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# THE NEW CASTLE RECORD



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## Warwick honors members of the School Board



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Virginia School Board Association recognizes February as School Board Appreciation Month. Suggested Superintendent Jeannette Warwick to the community, "I invite you to recognize and celebrate the work of your School Board. Invite them out for coffee. Ask how you might help support the local neighborhood schools. Write your School Board members a thank you note. Additionally, let them know you appreciate what they do for students in Craig County Public Schools." Pictured from left to right, Director of Instruction Samuel Foster, Chairman and representative for Craig Creek District Susan Crenshaw, Vice Chairman and representative for Simmonsville District Gina Smith, Craig City District Trace Bellassai, New Castle District George Foster, Potts Mountain District Faye Powers and Superintendent Jeanette Warwick.

**Pam Dudding**  
Contributing writer

It is often said that "it takes a village to grow a child." Members of the Craig County community also understand that it takes special caring people in the village to help lead.

Craig County Public Schools Superintendent Jeannette Warwick announced that February marks the observance of School Board Appreciation Month by the Virginia School Board Association – a time to salute the work of Board members and celebrate public education.

"The theme of this year's celebration, '115 years of Providing Leadership Advocacy and Support,' reflects the partnership of the Virginia School Boards Association with local school board members as they serve their divisions and advocate for public education with local, state and federal leaders of behalf of all students," noted the Superintendent.

She added, "In Craig County, Board members must develop policies and

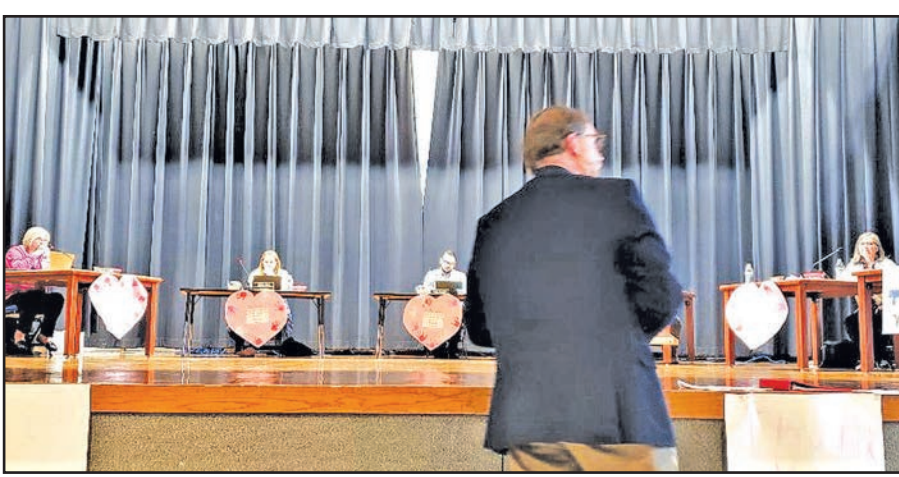
make tough decisions on complex educational and social issues impacting the entire community. Too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of these men and women who represent us."

The current School Board members are Chairman and representative for Craig Creek District Susan Crenshaw, Vice Chairman and representative for Simmonsville District Gina Smith, Craig City District Trace Bellassai, New Castle District George Foster, Potts Mountain District Faye Powers.

"I invite you to recognize and celebrate the work of your School Board. Invite them out for coffee. Ask how you might help support your local neighborhood schools," Warwick suggested. "Write your School Board members a thank you note. Let them know you appreciate what they do for students in Craig County Public Schools"

Warwick recognized the School Board members at the February School Board meeting with a certificate of appreciation.

See **Warwick honors**, page 5



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Director of Instruction Samuel Foster sharing research with Craig County School Board members on the pay scales of their teachers and administrative staff. Sadly, he reported, "In terms of our region, we are at the bottom."

## Pay scales for Craig County Schools still near the bottom

**Pam Dudding**  
Contributing writer

Samuel Foster, Craig County's Director of Instruction, recently presented the budget overview for CCPS.

In viewing the slides, it was heartwarming to see at the bottom of each, the district's motto, "Every Child a Graduate, Every Child Prepared for Life."

Foster began with an interesting question for everyone. "What is the value of an education?"

Amongst his research, he found that a high school graduate earns approximately \$12,000 more per year than someone without a diploma. Over three decades, that equates to \$377,400.

"On average, the higher the education, the more one earns over their lifetime, so when we talk about the value of the education, it's not only about learning and knowing something or being able to do something more, but there is also a monetary incentive that goes along with it," Foster said. "When we talk about a budget, we are talking about our students' futures where they can potentially do for them-

selves and for their families."

He added, "There is an amount of money that the county locality is required to give to the school system, and typically localities give more than they are required."

The last set of data Foster was able to obtain was from 2018. Craig County gave 43 percent more than what they were required to give based on the state formulas and at that time, there were 136 school divisions.

"At 43 percent, we were in the 110th place," Foster said. "One hundred and nine school division localities gave more to their schools than our county did."

He also noted that the highest was at West Point who gave 265 percent more than what is required.

"In terms of our region, we are at the bottom," he added. "The state average is 80 percent higher and the locality average is 100 percent higher."

His research showed that on average, schools around CCPS are getting double what they are required to get.

