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LEANN CROY
 OFFICE MANAGER/CSR
 PH: 540-864-6688
 TEXT: 540-486-2970

leann@guthrieinsurance.net
 www.guthrieinsuranceva.com
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THE NEW CASTLE RECORD



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!




The Lee family, on Peacefull Valley Drive, decorated their entire yard and home and took first place this year in the Craig County Rescue Squad's 2nd Annual "Light Up Craig" decorating contest, winning \$200 and a \$100 gas card donated by IGA Express Exxon. Their decorations included the birth of Jesus Christ, Santa and his reindeer, as well as many lights.

Decorating contest winners announced



PHOTOS BY PAM DUDDING
Darrell Frango won the Community Favorite vote and received a \$100 gas card donated by The Gopher Market. His entrance started with a Happy Birthday Jesus and music playing, with blow ups decorating his 75-yard driveway. At the top, his house, garage and bushes were brightly lit all in white lights.

Cold temperatures impact Craig County



PHOTO BY PAM DUDDING
Christmas week brought negative temperatures and wicked winds in Craig County. As the creeks start to thaw, and the people too, the community continues to look out for one another. The Craig County Emergency Services set up a warming shelter at the New Castle Volunteer Fire Department (540- 864-7079), at 443 Conrad Street for those who need a place. For more info, call (540) 864-5902.

2022: A year in Craig County in review



RECORD FILE PHOTO
With saddened hearts, the citizens of Craig County have to say goodbye to their hometown Carter Bank & Trust at the end of March.

Pam Dudding
 Contributing writer

Editor's note: This is a compilation of some of the biggest stories The New Castle Record covered over the past year.

From Jan. 26: Carter Bank closing its doors in Craig

The Carter Bank and Trust recently announced they will be closing their doors in Craig County.

On December 27, 2021, a letter was sent to inform bank employees that they will be closing their Craig County location at the end of March, the 31st to be exact, according to Area Manager Lorinda Sigmon.

Wrote Chief Retail Banking Officer Tami Buttery of Martinsville:

"Dear Valued Customer,

After careful consideration, our New Castle office, located at 181 Main Street in New Castle will be closing and consolidating with our Cave Spring office, located at 3132 Electric Road, SW, Roanoke, Virginia. This closure will occur at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30. Your accounts will be transferred automatically to the consolidating branch. No action by you will be necessary. Please refer to the enclosure for reference on Carter Bank & Trust locations and the digital tools we offer to help meet your banking needs, whether in person or online."

If you currently have a safe deposit box at the New Castle office, you will receive additional information in a separate mailing.

Any person wishing to comment on this proposed branch closing may file comments with the FDIC, the bank's

primary regulator, at: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 10 Tenth Street NE, Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30309-3906.

Comments should be received at the FDIC by the proposed closing date, but remember, the FDIC has no authority to approve or prevent this closing.

Brooks Taylor, Marketing Officer, shared their reasons for Carter Bank & Trust moving out of New Castle.

"There are a number of business factors included in any decision to make a change to our branch network. The decision to consolidate is in no way a reflection on our associates or our customers in the New Castle market," he said. "When we consider the potential to make a change such as opening, closing, or consolidating branches, the bank does a review of potential impacts to

See Year In Review, page 2

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Year In Review from page 2

for the stars of making sure everyone possible is enlightened by the system that was initially set up to help community citizens.

“Sometimes we can help and other times the persons may not qualify but we want them to ask. Most of the time we can,” she shared. “We want everyone to know we are here for them.”

Franklin also added, that if anyone is in need of food to please visit the office, “We will be glad to put a bag of food together for you take home from our food pantry.”

From April 6: Scholastic Book Fair returns to McCleary Elementary after hiatus

Students of McCleary Elementary School are excited about the upcoming Scholastic Book Fair returning to the school this year. After a two-and-a-half-year absence due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Scholastic Book Fair will be returning to McCleary Elementary School this Spring. McCleary will host the fair on April 11-14. The funds raised from this event will be used to purchase new books for the McCleary library.

