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Snow yard art captures hearts and gives smiles



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Shared Amanda Boone, Lorna's niece, "She has made everything from a gigantic coconut cream pie to a Baby Yoda which she dedicated to me and my little preemie guy. My Aunt Lorna has always been one of those people who lives life to the fullest."

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

When people are talented, it shows through regardless of what they do or where they live.

Local resident Lorna Bragg is a bit shy, but extremely talented and has been making snow art out of the snow Craig County has been getting lately.

"We've gotten a lot of snow here on John's Creek," said many local residents. "She's really making beautiful art out of it all. We are really enjoying it."

Lorna and her husband Jerry moved to Craig County from Salem about ten years ago after living there all of her life. They and their cat share a love of Craig County's beauty and everything that it offers. "We love it here," she said.

"Jerry likes to take the pictures, but does very little of the snow art, however, he cleans off our vehicles and porches while I play," Lorna added with a little giggle. "I'd rather build things out of snow than eat when I'm hungry."

Lorna has made everything from a deer (or moose) to an upside-down snowman with a huge grin, a baby Yoda, a snowman with his legs crossed and a mask on, a bear crawling over a ledge, a huge coconut pie (that I thought was real at first) and a giant ice cream sundae, amongst many other creative things.

"All my life though, I have loved playing in the snow," Bragg said. "I won't say for how many years though." She makes her creation, then spray paints them and snaps a photo.

Lorna also shared that nobody influenced her, but she does appreciate art. "As a matter of fact, I have to look at a picture to even make some of my sculptures," she said. "Lots of trial and error, but I try to improve as I go along."

Though Lorna doesn't believe she is "an artist by any means and will never be," in her eyes, many beg to differ, including her neighbors, newfound Facebook friends and family members.

See Snow yard art, page 2

Craig County toddler enjoys eating snow



One-year-old Ellie Slusher recently enjoyed eating the snow more than playing in it. Here, her mother captures a genuine laugh.

Now in effect is 4 p.m. burn

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

The last thing anyone wishes for is for their house to burn down or any of their precious barns with animals to be destroyed by fires.

Brush fires accidentally happen every year, whether it be by a discarded cigarette butt, a campfire that wasn't drowned or put out completely, by a child playing with matches or even by an old kerosene jug sitting in the sun, just to name a few.

Craig County is fortunate to have many local fire departments that work diligently in getting to a scene as quickly as possible when someone calls in about a devastating fire.

"This is a statewide burn ban," Jim Cady, the Craig County Emergency Management Coordinator and Emergency Services Coordinator, said. "It's every year, dates change slightly."

Already though, there has been a 4 p.m. burn put into effect, starting on February 15 that will run through April 30.

The proposed Burning Law in brief is:

- No burning until after 4 p.m. If within 300 feet of woodland or grass brushland leading into woodlands

- Fire must be attended at all times if within 150 feet of woodland or grass or brushland leading into woodland

- No fuel may be added, or fire rekindled after midnight

- Law applies to campfire, warming fires, brush piles, household trash, stumps, fields of broomstraw and brush or anything capable of spreading fire

Everyone seems to know, whether by experience or watching the television, that wildfires can burn millions of acres of land at shockingly fast speeds, consuming everything in their paths.

National Geographic has concluded that, "The fast pace rolling flames can travel up to 14-miles an hour, which converts to about a four-minute-mile pace and can overtake the average human in minutes."

Also, naturally occurring wild-fires can spark during dry weather and in droughts.

"In these conditions, normally green vegetation can convert into bone-dry, flammable fuel; strong winds spread fire quickly; and warm temperatures encourage combustion. With these ingredients, the only thing missing is a spark - in the form of lightning, arson, a downed power line, or a burning campfire or cigarette - to wreak havoc," added the National Geographic.

The maximum fine is \$500 if one is found to have started a fire.

Individuals may contact the Virginia Department of Forestry for any additional information. It is always better to stay on the side of caution.

As Smokey the Bear states, "Only YOU can prevent forest fires!"

So, let's all do our part and be alert whether in our yards, in the woods or driving along our roads. It take a community to keep a community safe.

Feeding America is back in Craig

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

Because of the COVID-19, many families have struggled when it comes to consistently putting food on the table.

The blessing of having the Feeding America truck delivery back in Craig was more than a welcome to many.

The New Castle Christian Church continues to host the huge amount of food that Feeding America brings to the community.

"They delivered 240 pre-packaged boxes," Pastor Sheldon Cosma said.

It included fresh vegetables such as some loose cabbage, red potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions and carrots.

Even with the cold and rainy weather, the faithful volunteers showed up to help box up the vegetables and bring some extra healthy foods to Craig residents this month.

"It was a little cold and wet, but I hardly noticed because it warms my heart to spend time around such great servants of Christ," Cosma said. "And yes Jean (Bradley), sometimes I do not have enough sense to get in out of the rain."

With boxes securely placed in everyone's vehicle as they drove around the block for the drive-through pickup service, many thanks and lots of smiles were expressed to the volunteers.

Hopes are that the truck will continue monthly on the second Wednesday. However, keep in touch with the Facebook notifications just in case changes are necessary.

"I love my church family," Cosma said as the day ended.

Many residents added the same sentiments as they drove off with a box of quality food for their families.

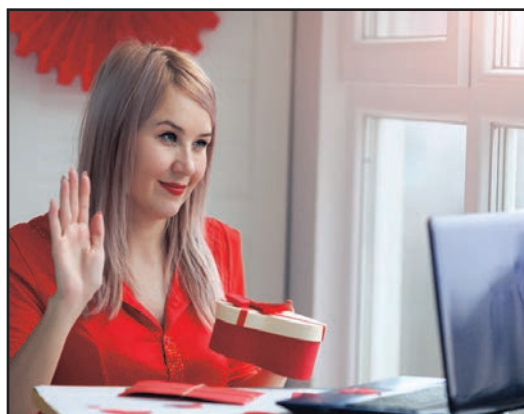
School Board adorned with hearts of love



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Pre-kindergarten students at McCleary Elementary recently showed their appreciation to the Craig County School Board by placing their hands on a large heart that said, "Thank you for working so 'heart' to take care of us!!!! With love PreK Kids."




SUBMITTED PHOTO
Despite cold weather, faithful volunteers came out to pack the vegetables left by the Feeding America truck and loaded them into vehicles as citizens drove by.