"That makes a big difference, as the

See **Pay scales**, page 5

## Teachers of the Year recognized for their hard work



SUBMITTED PHOTO

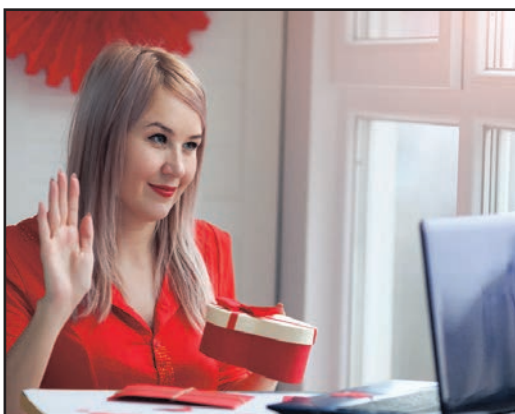
Three teachers – Lauren Bayne (McCleary), Rebecca Craighead (Craig Middle) and Donna Deplazes (Craig High) - were recently honored at the February School Board meeting for receiving the Teachers of the Year awards from the local Craig Valley VFW Post 4491. "We are very proud of our teachers here at Craig County Schools," Superintendent Jeannette Warwick said as the teachers were presented some flowers and a certificate.

## Snow and ice covers the landscape of Craig



PHOTO BY PAM DUDDING

Last week's winter weather left Craig County covered in snow and ice. People travelling safely, and the snow's beauty glistened with magnificence in the country land.



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# 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](http://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](mailto: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.

### 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.

Send community news and photos to [shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org](mailto:shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org)

# General Assembly confirms Westfall as State Inspector General

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) has announced that the General Assembly has confirmed the Governor's reappointment of State Inspector General Michael C. Westfall. Westfall's four-year term began July 1, 2020, when the Governor announced the re-appointment.

"I am humbled and honored that the General Assembly has confirmed the Governor's appointment to allow me to continue serving as the Commonwealth's State Inspector General through June 30, 2024," said Westfall. "I am proud of our team and their accomplishments, and am glad that others outside of OSIG are recognizing our work. By modeling our core values of integrity, trust, dedica-

tion, collaboration and respect, we are moving closer to our vision of maximizing the public's confidence and trust in state government."

Westfall cited recent examples of OSIG's work that is making an impact on state operations and the citizens of the Commonwealth. They include:

- Completion of the Natural Resources Law Enforcement Diversity Recruitment and Hiring audit.

- Successful prosecution of the Department of Motor Vehicles bribery conspiracy case.

- OSIG's accomplishments outlined in the Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia.

- The OSIG Behavioral Health

and Developmental Services Unit's assistance to constituents.

The Governor initially appointed Westfall as State Inspector General in April 2018. Westfall served as acting State Inspector General since February 2017 and Deputy Inspector General since 2015.

Prior to joining OSIG in 2015, Westfall served in several leadership positions, including Chief Audit Executive for the Virginia State Police and Assistant Director and Director of the Chesterfield County Office of Internal Audit, where he oversaw internal audits and hotline investigations for more than 20 years. He began his career as an auditor for the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General.

Westfall holds a master's degree in accountancy from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a Certified Inspector General, a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Fraud Examiner. He was recently elected to serve a three-year term on the Association of Inspectors General Board of Directors. Westfall also is a member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners and the Virginia Local Government Auditors Association (past-president). He previously served in leadership roles with the Association of Local Government Auditors and the Association of Government Accountants (past president of the Richmond chapter).

-Submitted by Kate Hourin



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Michael C. Westfall

# Local homeless shelter looking to move to new, bigger location

Shawn Nowlin  
[shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org](mailto:shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org)

Roanoke Area Ministries (RAM), which celebrated its 50th anniversary in January as the largest day shelter in the area, is in the process of moving into a new facility. Since 1987, the RAM House, which is still owned by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, has been located inside a square brick building on Campbell Avenue that once housed the school and congregation of Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church.

When asked why the change in locations now, RAM Executive Assistant Molly Archer replied, "RAM House wanted to assess with our programming to see what needs were still needing to be met by our clients. We wanted to expand our programming, and also make our building handicap accessible. That and the opportunity of having a funder for the building led us to the decision to move."

Founded in 1971, the doors at RAM House are open for those needing care coordination, day shelter services,

meals and emergency financial assistance in Craig County and other local areas. RAM House also creates a safe place for people to utilize additional resources.

Roanoke County resident Jim Henson distinctly remembers an interaction he had with a homeless man in 2016. "I was putting some gas in my car and he kindly asked if I could buy him some water in exchange for him cleaning my windows. I ended up buying him a meal, purchasing him a gift card and telling him about the RAM House. When

I followed up months later, he said everything was working out just fine."

The RAM House, explained Archer, is an interfaith non-profit that advocates for those facing or are threatening by homelessness and hunger. Through our Emergency Financial Assistance Program, she continued, we provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants, which assists in helping people pay for utilities, rent and medication.

"By listening and asking genuine questions, we can determine the best needs of our

clients. It's based on conversation and observation. We build relationships and rapport with our clients. Assistance is given based on a case-by-case analysis of a person's holistic needs. Different clients have different needs, so we customize care management accordingly," Archer added.

The new site, which has yet to be announced publicly, is expected to offer better amenities for homeless people, larger offices for employees and more services. Additional information about the organization can be found at [raminc.org](http://raminc.org).

