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PRSR-T STD US POSTAGE  
PAID Franklin Free Press  
113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35663

## Dog, owner reunited after theft

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When Jeff Masterson realized his truck had been stolen last Friday morning from Legacy Chevron on Highway 43, he wasn't worried about the truck, or the two guns he had in the vehicle, or the several thousand dollars in cash that was in the truck, or the recently filled prescriptions that were also gone. His one focus was on the precious cargo in the back of the pickup—his 20-month-old German shepherd, Jett.

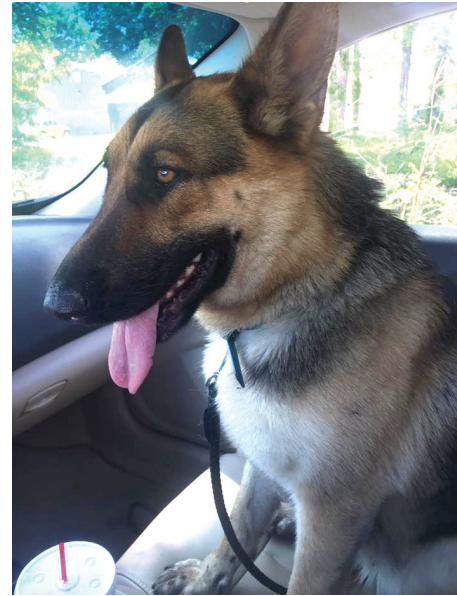
Masterson was reunited Saturday morning with Jett after a man was taken into custody in Tishomingo County, Mississippi. Masterson was relieved to find his dog healthy and safe.

Shawn Allen Scott, 32, 109 Filmore Street, Russellville, was taken into custody by Tishomingo County sheriff's deputies and will be returned to Franklin County, where he faces felony theft charges related to the vehicle and possession of prescription drugs.

According to Russellville Police chief Chris Hargett, Scott contacted RPD dispatch early Saturday and told the dispatcher he heard officers were looking for him and that he hadn't stolen a truck.

Scott said he had Jett with him, and minutes later deputies arrived at a Tishomingo County park and took him, and Jett, into custody. At the time of his arrest, Scott possessed two of Masterson's prescription bottles on his person, Hargett said.

See 'DOG,' Page 10



Jett, a 20-month-old German Shepherd, was in the back of Jeff Masterson's truck when it was stolen from a gas station Friday.

Vote **Barry Moore**  
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## Board honors Jolly for 'exemplary service' to local students, teachers

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

For John Jolly, his There's a Way, Inc., a non-profit corporation established in 2001 to benefit Franklin County high school seniors and teachers, was always about the kids and never about him.

Seventeen years later, as the time demands of running the foundation along with some recent health issues have contributed to Jolly ending the foundation, it was time to say 'thank you' to Jolly for all he's done to better the future of Franklin County students and educators.

The Franklin County Board of Education passed a resolution at its May 15 meeting in appreciation of Jolly for his "many years of exemplary service."

Through the 2018 scholarship awards, There's A

Way has awarded 878 scholarships to Franklin County and Russellville City Schools graduating seniors. Additionally, Jolly wanted to recognize the efforts of outstanding teachers, so his foundation also annually awarded Outstanding Teacher Awards with a stipend for the teacher to use at his or her discretion. There's A Way awarded 245 of these teacher awards since 2001.

"We truly appreciate Judge Jolly and all of his efforts to encourage our students in Franklin County to continue their education either through higher education or through job training in preparation for a career," Franklin County superintendent of education Greg Hamilton said. "Most people don't realize the amount of work he dedicated for this organization, all in the name of helping education."

See 'JOLLY,' Page 3

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**MANAGEMENT:** Joe manages and oversees the daily operations of a department of 20 full time employees.

**TEAMWORK:** Working with NACOLG and other fire departments, Joe's department has applied for and received numerous grants, including a storm shelter grant.

**BUSINESS:** Joe, and his wife, Shae, owned and operated Quinn's Grocery for several years.

# Joe Mansell

Franklin County

# Probate Judge

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**Bobby Gordon Byrd**,  
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**Shirley Fisher**,  
Littleville, age 82  
Died Wednesday, May 16, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Tharptown Cemetery.

**Mary Gantt Hudson**,  
Russellville, age 97  
Died Friday, May 18, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

**Harold Wayne Michael, Sr.**,  
Tuscumbia, age 70  
Died Wednesday, May 16, 2018. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Glendale Cemetery in Leighton.

**Carl Hugh Palmer**,  
Phil Campbell, age 81  
Died Thursday, May 17, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

**Orval "Pug" Pounders**,  
Phil Campbell, age 92  
Died Wednesday, May 16, 2018. Funeral held at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church. Interment in the adjoining church cemetery.

\*Sale good May 23 through May 29\*



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# Commission studies internal controls in wake of theft

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission is looking at additional ways to secure internal controls over financial management of the commission office following the revelation earlier this year that the former county administrator embezzled more than \$750,000 of county funds.

At its May 14 work session, commissioners heard from financial manager Craig Cooper about internal controls to consider for the office. Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore said his office is reaching out to other counties, both larger and smaller than Franklin County, to “find the correct fit” for internal controls in his office.

“No two counties are the same,” Moore said. “We wanted to get some outside opinions and see what works for them and whether those controls are something that would work for us. We’re always looking at ways to improve our financial system. We will continuously look at internal controls. There is always room for improvement. This will be worked on an ongoing basis.”

Student scholarships averaged around \$1,200 and were as much as \$1,700 this year. Jolly was always careful to award scholarships in proportion to the enrollment at each high school, so all schools were represented. All seniors were invited annually to apply.

In a 2007 interview, Jolly talked about why he started the foundation.

“I enjoy working with the administrators, and I have a great relationship with them,” he said. “I’ve also met some really outstanding students, and not just the ones who receive scholarships. My reward is seeing students graduate and accomplish something, whether they go to college, trade

Moore said once additional controls are researched and the best course for Franklin County is determined, the guidelines will be presented to the Franklin County Commission for approval.

“That way the entire commission is involved,” Moore said, “and can have input and say, ‘We like this step’ or ‘We don’t like this measure.’ We want to all be on the same page.”

**“No two counties are the same,” Moore said. “We wanted to get some outside opinions and see what works for them and whether those controls are something that would work for us. We’re always looking at ways to improve our financial system. We will continuously look at internal controls. There is always room for improvement.”**

Former county administrator Crista Madden pled guilty in March to two felony charges after she stole \$753,889.21 of taxpayer monies over a 10-year period. Madden is set to be sentenced on her plea on June 11, 2018.

The scheme involved a pattern of false purchase

## ‘JOLLY,’ from page 1

school or Bible college.”

Jolly’s wife Jeanette serves as a There’s A Way director. She’s seen first-hand the time her husband dedicated to scholarship program.

**“There’s really no way to accurately measure how much John Jolly and There’s A Way have helped the students and teachers of Franklin County,” Hamilton said.**

“It takes a tremendous amount of time, and he’s raised a lot of money and given out a large amount of scholarships,” Jolly said. “It’s been a full-time job with him. He’s very meticulous about this program. It was just time to give it up.”

orders generated by Madden and checks that had been altered so she could deposit them directly into her checking account.

Moore said the review of county bank statements would be a process involving three persons. First, the employee who receives the bank statement will have signature authority on the account. A second employee, not on the account, will open the statement and verify all checks were made out to legitimate companies. Then a third employee will reconcile the statement as the final step of the three-step process.

“This is something we are going to expand on,” Moore said. “There may be some things we want to do different in six weeks or so. We’ll review this periodically and make sure there are checks and balances and more sets of eyes on statements.”

Cooper has not been hired by Franklin County. He came at the request of commissioner Jason Miller to Monday’s work session.

“He said if we had any questions, to feel free to call him any time,” Moore said of Cooper. “We have no plans to hire him at this time, but that could change down the road.”

Jolly ran There’s A Way out of an office donated by CB&S Bank.

Jolly served 15 years as Franklin County District Attorney and 18 years as Circuit Judge for Alabama’s 34th Judicial Circuit.

He and his wife have one daughter, Ginger, a Russellville High School graduate. Jolly is a United States Army veteran and a former marathon runner.

“There’s really no way to accurately measure how much John Jolly and There’s A Way have helped the students and teachers of Franklin County,” Hamilton said, “and we wanted to find a way to say thank you for his unselfish efforts.”

# Bevill State puts Hamilton cuts on hold after opposition

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

A planned downsizing at Hamilton’s Bevill State Community College has been placed on hold after it was met with public opposition and outrage from Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow.

In April, BSCC announced the elimination of four work force development programs at the school’s Hamilton campus. They were to include diesel mechanics and the auto body program, drafting, auto mechanics and machine tool programs. Three of the programs were set to still be available at the school’s Sumiton or Jasper campuses.

The decision was “strategic and data-driven based on quantitative data over several years,” said Tana Collins with BSCC.

In essence, Bevill officials said they were discontinuing programs that no longer were effective in training students with industry standards to get jobs in those fields.

Last week, Bevill president Dr. Kim Ennis announced it was reconsidering the decision to close these programs. Bevill officials planned a series of town hall meetings to explain the reasons for the closings, but after the first meeting, plans changed.

“While I am still addressing budgetary issues, our first town hall meeting with community members, students and local business and industry in

Sumiton brought to light the need to enter into further discussions about program closures,” Ennis said. “We are currently taking the time to reevaluate these decisions and align our programs with industry needs.”

Bevill also recently announced that it would cut 15 employees from its staff as a cost-saving measure.

**Morrow questioned Ennis’s authority to unilaterally make the cuts and asked for the criteria she used in making the decision.**

**“You’re an employee of the State of Alabama. The people of Alabama own these schools and programs, not you!” Morrow said in his letter. “As a legislator, I will not sit idly by while you destroy the educational opportunities that we have worked for years to provide to the citizens of my Legislative District.”**

“We’ve been dipping into our reserves for the last five years,” Collins said. “It’s just like your budget at home. You can’t keep dipping into your savings and keep your financial strength.”

Morrow said he learned of the cuts when he was in Hamilton earlier this month for the announcement of a \$3 million grant for Tombigbee Rural Electric Cooperative and its project to bring high speed internet to all members of its cooperative.

In a letter to Ennis dated May 17, 2018, Morrow

said the positive news of the grant was diminished when he learned of Bevill’s planned program cuts.

“This feeling of excitement and celebration that I was enjoying quickly vanished,” Morrow said, “when a friend came up to me and said, ‘Have you heard that four work force development programs are being terminated at Bevill State in Hamilton?’ I asked him to repeat what he just said. I could not believe my ears!”

Morrow’s letter requested that Ennis “immediately cease any plans or activity aimed at closing any program at Bevill State,” saying that his constituents in Franklin County depend on Bevill State at Hamilton for educational and career development.

Morrow questioned Ennis’s authority to unilaterally make the cuts and asked for the criteria she used in making the decision.

“You’re an employee of the State of Alabama. The people of Alabama own these schools and programs, not you!” Morrow said in his letter. “As a legislator, I will not sit idly by while you destroy the educational opportunities that we have worked for years to provide to the citizens of my Legislative District.”

Morrow sent copies of his letter to Gov. Kay Ivey; Jimmy Baker, Chancellor of Alabama’s Two Year Colleges; and Jeff Newman and Matthew Woods, members of the Board of Trustees of the Alabama Community College System.

# Top ten reasons to send your kid to summer camp

By Brian Presley

For most people, summer camp is just something they did for a couple of weeks as a kid, but for many it was much more than that. As someone who has experienced summer camp as both a camper and a counselor, I can tell you that it will not only give the parents a rest but can also change a kid's life for the better.

Summer camp gave me the confidence to be a stay-at-home dad and to self-publish a book based on the games and activities that filled my summers. A website was created to promote the book, but *What To Do With The Kids* is now a big part of my professional life and reaches people from around the world.

Summer camp was a great experience for me as a kid growing up in a government town and has created some life-long friends and memories. With that in mind, here are my top 10 reasons why you should send your kid to summer camp:

## 1. It gets them out of town

For kids living in a city, there aren't many parks, and the parks that are

there are not very big and are usually crowded. If you're lucky, there's a swimming pool or splash pad nearby. For those living in a house, the backyard can get boring, and if you live in a new house, chances are your backyard is the size of a postage stamp. Kids in smaller towns can also get bored with the limited amount of activities available.

Most summer camps are located outside cities and surrounded by trees near lakes or rivers. The air is cleaner, and the noise is all natural. It's a nice change for kids whose only exposure to wildlife is squirrels, pigeons and maybe the odd rat.

## 2. It gets them away from their family

Yes, you love them, and the kids love you, too, and it may sound cruel, but everyone can use a break at least once. Being away from home can also give kids an appreciation of what they have.

## 3. It gives them a sense of independence

For most kids, this will be the first time they travel anywhere without

See 'CAMP,' Page 5

## OurHouse

by Ree Shannon



## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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by Dave Ramsey

## Save up, or get a mortgage?

Dear Dave,  
I'm 28, single, and I just became debt-free. In addition, I make \$70,000 a year and have the equivalent of six months of expenses set aside for emergencies. Should I save up to pay cash for a house, or is mortgage debt okay? I'd like to keep the price of a new home between \$200,000 and \$225,000. Since I currently live in a nice apartment, I think I can save about \$20,000 a year. What do you think?

Kathryn

Dear Kathryn,  
It sounds like you're in great financial shape. Congratulations on becoming debt-free!  
Let's take a look at both scenarios. If you can save \$20,000 a year, that means you're about 10 years away from a nice, paid-for home, and you're still debt-free. That's one option. At the same time, I don't yell at people for taking out a 15-year, fixed-rate mortgage, where the payments are no more than 25 percent of their monthly take home pay. In this situation, you

could save like crazy for a couple of years and make a big down payment on a home in the price range you're talking about. Then, you could pay off that house in just 15 years.

I honestly don't have a problem with either solution, Kathryn, but think about this. Wouldn't it be great to have your own home, and still be completely debt-free, at 40? It's something to think about!

Dave

## Stand up to them!

Dear Dave,  
A debt collection agency started calling my office a few weeks ago. I gave them an initial payment and made an agreement to pay off the debt in monthly installments. This morning, they started calling me at my office again wanting payment. Can I legally demand they not call me at my place of employment?

James

Dear James,  
Absolutely! You have a legal and moral obligation to pay your debts, and I'm glad this is something you recognize. But collectors have rules they must follow. They're governed by law just like everyone else.