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Snow yard art from page 1

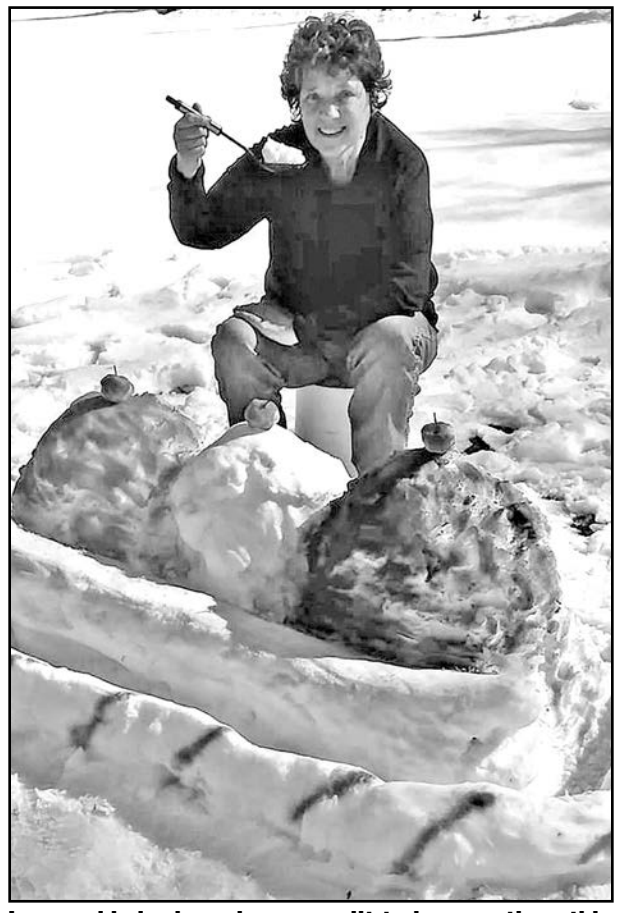


SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Another Lorna niece, Samantha Dunman, a yoga instructor who lives in Florida, said, "How fun! My great aunt recently made this handstand snowman for me. Thanks Lorna."



Expressed, Linda Boone, another Lorna niece, "She is an outdoorsman and an avid hunter and can out hunt and out fish all of her brothers. She has always been outgoing and a country gal. She's definitely talented and nice and she's always been fun. She's always had a kid's heart."



Lorna added a huge banana split to her creations this week, sharing, "I thought about sharing this banana split, but...naahhhh! LOL!"

"Now with Facebook, it's more exciting," she expressed. "Some of my family members, remembering when they were little kids, comment now on the posts, saying how some of their happiest memories were playing in the snow with me and I like that. Now with the Covid, I hardly get to see any of them. The snow posts keep us close and makes them smile and I love doing it."

Lorna said that she does enjoy art, especially outdoor scenes, as she has always been an outdoors lover.

"Needless to say, I don't do housework when it snows because I'm too busy enjoying the snow and watching my sculptures slowly disappear," she said. "Now I'm going to really have to step up my game."

Lorna's family still connects

with her on Facebook also. Jennifer Altice publicly posted, "Some of my best childhood memories were playing in the snow with my Aunt Lorna Bragg. She's still at it."

Lorna's niece, Samantha Dunman, who lives in Daytona, Florida, shared, "How fun! My great aunt made this handstand snowman for me today! Thanks Lorna."

Dunman says that she is a yoga instructor that practices handstands daily and has been posting about her handstand journey for a few years now.

"Lorna decided to make me a snowman doing a handstand," she said. "I never get to see snow because of where I live, so I thought it was very creative and thoughtful of her to do."

Another niece, Amanda

Boone, posted on Facebook, "Why my aunt is better than yours!" with Lorna's picture of the snow art of a baby Yoda. Lorna responded to Amanda, "I made that just for and Justice."

Amanda continued, "I grew up in a very large family, but was an only child. My dad was one of ten children. My mom had seven brothers and sisters. Out of all my many aunts and uncles, the one who I related to the most, as a child and as an adult, is my Aunt Lorna. She always took the time to play with me and make me feel important as a child and still does. Ever since I can remember, she has always loved the snow. Driving in it, playing in it, and then there is her special skill making snowmen or snow creatures, so to speak. Here lately she has taken her

skills to a whole new level. She has made everything from a gigantic coconut cream pie to a Baby Yoda which she dedicated to me and my little preemie guy. My Aunt Lorna has always been one of those people who lives life to the fullest. You will never see her when she doesn't have a smile on her face. This woman is and has always been a true inspiration to me."

Linda Boone, who lives nearby in Shawsville, shared her love for Lorna also.

"Lorna is my dad's sister. She is a twin. She is an outdoorsman and an avid hunter and can out hunt and out fish all of her brothers. She has always been outgoing and a country gal. She's definitely talented and nice and she's always been fun," she said.

Linda added, "She's always had a kid's heart. I mainly love

the deer one because she is a hunter. I remember when I was growing up and we all hunted together. She has always loved playing in the snow. She has always had a creative imagination and a comical side. She has always made me laugh and will do anything in the world for you. It's been a while since I've seen her, but she's always created snow figures. She will probably make a trout creation before the snow melts as she is a big-time trout fisherman."

Lorna added a huge banana split to her creations this week, sharing, "I thought about sharing this banana split, but... naahhhh! Lol!" as she held a spoon up to her mouth over it.

"I just like to bring a smile or two to people's faces," Lorna shared. "It helps to relieve some of the stress."

Grant aims to accelerate sustainable aquaculture farming in Virginia

To help put aquaculture farming on par with its land-based counterparts, the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center received a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The grant will allow researchers at the seafood AREC to analyze the economics of incorporating smart farming technologies into shellfish aquaculture.

Sustainable farming methods for Virginia oyster, mussel and scallop growers will incorporate technologies like robotics, automation, computer sensing and imaging, and artificial intelligence.

Dr. Jonathan van Senten, an aquaculture extension specialist and assistant professor in Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, will collaborate with the

University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Louisiana State University, Pacific Shellfish Institute and the Fraunhofer USA Center for Experimental Software Engineering. Collectively, they will analyze the economic viability of the technologies developed by the research team.

"There hasn't been such a cohesive effort to address this set of

challenges that exist in aquaculture before," van Senten said. "The exciting part of this, for me, is this new approach to solving some of these decades-old problems through new technologies."

Kyle Sturgis, chairman of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Aquaculture Advisory Committee, said whenever an AREC gets funding to help an agriculture sector, it's beneficial. "Technology has become such an important part of our society, and we have seen so many advancements in land-based agriculture that sometimes I feel the aquaculture industry is lagging behind."