“When we look back on our childhood, many of us have fond memories of being read to, of snuggling up and enjoying a favorite story with the people who love us,” said Karen Jones, a librarian and gifted resource teacher at McCleary. “Study after study shows that early reading with children helps them learn to bond with their parents and read early themselves. Those early readers are more likely to find success later in life.”

Jones also noted that evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

Jones added, “Connecting kids with stories they love, in whatever format they prefer—from fiction to nonfiction, chapter books to graphic novels, physical books to digital books—has been Scholastic’s mission for nearly 100 years.”

The book fair will offer specially priced books, including popular series like “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” and “Minecraft” books, award-winning titles, new releases, adult bestsellers and other great reads from dozens of publishers.

The fair will also be open on Wednesday April 13 from

4-7 pm so that parents can come and shop with their children. There will be books for all ages, from preschool to adult, picture books, easy-readers, popular series, cook-books, as well as other fun school supplies like pencils, erasers, highlighters and other small gadgets

Book fair customers may help the school build classroom libraries by purchasing books through the Classroom Wish List program, which students and teachers will have created for their individual classes.

Jones explained that there is an “e-wallet” option available where parents can put money on an online account for their child to spend at the book fair. More information about this can be found on the fair webpage at <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/mcclearyelementaryschool>.

In addition, the book fair will feature the All for Books program, where students can share the thrill of reading with others by donating loose change to purchase books from the Book Fair for the school library. Scholastic Book Fairs then matches those monetary donations with a donation of up to one million dollars in books from The Scholastic Possible Fund.

“The book fair is one of the most important events in the school calendar. It celebrates and encourages reading, which is vital to every child’s success in school, and in life,” Jones shared. “The fair also gives kids access to good books, which will motivate them to read more.”

She added, “The book fair provides an opportunity for the community to get involved in a universal mission: encourage kids to read every day so they can lead better lives.”

Children’s author Bali Rai has said, “Reading for pleasure is the single biggest factor in success later in life, outside of an education. Study after study has shown that those children who read for pleasure are the ones who are most likely to fulfill their ambitions. If your child reads, they will succeed – it’s that simple.”

From May 18: Field of Dreams continues to expand their vision

Spring is here and the field of dreams is alive with children excitedly playing the all-American sport, baseball (or softball). Recently their newest building, a concession stand, was completed.

“Because of the dedicated work of many in the past couple years, there have been more projects completed and woven together at the Craig Field of Dreams that I can remember,” shared Debbie Snead. “Beginning with the 2500-foot ditch dug by BJ and Grant Oliver to connect the PSA water to the center of the complex to the commercial single phase service installed by Craig Botetourt Electric Cooperative to provide electricity to the complex; to the creation of a new Learning Lab/Concession stand by Bevins’ construction company; to get kids outside learning and earning to professional preparation of the infields by Rob Coulter and expert mowing and field maintenance by Zachary Taylor and a potential conservation plan for erosion control and field beautification by the Mountain Castle Soil and Water Conservation District and Valley Landscaping.”

She added that they are just beginning to construct a commercial septic system to connect to the new building and restrooms enabling a safe and healthy outdoor environment. The work is being provided by Craig’s D&C Excavating with funding from the Craig Economic Development Authority and the Virginia Outdoor Foundation’s Get Outdoors fund.

“The foundation is established to promote the preservation of open space lands and to encourage private gifts of money, securities, land or other property to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, scientific, open space and recreational areas of the Commonwealth,” Snead added. “We are indeed grateful for their funding and support of this critical component of the Field of Dreams making the complex more self-sufficient and sustainable.”

She also emphasized that all of these skill professionals cannot be matched except by their volunteer team of sports experts. “Craig Recreation and Conservation Association Sports Director Sheri Sloss guides the coaches and arranges schedules, referees, equipment and uniforms, works with the kids, volunteers, and parents and handles finances,” Snead said. “The rest of our team who support this work are also CCR & CA board members: Teresa Oliver, president; Joyce Ashley, secretary; and Debbie Boitnott, treasurer.”