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10				
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60					61	62						63		
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- CLUES ACROSS
- 1. Ancient Persian city
  - 5. Spindles
  - 11. Stake
  - 12. Retrain
  - 16. Close by
  - 17. Commercial
  - 18. One who publicly announces
  - 19. American ballplayer
  - 24. Junior's father
  - 25. Go up or climb
  - 26. Concern
  - 27. When you hope to get there
  - 28. Iacocca and Oswald are 2
  - 29. Plant of the lily family
  - 30. Male college organization
  - 31. National capital
  - 33. Raccoonlike animal
  - 34. Symbols of fertility
  - 38. Astronomy unit
  - 39. Series of ridges in anatomy
  - 40. Hebrew leader
  - 43. A portent of good or evil
  - 44. Supreme goddess
  - 45. Gelatinous substance
  - 49. Engage in a contest
  - 50. Famed ballplayer Ruth
  - 51. Pledge
  - 53. -\_\_\_ denotes past
  - 54. Revival
  - 56. Spanish surname
  - 58. Gold
  - 59. Elsa's sister
  - 60. Workplace
  - 63. Large quantity of something
  - 64. Engraved
  - 65. Discount
- CLUES DOWN
- 1. Shoe
  - 2. Disquiet
  - 3. Posture
  - 4. Large nests
  - 5. Soviet "Second Symphony" composer
  - 6. Joins 2 pipes of different diameter
  - 7. Exist
  - 8. Overdose
  - 9. Pleat of fabric
  - 10. Predict the future
  - 13. Burgeoning technology
  - 14. Having made a valid will
  - 15. Having no fixed course
  - 20. \_\_\_ route
  - 21. Lethal dose
  - 22. Indian musical pattern of notes
  - 23. Athlete
  - 27. Geological times
  - 29. Atomic #21
  - 30. In support of
  - 31. Brew
  - 32. Certificate of insurance
  - 33. Taxi
  - 34. Type of saying
  - 35. For cigars
  - 36. Phil \_\_, former CIA
  - 37. Local area network
  - 38. Gym class
  - 40. Philippine Island
  - 41. Not great or bad
  - 42. Eastern part of NY state
  - 44. Gov't lawyers
  - 45. Constructions
  - 46. Former British gold coin
  - 47. Unkeyed
  - 48. Rechristen
  - 50. Threaten persistently
  - 51. Southeast
  - 52. Cools your home
  - 54. Removes the leaves
  - 55. Regretted
  - 57. Thus
  - 61. Relief organization (abbr.)
  - 62. Exclamation of surprise

# YOUR LOCAL NEWS

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# Sen. Tim Kaine visits Roanoke Valley, tours vaccination sites



Dr. Cynthia Morrow, the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District Director, and Sen. Tim Kaine discussing vaccination updates.

PHOTOS BY SHAWN NOWLIN



Sen. Kaine having a conversation with a woman after she was vaccinated.



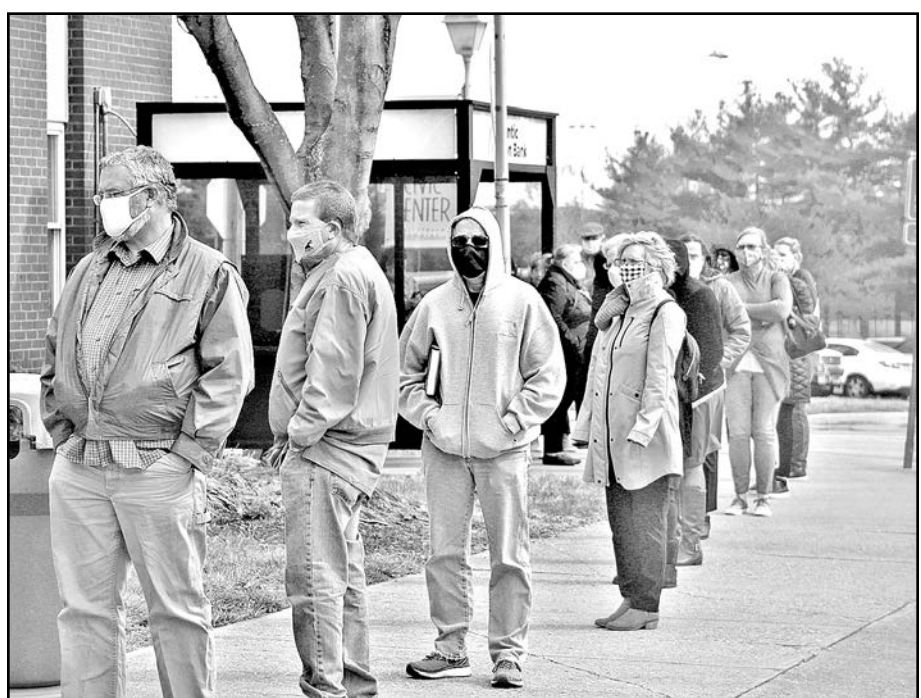
Sen. Kaine conversing with health experts.



VDH employee administering a COVID-19 vaccine on a senior.



After receiving a vaccine on Feb. 16, individuals were encouraged to wait for at least 30 minutes before leaving the building.



People of all ages and backgrounds waiting in line to get a vaccine.

**Shawn Nowlin**  
shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org

Last week, Senator Tim Kaine held virtual and in-person events across the state to discuss health care amid the coronavirus pandemic. On Feb. 16, Kaine, who served as Virginia's Governor from 2006 to 2010, toured the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) vaccination site at the Salem Civic Center.