"But with this grant and the resulting research, this can move aquaculture in a direction where more producers can incorporate technology into their operations."

Van Senten said the current state of seafood

markets calls for automation and more precise handling of inventory and stock on aquaculture farms. "This technology could provide a way to maximize inventory to ensure that farmers are getting 100 percent of the market-ready product and not harvesting anything that is not ready to be sold."

The first step is for the research group to take successful models and technologies and adapt them to meet the harsh aquatic environments such as corrosive saltwater, currents, storms and shellfish predators. Van Senten will analyze the economic viability of these new technologies for shellfish farmers.

Heather Lusk, vice president of H.M. Terry Co. LLC, said oysters are hand-counted on her family's shellfish farm, and an automated system would help the operation reduce labor costs and be more cost-effective.

Lusk, who also sits on

the boards of the Virginia Aquaculture Advisory Board and the Shellfish Growers of Virginia, added that the USDA-funded research will benefit many of Virginia's aquaculture producers.

In addition to economic benefits, van Senten expects environmental benefits as well. For example, he said dredging, a current harvesting processes for shellfish, relies on casting a net or cage and dragging it across the bottom of a body of water, catching buried shellfish. This process could be harmful for the health of shellfish habitats.

The technology to be developed by this grant, such as underwater drone monitoring, could allow for targeted harvests and improved success rates that can help protect underwater ecosystems.

-Submitted by Kyle Sturgis

Van Senten said the current state of seafood

Lusk, who also sits on

Bank of Botetourt now accepting applications for Annual "Taking Care of You" Community Scholarship

Bank of Botetourt recently announced that the Fifth Annual Community Scholarship for a combined total of \$1,000. First place will receive \$500, with second and third receiving \$250 each. These scholarships are available to high school seniors and existing college students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher and who currently utilize Bank of Botetourt for their banking services.

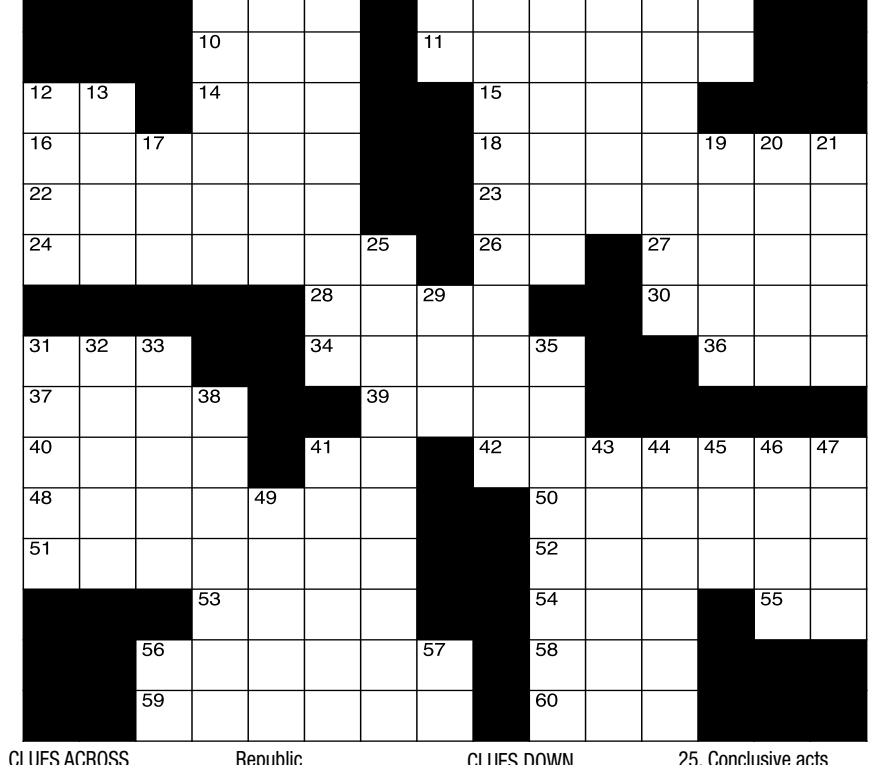
To apply, applicants will need to write a two-page essay on the topic of

"How has Bank of Botetourt been able to take care of your banking and financial needs?" The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, March 31.

For more information, Bank Education Team Representative Jon Foreman can be reached at scholarship@bankof-botetourt.com or 540-591-5053.

-Submitted by Mary Ann Miller, Business Banking and Community Relations

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Big tech firm</p> <p>4. Picked</p> <p>10. Type of whale</p> <p>11. A woman of refinement</p> <p>12. New England state</p> <p>14. Common gibbon</p> <p>15. Tall coniferous tree</p> <p>16. State capital</p> <p>18. Making a liquid muddy</p> <p>22. Vinegary</p> <p>23. Peninsula</p> <p>24. Thee</p> <p>26. Atomic #55</p> <p>27. Used in units of measurement</p> <p>28. Welsh female name</p> <p>30. Arab ruler title</p> <p>31. One's mother</p> <p>34. Trap</p> <p>36. Soviet Socialist</p> | <p>Republic</p> <p>37. Assn. of oil-producing countries</p> <p>39. Holy fire</p> <p>40. Emit coherent radiation</p> <p>41. Atomic #81</p> <p>42. Orthodox Jewish college</p> <p>48. Herbs</p> <p>50. Ran after</p> <p>51. Begin again</p> <p>52. Named</p> <p>53. Barbary sheep</p> <p>54. Unwell</p> <p>55. Postscript</p> <p>56. Drivers</p> <p>58. One point east (clockwise) of due north</p> <p>59. Prim</p> <p>60. A facility equipped for sports or physical training</p> | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. Small islands</p> <p>2. Skullcap</p> <p>3. Unexplained events</p> <p>4. One hundredth of a meter</p> <p>5. Beloved baseball announcer</p> <p>6. Repulsive</p> <p>7. Northern European languages</p> <p>8. Match or surpass</p> <p>9. Northeast</p> <p>12. Chew the fat</p> <p>13. Innovative industry</p> <p>17. Land to put down to grass</p> <p>19. Products</p> <p>20. Nostril</p> <p>21. Surprise Icelandic politician</p> | <p>25. Conclusive acts</p> <p>29. Inform on</p> <p>31. Grinding tooth</p> <p>32. Keep up</p> <p>33. Tablelands</p> <p>35. Raising</p> <p>38. Mythical creature</p> <p>41. Hums</p> <p>43. Mountain in Antarctica</p> <p>44. Neighborhood in Manhattan</p> <p>45. Distinctive practice</p> <p>46. Vice president</p> <p>47. Contributes to</p> <p>49. Small bones</p> <p>56. Oil company</p> <p>57. Empire State</p> |
|---|--|---|---|

Send community news and photos to shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

The Craig County Public Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Wednesday from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The library is located at 303 Main St. in New Castle. For more information, call (540) 864-8978 or visit www.craiglibrary.org.