If you are interested in working with the board serving as a coach or volunteering for fundraising the CCR & CA welcomes your participation.

You may contact any of the officers to volunteer or for



The Field of Dreams continues to build as they just finished their new concession stand.



An aerial shot was taken of the Field of Dreams by Abbey Pierson as her husband, Brand, flew over the field.



McCleary Elementary is happy to announce the return of their Annual Book Fair which will be held April 11-14. Family night, scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. on April 13, is for anyone to attend. Books for all ages and other items will be available for purchase.

membership. All donations can be sent to treasurer Debbie Boitnott at PO Box 371, New Castle Virginia 24127.

All donations and volunteers are greatly appreciated as we all work together to build a better place for our kids to enjoy.

From June 22: Town businesses grateful to Town Council

Months ago, the discussion of adding a cigarette tax brought some businesses to the forefront of the Board of Supervisors and the Town Council with their concerns.

The Craig County Board of Supervisors chose to impose a tax of \$4.00 per carton of cigarettes, hoping to offset the cost of providing two more EMS workers to the force in Craig.

Going from a zero tax to

\$4 did not settle with Craig County citizens or businesses, as that is one staple that draws customers to the businesses.

Three businesses reported their sales reduced drastically, not only in cigarette/vaping/chewing tobacco sales but in the other staples those customers purchase when stopping in for those items, such as gasoline, drinks, and other fast pickup things.

Mike and Richard Carper, representing The Gopher

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15					16				
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68						69				70		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Product or ___ (abbr.)
 - Zodiac sign
 - S. China seaport
 - Former OSS
 - Early English printer
 - Aphid genus
 - General’s assistant (abbr.)
 - Aussies
 - Dissuades
 - Make law
 - Drench
 - Soak in a liquid
 - Male child
 - It cools your home
 - Small constellation
 - To call (archaic)
 - Explores beneath the Earth
 - Commercial
 - W. hemisphere organization
 - You can find it in a can
 - “Land of the free”
 - 42 36 inches
 - Footwear
 - Challenges
 - They hold things together
 - Of I
 - Partner to flow
 - Not connected by kinship
 - Worries
 - Garlic mayonnaise
 - A way to take by force
 - Legendary English rockers
 - Your consciousness of your own identity
 - Fencing swords
 - Silly
 - Actor DiCaprio
 - Encircles with a belt
 - Mails a message
 - Longing
 - CLUES DOWN**
 - Horse mackerels
 - It can be viral
 - Prickly plants
 - Consciousness
 - Type of sarcoma
 - Tax collector
 - Sun up in New York
 - One who scorches
 - Influential psychotherapist
 - Situated at an apex
 - Communicative
 - Forearm nerve
 - Former CIA
 - Folk singer DiFranco
 - Employee stock ownership plan
 - Large-scale
 - School environment
 - Remove
 - Male parents
 - Large rodent
 - Weighed down
 - Held tightly
 - ___ route: going there
 - Explains again
 - Exclamation of surprise
 - Courteously
 - Lying down
 - Judge
 - Forcefully took
 - Loosely compacted sediment
 - High mountain
 - Portable conical tents
 - Cereal grass
 - Dining utensil
 - Thoughtful
 - Helps you walk
 - Indicates near
 - Midway between northeast and east
 - Local area network

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OPINION

Joalbokafloo

The legend of Jólábokaflóð is a slightly romanticized Christmas tradition translated to mean “Christmas Book Flood”. Icelanders give and receive books every Christmas Eve, and then spend much of the day reading as a Christmas ritual. Publishers purposefully release new titles before the holidays, and the four months around Christmas account for half of the country’s book sales each year.

Storytelling is a winter tradition

everywhere, but especially in the north where darkness prevails. Long ago, telling stories and reading aloud during the cold winter months was common while some family members worked the wool into clothing and prepared the dried food and grain for storage. Iceland is not the only place that has reading rituals around Christmas time.