Be certain to keep your end of the agreement. Make your payments on time, or early, whenever possible. Then, if they call you at work again, remind them of your initial payment and the terms of the agreement already in place. Be polite, but firm, and demand that they never call you at your office again.

In addition, send them a certified letter, return receipt requested, so you'll have proof you sent

See 'DAVE,' Page 5

## 'CAMP,' from page 4

their parents, and that can be exciting for them. There will be rules to follow, but it's different when mom and dad aren't around. They'll be with other kids, and chances are the counselors are not that much older since they are most likely high school or college age, so it won't feel like they're at home with their parents. For many kids, it's like being paroled from the routine of home and school.

### 4. It exposes them to different people

Most summer camps attract kids of different races, religions and economic standing from different parts of your city and even from different cities all together. It provides an opportunity to meet and discover other kids regardless of what their background is, what school they go to and where they're from.

### 5. They can be themselves

At school and with their friends, a lot of kids can feel the pressure of acting like everyone else, but a good camp program lets kids be themselves. They can be who they are, and the only acting they'll have to worry about is during the camp-fire skit!

### 6. They can learn new skills

The most important thing I ever learned at summer camp was to swim, and that's a skill that every kid should learn. Learning to swim allowed me to learn other skills such as canoeing, a bit of sailing and how to keep safe near water.

The field sports program that I ran as a counselor introduced kids to sports they may not have had a chance to learn at home, such as volleyball, basketball, badminton and softball just to name a few. For many, it was the first time they ever got to play and learn about a different sport.

One of the more popular areas of a summer camp program is the crafts. Some camps still make the traditional key chain and bracelet, but a lot of programs teach drawing, painting and sculpting. For a lot of kids, it's a chance to discover their artistic abilities.

### 7. Learn life skills

Life skills are something that many kids learn without realizing it. Simple daily procedures such as cleaning their cabin or tent, making their bed, setting the dining table for a meal and cleaning up afterwards are habits that can carry on after they leave camp.

The kids will learn teamwork and cooperation since they'll be participating in a group or as "a cabin." The "all for one and one for all" philosophy works wonders and can help make your kids become more confident and out-going.

They may also pick up a few good habits as well. A number of parents have told me that their kids would

start helping to clear the table after meals and make their beds, at least for a little while.

### 8. It gets them active

Summer camp is filled with activities that involve running, swimming, hiking and, of course, playing. There are also times in the day where kids can just relax, but the sign of a good camp experience is when the kids are tired but happy at the end of the day.

### 9. Everything is low-tech

The majority of summer camps have a "no electronics" policy. That may be harsh for some kids, but it's a great way to help them realize that they can live without it for a little while. If the kids ask, tell them that all camp activities are in "real-time" and are "interactive." There is no "delete" or "return" button, so they may have to try doing something again and again.

Announcements are made in the dining hall live and in person. There are no texts, emails or Snapchats, so messages are passed on to each other by actually speaking to another person. The only hi-tech item they should have is a flashlight.

### 10. It creates memories

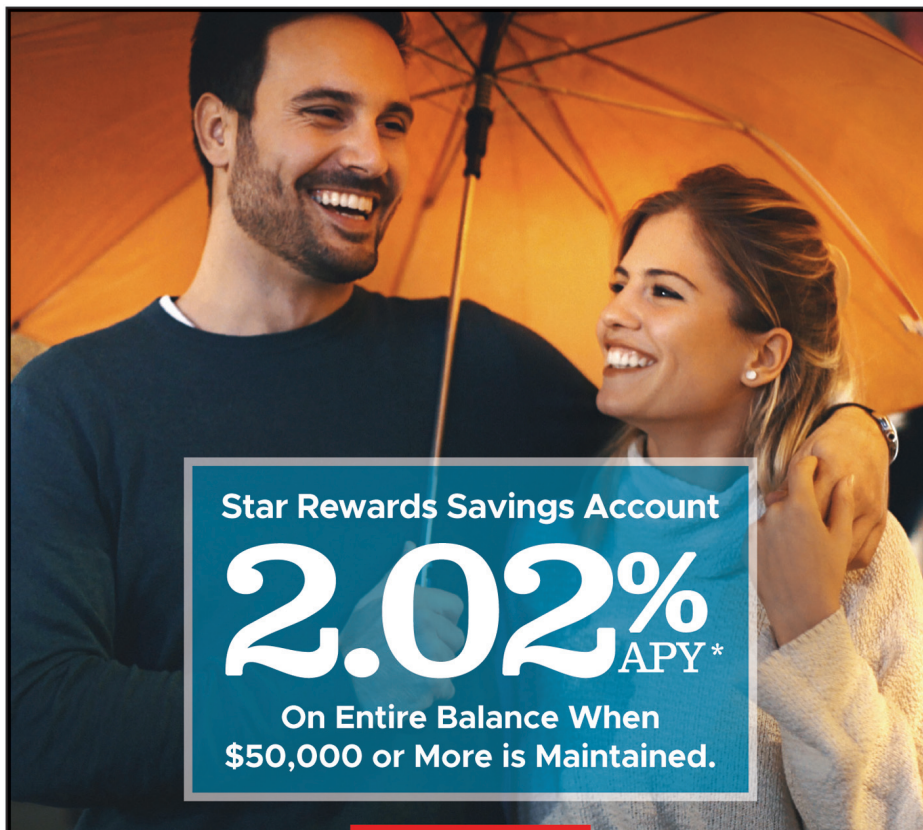
As a camper and as a counselor, I learned a lot of new skills and a lot about myself and others at summer camp. There are people that I can picture exactly how they looked over 30 years ago and moments that have helped make me who I am today.

It's great to meet up with old friends and a real treat to be recognized by a former camper who can recall a fun moment so many years ago. It's also quite special when these campers who are now adults speak fondly of their time at camp. It gives me a great feeling of knowing that I was a part of it.

There are a lot of private camps and camps that are operated by churches or non-profit groups who can help you send your kids regardless of your financial situation. As a camper, my fees were subsidized so my parents could afford to send me, but when I was up there, I was just one of the kids.

Specialty camps are very popular, and day camps in the city are fun, but getting out of town and going to a traditional summer camp is an experience that every kid should have once. They may not come back with all their socks and towels, but they will have memories that can last a lifetime.

*Brian Presley is a former camper, counselor and program director at Camp Minwassin located near Eganville, Ontario. He is also a semi-retired stay-at-home dad and the owner of whattodowiththekids.com, the website that adults go to when they want to know what to do with the kids.*



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## 'DAVE,' from page 4

the letter and they received it. In the letter, let them know that—according to guidelines set forth in the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act—you are demanding they not call you at your office again.

If they call you there after receiving this formal demand to stop, they'll be in violation of federal law. If that happens, let them know you'll talk to a lawyer and sue them.

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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# What's Happening

256.332.0255

EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

**R**ussellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Boston butts for Memorial Day weekend. Butts are \$30. Pre-order at 256-810-1970. Pick-up will be Saturday, May 26 from 8-10 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge on Coffee Street.

**A**ttention all young ladies of Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale counties entering 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in the Fall of 2018!!! The Distinguished Young Women Scholarship Program will be held Saturday, August 4 at Norton Auditorium on the campus of The University of North Alabama. Young ladies entering the 12th grade will have the opportunity to compete for cash scholarships as well as many other scholarships to colleges and universities. Also, each county winner will have the opportunity to represent her county at the state program in Montgomery in January of 2019. Young ladies entering the 10th and 11th grades have the opportunity to be "DYW Little Sisters." For more information, contact Susan Hargett at 256-710-9239 or Katernia Cole-Coffey at 256-332-8880, or check information on our Facebook page at Distinguished Young Women of Northwest Alabama, or email dshargett@aol.com. Other information and sign-up is available at [www.DistinguishedYW.org](http://www.DistinguishedYW.org). Please contact us no later than June 23, 2018.

**Y**ou're invited to REVIVAL at Mt. Joy Free Will Baptist Church. Services will be Sunday, May 27 at 5 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday, May 28-30 at 7 p.m. Evangelist will be Bro. Robert Partridge. Special singers each night. Pastor Bro. Coy Morgan and congregation invite you to attend.

**S**iloam Missionary Baptist Church will host "Ladies Night Out" with Rita Sweatt from Amory, Mississippi on Tuesday, May 29 at 6 p.m. Rita is a soloist and speaker for women's events, doing monologues of different Bible characters in acting and song. She will be performing the Story of Ruth for our ladies. Come and join us in a night of worship and praise. Rita's objective is to live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work. The church is located at 1657 Hwy. 60 in Russellville. Admission is free! For more information, please call 256-810-3997.

**T**he 2018 "Sea Valiente" ("Be Brave") Assembly of Jehovah Witnesses is set for Friday-Sunday, June 1-3, at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville. The program includes interviews/discussions, a conference on "The Hope of the Resurrection," a multimedia presentation and movie. Log onto [jw.org](http://jw.org) for program times and information. The assembly will begin daily at 9:20 a.m. and run through 4:50 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and through 3:30 p.m. on Sunday.

**K**iwanis Club of Corinth proudly presents the 21st annual "Leon Frazier Memorial Sing." The concert is set for Saturday, June 2, at the Historic Corinth Coliseum Civic Center, 404 Taylor Street in downtown Corinth. The night will be filled with great southern gospel music featuring Gold City, the Perry's, Jeff and Sheri Easter, Josh and Ashley Franks, and Dujuana Frazier Thompson. Doors will open at 5 p.m., and the concert begins at 6 p.m. For more information, call 662-665-1175.

**E**veryone is invited to attend a Candidate Supper at Jonesboro Community Center on Saturday, June 2. Bean plates will be \$10 for adults and \$7 for children. Supper starts at 4 p.m. Candidates will speak at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call Dianne at 256-332-0525 or Helen at 256-332-8078.

**L**iberty Chapel Free Will Baptist Church invites you to revival services from June 3-6. There will be a different speaker each night. Sunday night service begins at 5 p.m. with Bro. Darrel Rambo. Monday features Bro. Larry Crumpton at 7 p.m. Tuesday is Bro. Marcus Lipscomb at 7 p.m., and Wednesday is Bro. Caine Coffee at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome. The church is located in the Oak Grove community on Hwy. 81. For more info, call Delmer Duboise at 256-324-8430.

**T**he Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris Jr., Camp #1833 will meet Thursday, June 7 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue in Russellville. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. For more information, call 256-324-2317. Everyone welcome!

**T**he Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Russellville on Saturday, June 9 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.

**N**itrate City Baptist Church, 6175 Second Street in Muscle Shoals, invites you to "Game On" VBS, Monday, June 11 through Wednesday, June 13 from 6-8:30 p.m. Registration is Monday, June 11 at 5:30 p.m. Classes for students who have completed grades 1-6 (children) and grades 7-12 (youth). Tyler Pendley is the pastor.

**A**merican 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 June 14.

**O**range Baptist Church will hold Vacation Bible School on Saturday, June 16 from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. The church is located at 8153 Highway 34 in Russellville. VBS will be one day only. For more information, call 256-332-2296.

**M**ountain Valley Hee Haw features live music every Friday and Saturday night. Show time is 6 p.m. Karaoke at 7 p.m. on Thursday nights. Free admission. No alcohol or drugs. From Russellville, take 243 to Hwy. 79, turn right, go 1/4 mile, third building on left. Call 256-332-5479 or 256-810-4840.

# Local establishments earn satisfactory health ratings

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The 12 Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of April 30-May 4 each had scores that fall into the "satisfactory compliance" range.

Health ratings are required to be prominently posted in all food/lodging establishments. Scores are graded by the Alabama Department of Public Health inspectors on a 100-point scale.

Establishments with scores of 85 to 100 are considered to be in "satisfactory compliance" and are routinely inspected. Establishments scoring between 70 and 84 will be inspected again in 60 days, and those scoring between 60 and 69 will have another follow-up within 48 hours. Any establishment scoring below 60 will be immediately closed.

Areas of inspection by ADPH include management and personnel; food storage, preparation and service; equipment; utensils; linen cleanliness; plumbing and waste; poisonous or toxic material storage; and an inspection of the physical facility or property.

The 12 Franklin County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 89 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The highest score was 98, received by the Speedy Pig, 13670 Hwy. 43, Russellville.

Inspections of Franklin County

businesses, with critical item violations noted, resulted in the following scores:

- El Quetzal Buena Vista Bakery/Restaurant, 118 E. Franklin St., Russellville, 88. (Melted food bowl, cooked food in cooler not date marked).

- Panda Buffet, 14633 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 91. (Improper insecticides used).

- Captain D's #3737, 15434 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92.

- Pupuseria y Taqueria Las 3 Fronteras, 519 St. Clair St., 93. (Soap stored on utensil shelf).

- Homestead Cafe, 6631 Hwy. 43, Spruce Pine, 93.

- C.J.'s Grocery, 14545 Hwy. 187, Russellville, 94.

- McDonald's #23035, 606 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 96.

- City King Buffet, 520 4th St. SE, Red Bay, 96.

- Willi's, 5680 Hwy. 243, Phil Campbell, 96.

- Bay Mini Mart, 908 4th St., Red Bay, 96.

- Pilgrim's Place, 1314 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 97.

Of the 14 inspections done in Colbert County from April 30, 2018 through May 4, 2018, no business scored below the satisfactory range.

The high score for the week in Colbert County was 99, received by Rayo Mart, 6505 E. 2nd St., Muscle Shoals.

Updated health ratings are available at [www.foodscores.state.al.us](http://www.foodscores.state.al.us) and may be viewed by city or county.

# Vote Barry Moore

## PROBATE JUDGE



ASHTON • BARRY • DEEDRA

- Married to Deedra Seale Moore - Business Education Teacher at Russellville High School
- 1 child - Ashton Moore, 17 yrs. old - Attends Russellville High School
- Member of North Highlands Church of Christ
- Member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 5184 Currently serving as Quartermaster.
- Graduated from Russellville High School, 1984
- Graduated Cum Laude from University of North Alabama, 1990 - Degree in Business Management.
- Retired from Alabama National Guard, 115th Signal Battalion with 23 years of Service.
- Served 1 year in Iraq, 2004-2005
- Over 15 years of Management Experience.
- Currently serving as "YOUR PROBATE JUDGE" with 11 years of experience.

