible."

The celebration also served as a sort of going-away party for the seniors and as one last "thank you" from fans to seniors and vice versa. After being a part of one of the greatest runs in AHSAA baseball history, seven Golden Tigers will be moving on: Holland, Russ Carpenter, Colin Garrison, Cody Greenhill, Judd Ward, Sid Willis and Chad Wray. Over the past three seasons, this senior class helped Russellville amass an overall record of 121-23.

Carpenter (Martin Methodist), Greenhill (Auburn), Holland (Martin Methodist), Ward (Auburn) and Wray (South Alabama) have all signed scholarships to play baseball at the collegiate level.

"It's an amazing feeling," Holland said. "The seniors, we're walking out as winners, and with that, we can carry it on to college and just carry it into life."

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## Devin Buckhalter Baseball/Football, Russellville

Buckhalter, who just finished his sophomore year at RHS, pulled double-duty earlier this month, helping the Golden Tigers bring home a third consecutive baseball state title and then shining on offense in the spring football game.

On May 17-18 in Montgomery, Buckhalter scored four runs as Russellville took two out of three from Faith Academy in the Class 5A state finals. Then on May 19 at Jacksonville State, Buckhalter threw a 34-yard touchdown pass and later added a 26-yard TD reception in the Golden Tigers' 23-20 loss to Saks in the spring game.



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## 'MOTES,' from page 13

"Any time you have a player that has an opportunity to continue their career at the next level, it's just a blessing to be a part of that," said Golden Tiger coach Patrick Odom. "Bailey's worked for a long time to accomplish a dream of playing college basketball, and it's just fun to see kids who've worked hard, not only athletically but academically, reach their goals."

But the journey to get to a position where Motes could continue his basketball career was an interesting one.

Motes started his freshman year at Phil Campbell before moving to Tharptown for his sophomore and junior seasons. In his final year of high school, Motes made the transfer to Russellville to play for Odom's Golden Tigers.

"I kind of wish I had moved sooner. And Coach Odom, it's been great playing for him," Motes said. "It was a great year; I couldn't have asked for it to have been any better."

**"Any time you have a player that has an opportunity to continue their career at the next level, it's just a blessing to be a part of that," said Golden Tiger coach Patrick Odom. "Bailey's worked for a long time to accomplish a dream of playing college basketball, and it's just fun to see kids who've worked hard, not only athletically but academically, reach their goals."**

On the floor, it is hard to be much better than Motes was for the Golden Tigers last season. The 6'1 shooting guard averaged 20.1 points, 5.1 rebounds and 3.7 assists per game, and he helped lead Russellville to an area title and an appearance in the sub-regional round of the Class 5A playoffs.

Motes was also named second-team All-State by the Alabama Sports Writers Association and was the *TimesDaily* 4A-6A Player of the Year and the *Franklin Free Press* Player of the Year.

"He's relentless," Odom said. "He's such a competitor, and he's the type of guy that's going to give you all he's got from day one. We're going to miss him."

Motes's single-season impact may best be seen in Russellville's wins and losses column. In the 2015-16 season, while Motes was earning first-team All-County honors from the *Free Press* at Tharptown, the Golden Tigers were struggling, compiling an 11-16 record. In 2016-17, with Motes leading the way, Russellville finished 18-8.

Not all of the credit can go to Motes, as players like Austin Stidham, Taylor Vincent and Devin Buckhalter also made major contributions, but he was as key to Russellville's success as any other player donning the Black and Gold.

"He's been such a great player for us this year, and he's made a huge impact on our program," Odom said. "I was very blessed to have a group of guys that just hate to lose, and they give you everything they've got. That's the kind of player Bailey is."

Just like at Russellville, Motes is hoping he can also make an immediate impact at Huntingdon, where the Hawks finished 2-23 last season.

"That's another reason I made my decision to go to Huntingdon, because I want to play right away," said Motes, who scored more than 1,900 career points at the high school level. "I feel like if I go in and do what I'm supposed to do and work hard, then I'll have a chance to start and play right away."

The chance to improve a team, like he did with the Golden Tigers, is an opportunity Motes relishes.

"They're rebuilding there," he said, "and I want to be a part of something special."



PHOTO BY KADIN POUNDERS

Bailey Motes signs his scholarship offer from Huntingdon College while his father, Jason Motes, and his mother, Tracie Nix, look on.

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# 'Cat can do



**COURTESY PHOTO**

John Gregory Pierce, who graduated from Colbert Heights High School last week, recently received a scholarship from Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 and the Grand Lodge of Alabama. John Gregory, the son of Greg Pierce of Russellville, also received a baseball scholarship from Blue Mountain College in Mississippi. As a senior, he helped Colbert Heights advance all the way to the Class 3A state semifinals.