Christ Lutheran Church, located at 2011 Brandon Avenue in Roanoke. Contact 540-293-4065 for more information.

EVERY SUNDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 8 p.m. at New Castle Fire Hall.
- The New Castle Christian Church, located at 282 Salem Ave, is pastored by Sheldon Cosma is having services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., with communion at each, and is on Facebook live at 9 a.m.
- St. Johns Catholic Church, on Route 615, is having virtual masses at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. by Father Steve McNalley. They are also live on Facebook. For more information, contact (540) 864-8686 or send an email to stjohnnewcastle@tds.net.

SECOND MONDAY

- Paint Bank Ladies Auxiliary meeting, 7 p.m. at the Paint Bank Fire Department. Call

897-5346 for more information.

- Craig County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting at 6 p.m. at the library.

THIRD MONDAY

Town of New Castle Council Meeting at 7 p.m. inside the New Castle Town Hall, located at 339 Market Street.

FIRST TUESDAY

Craig County School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. in the High School Media Center.

SECOND TUESDAY

Mountain Lodge 140 AF&AM, 7:30 p.m. at Lodge Hall, 255 Main St.

THIRD WEDNESDAY

The Botetourt/Craig/Roanoke Farm Service Agency County Committee meets each month at 10 a.m. at the Bonsack USDA Service Center. Please call

one day before the meeting date regarding possible cancellation information 540-977-2698, Ext. 2. The Bonsack USDA Service Center is located at 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1, Roanoke, VA 24012. All County Committee meetings are open to the public.

FIRST THURSDAY

Craig County Board of Supervisors meets at 6 p.m. at the Craig County Courthouse.

SECOND THURSDAY

Maywood Garden Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. held at Simmonsville Fire Department.

EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY

Everyone six months and up should receive a flu shot each year. A parent or guardian must accompany those under the age 18. Insurances will be billed. People are encouraged

to bring their insurance card and not attend if they have COVID-19 like symptoms. The curbside clinic schedule is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only. For more information, contact 540-864-5136.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The Angels of Assisi Pet Health Clinic will return to Craig County from 10 a.m. until 2 pm at the Volunteer Fire Department on 443 Conrad Street in New Castle. No appointments are required.

FEB. 14 – FEB. 24, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Catawba Valley Baptist Church is hosting their first exclusive Virtual Wild Game Dinner and Auction online from Feb 14 through Feb. 24. The dinner will take place that Friday with pickup at the Moose Lodge on Rt. 311. Interested individuals may go to

their website at: <https://www.catawbavalleybc.org/wildgame-514893.html> or contact the office at (540) 380-8448 for more information.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

- A Chili Community Church Cook-off at Craig Valley Baptist will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. A little fun competition between all local churches in Craig County, there will be three entries per church and free hot dogs. The community is invited to taste and vote. To enter, contact the church at (540) 864-5667.

- Upper Craigs Creek Volunteer Fire Dept. will host a fundraiser Spaghetti dinner from 3 to 6 p.m. Due to COVID-19, it will be takeout and will include spaghetti, garlic bread, dessert and a drink for a \$10 donation. Call (540) 864-6087 to reserve your meal(s) or connect with them on their Facebook page.

Special enrollment period for health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act begins this week

Now more than ever, it's important to have health insurance. The marketplace at HealthCare.gov soon will offer an opportunity to shop for, enroll in or change to a new health insurance plan.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has announced a special enrollment period (SEP) for individuals and families who wish to enroll in health plans under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). The SEP will run for 90 days from February 15

through May 15, 2021. During the SEP, consumers may submit a new application for health coverage or update an existing application on HealthCare.gov. Current enrollees will be able to change to any plan offered in their area.

Unlike previous SEPs, there is no restriction requiring enrollees to choose the same level of coverage as their current plan. In addition, consumers will not need to provide any documentation of a qualifying event (such as the loss of a job or birth of a

child), which is typically required for SEP eligibility. If an enrollee chooses a new plan, however, it is important to note that deductible and out-of-pocket maximum accumulations are not required to be transferred to the new plan chosen, and that those amounts will start over for the enrollee. Health insurance plans not offered through HealthCare.gov are not required to, but may provide for, eligibility under this same SEP.

Consumers will have 30 days after they submit an ap-

plication to choose a plan. Coverage will begin the first of the month after plan selection. After May 15, 2021, consumers may only enroll in an ACA-compliant health insurance plan if they recently lost their employer-sponsored health insurance coverage or have had a qualifying life event, such as a household change. To learn more about enrolling after May 15, 2021, visit HealthCare.gov's SEP page.

To raise awareness about the SEP and reopening en-

rollment under the ACA, representatives from Enroll Virginia, the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange, the Virginia Bureau of Insurance and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources participated in a virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, February 16, at 10:30 a.m. The event was live-streamed on Enroll Virginia's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/enrollva/.

-Submitted by
Katha Treanor

New internet options for Craig County

Even though the Craig County Broadband Committee has only been active for five months, the members have been hard at work developing internet options Craig County. Members of the committee have met with executives from companies such as T-Mobile and CBEC, and representatives from Elon Musk's SpaceX, Dish Network, Virginia Tech and more.

"Craig County lacks the necessary population to attract large investments from most national Internet Ser-

vice Providers (ISP), as a result nearly 89 percent of the county is underserved. We're concerned that our students and workforce are being left behind in an ever-digital world," Broadband Committee Member and former New Castle Town Council member C. Jordan Labiosa said.

Utilization of Craig County's local assets have been a subject of discussion for the committee. Even though the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Corporation (MBC) installed fiber on RT 606, 615, and 42 in Craig

County, an ISP would need to agree to lease that infrastructure to make it usable for local internet access. Exploration of potential grants is ongoing, but in order to qualify for the grants work must be done by the ISPs to create expansion plans in the community.