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\$1200 Down

09 Chevy Impala

\$1500 Down

11 Nissan Altima

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# School board passes emergency fund plan

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education approved a resolution to develop a plan to establish and maintain a minimum general fund balance equal to one month's operating expenses, which is \$2.2 million.

Alabama law requires all public school systems to maintain an emergency fund balance equal to one month's operating expenses. Many systems in Alabama are not able to bankroll that much funding. In those instances, the systems are required to present a plan pursuant to the School Fiscal Accountability Law to establish and maintain a minimum general fund balance of one month.

As of March 31, 2018, Franklin County Schools had an emergency fund balance of \$403,061.35, according to chief financial officer Carla Knight.

The plan approved by the board calls for action in three categories: Personnel, transportation and a more generalized third category of 'other.'

**The Franklin County Board of Education approved a resolution to develop a plan to establish and maintain a minimum general fund balance equal to one month's operating expenses, which is \$2.2 million.**

Some of the steps taken related to personnel designed to increase the emergency fund included not replacing a child nutrition clerk position in the central office, not replacing a special education testing certified position at the central office, postponing replacing the assistant superintendent that was vacated on January 1, 2018 until June 1, 2018, abolishing a central office certified supervisor supplement of \$6,206 and decreasing local teaching units from 10.49 in fiscal year 2017 to 3.86 units in fiscal year 2018.

This number is expected to be reduced even more in the coming year as the system's earned units increase due to student enrollment increases in fiscal year 2018.

"We gained a large number of students last year when Russellville City Schools implemented a tuition program," Knight said. "The extra teachers required were not funded until the next year, because teaching units funded by the state are based on the previous school year."

In the area of transportation, Franklin County school administrators hope to subtract costs by the addition of 44 new buses.

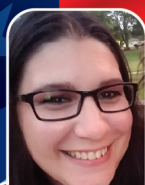
"With the combination of rebate incentives from both the bus vendor along with the propane vendor, the expected savings in maintenance and fuel costs, along with the increased Fleet Renewal Allocation, we expect these buses to pay for themselves," Knight said.

The State of Alabama provides funding through the Fleet Renewal Allocation for all buses less than 10 years of age. Older buses are not funded.

Other areas Knight said the system will manage to maximize savings include continuing to monitor the Child Nutrition Program activity to keep food costs and meals per labor hour in line with state standards.

Additionally, officials will plan to collect 100 percent of available indirect costs from all available federal funds, utilize the flexibility option on earned units as much as possible to keep the staff as close to the Foundation earned level as possible, and to utilize federal funds allocated to the system and reduce the amount of carryover each year.

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# Cleveland hired as assistant superintendent

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education approved the recommendation of superintendent Greg Hamilton and hired Johnny Cleveland as assistant superintendent/transportation supervisor at its May 15 meeting.

Cleveland has been serving as the system's federal programs director after replacing Tilda Sumerel when she retired from the position last year. Previously, Cleveland served as assistant federal programs director.

His administrative experience also includes serving as principal of Red Bay Elementary School.

"Johnny has done an outstanding job as federal programs director and when he served as principal of Red Bay Elementary," Hamilton said. "He is very meticulous in his work, and I think he'll do an outstanding job as transportation supervisor and assistant superintendent."

Cleveland said he aspired to enter administration after he began pursuing his doctorate in

Institutional Technology.

"I feel the knowledge I gained as federal programs director and from Tilda when she was director will add to my knowledge base as assistant superintendent," Cleveland said. "It's all a learning experience, and I'm proud to be put in the position to serve the students, faculty and citizens of Franklin County."

**"Johnny has done an outstanding job as federal programs director and when he served as principal of Red Bay Elementary," Hamilton said. "He is very meticulous in his work, and I think he'll do an outstanding job as transportation supervisor and assistant superintendent."**

Cleveland also expressed his appreciation to retired assistant superintendent Donald Borden for his efforts in bringing 44 new propane fuel buses to Franklin County Schools.

"That will be a big help," Cleveland said, "and I want to thank Donald Borden for all the work and research he put into that."

In other action, the board:

•Approved the retirement of Wanda Lemay,

Belgreen school counselor, effective July 1, 2018; approved the resignation of Mitchell Dalrymple, social science teacher at Belgreen, effective June 1, 2018; approved the leave of absence for Michelle Puryear, Tharptown Elementary teacher, for a one-year period; approved the employment of Bryan Jimenez as Spanish teacher for Franklin County Schools; approved Richie Hester and Sonny Glasgow as summer school teachers; and approved the suspension/reassignment of bus driver Cindy Carter at East Franklin for a 10-day suspension without pay and reassignment of bus route.

•Approved a resolution honoring John Jolly, president and founder of There's A Way, Inc., a non-profit corporation that awarded 245 outstanding teacher awards and 878 student scholarships to Franklin County and Russellville City Schools students since it began in 2001. Jolly recently announced this would be the final year of the foundation.

The next meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education is set for June 12, with work session at 4 p.m. and meeting at 4:15 p.m.

# County to use 30 poll iPads for June 5 primary

## Units will allow workers to make sure voters are eligible and at correct precinct

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Franklin County voters will see a change in how they sign in when they go to the polls for the Tuesday, June 5, 2018 primary election.

The Franklin County Commission approved the purchase of 12 voter identification poll iPads at its May 21 meeting. Additionally, Alabama secretary of state John Merrill announced this month that his office was providing Franklin County with another 18 poll iPads, bringing the total for the county to 30. This will allow each voting precinct to have one of the pads onsite and allow county officials to have several spare units on hand in case of emergencies.

The poll pad units allow poll workers to scan a voter's drivers license or authorized ID card to confirm the voter's eligibility and to ensure the voter is at the correct precinct.

The 12 units will be purchased from Knowink

Election Solutions at a cost of \$850 per unit. Additionally, the contract provides for a poll pad license package for each unit at a cost of \$495 each. And the county will pay \$1,500 for onsite poll worker training to learn how to operate the units.

**The Commission approved the purchase of 12 voter identification poll iPads at its May 21 meeting. Additionally, Alabama secretary of state John Merrill announced this month that his office was providing Franklin County with another 18 poll iPads, bringing the total for the county to 30.**

**"This was an opportunity to save some money," Moore said. "With the secretary of state working with us on this, it was a good opportunity to take advantage of getting the 18 pads."**

The three-year contract also includes a \$100-per-year software license and maintenance per unit, for an added cost of \$3,000 per year, bring-

ing the total contract to \$26,610.

Franklin County probate judge Barry Moore said the county will be reimbursed 50 percent of the software cost per unit. Moore said the balance will be paid from funds in the county's HAVA (Help America Vote Act) fund, which has \$20,000 available.

Poll workers will work with the new iPads at poll worker training on May 29.

The poll pads will have all software programs downloaded prior to election day and they do not need an internet connection to work.

"I think this was an opportunity to save some money," Moore said. "With the secretary of state's willingness to work with us on this, it was a good opportunity to take advantage of getting the 18 pads."

Poll workers will have printed voter lists on June 5 in case there are any problems with the iPads, Moore said. Voters will still sign the book for the appropriate primary they choose to vote in.

# Shewbart announces re-election bid in District 5

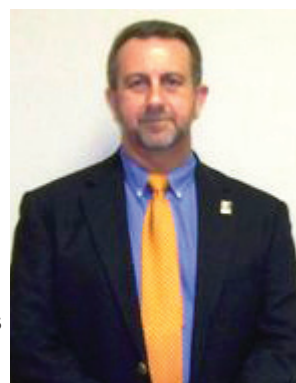
Submitted to the FFP  
by Mike Shewbart

I have two children, Brooke, 18, and Lane, 15. Both attend Red Bay High School, and they are involved in several extracurricular activities. My parents are James and Pat Shewbart, who were raised in the Red Bay area. My grandparents are Carl and Susie Shewbart, and Buck and Meadie Vinson. My children and I attend the First United Methodist Church in Red Bay, where we are active members. I have taught youth Sunday school classes and Wednesday night classes. Brooke and Lane are active members of the church youth group.

I graduated from Red Bay High School in 1978. After high school I continued my education by studying Business Administration and Computer

Science at Northwest Alabama Community College. I am Microsoft Computer and Network Certified A+.

I was honored to be elected in 2012 to represent the citizens of District 5 on the Franklin County Board of Education. In 2014, I was elected by fellow board members to serve as president of the board. I have attended workshops and classes and completed more than 153 hours of board of education training. When I was elected, I promised you I would



Mike Shewbart

work with each of you and our city and industry leaders to complete many improvements at the Red Bay campus. With your help, we have been able to make many needed improvements. A few of the improvements we have been able to work together to accomplish are:

- A new roof for the elementary classrooms.
- New restrooms for the elementary gym.
- Drainage in the elementary playground.
- Replacement of an outdated boiler heating system, saving the school and system high utility bill cost.
- Additional parking for students and staff across from the office and elementary classes.
- Replacement of inefficient lighting in classrooms with "energy-efficient lighting" and adequate lighting, which provided more savings to

See 'SHEWBART,' page 11



# Classifieds

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**YARD SALES/ ESTATE SALES**

Yard Sale this Wed./Thurs./Fri. May 23-25 from 8 am-until at 214 Hillandale Drive, Russellville. Flower arrangements, clothing, toys, household items and lots more!

Yard Sale this Friday, May 25 from 6 am-until at 1595 Duncan Creek

Road, Russellville. 256-460-5016. (1)

Yard Sale this Saturday, May 26 from 7 am-until at 100 Spring Street, Russellville. Household items, clothing and MORE!

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1 BR, 1 BA house for rent, located behind King Drive-In. In Tharptown school district. \$300/month. \$300 deposit. 256-412-7544. (1)

Rent to Own House Available. 3 BR/1 BA. Russellville. \$3,000 down, \$600/month, includes taxes and insurance. Call 256-412-8333. (1)

Apartment for Rent. 600 Madison. 2 BR, 1 BA. \$325/mo., \$325/dep. Call 256-810-3998 or 256-460-5016. (1)

House for Rent. 110 Marlin. 2 BR, 1 BA. \$375/mo., \$375/dep. Call 256-810-3998 or

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Trimmer/mower w/big roll of trimmer, \$200. Garden tools, \$5 and \$10 each. Call 205-993-5961. (2)

Boat for sale: 14-foot runabout, 70-hp, with trailer, \$700. A real steal. Call 205-993-4495. (5)

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## 'DOG,' from page 1

Masterson said he pulled into Legacy last Friday morning, as he always does, to get a biscuit. He left his keys in the truck and went inside.

"I ran in there, and there was one guy ahead of me," Masterson said. "He and I talked. I stopped to put some jelly on my biscuit and went out the door, and my truck was gone. I first thought someone was messing with me. The police came right away and looked at the security video to identify the suspect."

Masterson said a witness told him Scott nearly collided with another vehicle as he pulled out of the Chevron parking lot. Masterson immediately took to Facebook and posted a picture of the man and of his missing dog. He offered several

rewards throughout Friday for Jett's safe return.

"I kept throwing rewards out there hoping he'd be somewhere where he'd see it and think it would benefit him to turn in," Masterson said. "Someone showed him the Facebook posts, so he called RPD and told them he couldn't believe someone accused him of this. Dispatcher[Patti] Landers and Officer [Craig] Bullion kept him on the line and told him they were just trying to recover the dog."

"He said, 'I've got the dog. I've had it all night. I've been feeding it hamburgers.'"

Early Saturday, Masterson was reunited with Jett, who was happy and healthy.

While he'd never want to thank someone for allegedly stealing his truck, Masterson is thankful

that Scott cared for the dog.

"At least the guy had somewhat of a heart," Masterson said. "I'm thankful he took care of her. Other stuff can be replaced and insured, but Jett is part of the family."

Masterson has raised Jett since she was a young puppy, and she converted him into being a 'dog person.'

"I was the type years ago, I grew up and thought, 'Oh, that's just a dog.' But I raised Jett from a pup, and she's with me every step of the way," Masterson said. "People don't understand how much a part of the family they are. She's priceless to me."

The Masterson family expressed its appreciation to the Russellville Police Department for investigating and handling the case, and to the thousands of folks on Facebook who spread the word about Jett missing and the reward.

"We had well over 1,000 likes by Saturday afternoon when I was able to announce we had her back in our hands," Masterson said. "It just touches me. Most everybody is a pet lover, and they can be like their child. That made me think. What if this had been someone's child? Imagine getting out and pumping gas with a child in a car seat and a minute later, that child is gone."

"It's sad we're at that point where so many transient people are in Russellville. It's dangerous. These prescription drugs and illegal drugs are really hurting our country and our community."

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## 'SHEWBART,' from page 9

our school system.

- Repairing of waterlines that had been leaking for more than 34 months before I was elected.

- I fought for lighting to the football stadium so it would be in compliance with the generally accepted lighting standards. During this important issue, I wasn't afraid to go to bat against fellow board members and the superintendent and insurance to do what was right for our campus.

- I worked with the Red Bay education committee and Red Bay City Council to purchase much needed computers for grades K-12.

- Worked cooperatively to secure grants to add fiber optics to every school in the county, including Red Bay.

- As I promised six years ago, all hiring decisions were made by hiring the most qualified candidate regardless of family affiliations. I pledge this will continue!

- I have promoted and utilized community stakeholders' input and advice in hiring and seeking out qualified administrators to help lead our schools. I commit to continue this practice if re-elected!

The board was able to receive a grant from USDA to provide every student in Franklin County a free

breakfast and lunch, not only during the school year but in the summer months as well. This alone has saved parents of the students several thousands of dollars a year. I am proud you have elected me in the past to be able to fight for our children and to help save parents money!

I feel that we must continue to hire the very best employees that are available. Our test scores show this to be very beneficial for our students. As a result of the most qualified teachers instructing our students every day, Red Bay High School scored higher than any other school in the county, and most other schools in northwest Alabama. Our students deserve the best education we can provide. I am committed to supporting our teachers in the classroom and will continue to fight to give them the tools they need to succeed!

If re-elected, I commit to you I will continue to work to improve our school, and I am committed to working toward the goal of constructing a NEW school building at Red Bay.

I humbly ask for your vote and confidence on June 5 in the Democratic Primary.

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## Let's get physical

The RHS football team wrapped up a hard-hitting spring. See story Page 14.

## Headed to Huntingdon

Belgreen senior Jacob Mayberry will play hoops for the Hawks. See story Page 16.