While touring the facility, Kaine met with volunteers and staff to learn about the lifesaving work they are doing as well as converse with those who received a vaccine shot. Among those present to help answer the Senator's questions was Dr. Cynthia Morrow, the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District Director.

"We rely on data to identify vaccine distribution strategies and understand COVID-19's impact. We have struggled to meet the demand for information about these decisions and have not been able to personally respond to all of the inquiries and requests we have recently received," said Dr. Morrow a week before the Senator's arrival. "I am sorry for this. We are committed to improving the way we communicate about opportunities to schedule a vaccine appointment, about testing events and about other important aspects of the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District."

Just this week alone, hundreds of area residents like Nicole Zimmerman have been vaccinated in the Salem Civic Cen-

ter. "When you first come in here, you are asked a bunch of questions to make sure that you are healthy," Zimmerman said. "After waiting in line until it's your turn, you get a quick shot, and they ask you to wait for like 20 minutes before leaving."

As a VDH volunteer, Elizabeth Draper's understanding of the vaccination process has grown considerably in recent weeks. "Many of my friends are nurses and they told me that VDH was looking for volunteers. That is how I got involved. From everything that we've seen, our vaccines are really safe. The biggest fear that some people have is the vaccines were not well studied. That simply is not the case."

Last week, during her weekly column to update the community, Dr. Morrow said, "there's good news for those seeking vaccination appointments. The VDH has created a new statewide Vaccine Pre-Registration System to provide a unified and comprehensive process for Virginians to pre-register for the COVID-19 vaccine. If you previously filled out our RCAHD website form indicating your interest in the vaccine, your data was automatically imported into the new system and you do not need to pre-register again."

After touring the Salem Civic Center vaccination facility, Kaine visited the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority to learn more about what the organization needs as they respond to

the coronavirus pandemic. While working in Congress on another exhaustive COVID-19 relief bill, Kaine has expressed a desire to gather as much infor-

mation from Virginians as possible. "I am so glad I got to meet so many people here in Southwest Virginia. The feedback given has been invaluable," he said.

## LEGAL NOTICE

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that after thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this Notice, proceedings will be commenced under the authority of Section 58.1-3965 et seq. of the Code of Virginia to sell the following parcels of land located in the County of Craig, Virginia for the purpose of collecting all delinquent real estate taxes on such property.

Property Owner	Tax Map Number
Thomas Callahan	27-A-20
Joseph Devito	79A-1-83
Joseph Devito	79A-1-84
Joseph Devito	79A-1-81
Oran Greenway	60-A-1
Dennis Ramey	19-A-43
G. T. Thayer, III, et al.	10-A-1
G. T. Thayer, III, et al.	10-A-3A

The owner of any property listed may redeem it at any time before the date of sale by paying all accumulated taxes, penalties, interest, attorney fees and costs, thereon, including the pro rata cost of publication hereunder. Payment must be made in full. Partial payment of delinquent taxes, penalties, interest, or costs shall not be sufficient to redeem the property and shall not operate to suspend, invalidate, or make moot any action for judicial sale of the subject property. Sums due to the County of Craig should be made payable to the Sands Anderson PC and mailed to Sands Anderson PC, Attn: Kimberly Cregger, P.O. Box 2009, Christiansburg, Virginia 24068. For more information please call 540-260-9011.

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# OPINION

## Is this the time to get your GED?

The majority of the people who did not graduate from high school do not lack intelligence. They simply encountered difficulties in high school. Now is the time that you get the second chance you deserve. You can do this.

### Library Corner

Empowering individuals to build a stronger community

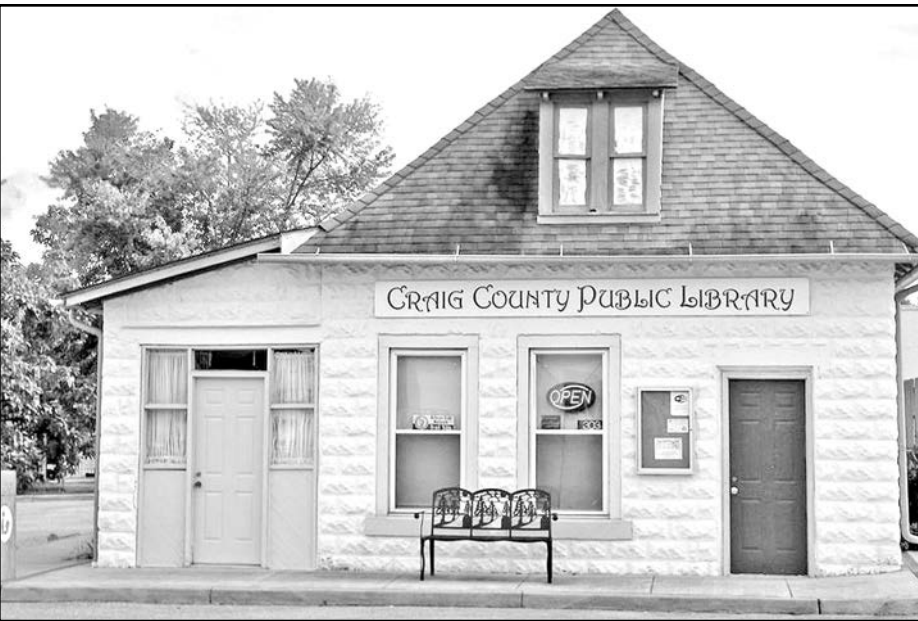
Did you or someone you know miss out on a high school diploma? Has this affected your job opportunities? Maybe now is a good time to change that. Invest this down time to be better prepared to get back into the job market. Securing a GED (General Educational Development) is work that will pay off. It is equivalent to that high school diploma you didn't get. You can register for free classes at Craig County Public Schools. Currently classes are meeting on Monday and Thursday nights from 5 p.m.