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## 'PACE' from page 13

later. After moving back to receiver (where he led the team last season as a sophomore with 35 catches for 514 yards), Buckhalter caught a handful of passes from Barnwell on the third-quarter scoring drive—including a tunnel screen that went for 30 yards on a third-and-31 play and then the highlight-reel touchdown grab.

"For Devin to play at the level he did at quarterback with the limited amount of time he had to prepare, he did a great job," Heaton said. "He's a very physical, dominant figure back there, and I think the more he becomes comfortable with that, the more explosive he'll be in that role."

"Being able to get Barnwell in with that first group in the third quarter and get Devin back out on the perimeter was big. The more guys we can get on the field in situations where they can make explosive plays for us, we want to do that. I think that third quarter of the spring game gave us a great indication of the direction we need to head."

The prospect of Buckhalter joining a loaded set of skill players that also includes Phinzee, rising senior receivers Logan Jones and Robert Hamilton, and rising junior tailback Zaye Boyd is an exciting one for Russellville—and a frightening one for opposing defenses.

"We've got a lot of older guys like Devin, Robert, Zaye Bernard, Logan—that's a lot of weapons," Heaton said, "and when you're able to put all those guys on the field at the same time, it's exciting. You've got a chance to make plays."

That's why so much is riding on Barnwell's development this summer into the kind of quarterback who can be trusted to make the right reads, protect the football and get it into the hands of all those playmakers.

"That's gonna be what we need him to do," Heaton said. "We don't need him to play like a two- or three-year starter. We need him to not make mistakes and just operate the offense. If he can do that, if he can distribute the ball and make the reads he needs to make and get the ball where he needs to get it, he can be successful in our offense."

"He's gonna be a great player, no doubt about it, but you don't have to be a great player to be successful in our offense. For Luke, it's just a matter of being in the fire a little bit and having that opportunity to grow. We'll make sure he gets that chance this summer in competitions as much as possible and in the fall jamboree as much as possible."

Whether Buckhalter or Barnwell are taking the snaps, those snaps will be coming at a fast and furious pace. The idea, according to Heaton, is to spread out opposing defenses and wear them down over the course of a game, thereby taking some pressure off an inexperienced offensive line that has only one returning starter (rising senior left guard John David Palmer) from last season.

"We're trying to go as fast as we can, which helps us rotate in a lot of guys," Heaton said. "That way our guys [up front] don't have to be as physically superior as they did in the past. Offensively speaking, we're playing a lot of younger guys, and we're doing a lot more run-pass option stuff that allows the perimeter guys to run more routes rather than be more physical blocking. It helps those younger guys play faster."

Joining Palmer on the starting offensive line for the spring game were rising senior Layne Johns at left tackle, rising junior Ondre Armstead at center, rising sophomore Noah Pounders at right guard and rising senior John David Aycok at right tackle. There's precious little varsity experience among that group, but Heaton is confident the Golden Tigers can find a way to be productive in the running game again this season.

"What will help us is having those great athletes and playmakers at those skill positions," he said. "That allows you to get the ball on the perimeter and stretch the defensive front a little bit. If you can do that early in the first half and tire them out a little bit with tempo, that allows your younger guys [up front] to develop and then

See 'PACE,' page 19

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## 'PACE', from page 18

in the second half run the ball in between the tackles a little more.

"When you're really good on the outside, the idea is to stretch the field and make those inside guys [on defense] run at a fast tempo. Then, in the third and fourth quarters, you're able to run inside a little more. Zaye will help in that category, coming off the year he had and putting on a little bit of weight. He'll be able to run between the tackles a little better."

Don't expect the explosive Boyd (who had long runs of 88, 71, 65, 52, 46 and 44 yards among his 25 total touchdowns last season) to suddenly become a three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust style of runner, though. On the contrary, Heaton believes the potential for big plays will be even greater in 2017.

"What's gonna help us a lot this year is the talent we have on the perimeter," Heaton said. "People aren't gonna be able to put as many guys in the box as they did last year. I think you're gonna see a lot of bigger runs from Zaye this year.

"Overall, he did a good job [in the spring game]. I thought at times he did a better job blocking. There's no doubt he's gonna be an instrumental piece for us. Guys like Zaye are game-changers. He can take over a game."

So can Buckhalter, who essentially did just that on Russellville's third-quarter scoring drive against Saks.

"Devin came to me at the beginning of that series," Heaton said, "and told me, 'I can beat this guy they've got manned up on me.' You want to hear that confidence from your guys, but at the same time you have to make sure you're taking what they give you. We got in that fourth-down situation after we had a mistake on the snap count, and that put us in a bind. I said, 'Hey, you know what, let's get it to him and see what he can do.'"