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# DYNASTY remembered

Russellville's quest for a fourth straight title fell one series short, but the Golden Tigers of 2015-18 will forever be etched into the annals of AHSAA baseball history. Looking back, it certainly was an UN-FOUR-GETTABLE run.

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

MONTGOMERY - Standing outside the main gate at Riverwalk Stadium in downtown Montgomery on a hot and muggy Friday afternoon, a Russellville baseball parent summed up in one short sentence the predominant feeling shared by the vast majority of Golden Tiger fans who had just watched their team's bid for an unprecedented fourth consecutive Class 5A championship end with a two-game sweep at the hands of Faith Academy.

"I know they're upset right now," the parent said of the 20 players and six coaches getting ready for the long ride home, "but they shouldn't be."

It wasn't that Russellville was completely outclassed by Faith last week; on the contrary, if the Golden Tigers—who stranded 18 runners and struck out 18 times at the plate in two games while handing out 14 "freebies" (walks plus hit batters) on the mound—had hit and pitched to their potential, they may well have finished off the four-peat instead of suffering a pair of frustrating losses, 5-3 and 7-3. Having emerged from a loaded South bracket despite a season-ending injury to No. 2 starter Gabe Shepard (a Southern Miss signee) in mid-April, the Rams (34-3) were a deserving champion—just not the unbeatable juggernaut their No. 4 national ranking (courtesy of Perfect Game USA) might have suggested.



PHOTOS BY KYLE GLASGOW

Ezell (far right, foreground) played a pivotal role on each of the four state finals teams, helping Russellville compile a 38-7 playoff record.

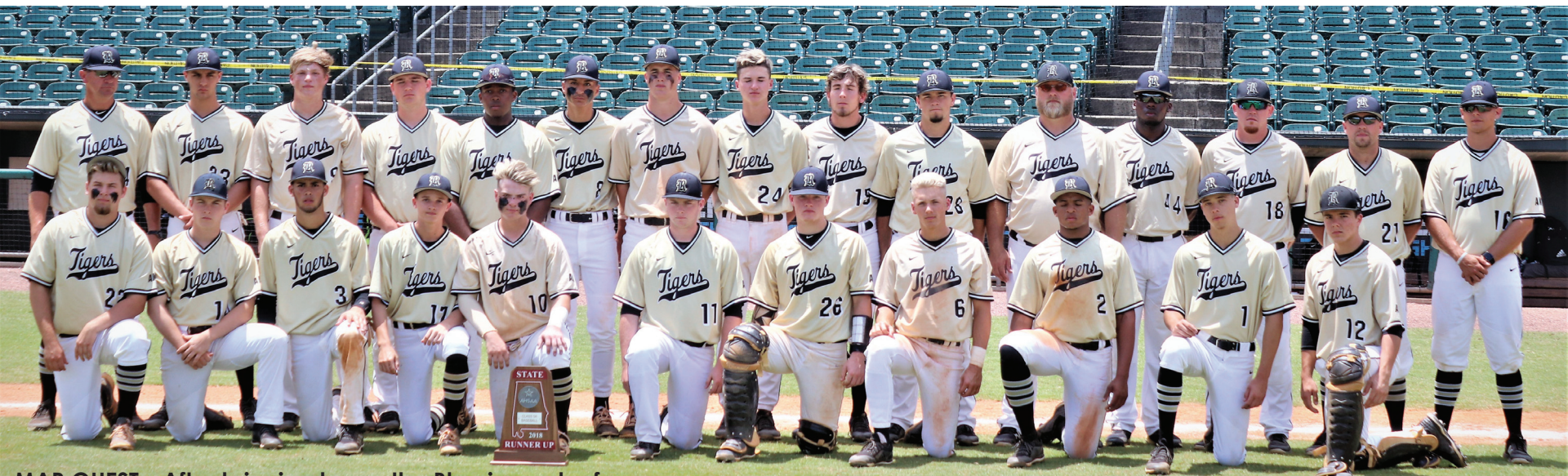
But despite the disappointment that comes with not playing your best when your best likely would have been enough, the prevailing sentiment still rings true: The Golden Tigers have nothing to hang their heads about. A team devoid of the SEC-level talent that propelled the program to three straight Blue Maps from 2015-17 still managed to fight and scrap and work its way back to the state finals, reaching the 30-win mark for a fourth straight year.

For the first time since the inaugural championship run in 2015, just making it to Montgomery felt like a major achievement unto itself.

Eleven Russellville baseball players will graduate Friday night, but head coach Chris Heaps spent 15 years as an assistant at Hartselle, where he was a vital part of a program that churned out championship-caliber teams year after year after year despite bidding farewell to huge senior classes each and every May. Can he and his capable staff keep the Russellville machine humming? It wouldn't be wise to bet against him, particularly with key contributors Hunter Briles, Devin Buckhalter and Caden Parker all returning next season and a bunch of talented arms in grades 7-9 poised to make an impact in the years to come.

For now, though, Russellville's streak of state titles has ended. It's been an unforgettable four years, a stretch during which the Golden Tigers played 20 postseason series, won 19 of them (with 14 sweeps) and put together a

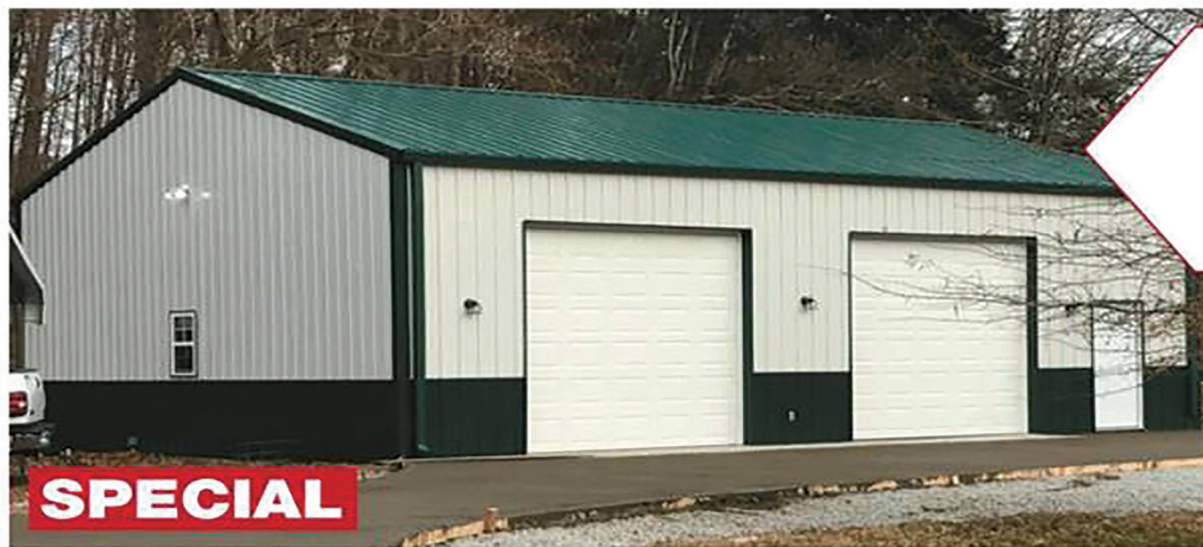
See 'DYNASTY,' Page 18



MAP QUEST - After bringing home the Blue in each of the previous three seasons, Russellville was seeing Red for the first time last Friday afternoon at Riverwalk.

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# Russellville wraps up hard-hitting spring

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

John Ritter is perfectly willing to accept—and even embrace—a little new-school style.

As long as it doesn't mean sacrificing an ounce of old-school substance.

"We approach practice with a combination of both," Ritter said on Saturday, just a few days after wrapping up his first spring as Russellville's head football coach with an intrasquad scrimmage. "We do a lot of new-school fun things like playing music at practice. We practice at a really, really fast pace, and everything's high-intensity. At the same time, though, we're teaching the fundamentals. We're teaching tackling. We had a very physical spring from the standpoint of, we taught them all how to be physical. We taught them all how to tackle.

"At the end of the day, kids like that. This is the only sport where you can be that kind of aggressive. Being physical and being rough is encouraged in football. In every other sport, there's a penalty for it."

Emphasizing and developing physicality without jeopardizing player safety is a major building block for Ritter, a former ASWA Coach of the Year at both Red Bay (2012) and West Morgan (2016) who was hired to take over the Golden Tiger program in March.

"It's one thing to hit. It's another thing to teach them *how* to hit," Ritter said. "That's one thing we really take a lot of pride in the way we practice. We're gonna establish that physical brand of football, but we're not out there just lining up and run-

ning into each other. Our goal is to teach them how to tackle and how to be physical the right way, so that we do protect ourselves.

"We tackled every day in practice for nine straight days, and we didn't have one guy get hurt from tackling and hitting. We had one knee injury [to rising senior lineman Will Rushing, who suffered a torn meniscus on the first day of spring drills and had surgery last Friday that should only sideline him for a few weeks] that was kind of a freak thing, and we had a couple of rolled ankles here and there, but we had no injuries [that occurred] because of the physicality of our practices. We're learning how to do it the right way, the safe way. I was really pleased with how our kids took to that—being physical on both sides of the ball and in every phase of the game, not just on offense and defense."

**"It's one thing to hit. It's another thing to teach them *how* to hit," Ritter said. "That's one thing we really take a lot of pride in the way we practice. We're gonna establish a physical brand of football, but we're not out there just lining up and running into each other. Our goal is to teach them *how* to tackle and how to be physical the right way, so that we do protect ourselves."**

If physicality (properly technique, but relentless) is one staple of Ritter's coaching philosophy, a high level of enthusiasm is certainly another.

"I'm a firm believer that your assistant coaches feed off the head coach, and your kids are gonna take on the personality of their coaching staff," Ritter said. "The personality we want to have is very intense, very enthusiastic, very positive, real-

ly getting after it. So we're playing music at practice, jumping up and down, having a good time. But we also started to see a sense of rivalry develop between the offensive and defensive staff, and the kids feed off that.

"The longer we practiced, the more intense it became, the more we had kids calling on each other but also calling each other out when they didn't do their jobs. You create a sense of accountability, and it all stems from that high-impact, high-intensity, get-after-it type of personality that I have and that our other coaches have as well."

Ritter credits that kind of contagious enthusiasm and zeal for the game as a primary driving force for Russellville's numbers this spring, which were through the roof.

"Counting five or six baseball players who either played last year or have expressed interest in playing this year, we started the spring with 106," Ritter said. "We finished the spring with 96. We lost ten to attrition, which is not unusual, and we'll probably lose ten or twelve more before the fall. That last scrimmage, we had five in baseball and seven guys that were injured and couldn't play. I think we dressed 84, so that's 96 kids who are gonna start the summer with us.

"I really don't know why the numbers are up. Maybe after the first couple of days of practice, the kids were talking in the hallways about how much fun we were having."

Ritter said that getting up to speed won't be an issue for those players who missed the spring for one reason or another.

"That's not a huge deal," he said. "The way the

# 'SPRING,' from page 14

summer is set up now and the way we practice in the summer, spring training is kind of overrated. We'll have 21 workouts this summer, and we'll practice 21 times. Those guys that didn't participate in the spring, it's not a big deal. We can catch them up really quick. We didn't put a lot in offensively, mainly just our base stuff. For the most part we just wanted to line up and get after each other.

"Our goals this spring were to identify the guys who are gonna play hard, the guys who will strike and the guys who will be coachable. I think we accomplished all three of those goals."

Under Ritter, Russellville will remain no-huddle on offense but will transition from wristbands to a signal-based system. He estimated the Golden Tigers got about a quarter of their new offense installed during the spring.

"I think it's very important over the next two months for us to see who's willing to sacrifice, to do what it takes to be successful," Ritter said. "The next two months are all about getting better, getting bigger, faster and stronger, but also about being a good teammate—sacrificing a little bit of your summer so you can get better and be accountable to your teammates when fall practice starts. Like I told our guys, at the end of the day, we're still Russellville. If we approach it like that—'By George, we're Russellville, and we're not gonna be defeated'—we'll have a great summer."

"We probably put in about 25 percent of the offense—just the really, really, really basic stuff," Ritter said. "Our language and vernacular and how we call things are different. We put in three run plays, we put in one screen, two quick-game and two combinations on offense. We really just wanted to see who would play hard.

"Defensively, what we do is so simple [Ritter and defensive coordinator Chris Balentine have run an aggressive, slanting 3-4 scheme with great success at multiple schools], we were able to put the majority of it in. We worked as we went to get better at the little things."

Those install efforts will increase this summer during the team's Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday practice sessions. Ritter's plan is for his team to be ready to hit the ground running when fall camp kicks off on August 6.

"Our goal is to be ready to practice and not do any install after that day," said Ritter, whose team will host East Limestone for a preseason game on Friday, August 24. "We want to make sure that on that first Monday in August, when we start fall practice, we're right where we need to be and we don't have to play catch-up."

The Golden Tigers' first summer schedule under Ritter includes a trip to Samford on July 12 for a 7-on-7 competition, plus another camp at Russellville on July 26 that will feature 24 teams—all but two of which Ritter said will be local.

With spring drills in the rearview and the August 31 opener against Deshler looming on the horizon, Ritter emphasized the importance of June-July activities as the Golden Tigers aim to bounce back from last season's 3-7 finish.

"I think it's very important over the next two months for us to see who's willing to sacrifice, to do what it takes to be successful," Ritter said. "That's what I told the guys. The next two months are all about getting better, getting bigger, faster and stronger, but also about being a good teammate—sacrificing a little bit of your summer so you can get better and be accountable to your teammates when fall practice starts.

"Like I told our guys, at the end of the day, we're still Russellville. If we approach it like that—'By George, we're Russellville, and we're not gonna be defeated'—we'll have a great summer."



## Eric Boutwell

Freshman golfer, Russellville

Boutwell went toe-to-toe with Fighting Joe last Monday and came out on top. In round one of the Class 5A state tournament at the Robert Trent Jones course in the Shoals, Boutwell put up the low score of the day with a four-under 68, one stroke better than Will McFadden of St. Paul's. Boutwell slipped a bit on Tuesday but still shot a respectable round of 77 to finish the tournament at 145, good enough for second place overall, five shots back of McFadden.

Boutwell's performance helped the Golden Tigers edge out Briarwood for a Red Map.



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# Belgreen's Mayberry headed to Huntingdon



Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

Jacob Mayberry remembers exactly how it felt. As a middle-school student at Russellville, Mayberry didn't make the cut when he tried out for the seventh-grade basketball team. And it stung.