In Norway, public libraries called Bibliotek have scheduled programs such as film viewing. Litteraturhuset, The House of Literature, is also a popular place for people who want to read. Inside it is a cafe, a

Library Corner

Empowering individuals to build a stronger community

restaurant and a bookshop, all in one place! It’s often crowded because it has a bookshop and a café which are open until midnight and weekends.

In today’s Iceland, the coming of winter starts a series of book events,

authors book signings and new material being introduced in anticipation for the large amount of book sales that occur around Christmas. According to Smithsonian magazine, Icelanders read an average of 2.4 books per month. Iceland is consistently ranked among the most literate countries in the world, based on metrics like achievement tests as well as characteristics like average total years of schooling and publications and libraries per capita.

In Alaska, winter programs are very popular in public libraries because outdoor activities for every-

one are limited. A public library is a perfect place to have events and to provide a social outlet for kids and grown-ups alike.

Snuggle up with a good book this holiday and enjoy the dark cold days of winter!

-Raven Meadowbrook

Library news:
Thank you for your end of year donations to the Craig County Public Library! We depend in our people for support of such an essential part of our county infrastructure. Every little bit helps us to provide more for our community.

Santa through the years



Morgan Griffith
Representative

character.

The figure of Santa Claus is perhaps the most obvious example. Christmas is a season of miracles – the virgin birth, the Star of Bethlehem, and so forth – and how a Mediterranean holy man of late antiquity became the red-suited gift-giver of modern Western culture surely fits in the season’s theme of the unlikely taking place.

There is little definitive record of Saint Nicholas, the historical figure who provided the basis for Santa Claus. According to History.com, he is believed to have been born around 280 A.D. in modern-day Turkey. The stories that surround him praise his generosity and kindness toward the poor, the sick, and children. The day he is believed to have died, December 6, is

celebrated as a feast day by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Saint Nicholas became the patron saint of children and sailors, among others, and was adopted as a patron saint by countries and cities as well. His relics were venerated, and he garnered popularity across Europe, including the Netherlands, which proved to be a key stop on his journey into American popular culture.

In the Netherlands, Sint Nikolaas, as he is known in Dutch, or Sinter Klaas for short, was said to leave gifts for children on his feast day. Not yet the portly presence we recognize, Sinter Klaas was portrayed as a white-bearded man dressed in red clerical garb.

This version of the Saint Nicholas legend came to North America with the seventeenth-century Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam,

renamed New York when acquired by the English, and was celebrated for centuries before it gained a wider foothold in our country’s imagination.

In the early nineteenth century, one of the young country’s leading authors introduced a version of Sinter Klaas to a larger audience. Some of the products of Washington Irving’s pen, such as Rip Van Winkle and the Headless Horseman of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” remain well-known to us today. Irving was a New Yorker familiar with the region’s Dutch culture. He helped shape the image of Sinter Klaas, describing a version of the saint who flew in a wagon from house to house, dropping presents for good children down their chimneys.

In 1823, “A Visit from St. Nicholas” was published. Better known by its opening

line, “Twas the night before Christmas,” the poem was written by Clement Clarke Moore for his children. Moore did not take credit for its authorship at first, but his creation introduced still more details we recognize today, including a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer as his vehicle instead of Irving’s wagon.

As the modern portrait of Santa Claus took shape in words during the nineteenth century, it was matched by illustrations. Thomas Nast was a cartoonist famed for his political work. His legacy includes the identification of the Republican Party with the elephant, matched against the Democratic donkey. And it includes a Santa Claus that largely fits how we think of him. Nast’s cartoons for Harper’s Weekly portray Santa as large and white-bearded, cheerfully distributing presents.

If Nast helped to settle the image of Santa Claus, the Coca-Cola company propagated it. Its colorful ads, drawn by Haddon Sundblom, from the 1920s onward, portrayed a jolly, rotund, red-cheeked Saint Nicholas inspired by Moore’s poem. These ads were in magazines such as The Saturday Evening Post and National Geographic. They always featured Santa and a bottle of Coca-Cola. Through the years they produced many advertising items with the Sundblom Santa from metal trays to dolls.