"Discussions with ISPs have gone well in the sense that many are open serving our community in an altruistic way. Most whole-county fiber expansion plans will cost in the Millions of Dollars when you consider the amount of land in

our community. This has led to the development of short-term options while the ultimate goal of whole-county fiber is being pursued," Trace Bellasai, Broadband Committee Chairman and Craig County School Board Member, said.

The Broadband Committee is excited to announce that all Craig County residents are now eligible to pre-order Starlink internet service. Starlink is a low earth orbit satellite ISP currently capable of delivering around 100mbps with an eventual goal of 1Gbps. It is anticipated that

this service will be launching mid-to-late 2021 but potential customers are encouraged by Starlink to pre-order today as they will be chosen on a first come, first serve basis until the provider is fully operational. Interested individuals should get started at starlink.com

Other members of the Craig County Broadband Committee include Sam Foster, JoAnna Hutchison and Ryan McDaniel.

-Submitted by
C. Jordan Labiosa

Roanoke County launches economic development strategic planning effort

Roanoke County has launched a yearlong effort to develop a strategic plan that will help guide the direction and focus of the County's economic development program over the next five years. Branded the ELEVATE Roanoke County 2026 Plan, the County will be assisted by the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development which has worked with more than 200 clients at the national, state and local level on such plans and other economic development projects. The effort is funded by a grant from Appalachian Power and leveraged resources from the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development.

"Developing a strategic plan is essential to the work of economic development," said Jill Loope, Roanoke County Director of Economic Development. "Changing demographics, consumer preferences and the ability of many employees to work remotely presents challenges and opportunities for economic development. This strategic planning effort will guide the County and enable us to direct our actions and investments to yield future results."

"Communities such as Roanoke County work re-

ally hard to improve their economies and the wellbeing of all their citizens. But with limited resources and small staffs, it is difficult for them to both do that hard work day in and day out and at the same time gather the information and perspective needed to plan for the future," said Scott Tate, Associate Director of Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development. "Our office will help gather the data, survey business owners and community leaders, research best practices, and together with the County, craft a plan that will help guide the County's economic development efforts."

The planning process will be ongoing throughout 2021 and will include data gathering and analysis; community engagement; assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; community presentations and opportunities for the public to provide input. The final report and public presentation of the strategic plan will be released in late fall. Helping steer the effort is a group of representatives from Roanoke County, businesses, and other economic development stakeholders in the region.

-Submitted by Jill Loope

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OPINION

Fun Quotes

Library Corner
Empowering individuals to build a stronger community

Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are... Mason Cooley
A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life....Henry Ward Beecher

A book is a dream that you hold in your hand....Neil Gaiman
No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.... Dead Poets Society
Never judge a book by its movie!
"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think, and loved more than you'll ever know" - A.A. Milne

from Whinnie the Pooh.
"Libraries are innately subversive institutions, born of the radical notion that every single member of society deserves free high-quality access to knowledge and culture" - Dr. Matt Finch
I don't know why people think technology is making us antisocial. I will ignore you just as easily with a book as I will with my cell phone.
Things book lovers do:
1) Read several books at one time.
2) Keep a running

list of more books they want.
3) Feel happy when you remember you get to read your book later.
4) Feel sad and lost when they finish a great book.
5) Pause to appreciate a beautifully written sentence.
6) See the cover of an old book and be transported back to their youth.
7) Find joy and comfort in re-reading a favorite book.
8) Walk into a library or bookstore and say,

"Hey, I could live here!"
For Valentines: He said, "Books or me." I sometimes remember him when checking out books.
Reading is a workout for the mind. When I say, "I'm going to the gym," I mean I'm going to the library.
I cannot remember the books I have read any more than the meals I have eaten; even so, they have made me.... Ralph Waldo Emerson
Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant na-

tion....Walter Cronkite
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Reactions to President Donald Trump's Senate acquittal

President Joe Biden
"It was nearly two weeks ago that Jill and I paid our respects to Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who laid in honor in the Rotunda after losing his life protecting the Capitol from a riotous, violent mob on January 6, 2021. Fifty-seven Senators - including a record seven Republicans - voted to find former President Trump guilty for inciting that deadly insurrection on our very democracy. The Senate vote followed the bipartisan vote to impeach him by the House of Representatives. While the final vote did not lead to a conviction, the substance of the charge is not in dis-

pute. Even those opposed to the conviction, like Senate Minority Leader McConnell, believe Donald Trump was guilty of a 'disgraceful dereliction of duty' and 'practically and morally responsible for provoking' the violence unleashed on the Capitol."

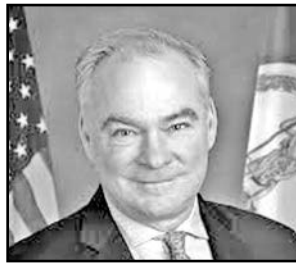


Former President Donald Trump
"I want to first thank my team of dedicated lawyers

and others for their tireless work upholding justice and defending truth. My deepest thanks as well to all of the United States Senators and Members of Congress who stood proudly for the Constitution we all revere and for the sacred legal principles at the heart of our country. This has been yet another phase of the greatest witch hunt in the history of our Country. No president has ever gone through anything like it, and it continues because our opponents cannot forget the almost 75 million people, the highest number ever for a sitting president, who voted for us just a few short months ago."

up for debate. We saw it. We heard it. We lived it. This was the first presidential impeachment trial in history in which all Senators were not only judges and jurors, but witnesses to the constitutional crime that was committed.

The former president inspired, directed and propelled a mob to violently prevent the peaceful transfer of power, subvert the will of the people, and illegally keep that president in power."



Senator Tim Kaine

"One year ago, I said upon the conclusion of President Trump's first impeachment trial, 'Unchallenged evil spreads like a virus,' and that acquittal would lead to worse behavior. The events of January 6 - seven dead, the first siege of our Capitol in over 200 years, the disruption of the peaceful transfer of power - are the direct result of that first acquittal. I voted to convict because seven needlessly died and hundreds were injured by a former President's egregious lies. So many risked all to protect us. The least we can do is protect them by voting to condemn and thus prevent behavior that should never be repeated."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
"Former President



Trump's actions that preceded the riot were a disgraceful, disgraceful dereliction of duty. Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day. We have a criminal justice system in this country. We have civil litigation. And former Presidents are not immune from being held accountable by either one."

purpose. We don't censure people for inciting insurrection that kills people in the Capitol."