But it also forced him to take a hard, honest look at the player he was and the player he badly wanted to become.

"It made me mad," Mayberry said, "but I should have got cut. I knew I wasn't good. Getting cut motivated me. It made me want to prove to people that I could play.

"That's when I started to get better."

With school ball out of the picture for at least a year, Mayberry signed up to play in the Muscle Shoals rec league. After transferring to Belgreen as an eighth-grader, Mayberry had to sit out a year before he could suit up for the Bulldogs, so he returned to the rec league for another go-round.

It was there in Muscle Shoals where Mayberry, an old-school point guard with handles and quickness but limited shooting range, crossed paths with former Coffee High School star and hoops whisperer Rayfield Ragland, who was coaching another team in the same league. Already eager to dedicate himself to the game, Mayberry's development as a player kicked into overdrive during regular training sessions with Ragland.

One of Mayberry's chief goals was to address what he saw as his most glaring deficiency.

See 'MAYBERRY,' page 17

FILE PHOTO

An excellent defender, Mayberry (12) racked up 128 steals over his final two seasons at Belgreen, helping the Bulldogs go 47-15 and make back-to-back trips to the Northwest Regional. As a senior, Mayberry averaged 3.7 assists and a career-high 10.4 points per game.



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## 'MAYBERRY', from page 16

"My shooting. I couldn't shoot at all," Mayberry said. "I was a good ball-handler, and I could pull off the dribble, but I wasn't a good shooter."

Mayberry improved his stroke under Ragland's tutelage, but he never became a knock-down three-point shooter—not even while running the point the past two seasons for Bulldog teams that went 47-15 and made back-to-back trips to Hanceville. He did, however, develop a reliable mid-range jumper, one he could stop on a dime and fire with accuracy anywhere between 12 and 17 feet from the basket.

The pull-up J became a signature shot for Mayberry, who valued it most of all for the element of surprise (and the cleaner looks) it often provided.

"When somebody's a catch-and-shoot guy," Mayberry said, "you usually know who those guys are, and you can put a hand in their face. But if you're driving in and pulling up off the dribble in the mid-range, it's kind of hard for them to stop and get a hand up. They never know when you're gonna pull up and shoot it."

That patented mid-range shot was on full display early this spring when Mayberry and fellow Belgreen senior Eli Hiser attended a try-out—arranged for them by Bulldog coach Clint Isbell—at Huntingdon College, a Division III program in Montgomery. Mayberry, who had previously taken part in a summer hoops camp at Huntingdon prior to his senior year, made a strong impression this time around on head coach Caleb Kimbrough while playing five-on-five with current Hawks players.

"I did not do good at all starting out," Mayberry said. "We had been doing baseball stuff at Belgreen for two or three weeks, so I hadn't been shooting much. But after a while I finally got into a rhythm and made a few plays. I started getting back into it and doing really good."

"It's a whole lot different than high school ball."

**"It made me mad," Mayberry said of failing to make the basketball team as a seventh-grader at Russellville, "but I should have got cut. I knew I wasn't good. Getting cut motivated me. It made me want to prove to people that I could play. That's when I started to get better."**

At 6'1 and roughly 150 pounds, Mayberry is slight of build but wiry, cat-quick and athletic. The sheer size of players at the next level ["I was only bigger than one or two kids on the team," he said] threw him for a bit of a loop, but by the latter stages of the scrimmage he was more than holding his own. He got on a scoring roll during one hot stretch, sinking several of those mid-range jumpers and even tossing in a handful of threes.

One particular play stands out in his memory, though.

"There was this kid who was pretty good, one of the best on the team," Mayberry said. "I don't think he thought I was that good, but I got hot and kept scoring, and we went at it for a while. There was one play everybody went crazy on. I'm sure Eli remembers it, too. I got a steal and got out on a fast break, and that guy tried to swat it up off the backboard, but I did like an up-and-under reverse layup, and everybody went crazy."

"It was pretty cool."

As Mayberry, accompanied down to Montgomery by his father, Anthony, and his grandfather, Freddy Hall, was getting ready to head back home after the workout, Kimbrough came over for a chat.

"He was talking to my dad and grandpa," Mayberry said. "He told me he was impressed with what he saw. He told me I could play a little bit, and he wanted me to come down and play for them."

Mayberry, who also had offers to play at Spring Hill College in Mobile and Blue Mountain College in Mississippi, had thoroughly enjoyed both his trips to Huntingdon and wasted little time in accepting Kimbrough's offer. He was set to sign with the Hawks this week. [Hiser will sign with Blue Mountain on Wednesday afternoon. For full coverage of his signing, see next week's edition of the *Free Press*.]

"It was a pretty good feeling," Mayberry said of getting the offer from Huntingdon. "That's the one place I liked the best when I went and tried out. To actually hear the coach say those words, you know, I was really happy to hear that."

Mayberry enjoyed a career year at Belgreen as a senior, averaging 10.4 points per game on 45-percent shooting from the floor. He led the Bulldogs with 110 assists (3.7 per game) and also with 74 steals (2.5 per game). He pulled down 3.7 rebounds per game and shot 62 percent (70-for-112) from the foul line, earning second-team All-County honors from the *Free Press* for a second straight year.

With Mayberry running the show and setting an aggressive, up-tempo tone on both ends of the floor, Belgreen rolled to a second consecutive area title and also repeated as Franklin County champions. The Bulldogs finished the season 25-6, losing to R.A. Hubbard in the Northwest Regional semifinals.

Mayberry was at his best in some of Belgreen's biggest games, scoring a career-high 21 points (to go along with five assists and four steals) the day after Christmas in an 81-78 loss to Class 6A Cullman in the Bracy Invitational at Deshler High School.

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He also put up 18 points in the county semifinals against Phil Campbell (a 58-49 win) on January 20 and then scored 13 points two nights later to help the Bulldogs out-last Red Bay 64-53 in double-overtime in the finals.

As a junior in 2016-17, Mayberry averaged 9.2 points, 4.2 assists and 3.5 rebounds per game while leading Belgreen with 54 steals. He scored a season-high 19 points in the Northwest Regional semifinals against South Lamar (pictured at right).

All in all, not a bad career for a kid who got cut from the team as a seventh-grader at Russellville. That career will now continue at the college level, a goal Mayberry has been pursuing for quite some time.

"Probably ever since I started working with Rayfield," he said. "I'm pretty excited."



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**'DYNASTY' from page 13**

remarkable record of 38-7 in playoff games—tying Spanish Fort (2010-13) for the most postseason wins in a four-year period in Class 5A history. But just in case some of the details have slipped your memory, here's a look back at Russellville's remarkable run.

**2015 Postseason**

**Round 1:** Swept Boaz at home, winning 10-9 and 3-2

**The skinny:** If not for some key defensive miscues by the visiting Pirates, Russellville's run to its first-ever state title might have been derailed before it began. Junior lefty Bailey Thompson rescued the Golden Tigers with four hitless innings of relief on the mound, earning the save in Game 1 and the win in Game 2.

**Round 2:** Swept Etowah on the road, winning 16-3 and 1-0

**The skinny:** Sixteen hits—including home runs by junior Austin Bohannon and sophomore Judd Ward—carried Russellville to a Game 1 rout, and senior ace Jacob Green struck out nine batters in a five-hit shutout in Game 2 to out-duel Etowah sophomore Eli Dunn.

**Round 3:** Swept East Limestone at home, winning 11-1 and 10-3

**The skinny:** Bohannon clubbed a pair of two-run homers, one in each game, and the Golden Tigers finished with 24 hits in a Friday-night sweep that extended their win streak to 17 games and sent them to the state semifinals for the first time since 2007.

**Round 4:** Swept Alexandria on the road, winning 18-5 and 3-0

**The skinny:** Russellville rode another Game 1 offensive explosion (an eight-run third inning highlighted by Bohannon's three-run blast, plus a seven-run sixth inning that included a bases-clearing double by Ward) and another Game 2 gem from Green (six strikeouts in a five-hit shutout) to a fourth straight series sweep, advancing to the state finals for the first time in program history.

**State Finals:** Swept Helena, winning 3-2 and 4-1

**The skinny:** The Golden Tigers got complete game wins from sophomore Cody Greenhill in Game 1 and Green in Game 2, plus a 5-for-7 performance at the plate from junior shortstop Reed Smith, the series MVP. The sweep of Helena gave Russellville (35-6) its first baseball state championship and a 21-game win streak to close the season.

**2016 Postseason**

**Round 1:** Swept Boaz at home, winning 12-1 and 10-0

**The skinny:** The drama from the previous year's first-round series with the Pirates was quickly buried in Game 1 beneath a seven-run first-inning onslaught, one that began with a leadoff homer by Smith and ended with a grand slam by Bohannon. Fellow senior Austin Kitterman finished the two-game sweep 4-for-4 with three RBIs and five runs scored.

**Round 2:** Swept Lawrence County at home, winning 10-0 and 7-1

**The skinny:** Greenhill threw a two-hit shutout in the opener, and Bohannon struck out 12 batters in six innings of two-hit ball in Game 2 as the Golden Tigers cruised into the quarterfinals.

**Round 3:** Swept Alexandria at home, winning 3-2 and 12-1

**The skinny:** Greenhill and Bohannon took care of business on the mound, both notching their 12th win of the year while becoming the first pair of Russellville teammates to each strike out 100 batters in the same season. Ward, the team's junior centerfielder, put on a defensive clinic in Game 1, throwing out the potential tying run at the plate in the sixth inning and snaring a sinking line drive with runners at second and third to end the game in the seventh; he then reached base four times and scored three runs in the Game 2 rout.

**Round 4:** Swept Corner on the road, winning 5-0 and 4-3

**The skinny:** In front of a massive overflow crowd at Corner High School, Greenhill completely overmatched the Yellow Jackets in Game 1, striking out 11 and allowing just one hit (an infield single). The Golden Tigers got a go-ahead sac fly from senior RBI machine Landon Oliver in Game 2 and held on to win, thanks in part to a botched squeeze play by the Yellow Jackets that resulted in a double play and killed a sixth-inning rally.

**State Finals:** Took two of three from Faith Academy, losing 9-1 and winning 3-0 and 5-3

**The skinny:** Russellville's 19-game playoff win streak ended in stunning fashion at Paterson Field, as Faith took advantage of a handful of early errors in Game 1 to rough up Greenhill and hand him his first career postseason loss. The Golden Tigers rebounded the following day at Riverwalk, getting a two-hit shutout from series MVP Bohannon in Game 2 and six strikeouts from Kitterman and his wipeout slider in Game 3. Ward scored the decisive run in the fifth inning of the clincher, roping a triple to right-center and coming home on a wild pitch to break a 3-3 tie. Russellville (48-7) won its second straight championship and set a school record for wins in a season.

**2017 Postseason**

**Round 1:** Took two of three from Mortimer Jordan at home, winning 7-3, losing 3-1 and winning 11-0

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## 'DYNASTY', from page 18

**The skinny:** Skylar Holland's three-run homer in the second inning of Game 1 was a knockout blow, but the Blue Devils got up off the deck to win Game 2 behind a two-run blast and six strong innings from ace Dalton Hall. After going just 8-for-46 at the plate in Friday's doubleheader, Russellville banged out nine extra-base hits (including three home runs) on Saturday to take the series with a rout. Ward hit for the cycle in Game 3, and junior reserve Jeff Lloyd punctuated the win with a walk-off blast in the bottom of the sixth.

**Round 2:** Swept Arab on the road, winning 13-2 and 13-3

**The skinny:** Ward jumpstarted the Game 1 rout with a two-run homer in the top of the first and finished the day 5-for-8 with two doubles and a triple. An under-the-weather Greenhill struck out eight and didn't allow an earned run in the opener, and senior Chad Wray picked up his first career playoff win in Game 2 to finish off the sweep.

**Round 3:** Swept Etowah at home, winning 3-0 and 5-1

**The skinny:** Greenhill dominated Game 1, setting a new career playoff-high with 12 strikeouts in seven innings and also breaking the school's single-season record with his 16th home run, a two-run shot off Blue Devil ace Eli Dunn. Wray followed suit with 12 strikeouts in the nightcap, holding Etowah to four hits in a complete game.

**Round 4:** Swept Ardmore at home, winning 6-0 and 7-3

**The skinny:** After winning semifinal series at Alexandria and at Corner the previous two years, the Golden Tigers got a chance to celebrate clinching a trip to Montgomery on their home field for a change. Greenhill struck out seven in six shutout innings in Game 1, and Wray battled through a rocky first couple of innings to win the nightcap. Ward reached base six times in the doubleheader, sealing Game 2 with a late two-run double.

**State Finals:** Took two of three from Faith Academy, winning 9-1, losing 8-7 and winning 7-4

**The skinny:** Greenhill got revenge on the Rams in Game 1, touching 94 on the radar gun and striking out 11 batters in a two-hit tour de force. Faith extended the series with a three-run rally in the seventh inning of Game 2, but the Golden Tigers—sparked by a walk and a triple from senior leadoff man Colin Garrison—jumped out to an early 7-0 lead in Game 3. The Rams rallied again and had the tying runs on base in the top of the seventh, but junior reliever Rudy Fernandez got the final out on a groundball to second to seal the win and a third straight championship for Russellville (38-10). Greenhill took home series MVP honors, edging out Holland, who picked up the win in Game 3 with six strong innings and also finished the series 7-for-9 at the plate with four RBIs.

**Greenhill got revenge on the Rams in Game 1 of the 2016 state finals, touching 94 on the radar gun and striking out 11 batters in a two-hit tour de force. He took home series MVP honors, edging out Holland, who picked up the win in Game 3 with six strong innings and also finished the series 7-for-9 at the plate with four RBIs.**

### 2018 Postseason

**Round 1:** Swept Etowah at home, winning 7-3 and 7-3

**The skinny:** Landon Ezzell homered and went the distance on the mound to win the opener; Fernandez followed suit with a three-run blast and a complete game to win Game 2 and seal Russellville's third playoff sweep of Etowah in the past four years.

**Round 2:** Took two of three from Lee-Huntsville on the road, losing 3-2 in eight innings and winning 10-2 and 13-1

**The skinny:** Lee walked off with a win in Game 1 (pushed back to Saturday due to wet field conditions) to put Russellville's four-peat bid in early jeopardy, but the Golden Tigers rallied from an early 1-0 deficit in Game 2 to score six runs in the third inning and win going away. Monday's Game 3 was a rout, with junior pitcher Caden Parker striking out eight batters in six innings and seniors Noah Gist, Houston Kitterman and Brock Malone collecting two hits apiece.