to 6 p.m. via Zoom, virtual computer meetings. Cynthia Swiney can be contacted at 540-864-5185 for more information. You can leave your name and phone number or email her at cswiney@craig.k12.va.us and she will help you get registered or answer questions you may have about achieving your GED goal. The test is given online. It is made up of four parts: Math, Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts and you take them one at a time. If you do not pass, you can retake each section as needed. The full test is \$120 or \$30 for each part. On average, people study three months in advance to improve their chances of earning their GED. Three months is

a small investment for a diploma that will impact your future potential. There are resources to help you reach this goal. Study material is available such as study guides and practice tests. You can check out the 2021 study guide and practice tests at the Craig County Public Library. There are online classes available, some for fees and others free. Look into bestgedclasses.org for free resources, contact Cynthia Swiney or the regional GED site in Roanoke (540) 767-6161 for additional information. Your library can give you computer access to explore options, participate in Zoom Meetings, or check out a Hot Spot for Wi-Fi access at home. The benefits of having a GED are huge. Hold-

ing a GED means that you increase your earning potential or further your education for career growth. It also means that

employers will no longer pass you over as a job candidate just because you did not graduate from high school.



The Craig County Public Library is at 303 Main Street.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

# The latest COVID-19 statistics

### Dr. Cynthia Morrow

Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts Health Director  
Guest Contributor

Each week's Tuesday news briefing with local reporters begins with a roundup of the latest COVID-19 statistics in the Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD). We share in-

formation on the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in each RCAHD locality, hospitalizations and other data that help to describe the toll the pandemic has taken here in our own backyard. Sometimes the data are encouraging, such as the recent downturn trend in infection rates over the last several weeks. Sometimes the data is heartbreaking, as we recently shared that more than 300 of our friends and neighbors have succumbed to this deadly disease in the past year. The challenges of gathering reliable data in this pandemic have been great. Accurate reporting involves the work of epidemiologists, case investigators, data managers, hospital staff, laboratories, testing centers and more. Yet even with the conscientious efforts of many dedicated professionals, it is easy to become overwhelmed and numb to the meaning of all the digits. Numbers don't capture the sense of loss of a beloved grandparent who resided in a nursing home, a loss

made all the more painful by quarantines prohibiting family visits. It is also difficult to describe the hardship suffered by employees and owners when one of our local businesses is forced to close or the challenges parents face with homeschooling their children. It is important that each of you knows that you are not a number to me or any member of the RCAHD staff. Despite these limitations, we do use data to paint a picture of the impact that COVID-19 has had on our community. And we use data to inform difficult decisions, such as how to determine who will receive the 3,150 precious doses of vaccine our district receives each week. We use data to inform us as to who is pre-registered and who is least likely to be able to navigate the pre-registration process. We use data to inform us about who is most at risk for serious disease -or even death - from COVID-19 and who is most likely to be exposed to the disease. While we rely on data

to understand COVID-19's impact and to identify vaccine distribution strategies, we also use data to improve our ability to serve you. We have struggled to meet the demand for information about these decisions and have not been able to personally respond to all of the inquiries and requests we have recently received. For this I am sorry. We are dedicated to continuing to improve the way we communicate about opportunities to schedule a vaccine appointment, about testing events and about other important aspects of the RCAHD. Every decision we make is driven by data and our commitment to serve you to the best of our ability. This week marks some good news in the effort to provide better customer service to those who are currently seeking vaccination appointments. The Virginia Department of Health has created a new statewide Vaccine Pre-Registration System to provide a unified and comprehensive process for Virginians to

pre-register for the COVID-19 vaccine. If you previously filled out our RCAHD website form indicating your interest in vaccine, your data were automatically imported into the new system and you do not need to pre-register again. This system, combined with an expanded central call center, promises to help our citizens verify that they are in the system, and will help to ensure that callers can get timely assistance with questions and pre-registration. We recently celebrated the delivery of over 11,000 first and second doses into the arms of RCAHD residents, a milestone achieved through the hard work of RACHD and Carilion staff with the help of an army of community volunteers. This week, as we continue to focus on reaching our older citizens, especially those in communities of color, as well as the top three tiers of essential workers in Phase 1B, we will look forward to celebrating our improved ability to serve you.

**THE NEW CASTLE RECORD**

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The New Castle Record encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Record reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length content and style. News of public interest is solicited from all sections of the county.

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# SCC'S Bureau of Insurance recovers more than \$14 Million for consumers in 2020

Last year, the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance (Bureau) helped thousands of consumers recover approximately \$14.3 million in refunds, benefits, restitution and other payments related to their insurance coverage. These efforts are only one of the many ways in which the Bureau assists Virginians who have insurance questions or concerns – whether those consumers are shopping for insurance, trying to understand what their insurance policy covers, have questions about premiums, or question why their insurance company did not renew a policy or why it denied a claim.

As part of its recovery efforts, the Bureau receives tens of thousands of inquiries and handles thousands of formal complaints each year. Con-

sumers may contact the Bureau if they have insurance questions or want to file a formal complaint against an insurance company, agency or agent.