Senator Mark Warner
"The evidence presented by the managers, in this case, was overwhelming: Donald Trump used the platform of the presidency to incite a violent insurrection against the seat of our democracy that led to multiple deaths. These are the most serious charges ever levied against a U.S. president, and with good reason. While the Senate failed to achieve the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump and bar him from future office, a bipartisan majority of Senators voted to send a clear message to future presidents that conduct of this nature is impeachable, intolerable and disqualifying. When the history books on this moment are written, I believe that judgment will be clear."



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

"What we saw in that Senate was a cowardly group of Republicans who apparently have no options, because they were afraid to defend their job, respect the institution in which they serve. Censure is the slap in the face of the constitution. It lets everybody off the hook. All these cowardly senators who couldn't face up to what the president did and what was at stake for our country are now going to have a chance to give a little slap on the wrist? We censure people for using stationary for the wrong

Senator Thom Tillis
"My vote was based on two fundamental issues with the impeachment process. The first being the decision to hold a trial for a private citizen, and the second being the charge itself. There are valid questions whether it is constitutional for Congress to

See Trump, page 5

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Trump

from page 4

put a private citizen on trial. And even if it is constitutionally permissible, it isn't prudent in the absence of a thorough impeachment inquiry. The House managers argued impeachment was necessary to bar former President Trump from running for president again. Their rationale is not rooted in any consistent, objective standard and collapses on itself: what accountability would a trial provide to a second-term president who commits impeach-

able offenses in their final days in office when they are already constitutionally barred from seeking another term? I have faith in the American people to determine whether former President Trump disqualified himself from seeking the presidency in the future."

Senator Richard Burr

"January 6 was a grim day in our nation's history. The attack on the U.S. Capitol was an attempt to undermine our democratic

institutions and overrule the will of the American people through violence, intimidation and force. Seven lives were tragically lost as a result of that day. Law enforcement officers, outnumbered and overwhelmed, sustained debilitating injuries as they bravely defended Congress against an angry mob. We now know that lawmakers and congressional staff came dangerously close to crossing paths with the rioters searching for them and wishing them harm."



Senator Ted Cruz

"The impeachment of Donald Trump on the charge of incitement was merely a rushed act of partisan retribution. I was against the Senate taking jurisdiction in this

trial from the start, as the House had chosen to impeach without providing due process or introducing evidence. The House brought only one charge before the Senate: incitement. Donald Trump used heated language, but he did not urge anyone to commit acts of violence. The legal standard for incitement is very high and it is clear by the results of this vote that the House Managers failed to present a coherent standard for in-

citement. In the United States, politicians from all parties and across the country routinely use words and phrases like 'fight,' 'win,' and 'take back our country' in speeches and interviews, including numerous Senate Democrats and House Impeachment Managers. Using this rhetoric is not impeachable, whether made by Republicans or Democrats."

-Compiled by Shawn Nowlin

Puppy Bowl title won by Salem dog

Shawn Nowlin

shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org

This year's Puppy Bowl, an annual Animal Planet program that mirrors the Super Bowl using puppies in a canine-sized football stadium, was aired on February 7. The 2021 contest between Team Ruff and Team Fluff featured 70 puppies from 22 different shelters across the country and concluded in dramatic fashion. When it was all said and done, Team Ruff prevailed in Puppy Bowl XVII with a 73-69 victory.

Not only did Marshall, a Boston

terrier who lives in Salem, participate in the event, he also took home game MVP honors after scoring two touchdowns for his team.

"SportsCenter" host Sage Steele and ESPN play-by-play announcer Steve Levy provided human commentary, while hip hop musician Snoop Dogg and businesswoman Martha Stewart were the event's hosts. Actor Dan Schachner served as the contest's "rufferee." The event also featured a halftime show and a national anthem performance.

Said Steele in the opening minutes, "textbook leverage by Muffin against Marshall as she gets low

and digs in. What a spin move, but Marshall is just as tenacious. The first touchdown of the game is scored by Muffin."

Added Levy, "it's a battle of terriers in the trenches. Marshall is pulling wicked high. Muffin gets control, but Marshall does not give up. We have a legit grudge match here. A statement is being made early."

An estimated one million people nationwide watched the contest live. Marshall's parents, Chris and Christina Lee, are founders of the nonprofit Deaf Dogs Rock in Salem.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

On Feb. 7, Salem puppy Marshall, a Boston terrier, won the 2021 Puppy Bowl, a yearly event aired on national television the mirrors the Super Bowl.

OBITUARIES

Crowder, Peggy Lou Huffman

Peggy Lou Huffman Crowder, 89 of New Castle, passed away on Thursday, February 11. She was born March 20, 1931, and was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Louis Crowder and her mother, Hattie Gladys Huffman.

Surviving are her children, Patricia Gail Crowder, Wendell Alan (Sherry) Crowder; grandchildren, Kimberly Dawn Crowder, Charles Jackson "CJ" (Stacey) Crowder, and Jesse Alan Crowder; great-granddaughters, Allie Marie and Cora



Nicole Crowder.

The family would like to thank the caregivers from Amedisys Hospice.

Funeral Services were held at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, February 15, at Hebron United Methodist Church with Rev. Rodney Longmire Jr. officiating. Interment followed in the Hebron Church Cemetery. The family received friends one hour prior to

the service.

Arrangements by Paitsel Funeral Home. www.paitselfh.com

Springer, Rita J.

Rita J. Springer went to fly with the angels on February 8, 2021. She was born June 11, 1940, in Bluefield, VA, to Roy and Fanny Blankenship. She was preceded in death by her husband, Jerry Springer; infant daughter, Cara Springer; brothers, Maynard Blankenship, Kenneth Blankenship; and sister, Alpha Jean Hancock.

She is survived by her sister, Janice Hannah; sister-in-law, Eriene Lenzer;

daughter, Teresa Springer; two sons, Craig Springer and Shawn Springer; daughter-in-law, Crystal Springer; and her greatest joy, her two grandsons, Luke Springer and Thomas Springer.

A Graveside Service was held at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 14, at Huffman Memorial Park in New Castle with Pastor Bill Frazier officiating.

Arrangements by Paitsel Funeral Home. www.paitselfh.com

Spitzer, William "Pete" man

William Spitzer, better known to his friends and family as "Pete," was born on August 29, 1934, in Baltimore, MD. He grew up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and at the age of 18 joined the Navy.

In 1960 he married his wife, Shirley Cook Spitzer. They moved to their home in Craig County in 1970 with their three children - Douglas, Earl and Renea. Pete worked for General Electric for 37 years, retiring in 1998. Pete was an avid gardener and his garden was a source of great pride to him. He was also a man of many interests and talents beyond gardening: electrician,



handyman, butcher, bee-keeper, winemaker and storyteller.