**Round 3:** Took two of three from Springville at home, losing 19-15 and winning 18-7 and 6-4

**The skinny:** Springville mashed its way to a stunning 14-0 lead after three

innings in Game 1 and then held on for the win. Russellville rebounded in Game 2 behind a pair of grand slams from Ezzell, overcoming three more homers by the visiting Tigers to even the series. Fernandez was the Game 3 hero, holding Springville's big bats in check for five-plus innings and then tying the game 4-4 in the bottom of the sixth with an RBI double. He later scored the go-ahead run, and senior reliever Jaret Ward finished off the win with the help of an incredible game-ending, series-clinching 6-4-3 double play turned by Parker and Malone in the top of the seventh.

**Round 4:** Swept Mortimer Jordan at home, winning 12-4 and 7-0

**The skinny:** A pair of three-run homers (one by Ezzell, the other by Lloyd) in the first inning of Game 1 set the tone for a day of domination by the Golden Tigers, who got six innings of nine-strikeout, two-hit ball from Parker in Game 2 to punch their ticket to Montgomery for a fourth straight season.

**State Finals:** Got swept by Faith Academy, losing 5-3 and 7-3

**The skinny:** Russellville managed only four hits in Game 1 off ace lefty Reece Ewing, who finished with 10 strikeouts in 6.1 innings. The Golden Tigers scored twice in the seventh and had the tying run at the plate with just one out, but sophomore Eli Giles closed out the win for the Rams. Trailing 2-1 midway through Game 2, Russellville loaded the bases with just one out in the bottom of the fourth but failed to scratch. Faith scored a run in the top of the fifth and then four more in the sixth, getting a three-run double from senior catcher Chris Sargent. The Golden Tigers (30-17) scored twice in the bottom of the sixth to cut the lead to 7-3, but they left the bases loaded again and would get no closer.

Over the past four seasons, Russellville is 151-40, with four area championships, 38 playoff wins and three state titles. The Golden Tigers remain one of only three teams (along with Hartselle from 1990-92 and Spanish Fort from 2010-12) to go back-to-back-to-back as Class 5A champions.



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Thanks in large part to career years from seniors like Malone (left) and Fernandez (right) in 2018, Russellville reached the 30-win mark for the fourth time in six seasons under Heaps (center). Over the past four years, the Golden Tigers have gone 151-40 with four area championships, 38 playoff wins and three state titles.

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# Russellville's Moore ready for next challenge

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Since she's graduating as the Russellville High School Class of 2018 valedictorian, it's clear Ashton Moore has her study habits down pat.

As she prepares to take the next step to the University of Alabama at Birmingham this fall, Moore knows she might have to make some changes to maintain her outstanding academic record.

"I usually try to study the night before tests, pay attention in class, and it turns out pretty well," Moore said. "I would like to stay in the same routine, but I'll probably have to study more."

Moore, the daughter of Barry and Deedra Moore of Russellville, will pursue a degree in biomedical engineering at UAB. Moore received a host of scholarships as a result of her academic standing and her outstanding score on the ACT of 31. As far as any tips for high school students preparing to take their ACTs, Moore has a few.

"I took it several different times. They should take plenty of practice tests so they know what kind of questions they'll be asked," she said. "Also, if there's a teacher in their school who can help with ACT questions, go to them and ask for help."

Moore received the prestigious Bryant-Jordan Student Athlete Award earlier this spring as a

result of her accomplishments both academically and in athletics. She was the lone winner for Class 5A from Region 8.

Moore recently completed her varsity golf career at Russellville. She was also a member of the FBLA, Key Club and RHS Student Council. Moore said she looked for activities that allowed her to volunteer and help her community.

"A lot of clubs at our school do things to help the community," Moore said. "I wanted to get involved with volunteer work. I was part of Junior Leadership, and that was really fun. I got to meet several students with like minds and interests from across the county."

To say Moore isn't one to seek the spotlight would be a gross understatement. Still, part of her duties as valedictorian include giving a speech at graduation. She hopes to convey a basic message to her fellow classmates that day.

"I want them to know that I know they will succeed no matter what path they take in life," Moore said, "and I wish them all the best going forward with their lives."

Moore is excited about moving into the next chapter of her life, and she credits her parents in helping prepare her for college and beyond.

"They've always taught me I should do my best at everything I do, and as long as I try my best they will be happy with the outcome," she said.

In addition to the Bryant-Jordan Award, which included a \$2,500 scholarship, Moore received a Presidential Recognition Scholarship from UAB based on her ACT score. That scholarship includes full tuition.

As far as finishing number one in a class of 167 students, Moore said the first time she even thought about it was her freshman year.

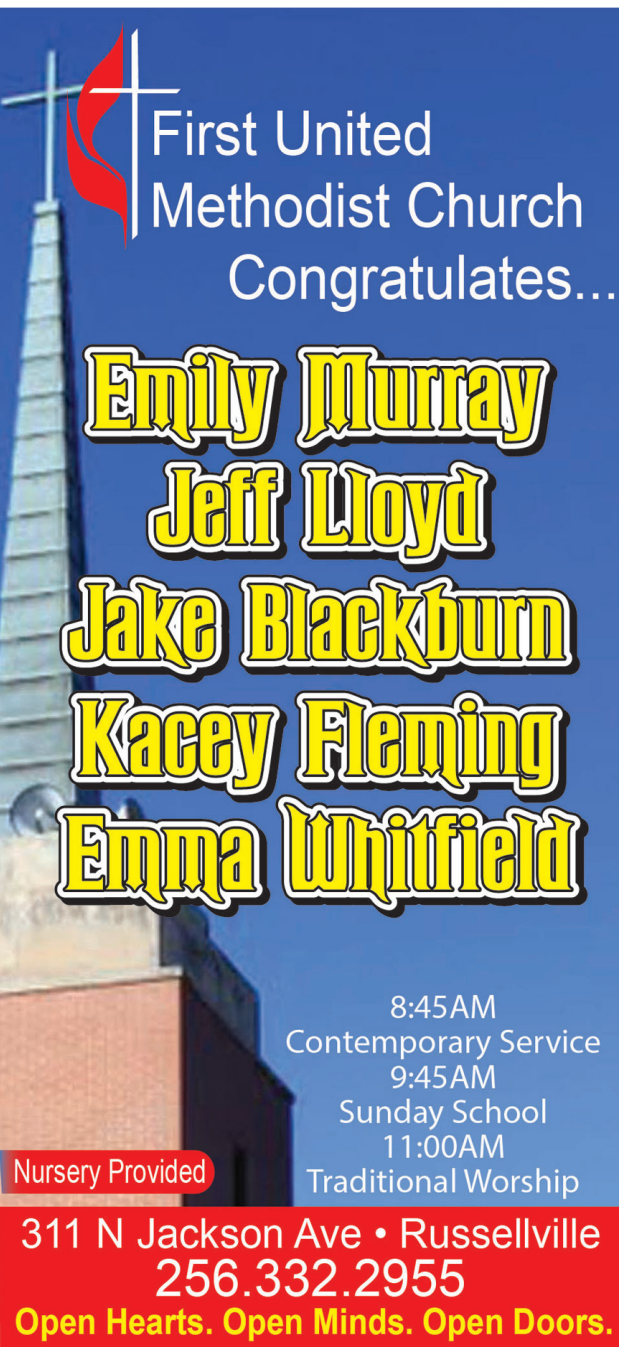
"I didn't know I was number one in the class until the end of our freshman year," she said. "Once I found out, I thought as long as I tried my best I'd be okay with wherever I finished."

She plans to enter the field of cancer research after graduation. While Franklin County isn't known for that field, Moore would still like to come home after school is complete if the opportunity presents itself.

"If there's a job opportunity in Franklin County, yes, I'd come back," Moore said. "But if there's not, I'll try to find one in the closest place I can."



Ashton Moore



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Shelton Matthew Byrd  
Solai Leilan Camacho

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# Grimes sees bright future for Class of '18 and RCS

By Heath Grimes  
Russellville City Schools superintendent

It's hard to believe another school year is coming to a close. It's always a bittersweet time as we reflect on the past year's memories and experiences, but I am so encouraged for our future because of the achievements we've seen academically, artistically and athletically in 2017-2018.

I want to start off by commending our outstanding faculty and staff for a year that has seen exponential growth, both in their professional development and in the educating of their students. I've seen a renewed excitement in our teachers to better themselves because of the profound impact it has in their classrooms. And I've seen that excitement trickle down to students who are then inspired to learn and grow more themselves. This culture we are creating that cultivates a love of learning and a desire to grow and be better is something to truly be proud of. And all of this starts at the top with motivated and dedicated administrators who strive for excellence, something that was highlighted by one of our own administrators being recognized as the District 7 North Principal of the Year this spring.

Academically, this past year we were honored to host the statewide AP celebration because of the tremendous gains our system saw on our AP test-

ing from the previous year. RHS was also named the first School of Excellence from A+ College Ready as well as receiving the School of Distinction honor from CLAS and later being named a CLAS Banner School, which was a title only seven other schools in the state received. But one of the things I'm most proud of is that Niche.com recognized RHS as the Number One Standout School in the state. This was determined by success and growth when demographics, poverty and other challenges are taken into account. I have no doubt that this distinction is well-deserved. Our teachers work so hard to overcome challenges that many districts/schools never deal with or even know about. The achievement and growth for this school system, when challenges are taken into account, is unheard of. Even the Alabama State Department of Education has yet to recognize the full extent of what is happening in our system.

Our extracurricular organizations had another great year with many earning recognitions at state conventions and events. This year we also saw three different rocketry teams from RCS qualify and compete in the national Team America Rocketry Challenge in Washington, D.C., with Team Lions coming in third place out of more than 100 teams.

Our fine arts department continued to shine with stellar performances from our band program with

the Marching Hundred in the fall and our concert bands in the spring that go all the way from sixth to 12th grade. The RCS Performing Arts had several great productions throughout the year that showcased the immense amount of talent we have in our schools. And we also celebrated 50 years of arts education at RCS with a special art show in addition to the accolades our art students earned in the annual TimesDaily Design an Ad contest.

As for our athletic program, we were proud to see not one but two red maps heading back to RCS with both the boys golf team and the varsity baseball team being state runners-up in their respective sports, and our other spring sports teams had great seasons as well. We welcomed new head football coach John Ritter this spring, and we are excited about the new vision for our athletic program that will see all of our sports working together to develop our student-athletes' abilities and character both on and off the field.

And as always, this year we continued to receive such amazing support from our school board, parents and our community. We have the best school board in the state, with members who truly care about our students and our teachers. We have seen an increase in parental involvement and participation this year, which is one of the goals we developed in our strategic plan. Our RCS Career and Technical Education Program is expanding and growing thanks to community input and support. Our stands remain packed with excited fans, and our events are well-attended by those who embody the meaning of Golden Tiger Pride.

As we approach graduation this week for the Class of 2018, I hope that each of our seniors will take that same Golden Tiger Pride with them wherever they go. I hope they will take the lessons they learned, the memories they made, and the wisdom they gained and use it as they start new chapters of their lives. This is a great group of students, and I know they will do great things in the future. It has been a privilege to be part of their educational career here at RCS, and I wish them nothing but the best as they move forward.

It is an honor to serve another year in a system that values excellence and takes pride in preparing our students for bright futures, and I look forward to what all we will accomplish next year.

As always, it's GREAT to be a Golden Tiger!

Sincerely,  
Heath Grimes  
Superintendent

***“Go confidently in  
direction of your dreams.  
Live the life you  
have imagined”***

*~ Henry David Thoreau*



**Congratulations  
to the Class of  
2018**

**Barry Moore  
& Family**







# ***Congratulations to the Russellville High School Class of 2018!***



**Russellville City School Board of Education. Front row from left: Judy Pounders, Greg Trapp, Superintendent Heath Grimes. Back row from left: Brett Gist, Jerry Groce, Greg Batchelor.**

## **Russellville City Schools 2018 Calendar**

Aug 7 - First Day for Students  
Sept 3 - Labor Day  
Oct 12 - Homecoming - Half Day  
Oct 22-24 - School Holidays

Nov 12 - Veteran's Day  
Nov 21-23 - Thanksgiving  
Dec 19 - Student Half Day  
Dec 20-Jan 4 - Student Holidays  
- Christmas Break

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# Belgreen has been 'like a family' to Williams

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As she faced the task of completing one of her biggest school projects in her high school career, Cortny Williams kept finding ways to put the project off, until her parents gave her some much-needed advice.

"I was putting it off and putting it off more, and my parents told me not to procrastinate," Williams said. "They said if I started procrastinating now I'd do it my entire life, and that's not good for you. They told me to face it head on, so that's what I did."

The advice from her parents, Timmy and Annette Williams, obviously had a profound effect on Cortny, as she will walk across the stage this week as the valedictorian of Belgreen High School's Class of 2018.

It will be a proud moment for Williams, who transferred from Russellville Middle School to Belgreen in seventh grade, a decision of which she never looked back.

"It's the best decision I ever made. It's like a family here," Williams said. "Everybody knows each other, and it's always been a better fit for me. Everybody in our class knows each other, and everybody has love. If you don't know your classmates, you can't have a love for each other."

Williams will continue her education at Northwest-Shoals Community College this fall, with plans to transfer to Athens State University to major in elementary education. Williams had the opportunity to work as a student aide for a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class for a few years, and that convinced her to look into a career in education.



Cortny Williams

"Working with those kids was my favorite thing to do," Williams said. "It was something I looked forward to every day."

Williams received a valedictorian scholarship from NW-SCC, which pays for 16 semester hours for two years. She also received the prestigious NaphCare scholarship in the amount of \$5,000. Williams said Northwest-Shoals does a good job of attracting some of the area's top students to their campus.

"Northwest offers the best scholarship for being top in your class. No other college around helps you out as much as Northwest, I guarantee you," Williams said. "Even if it wasn't around here, students would still go there because they offer the

best scholarships."

While finishing number one in her class is helping Williams pay for her education, she said being valedictorian wasn't something she even thought of until her junior year.

"Until 11th grade, I just wanted to do well academically for myself," she said. "When I got to be a junior, I realized I could do it. Then I began to really strive to make good grades on everything once I knew I had a chance."