During 2020 alone, the Bureau's Life & Health and Property & Casualty divisions handled more than 14,000 phone inquiries, almost 3,100 formal consumer complaints and 171 appeals of adverse decisions issued by managed care health insurance plans. Among other things, these two divisions handled complaints and appeals concerning claim denials, improper or delayed claims processing, cancellation or nonrenewal of insurance policies and improper billing.

As a result of complaint investigations, managed care appeals and market conduct

examinations, the Bureau's Life & Health and Property and Casualty divisions recovered more than \$12.2 million worth of benefits and savings for roughly 7,300 consumers in the form of refunds, insurance benefits, interest payments, reimbursements, additional claims payments and reinstated coverage.

In addition, the Bureau's Agent Regulation Division conducted 605 investigations and recovered more than \$2.1 million in restitution for consumers during 2020 through its Investigation Units. This amount represents refunds and payments provided to policyholders due to improper agent activities.

"Protect yourself financially by reviewing and updating your insurance regularly, understanding the terms of your

policy and your rights, and knowing where to turn if you need help," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. "We can look into whether a company has acted in accordance with its policy and the law."

In addition to recovery efforts for consumers, the Bureau helps Virginians in many other areas concerning their insurance. When shopping for insurance, the Bureau encourages Virginians to compare prices and terms and make sure to select coverage that fits their particular needs. The Bureau's specially trained staff can assist consumers with their insurance questions and investigate any complaints they may have with their insurance carrier.

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau

is working hard to help Virginians become well-informed insurance consumers. It offers outreach and educational materials about many types of insurance including health, life, homeowners, auto, long-term care, commercial insurance and Medicare. Consumers may view these materials, search for a licensed insurance company or agent in Virginia, view updates on key laws impacting insurance in Virginia, and much more on the Bureau's website at [www.scc.virginia.gov/pages/Insurance](http://www.scc.virginia.gov/pages/Insurance).

For more information, contact the Bureau of Insurance toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or in Richmond at (804) 371-9741 or visit [www.scc.virginia.gov](http://www.scc.virginia.gov).

-Submitted by  
Katha Treanor

## Warwick honors from page 1

tion. McCleary Elementary Principal Gerri VanDyke shared that the Pre-K students made hearts with their handprints on each member. A special note written in the middle at each member's table said, "Thank

you for working so 'heart' to take care of us!!!! With love, PreK Kids."

"I want to thank our local school board members as they serve Craig County Public Schools and advocate for public education with local, state and

federal leaders on behalf of all students," VanDyke added.

Faye Powers added the pictures of the hearts that were made for every school board member on her Facebook page, writing, "How blessed are we? This made my heart smile.

Thank you PreK kids for your thoughtfulness, your artwork is awesome! Keep up the GREAT WORK. Thanks to all the teachers for overseeing this special gift for us Board members and Superintendent."

Smith added, "Such a sweet

gesture." Replied Foster, "It is an honor to serve." Crenshaw left a big heart under the post.

"I wish to express our appreciation to our School Board members for all that they do for us, the staff and the children in Craig County," Warwick said.

## Pay scales from page 1

more we receive from our locality the more we can do for our students, the teachers and the school," Foster explained. "That is one of the issues we have to deal with is we get a certain amount from the state, and then the locality and all the extra things we want, the locality has to pick up the bill, whether raises, adding onto the building, etc."

Foster showed last year's budget, with no cuts for now.

"If we get exactly what we were allotted last year, we start with a \$6,841,926 budget, with approximately 520 students PreK – 12, 104 employees (which 52 are funded by the state).

1.7 percent between steps. He noted that CCPS is ranked 126 out of 132 school divisions in its pay scale. "In terms of our neighboring school divisions, we are number 15 of 15. We are at the bottom of the list," he said.

The average regional scale is a little over \$38,000. Approximately \$3,566 of which is higher than CCPS starting scale.

He noted that the administrative scales have not been adjusted in at least ten years and that scales from other schools are more difficult to find.

\$76,662 "A teacher ranges between \$50,000 and \$60,000 in annual salary," Foster said. "In the December budget session, the Board indicated they wanted a one-step and two percent raise for the teachers. We were not able to give a step last year due to state cuts in raises from the Governor's budget."

The hopes is to try to get teachers back on their next step, which is a two-step.

"If we keep the salary scale the same and move all the teachers up two-steps which is a 3.4 percent increase, we would need a little under \$70,000," he said. "We would like teachers to be on the correct step. We could do two steps and a .3 percent raise. If we do that, then we are looking at a 3.7 percent raise, and would need \$81,818."

er's salaries scale changes then the administration scale changes proportionally."

He noted that some local school divisions have given salary increases to teachers one year and admin the next year.

"We don't need an 'us' versus 'them,'" he said. "We are so small. By unifying the scale and linking it together, there is no question. If we say there is a two percent raise, then it's all straightforward."

For the teachers to receive a 12 percent to a five percent raise "which would put CCPS on a competitive scale, we need to add \$289,146 to our budget", Foster said.

do not do this, each year, a representative for the teachers will explain how CCPS teachers are still on the bottom of the pay scale in our region and state.

"We have got to flip this conversation to where when we come to budget time, I can come up here and talk to you about adding a program, or having teachers coming up asking to add things to their instructional program, rather than every year, having to figure out what can we cut so that we can increase our salaries," he explained. "We have got to have these conversations, so we are comfortable with the salary scales."