However, his greatest dedication was to provide the best life possible for his wife and family. Pete passed away on February 4, 2021, from complications of pneumonia. He is survived by his wife, Shirley Spitzer, three children Douglas Spitzer, Earl Spitzer, and Renea

Vincent, two grandchildren Andrew Spitzer and Racquel Johnston, four great-grandchildren, Noah, Haleigh, Lucas and Judah, his brother Donnie Hite and his sister Ruth Horn. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, no services will be held at this time.

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11599 Cumberland Gap Road/Rt. 42, New Castle, 864-5242; church phone:544-7040 Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m., Sunday School 10:30 a.m., Choir Tuesday 7:30p.m., Youth Outreach and Missions Program. Rev. Charles Stacy.

CHESTNUT GROVE CHURCH
Duane Wente, Minister, Rt. 42, New Castle, 540-864-5692. Sunday: Worship 10:00 a.m.

CORNERSTONE CHURCH
Pastor Don Brown, Corner of Salem and Wagner, New Castle, 580-3228. Sunday Worship 10:30am (Children meet separately, Nursery provided). Bible Study - Wednesday 6p Teens - Wednesday 6p. Ministries: Men, Ladies, Young Adult, and Seniors. Times vary, call for details.

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Pastor - Kenneth W. Davis, Jr., 6 Grannys Branch Road (Johns Creek), New Castle, Phone: 864-6102. Sunday School at 10 am. Sunday Worship at 11 am every Sunday. Fellowship meal after Sunday Worship on second Sundays. Everyone is welcome!

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171 Salem Avenue, New Castle, 864-5667; Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m., Wednesday: Prayer Service and Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Youth Group 6:30-8:00PM, Bible Buddies at 6:30-8:00PM. Transportation provided - call the church. Hearing devices also available. www.craigvalleybaptist.com

CRAIG VALLEY GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP
HWY 621, Pastor Roy Lee Law Jr., "Jay", 864-8984. Sunday School 10:00am; Worship 11:00am., Wednesday night Bible study 7pm, from HWY 311, up HWY 621, 8 miles on left.

CROSSROADS CHURCH
21892 Craigs Creek Road, New Castle. Pastor Gary Burch. 864-7520. Sunday School- 10-10:45AM, Sunday Worship - 11AM-Noon.

FIRST BAPTIST
Pastor Kevin Altizer, Corner of Main Street & Boyd Ave., New Castle. Church phone 864-5919. Sunday School 10:00AM, Sunday Worship 11:00AM and 6PM. Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7PM, Youth Group 7:00PM, Reformers Unanimous Addiction Recovery every Friday evening at 7PM.

GRACE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
5530 Catawba Valley Drive, Catawba, VA, 540-384-7075. Pastor Lorraine Taylor, agladypastor@msn.com. Sunday service begins at 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday Evening service at 7:00 p.m.; Youth (ages 13-18) & Super Church (ages 4-12) Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. You can also watch on Facebook Live at 10:30 a.m. www.graceassemblycatawaba.org

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
159 Old Railroad Ave, New Castle, 540-864-PRAY, Sunday School 9:30AM, Sunday Worship Service 10:00AM, Wednesday Night Services 7:00PM.

HEBRON UNITED METHODIST
Pastor Rodney Longmire, Rt. 606, 1981 Caldwell Mt. Rd., New Castle, 540-400-3419. Worship 11:15AM. LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST
Rev. Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

LEVEL GREEN CHRISTIAN CHURCH
3388 Cumberland Gap Rd. Newport, Duane Wente, Minister, 540-544-7179. Sunday School 10:00am, Sunday Morning Worship 11:00am, Children's Church 11:00am. Choir Practice, bi-weekly 7:00pm, Ladies meeting first Monday of each month at 7:00pm.

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Pastor Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle, 540-525-7662. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

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4199 Craig Valley Drive, New Castle, 864-6622. Sunday: Worship Service 9:00 a.m., Children's Church 9:15 a.m., Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

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Rockets begin volleyball practice this week but football season is officially canceled



Craig coach Geoff Boyer will be back on the bench for the spring volleyball season. He has indicated it will be his last season with the team.



Mark Harrison talks to the Rockets during a timeout at a 2019 game. PHOTO BY JIM DEVINNEY

While the Craig County volleyball team began practicing this week the football team has seen the season come to an end before it even begins. The school announced last week that Craig will not field a football team for the 2020-21 school year.

"We have notified the Pioneer District that we will not be having a football team this season," said Craig County High School principal Melissa Whiting. "We only had eight players who were both interested and eligible to play, so we won't have a team."

Whiting said she met with the eligible players and informed them that the school will create a weight-lifting and conditioning program instead. Football coach Mark Harrison will be in charge of the pro-

gram, and he feels this might be the best thing for the team.

"We really didn't need to try and squeeze in a spring season anyway," said Harrison. "Trying to play games now, and then turning around and trying to get ready for a fall season won't help Craig County."

The Virginia High School League fall seasons were postponed by the Virginia High School League due to the coronavirus pandemic. The VHSL instead moved the fall sports to the spring, hoping the pandemic would get better. Teams were eligible to practice beginning February 4th with the first games scheduled for February 22nd. Craig did not start practicing on February 4th and the announcement that there would not be a team came on February 9th.

Craig students have been struggling with stay-at-home virtual classes and that really hurt the football team. That made for an unusual amount of ineligible players.

"The important thing right now is for these kids to get their grades up so we can have a team in the fall," said Harrison. "We're way behind in everything. We have to get them back in the classroom where we can keep an eye on them and back in the weight room to get their strength up for football."

Harrison believes the Rockets will have no problem of fielding a team of well over 20 players in the fall. He only loses two seniors who would have played this year, Sam Boardwine and Jakob Craft.

"I feel bad for the seniors,"

he said. "I hate that they'll miss their last chance to play high school football, but a six game season at this time wouldn't benefit Craig County."

Mark is worried that a spring season of six games would hurt the chances of having a team in the fall.

"We get beat up a lot in the fall as it is, and to try and play a spring season would only hurt our program," he said. "In our situation, we're better off just trying to get ready for the fall. A six game season wouldn't do us any good, it just doesn't fit Craig. We'll get through this and we'll be fine."