Williams was a first baseman on the varsity softball team at Belgreen since seventh grade. She was also active in Beta Club, Students Against Destructive Decisions, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Business Leaders of America and the National Society of High School Scholars.

"FCA was for sure my favorite," she said. "I really enjoyed the meetings and devotionals. We watched inspirational videos. FCA helps you remember that even though you're playing sports and are an athlete, you have to keep God first."

Softball, although a fixture for Williams throughout high school, really had a larger impact on her this year because of the close-knit nature of her team.

"I've played on travel teams and played with all kinds of people since I began softball," Williams said. "This year's group was the best I've ever

See 'FAMILY,' page 27

# Congratulations Payton!

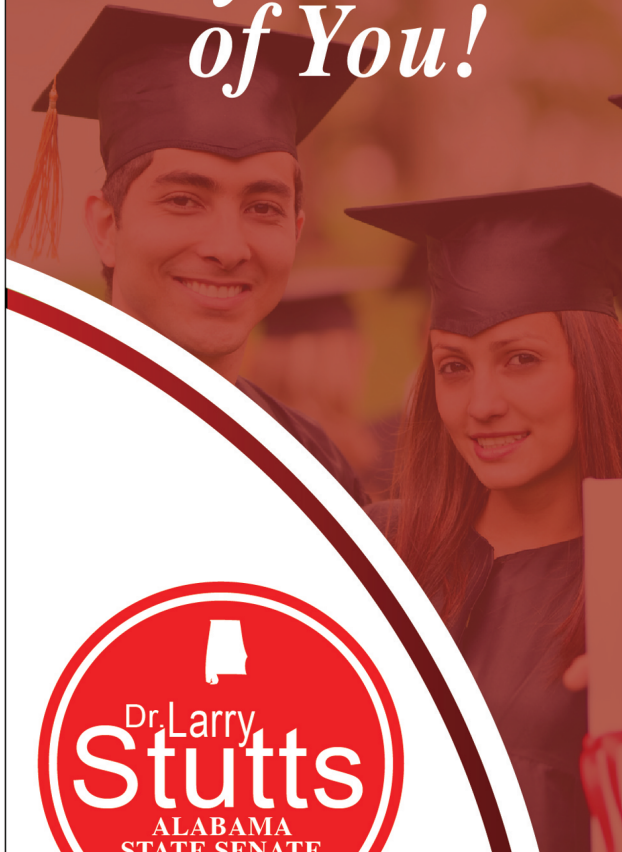


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# 'FAMILY,' from page 26

played with. Everybody loved each other so much. If you have that, it doesn't matter if you win or lose. If you have that, it's a great experience either way." As far as her study routine, Williams believes in note cards. Lots of them. "My advice to younger students would be to always put academics first, not athletics. That's the most important thing," Williams said. "The way I studied, I probably wrote 100 note cards every day. You have to find a certain way to study and stick to it. Don't try to change it up."

**"It's the best decision I ever made. It's like a family here," said Williams, who transferred from RMS to Belgreen in the seventh grade. "Everybody knows each other, and it's always been a better fit for me. Everybody in our class knows each other, and everybody has love. If you don't know your classmates, you can't have a love for each other."**

Williams appreciates so many teachers who've positively influenced her at Belgreen, but there's one who stands out—Susan Thompson.

"She is the history and economics teacher at Belgreen," Williams said. "She told us it would be the hardest class we'd be in, but she promised to prepare us for college and life after school, and I can guarantee you she did."

As part of Thompson's class, students learned life skills they could carry with them. They did an economics project where students had to research getting loans with banks, going to insurance companies for quotes and traveling to the courthouse to get car tags.

"These are all things in life you have to know how to do, and she gave us the opportunity to learn about them," Williams said.

Williams will take the stage Thursday evening to deliver her valedictorian speech, which she wrote last week. She plans to close her speech with a Bible verse from Proverbs 3:5: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding.*

"If you treasure these things in your heart," Williams said, "God will provide you with an abundance of blessings."

# BELGREEN Class of 2018

Kenneth William Arnett  
Callie Grace Barber  
Peyton Lindsey Bingham  
Hannah Allen Bradford  
Kaleb Joshua Bray  
AshLee Karter Britton  
Brandon Michael Butler  
Jeremy Mason Donahoe  
Christopher Alexander Franks  
Cynthia Shana Hall  
Elijah Kelly Hiser  
Lexi Cheyenne Jack  
Camron Lane Jarnigan  
Jasmine Danielle Martin  
Jacob David Mayberry

Harmony Claire McLean  
Alyssa Faith Murray  
Austin Tyler-Ellis Peachee  
Caleb Todd Pinkard  
John Dillon Randolph  
Payton Tucker Scott  
Lillian Phebe Six  
Triston Thomas Stevens  
Jacob Ernest Taylor  
Seth James Taylor  
Hailey Nicole Vandervort  
Joseph Lee Welch  
Morgan Kaitlyn Welch  
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# UAH-bound Howard eyes career in cyber security

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

As Colbert Heights valedictorian Lauren Howard looks back at her high school career, she says there's a lot of credit due her parents and teachers.

The daughter of Travis and Chastity Howard, Lauren will graduate first in her class of more than 90 seniors on The Mountain.

"When I was in kindergarten, my parents told me to always do my best. That always stuck with me," Howard said. "They never pushed me any more than that. I wanted to prove to myself I was doing my best."

Howard will continue her education this fall at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, where she will major in computer science. Howard hopes to enter the field of cyber security.

"I want to get into cyber security because I like to help people," she said. "The internet will always be growing, and I want to protect users on the internet."

As far as her selection of UAH, Howard said she fell in love with the campus the first time she visited it.

"I visited the campus about a year ago and was completely sold on it," she said. "It was a wonderful experience, and the tour was wonderful."

Howard was so solid on her choice of UAH that she turned down two scholarships that would have helped pay for her education at Northwest-Shoals Community College and the University of Alabama. She will receive a Merit Tuition Scholarship at UAH, which will cover her full tuition, based on her academic standing and her strong ACT score of 30.



Lauren Howard

Howard is no stranger to the ACT. In fact, she took it six times before hitting her target score of 30.

"I also had an English teacher, Laura James, help me take practice tests. She was a big help," Howard said. "I took the ACT the first time in the tenth grade. I was shooting for a 30 in order to get a full tuition scholarship at UAH."

Howard said she will always remember and appreciate the support she received from James.

"She always took the time to help her students," Howard said. "She even started a dual enrollment

course for English with the University of North Alabama. Mrs. James does a lot of things for students."

With the tight-knit Colbert Heights community and the school at the heart of it, Howard believes that helps create a family-like atmosphere.

"It's more isolated than other schools. But we receive a lot of hands-on help from our teachers," Howard said. "They're always really close with students. They tell life stories and try to help us the best they can. We have a very close senior class, too. It's almost like a family."

Howard was active in several school academic organizations, including Future Business Leaders of America, the National Junior Honor Society and the National Honor Society, as well as the math honor society, Mu Alpha Theta.

"I was in FBLA since seventh grade," she said. "We always did fundraisers and helped people in the community. It taught me the importance of volunteering and helping other people."

Howard recently began working at Oh' Bryan's restaurant in Tusculumbia. She plans to transfer to the Huntsville Oh' Bryans's and continue to work while in school.

While she plans to return home to Hawk Pride Mountain to visit her family and friends, Howard thinks it's likely she'll stay in the Huntsville area

See 'HOWARD,' page 29

## Congratulations

**Michael Howell**  
Son of Norma Farthing

**Raine Strickland**  
Daughter of Shannon Strickland

**Olyvia Grace Rea**  
Daughter of Stacy Fisher

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# 'HOWARD,' from page 28

after college because that's where the most job opportunities in cyber security will be found.

As far as advice to students about to embark on their high school careers, Howard says success isn't complicated.

"Believe in themselves and never give up," she said. "Always listen to what their teachers are saying. Listen to your parents, and hopefully they are motivating you. But most of all, believe in themselves."



# COLBERT HEIGHTS Class of 2018

Anderson, Brooke Paige  
Anderson, Destin James  
Anderson, Tyler Thomas  
Ashley, Austin Elijah  
Austin, Jacob Andrew  
Avery, Addison Paige  
Baker, Kambry Jayce  
Barnett, Mackenzie Ray  
Battles, Faith Nakota  
Baughman, Afton  
Borden, Brendan Matthew  
Borden, Leia Dianne  
Bradford, Brannon  
Buckshaw

Branson, Isaac Robert  
Brewer, KaLeigh Paige  
Brooks, Tori Lee  
Cain, Kaitlyn Diana  
Chandler, Dylan Tracy  
Claunch, Camryn Elizabeth  
Collins, Makayla Shea Paige  
Copeland, Malaina Jade  
Daniel, Brian Matthew  
Davis, Dalton Zane  
Dean, Chandler Ray  
Dies, Kirby Levi  
Drake, Hunter Mark  
Emmons, Lakyn Elise

Fish, Samantha Abigail  
Fisher, Tristan Michele  
Ford, Jacob Matthew  
Foster, Leslie Danielle  
Foust, Bevin Lee  
Gardner, Chelsey Erin  
Gipson, Isaac Laine  
Hadley, Dalton Andrew  
Hallmark, Haley Denise  
Hand, Allyson Danielle  
Harden, Bobby Ray Jr  
Henson, Chloe Paige  
Hill, Colby Ryan  
Holt, Devin Wayne  
Horrison, Cameron Keith  
Howard, Jerry Blane  
Howard, Lauren Nicole  
Jackson, Garrett Andrew  
Jackson, Olivia Claire  
James, Tessa Kay  
Kellam, Darren LaDrake  
Lawler, Charles Collin

LeClerc, Justin Charles  
Lindblom, Sarah May  
Britton  
Lovelace, Mathew Kadin  
Mewbourn, Zachary Lee  
Miller, Jonathan Isaiah Miles  
Moore, Brooklyn Jade  
Morgan, Hailey Faith  
Murphy, Joseph Aaron  
Nagle, Zachary Flint  
Parker, Lucas Tyler  
Peden, Steven Tyler  
Phifer, Randall Cain  
Philburn, Kaitlin Marie  
Pratt, James Kenneth  
Pruett, Kevin Anthony Jr  
Rikard, Tanner Ray  
Roberson, Samuel Eugene III  
Rogers, Katelyn Alexandra  
Rogers, Kristopher Lee  
Glenn  
Saint, Korey Wayne

Scott, Chason Lee  
Seal, Dylan Cole  
Sexton, William Harold  
Shaw, Kevin Jermaine  
Smallwood, Brock Alexander  
Smallwood, Christina Fay  
Smith, Mark Adam  
South, Madison Christine  
Spires, Alexander Miquel  
Stacy, Nathaniel Blake  
Stanfield, Carlos Alexis  
Staten, Colbie Lynn  
Stutts, Kayla Michelle  
Taylor, Cayla Jo  
Tedford, Rebecca Morgan  
Terry, Haley Brook  
Thompson, Stacy Danielle  
Thrasher, Austin James  
Trussell, Samantha Ryan  
Vinson, Jacie Grace  
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# Nix a perfect ambassador for Phil Campbell

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

If Phil Campbell mayor Steve Bell needed an ambassador for his town, he couldn't do much better than Carley Nix.

Nix, the daughter of Rodney Nix and Tonya Bostick, is the valedictorian of Phil Campbell High School's Class of 2018. She finished first among her class of 71 students and will take her academic talents to Troy University this fall.

Although she's moving four hours away to continue her education, Phil Campbell will always provide a lifetime of memories for Nix.

"I love my high school and couldn't have asked for a better place to be," Nix said. "I love my friends, going to basketball games and different sporting events. That helps you get close to people—your coaches, cheerleading sponsor, classmates, even principals. I'll miss Phil Campbell, and it makes me tear up thinking about it.

"There's no place like Phil Campbell High School, and you might not realize that unless you go there. It's like losing a family member, and that's kind of sad."

Although Nix didn't find out she was first in her class at Phil Campbell until last fall, she said it was always a motivating goal for her to do well in school.

"It's something I worked for really hard," she said. "Some people's strength is sports. Mine was trying to work toward this goal. It was a goal to try and set myself apart from others, and I wasn't going to do that through sports. I always wanted to represent my school and my parents well, and this was the best way to do it because I'm not very athletic."

Nix says success in academics isn't something that came easily for her. It's a strength she developed as she progressed through school.

"I have to work for it," Nix said. "I have to study pretty hard every time I have a test. Not that it's a struggle, but I definitely have to work for it. It's not something that came naturally to me. I had to teach myself good study habits."

While Nix knows she'll have to "intensify" her study routine at Troy, she still feels confident in her ability to succeed as she pursues a degree in nursing.

"What I've done so far has worked pretty well, but I'll have to intensify some," she said. "I can't



Carley Nix

just pick up a study guide the night before a test. But as far as my routine from high school, I'll stick to what I've been doing."

Nix chose Troy over the University of North Alabama and Northwest-Shoals Community College, although she says all three have outstanding nursing programs.

"UNA and Northwest-Shoals have great nursing programs," Nix said, "but Troy seemed a better match for me because of the fast-track program to become a nurse practitioner. That's my end all goal so I can practice medicine in some form, so Troy seemed like a better fit."

Another reason Troy was a good fit for Nix? Her boyfriend, former Russellville football standout Austin Stidham, attends Troy and is a member of the Trojan football team.

"I'm excited because I have my boyfriend down there, but I'm a homebody and I'll miss my mom," Nix said. "But I think I need to get away to better appreciate what I have. It's scary because it's unknown, but I'm pretty excited about it."

What attracts Nix about nursing is the ability to really help people. She's seen her father and grandfather battle cancer, and Nix recalls how supportive nurses have been with them.


"Doctors help patients, but nurses are the primary ones who comfort them," she said, "and

See 'NIX,' page 31


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**July 28: Vina Fest**  
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# 'NIX,' from page 30

that's what I want to do for other people when I go into the work force."

Nix received a leadership scholarship from Troy and scholarships from the Alabama Cattlemen's Association and the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association. She also received the prestigious NaphCare scholarship for students pursuing a career in health care. That was a \$5,000 scholarship.

At Phil Campbell, Nix played basketball and was a Bobcat cheerleader. She was president of Junior Civitan, the National Honor Society and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Nix said she most enjoyed the fund raisers and toy/clothing drives to help needy kids at Christmas time.