He concluded, "Let's make Craig County schools better instructionally! We need to make this school great. I've heard that New Castle is revitalizing. Well let's revitalize our schools. Let's make it better for the kids. Think about it, how much time do our kids spend here? Don't we want it to be great for them? We want them to be excited about coming to school and having fun. Our budget conversations need to be about that."

He noted that CCPS is the largest employer in the county with the salaries (approximately 62 percent) and benefits (approximately 25 percent) taking up about 85 percent of the budget. The remainder is used for utilities, buses, maintenance, fixing the septic tank, and other necessities.

"The majority of our funds come from the State at about 66 percent, 6.8 percent from the federal level, local 25.6 percent and a small other amount of .7 percent," he explained. "Every year, since Ms. Warwick has become Superintendent, I have scoured the internet for salary scales and budgets, trying to determine how we can compete, how to make things better for our staff and what do these scales need to look like."

Foster also reported that CCPS's current teacher scale starts at 35,103 with

Assistant Principals start at \$67,000, Elementary Principals start almost \$70,000 and High School Principals comes in at \$77,000 while School Directors make slightly more than \$77,000.

"Those average numbers are from \$11,000 to \$16,000 higher than our scales," he said. "There is one nearby where the difference from our starting Director scale and theirs is \$35,000."

Foster stated there were two things they proposed to add to the budget.

\*Middle School JVG program (\$25,000 with a match grant)

\*Preschool teacher and an aide. (nonspecial ed classroom), explaining that there is a need in the community for the school, as "children are coming in already behind" - we need this position so that our students can be ready for kindergarten, at

For the Administrator scale, they are matching the step increase.

He explained, "The next option is for teachers to scale number 2 which starts at \$39,000. The average for our region is about \$38,000. This puts us a little bit above the average. We maintain that scale for three years when teachers earn tenure."

They wish to link the administrative scale to the teacher's scale.

To become an administrator, an individual must have a master's degree and work 12 months versus ten months.

"Elementary principal difference is \$7,000 and high school \$13,000 and for Director was \$14,000," Foster continued. "If the teach-

er's salaries scale changes then the administration scale changes proportionally."

He noted that some local school divisions have given salary increases to teachers one year and admin the next year.

"We don't need an 'us' versus 'them,'" he said. "We are so small. By unifying the scale and linking it together, there is no question. If we say there is a two percent raise, then it's all straightforward."

For the teachers to receive a 12 percent to a five percent raise "which would put CCPS on a competitive scale, we need to add \$289,146 to our budget", Foster said.

It was noted that the Superintendent's salary is negotiated between the School Board and the Superintendent. "Typically, you will look at the highest salary and base it on that," Foster added. "Our Superintendents salary here at CCPS is ranked last in our state, yet our superintendent is the best throughout the Commonwealth."

Foster and Duncan worked on many scenarios.

Need between \$65,000 and \$95,000 for the admin scale. "Our scales are so out of line with everyone around us or even in the state," he added. "We have looked at every salary scale, every possibility, every scenario."

"We compete with local school divisions at job fairs and we will have one or two people talking with us," he said. "There is another local school division that is at the bottom of the mountain that has 50 people in line as everyone wants to work there because they have the highest salary starting point."

He added, "When we go into these job fairs, we have to apologize first, saying, 'I'm sorry, we're a small school division, we can't pay a lot, but we try to list all of the positives.' That one thing becomes the one issue that keeps possible teachers here in Craig."

Foster said, "We've been dealing with these budget issues for a long time. We need to be competitive and have a scale that makes us similar, competitive and reasonable with our neighboring divisions."

Foster shared that if they

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We would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and many acts of kindness during David's illness and passing. They have been greatly appreciated. May God bless each of you. Karla, Mike & Bob

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<p><b>CHESTNUT GROVE CHURCH</b> Duane Went, Minister, Rt. 42, New Castle, 540-864-5692. Sunday: Worship 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH</b> 159 Old Railroad Ave, New Castle, 540-864-PRAY, Sunday School 9:30AM, Sunday Worship Service 10:00AM, Wednesday Night Services 7:00PM.</p>	<p><b>PAXTON CHAPEL</b> Pastor Kenny Davis, 17 Sage Brush Lane, New Castle; "Presenting God's Word Faithfully"; Sunday School 10:00 AM; Sunday Worship Service 11:15 AM; visit us on the web at <a href="http://www.paxtonchapelchurch.com">www.paxtonchapelchurch.com</a>; email at <a href="mailto:paxtonchapel@yahoo.com">paxtonchapel@yahoo.com</a>.</p>
<p><b>CORNERSTONE CHURCH</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>HEBRON UNITED METHODIST</b> Pastor Rodney Longmire, Rt. 606, 1981 Caldwell Mt. Rd., New Castle, 540-400-3419. Worship 11:15AM.</p>	<p><b>THE CHURCH OF CHRIST</b> Contact person: Panco Cantley, 864-5035, 118 Main Street, New Castle. Service Times: Sunday, Bible classes-10 a.m., Worship-11:00 a.m., Evening Worship-6 p.m.; Wednesday, Bible classes - 7 p.m.</p>
<p><b>CRAIG HEALING SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> (Disciples of Christ) 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!</p>	<p><b>LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST</b> Rev. Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, &amp; 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.</p>	<p><b>NEW CASTLE UNITED METHODIST</b> Rev. Charles Stacy, 364 Main St., New Castle, Va. 864-5242; Sunday School 10AM, Worship 11AM; Monday Adult Choir 7PM, UMW 3rd Wednesday 7PM, Youth and other programs, Bible Studies.</p>
<p><b>CRAIG VALLEY BAPTIST</b> 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. <a href="http://www.craigvalleybaptist.com">www.craigvalleybaptist.com</a></p>	<p><b>LEVEL GREEN CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> 3388 Cumberland Gap Rd. Newport, Duane Went, 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.</p>	<p><b>ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 99 2nd Street, New Castle. Rev. Stephen McNally. 540-473-3691. Mass is on Sunday at 11:15 AM.</p>
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# SPORTS