Meanwhile, the volleyball team has begun practicing for a season that is expected to open on March 1. There

will be no middle school or jayvee teams, so coach Geoff Boyer will carry more girls on the varsity team than he normally would. The girls have a five week, 12 match season scheduled, playing the other six Pioneer District teams.

"We'll wear masks except when we're on the court and practice social distancing," said Boyer. "I'm glad we'll be able to get a season in."

Boyer has indicated that this will be his last season as coach. After this season he's stepping away to spend more time with his family. Twin sons Ryan and Thomas are now in the third grade at McCleary Elementary.

Cross country is also eligible to start practice this week. Craig will be coached once again by Chris Ratliff.



Brian Hoffman
Sports Editor

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY IN MAY?

If you were expecting to get a Valentine's card in the mail from me last week, don't fret if it didn't arrive. It may be in your mailbox this summer.

I'm in a fantasy basketball league with some college friends and others and there's a small fee to be in the league. I sent a check to our treasurer in Warren, Ohio the day before Christmas and it arrived last week. It was postmarked December 24 with a Greensboro postmark.

In addition, some Christmas cards I sent to friends and relatives in Pennsylvania also arrived within the past two weeks. I sent them on December 7.

What a great job our postmaster, Louis DeJoy, has done with the postal system. This

big donor to the Donald J. Trump campaign, who had no previous experience with the post office, has indicated he'd like to stay on. He has about as much chance of that as Adam Gase did of keeping his job with the New York Jets.

GOOD-BYE HAMMER

I was sad to learn of the passing of Hank Aaron on January 22nd, and especially the idea that he might still be with us if not for COVID.

Aaron was one of my favorites growing up. He had that easy swing that managed to meet the ball just as his quick wrists turned on the pitch. He could hit 'em far and often, and in my mind he's still the Home Run king, because he did it without the help of steroids.

Aaron wasn't just a home run hitter, he was a great baseball player. He hit for average, with a .305 lifetime average over 23 years in the big leagues. He was fast and was an excellent baserunner and he was also a terrific fielder. He's one of the "no brainer" all-time greats.

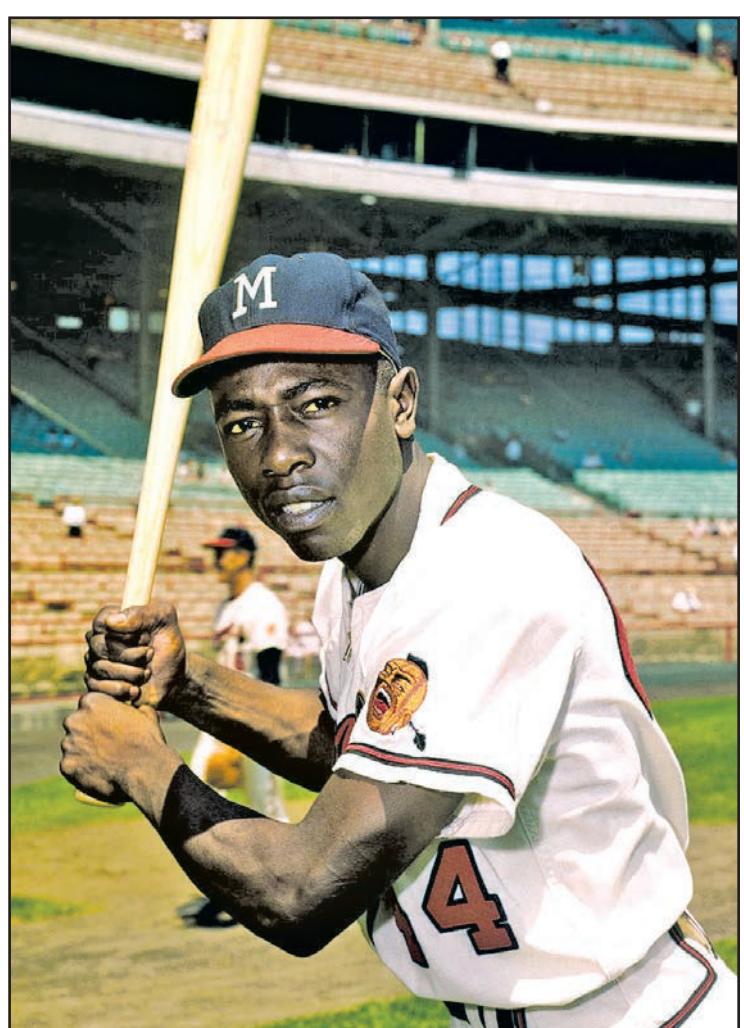
When I first joined the paper back in 1974, Aaron had just

broken Babe Ruth's record for career home runs that spring. In July of that year I had taken a job as a part-time writer for the Salem Times-Register after moving from Pennsylvania, and planned a visit back home for when the Braves were in town. I wrote the Phillies for a pass and, to my delight, they approved my request.

My plan was to do a story on Hank Aaron. After watching the game from the press box I waited outside the Atlanta locker room with the other writers, waiting to be invited inside. The door swung open and everyone rushed in, and there was Hank sitting in front of his locker.

Talk about nervous! I'd only been on the job for a month and now I'm approaching one of my idols, Hank Aaron, to do an interview. I didn't talk to him long, but got enough to write a short story while others fired questions as well. And, as I recall, he was very nice to everyone.

That was a long time ago, but a day I'll always treasure. It was a brush with greatness that I never expected to have as a little kid who loved baseball.



Hank Aaron as a member of the Milwaukee Braves.

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Rail Yard Dawgs schedule "Do Good Days"

Roanoke, VA – The Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs are teaming up with Wisler Plumbing & Air and the Wheeler Broadcasting family of stations for the first ever "Do Good Days." This two day event will be held March 12 and 13, 2021.

Members from each of the three organizations will be donating their time to help local non-profit organizations in the community and looking for nominations of designated non-profit organizations that

could use a few extra hands, not a few extra dollars. For example, nominations may include, but are not limited to, painting a fence, picking up trash, washing dishes, etc. The community is invited to follow along virtually on the Rail Yard Dawgs Facebook page (www.facebook.com/RailYardDawgs) during the event.

Now through February 25, nominations will be accepted online at www.dogooddays.com. All

nominations may not be able to be fulfilled, but it is the goal to complete as many as possible over the course of two days.

Submissions not fulfilled this year will be saved for future considerations. Proper COVID-19 precautions will be taken into consideration during the planning process. Organizations that have been selected can expect to hear from a representative ahead of time to coordinate logistics.