"He made a great play. I'm proud of him. Winners want the ball in that situation. We tried to get it to him, and he went up and made a great play. There were two or three guys over there, and he just went over the top of one guy and pulled it down. He showed great determination."

Defensively, Russellville allowed fleet-footed quar-

terback LaDerrick Bell to bust loose for a 72-yard touchdown run on Saks' third play from scrimmage and gave up a few more chunk plays to the Wildcats' impressive array of speedy tailbacks. But the Golden Tigers also got a big first-quarter interception from Jones (who returned it 68 yards to the Saks two-yard line, setting up a short touchdown run by Boyd that tied the game 7-7) and another takeaway in the third quarter—despite playing without a pair of returning starters on the defensive line in rising senior end Jeff Lloyd (who missed spring practice due to baseball) and rising junior tackle Will Rushing (who is nearly fully recovered from a meniscus injury).

### Key Summer Dates for RHS Football

- JUNE 5:** Summer workouts begin
- JUNE 27:** 7-on-7 camp at Birmingham Southern College
- JUNE 29:** ALFCA 7-on-7 Championships in Montgomery
- JUNE 30:** QB/WR camp at UAB
- JULY 13:** 11-on-11 scrimmage vs. W.S. Neal at Golden Tiger Stadium
- JULY 14:** 7-on-7 Camp and Linemen Challenge at RHS
- JULY 25:** Three-team 7-on-7 camp at RHS

"Defensively, we're going with a little bit of a different look," Heaton said, "and we had some guys out of place when they made those big plays. We corrected that in the third quarter. Plus, they had a lot of kids playing both ways, and they were exhausted. They were having to play tempo defensively against us, and then they're trying to play fast on offense, too. They were just out of gas. They made some mistakes, and we capitalized on it."

The Golden Tigers are still running a 3-4 scheme as their base alignment under new defensive coordinator Paul Czervionke, with a few more exotic looks mixed in.

"We're slanting more, bringing more pressure,"

Heaton said. "That kind of plays into the personnel we have a little bit. We're only gonna get better on that side of the ball. Getting Will Rushing and Jeff Lloyd back will be big.

"We have a couple of guys in new spots. We have the opportunity to be really good defensively, but we've got a lot of work to do."

That work begins in earnest on Monday, June 5, when the Golden Tigers officially report for summer workouts. Given the youth and inexperience at several key positions, this could be Russellville's most important summer since 2014—Heaton's first as head coach.

"Like I told our kids, we're young in spots, but that's not an excuse," said Heaton, who is 27-9 overall and 19-2 in region play in three years at RHS. "That's not something we want to rely on. We've got the summer to get un-young."

After devoting most of June to strength and conditioning, the Golden Tigers will start their camp circuit on June 27 when they travel to Birmingham Southern for a 7-on-7 competition. Two days later, on June 29, they'll head to Montgomery to participate in the ALFCA Championships, another 7-on-7 event.

Russellville's quarterbacks and receivers will attend a camp at UAB on June 30, another potential key step in the off-season development of both Buckhalter and Barnwell.

"Having both of those guys able to play quarterback, and being able to use Devin as a weapon all over the field, is gonna be big for us," Heaton said. "Knowing both those guys and how competitive they are, both of them are gonna work to help us. They're both humble kids, but they're very competitive and they both want to contribute. It's a good situation."

Russellville will host its annual 7-on-7 competition and linemen challenge at Golden Tiger Stadium on July 14. The night before, on July 13, Russellville is scheduled to face W.S. Neal High School in an 11-on-11 scrimmage. The Golden Tigers will then conclude their summer activities with a three-team 7-on-7 event on July 25 (opponents have not been finalized yet) before opening fall camp in August.

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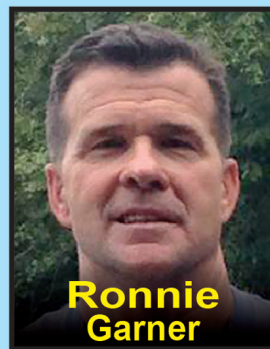
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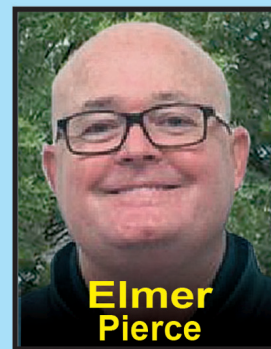
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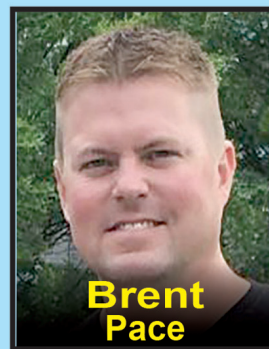
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