Send story ideas & announcements to bhoffman@ourvalley.org

## Rocket volleyball team opens Tuesday with home match against Narrows



The Craig County volleyball team masks up and social distances

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Better late than never, the Craig County volleyball team will open the season Tuesday, March 2, with a home game against Narrows.

The volleyball season is traditionally in the fall, but the coronavirus pandemic canceled all events in the fall of 2020. The Virginia High School League allowed for an abbreviated season in the spring, with masks and social distancing required when the girls are not on the court. The Rockets will be playing all Pioneer District opponents in a schedule that begins and ends in March.

If playoffs are included, the season will go into April and the Rockets have an excellent chance to get there. They return an experienced and talented team for coach Geoff Boyer's final season at the helm. He's stepping away after the season is complete to spend more time with his twin sons. He'll be assisted by Suzanne Gans and Tyler VanDyke.

Craig's three captains are seniors Nicola Austin and Autumn Hutchison and junior Kaylee Stroop. Austin, a middle blocker, is a returning first team

all-district and all-region player. A varsity starter since her freshman year, Nicole had an amazing 2019 campaign, leading the team in kills and blocks, placing second in assists and digs and leading the Rockets in overall points scored.

"She understands the game as well as anyone and makes plays both offensively and defensively," said Boyer.

Hutchison, also a middle blocker, was second team all-district and the only returning captain. She missed five matches last year due to an ankle injury.

"Autumn has been a varsity starter since her freshman year and is one of the best on and off court leaders I've coached," said Boyer.

Stroop, a junior setter, was first team all-district and first team all-region last season. She set a new school record with 573 assists, leading the team to a 17-5 season.

"Kaylee gets to every ball and does a great job adjusting to in-game strategy," said Boyer. "She steadies our ship during emo-

tional runs that girls' volleyball matches always offer."

Lucy Rigney, a senior libero, is back on the varsity after playing a limited role last year. She always stepped up when she was given opportunities and will be a key part of this year's squad as the main part of the defense and serve receive on every rotation.

Senior outside hitter Samantha Sarver played behind two four-year starters last season and will make an impact with her consistent play. Other players include juniors Abby Price, Kylee Clifton, Jennifer Fitzpatrick and Gabby Hypes and three sophomores, Kaitlyn Radford, Katie Day and Sierra Mayo. Craig will not have a jayvee or middle school program due to the pandemic.

"Our goals are to play volleyball, honor our seniors and be thankful we live in an area that we can safely participate in a team environment," said Boyer. "We are very grateful to the administrators, school board members and everyone who has made this season possible."



NCR FILE PHOTO

Coach Geoff Boyer is stepping away after the spring season.



Craig County captains are, left to right, Kaylee Stroop, Autumn Hutchison and Nicole Austin.

NCR FILE PHOTOS

### Craig County Volleyball: Girls Varsity Spring 2021 Schedule (as of 02-19-21)

TYPE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Game	3/2/21 5:30PM	Narrows	Craig County High School
Game	3/4/21 5:30PM	Covington	Craig County High School
Game	3/9/21 5:30PM	Eastern Montgomery	Craig County High School
Game	3/11/21 5:30PM	Away vs. Parry McCluer	Parry McCluer
Match	3/11/21 7:00PM	Away vs. Parry McCluer	Parry McCluer
Game	3/15/21 5:30PM	Away vs. Bath County	Bath County
Game	3/18/21 5:30PM	Away vs. Narrows	Narrows
Game	3/22/21 5:30PM	Away vs. Covington	Covington
Game	3/23/21 4:30PM	Highland	Craig County High School
Game	3/25/21 5:30PM	Away vs. Eastern Montgomery	Eastern Montgomery
Game	3/29/21 5:30PM	Parry McCluer	Craig County High School
Match	3/29/21 7:00PM	Parry McCluer	Craig County High School
Game	3/30/21 5:30PM	Bath County	Craig County High School

### 2020 Craig County Varsity Volleyball Roster

#	NAME	Position	Year
1	Nicole Austin ©	MB	Sr.
7	Abby Price	DS	Jr.
8	Kaylee Stroop ©	S	Jr.
9	Kylee Clifton	OH	Jr.
10	Kaitlyn Radford	OH	So.
11	Katie Day	DS	So.
14	Sierra Mayo	DS	So.
15	Jennifer Fitzpatrick	DS	Jr.
16	Gabby Hypes	OH	Jr.
19	Lucy Rigney	DS/L	Sr.
20	Samantha Sarver	OH	Sr.
23	Autumn Hutchison ©	MB	Sr.

Head Coach – Geoff Boyer  
 Assistant – Suzanne Gans, Tyler VanDyke  
 Managers - Bethany Saunders, Makenzie Lucas