"When you see pictures from kids who otherwise wouldn't have Christmas, which is something I've never encountered, thank God, that gives you joy to be able to help somebody," Nix said. "It's a feeling I can't explain."

Like most Phil Campbell classes, the Class of 2018 was forever changed after experiencing the devastating EF-5 tornado that ravaged the community on April 27, 2011.

"The tornado definitely made us closer. It made us realize we're not guaranteed tomorrow," Nix said. "As little kids, you don't

realize your friend, teacher or grandparent might die tomorrow. It brings you down to earth, and you realize you can't take things for granted.

"We try to enjoy the small things and enjoy everything while we can. You never know what might happen, so enjoy life as it happens."

When she delivers her valedictorian speech to her classmates, Nix plans to encourage them to embrace their future without regrets.

"We all have bright futures. I hear older people talk sometimes about wishing they'd done this or that in their lives," Nix said. "I never want my classmates to have regrets as we experience life in this world."

As Nix reflects on moving to the next phase of her life, she knows she's blessed to have two parents who've supported her through her entire life.

"I never worried about them missing a ballgame or school event," she said. "They were always saying, 'Just do your best, and if it happens, it happens, and if it doesn't we still love and support you."

"I have two of the best parents you could have, and I've never had to go without them. I'm thankful for that and couldn't ask for better parents."

# PHIL CAMPBELL Class of 2018

Adams, Alexis Sierra  
Alban, Alexis Gabriella  
Bailey, Megan Savannah  
Baker, Brooke Lovell  
Beam, Michelle Leeanne  
Benford, Rhett Celvin  
Berry, Austin Michael  
Bray, Jasmine Dawn  
Brazell, Austin Lee  
Brindley, Alexander Seth  
Bullock, Megan Lashae  
Butler, Andrew Lee  
Campbell, Joshua Paul  
Cheesman, Dylan R  
Clark, William Braedyn  
Clayton, Brandon Clifford  
Cotham, Cody Wayne  
Crowden, Matthew Garrett  
Cummings, Isaac Jaymon  
Demastus, Jacob Isaac  
Dolan, William Pierce  
Elliott, Darby Lynn  
Elliott, Matthew Jason  
Ergle, Karley Morgan  
Garrison, Anna Brooke  
Gist, Victoria Lynn  
Hagood, Caleb Joshua  
Hall, Joseph Patrick  
Hamby, Dustin Levi  
Hamilton, Kayla Paige  
Harbin, Kessly Brooke  
Hardy, Joseph Daniel  
Harvey, Grace Ann  
Harvey, Laura Beth  
Hurley, Isaiah Calvin  
Hutchens, Chase James

Hutcheson, Wesley Hunter  
Jackson, Leeah Ann  
Jackson, Mark Allen  
James, Joshua Michael  
Jones, Brianna Lashay  
Kidd, Katelyn Rose  
Knight, Olivia Morgan  
Lewis, Katlyn Danielle  
Mansell, Abby Gail  
Martinez, Kimberly Campos  
Molina, Francisco Valenzo  
Nix, Brody Coleman  
Nix, Carley Shae  
Nix, Shantah Elizabeth  
O'Kelley, Dawson Ray  
Ozborn, Destin Scott  
Payne, Jaedin Skie  
Pierce, Samuel Carter  
Pratt, Destiny LaShay  
Roberson, Chloe Denise  
Saint, Austin Kyle  
Sharpston, Jordan Ray  
Smith, Daniel Dwayne  
Strickland, Raine Leann  
Sumerel, Tanner Noah  
Swinney, Alli Beth  
Swinney, Eli Roger  
Thomas, Brandon Lee  
Thomas, Peyton Morgan  
Vandiver, Summer M  
Weeks, Carly Mae  
West, Chloe Deann  
Williams, Lily Grace  
Wingo, Reyna Shook  
Wrona, Michael Thomas  
Young, David Jacob

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# Gasque follows family tradition of serving others

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

BreAnna Gasque recently got her first taste of the 'Big Apple' as she and approximately 20 other students visited New York City.

While Gasque loved the trip, she was definitely ready to come back to Franklin County. Hopefully, when she finishes her education in a few years, Gasque will feel the same way.

Gasque is the valedictorian of the Tharptown High School Class of 2018. When contacted by the *Free Press* recently, Gasque was on the school trip in New York City.

"The Statue of Liberty was my favorite thing to see," she said. "I knew I wanted to see it before I went, and seeing it was awesome. I loved being in New York, but by the end of the trip I was ready to come home because I love living here so much."

The daughter of Andrew and Bonita Gasque, BreAnna finished first among the 39 students in her graduating class. Gasque said a teacher many years ago got her thinking about the possibility that she could be at the top of her class.

"I had an idea I might make it. In the fourth grade, a teacher told me I had the potential to be valedictorian one day," Gasque said. "That was the first time I ever thought about it and how it would feel to be number one in the class. I worked really hard and wanted to be number one."

Gasque will attend the University of North Alabama, where she will pursue a degree in nursing. She plans to become a registered nurse, following a path of nursing in her family.

"My grandmother was an LPN, and she told me so many stories about how she saw so many people and was able to impact lives," Gasque said. "I want to do something where I go to work daily and feel like I'm helping someone. Nurses not only help heal people, but I want to talk to the patients and become their friend."

Gasque was active in many school activities at Tharptown. She was a member of the THS volleyball team since the eighth grade. She also played softball and cheered multiple years in high school. Gasque was selected to serve on the Alabama High School Athletic Association Student Leadership group and said she learned a lot from participating in that program.

"I was one of sixteen in the whole state chosen to be part of it," she said. "We went to Montgomery in eleventh grade and this year to take part in a leadership conference. They worked with us on



BreAnna Gasque

becoming good leaders in our school. There were so many students from bigger schools, and I had the chance to meet people from all over the state.

"One of our speakers talked about a concept involving his 'I Believe' list. You can't demonstrate what you believe unless you know what you believe. We prepared a list on what we believe, not just in our faith but in life. It helped me realize what I believe and to get along and learn from each other in that way."

Gasque was from one of the smallest schools represented on the AHSAA Student Leadership program, something she saw as an advantage.

"There were so many opportunities to be a leader at my school," she said. "In bigger schools I don't think students have the opportunity we had at Tharptown to be close to everyone, to know everyone and hopefully impact everyone."

"It's amazing to think some high schools have five hundred or more in their class and you might only know twenty of them. Graduating with a small class, we see each other in town, know each other and share experiences and remember the things that shaped us. I wouldn't have it any other way."

Gasque said her involvement in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was one of the most impactful activities she was involved in at Tharptown. She believes her faith will be important as she pursues a career in trauma nursing.

See 'SERVING,' page 33



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*For I know  
the thoughts that  
I think toward you,  
saith the Lord,  
thoughts of peace, and  
not of evil, to give you  
an expected end.*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

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## 'SERVING,' from page 32

"In FCA, we have the opportunity to share with others our love of Christ at school, and that was very important to me because not everyone gets that opportunity," Gasque said. "I really feel like I'm a strong person because of my faith. As far as nursing, I know I'm going to see some really bad things. But as a person of faith, I can be the one there during others' hard times."

Gasque received a UNA Vanguard scholarship in the amount of \$5,500 per year. She also earned a \$1,000 valedictorian scholarship and a \$1,000 leadership scholarship. Gasque was one of several Franklin County students to earn a \$5,000 NaphCare scholarship for students pursuing careers in health care. Gasque received a \$1,750 scholarship from There's A Way, Inc, and she received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Grand Masonic Lodge. Gasque is ready and excited about the nursing program at UNA.

"In FCA, we have the opportunity to share with others our love of Christ at school, and that was very important to me because not everyone gets that opportunity," Gasque said. "I really feel like I'm a strong person because of my faith. As far as nursing, I know I'm going to see some really bad things. But as a person of faith, I can be the one there during others' hard times."

"I chose UNA because of the scholarship, and I didn't want to turn that down," she said. "Their nursing program is being renovated, and new things are coming, and I'm real excited about that. It's a good bit bigger than Tharptown, but I'm ready for that. UNA will give me time to make sure nursing is what I want to do, and it will prepare me well for that career."

As far as her valedictorian speech goes, Gasque hopes to convey one primary message to her fellow graduates.

"I've thought about this for a very long time," she said. "The message I hope everyone gets from my speech is that life is what you make it. Even in very hard times when we want to give up, there is light at the end of the tunnel."

# THARPTOWN Class of 2018

Kevin Arizmendi  
Linda Bahena  
Christian Brasuell  
Nery Castillo  
Savannah Chaney  
Aaron Creasy  
Cole Daniel  
Ameliah Dawson  
Ginger Diego-Juan  
Cara Ergle  
Skyler Fields  
Ally Folsom  
Manuel Francisco  
Eden Franks  
BreAnna Gasque  
Samantha George  
Micaela Guzman  
Hannah Hardin  
Emma Henderson

Loren King  
Skyler Letson  
Nayely Lopez  
Levi McCormack  
Frank Miguel  
Hannah Morgan  
Courtney Murphree  
Daniela Orantes  
Peyton Price  
Marlene Ramirez  
Misael Saldaña  
Tucker Sharp  
Mercedes Trapp  
David Vargas  
Valeria Vela  
Jhosell Villalobos  
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# Hamilton offers congratulations to Class of 2018

By Greg Hamilton

Dear Class of 2018:

As we wind down another school year, I want to congratulate the Class of 2018 on your significant accomplishments as you move on to the next phases of your lives.

It is my hope, and that of the dedicated educators in the Franklin County School system, that we have helped to prepare you for life after high school, regardless of where that path takes you. While I am excited to see what life has in store for each of you, there's also a touch of sadness knowing this will be the time that we say goodbye.

Each of you is special, and you have your own strengths, skills and personality traits that have positively impacted our school system, as they will also impact people whose lives you have not yet touched.

As it is for me, I'm sure this is an emotional time for you, seeing your days in Franklin County Schools come to an end. As you move forward with your futures, please take time to reflect on your days in the halls of Belgreen, Phil Campbell, Red Bay, Tharptown or Vina high schools.

You are part of the heartbeat of these communities. We hope the day will come when you tear up with pride watching your son or daughter enter school on that first day of kindergarten. And I sincerely hope you remain a part of Franklin County as you start your own families.

Every door in life is open for you. Whether your path next takes you to college, a technical school, the workforce or the armed forces, I challenge you

to make a difference in the lives of others.

What are your life goals? To be wealthy? Famous? Powerful? While there's nothing wrong with healthy ambition, I can tell you from my own experiences that the greatest life rewards come as a result of making positive differences in the lives of others. Whether it's in the lives of your family, your employees, your community, your church or

the lives of complete strangers, be that beacon of light that makes a difference to others. Life offers no greater reward.

I want to thank the members of the Franklin County Board of Education for their dedication in positively impacting the lives of Franklin County students, faculty and staff. Each of these men genuinely care about the success of this system and each student.

You will always remain a Bulldog, Bobcat, Tiger, Wildcat or Red Devil. This was, is and will forever be your school. I encourage you to stay involved with your school or, if life takes you elsewhere, to be active in the school in your new community. By doing that, you're helping to build the foundation for the future of your community.

Soon, we will begin preparations for another school year, and a new class of seniors across Franklin County. But that doesn't mean the accomplishments of the Class of 2018 will be forgotten. To the contrary, your inspiration to learn, grow and develop as tomorrow's leaders will have a lasting effect on Franklin County Schools. And for that, we remain forever grateful.

I wish you the very best success in your lives, and I'm excited to see what the future holds for the Class of 2018.

I'll close with a few words from award-winning author and writer Nora Ephron: *Your education is a dress rehearsal for a life that is yours to lead.*

Congratulations!

Greg Hamilton,  
Superintendent, Franklin County Schools



## Congratulations, Graduates!

**Joe Mansell**  
Franklin County  
**Probate Judge**



**From Our Family To Yours!**

# Congratulations, graduates!



Aaron Lewey  
Red Bay High School



Abby Montgomery  
Red Bay High School



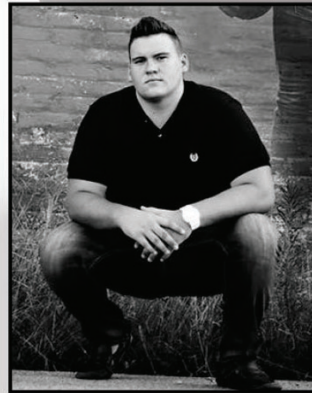
Destiny Higgins  
Red Bay High School



Mason Patterson  
Belmont High School



Krista Lindsay  
Red Bay High School



Skylar Maxwell  
Belmont High School



Georgia Jeffreys  
Univ. of North AL  
Masters of Education in  
School Counseling



Kendra Massey  
Welch College  
Bachelor of Science,  
Business Administration



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# Franklin County Board of Education

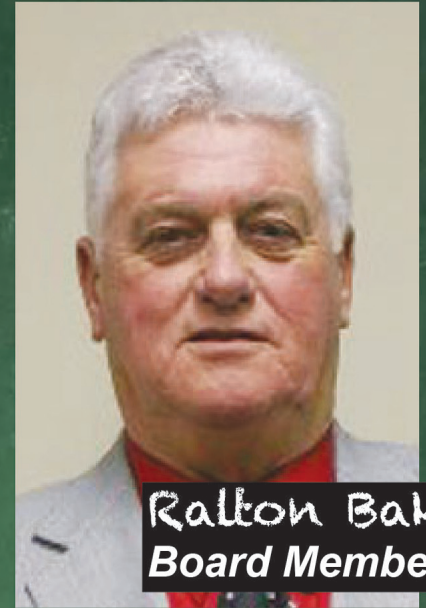
*“Congratulations Class of 2018!”*



**Greg Hamilton**  
*Superintendent*



**Mike Shewbart**  
*Chairperson*



**Ralton Baker**  
*Board Member*



**Terry Welborn**  
*Board Member*



**Shannon Oliver**  
*Board Member*



**Pat Cochran**  
*Board Member*

## 2018-19 Important Dates

Aug 7: First Day of School  
for Students

Sept 3: Labor Day

Oct 18: School 1/2 Day

Oct 19: Fall Break

Nov 12: Veteran's Day

Nov 19-23: Thanksgiving

Dec 19: School 1/2 Day

Dec 19-Jan 4: Christmas Holiday

Jan 3-4: Teacher In-Service Day

Jan 7: Students Return

Jan 21: Martin Luther King, Jr.