The popular conception of Santa Claus has evolved over the years, but the consistent association of Saint Nicholas and kindness speak to the lasting meaning of the Christmas season. I will let Santa, as portrayed in “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” have the last word: “Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night.”

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USPS 378-080 Salem, VA 24153
(540) 389-9355
1633 W. Main St. ourvalley.org

Michael Showell, *Publisher*
Aila Boyd, *Executive Editor* aboyd@mainstreetnewspapers.com
Brian Hoffman, *Sports Editor* bhoffman@ourvalley.org
Debbie Nixon, *Graphic Designer* dnixon@ourvalley.com
Toni Smith, *Graphic Designer* toni.smith@ourvalley.com
Lynn Hurst, *General Manager* lhurst@ourvalley.org
Randy Thompson *Advertising Consultant* advertise@ourvalley.org

Give us your view: aboyd@mainstreetnewspapers.com
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Preparing for winter weather

Southwestern Virginia’s location in the mid-Atlantic typically favors us with the variety of four seasons balanced with generally mild winters and warm summers. Still, the onset of winter can bring special safety concerns, and simple precautions can increase the safety of everyone during the winter season.

Before the coldest weather sets in, have all home heating systems checked. Clean your wood stove or fireplace chimney yearly and replace any loose bricks and mortar promptly. Know where all the shutoff valves and switches are.

Before you use a portable heater, check for frayed cords and never bypass the grounding feature of a three-pronged plug. Heaters should have an automatic shutoff if they overturn. Avoid using a portable heater near curtains, furniture and other combustibles.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is poisonous to breathe. Winter is a peak time for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning as

fuel-burning devices can release the gas if not operated properly. Deadly levels of CO can quickly build up as the gas emitted by these sources can linger for hours, even after the generator or grill has been shut off. Operate all gasoline-powered devices such as generators outdoors and never bring them indoors.

Your first line of defense against a CO emergency is early detection. Make sure to install CO alarms on every level of the home and in every bedroom.

Depending on the level of exposure, initial symptoms of CO poisoning such as headache and weakness may resemble viral illness. If you suspect that you are experiencing CO poisoning, get fresh air immediately. Leave the home and seek medical attention.

Severe winter weather can cause power outages, so keep extra energy supplies in an easily accessible place. Emergency supplies should include candles or a lantern, a battery-powered radio, a flashlight with fresh batteries and a supply of unexpired food that needs no cooking or refrigeration.

(Don’t forget your pets!) If the power fails for an extended period, turn off all electrical appliances, keep your refrigerator and freezer door closed, draw curtains to preserve heat and turn water on to a trickle so pipes won’t freeze.

When snow arrives, watch for slippery patches when walking outside. Do not overload your arms because it can make it difficult to keep your balance. Remove snow with caution and avoid doing too much physical work at one time. Work slowly and rest often to avoid sore muscles, falls and heart attacks. Use a sturdy snow shovel and when shoveling, lift with your leg muscles rather than your back. Complete heavy work before eating a meal. Don’t smoke or drink alcohol while working because smoking decreases the flow of blood through your body and alcohol increases the chances of overexertion.

The safety of our residents and their loved ones is very important to us. If you haven’t already prepared for severe winter weather, the best time to do so is now.

-Cynthia Morrow
Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts

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Year In Review from page 3

Market and IGA Express ExxonMobil, along with David Stephens from Food Country expressed their concerns to the Board of Supervisors and later to the Town Council.

The Town chose to impose a \$2 per carton tax from the \$4 per carton tax, which was either equal to or less than most surrounding counties. This forfeited the \$4 per carton tax within the town limits.

Since, businesses have seen their sales increase again, as they could not afford to lose the sales of these items as it helped them afford to pay employees.

“Concerning the Town Cig Tax which went into effect May 30, 2022, I want to thank the New Castle Town Council for taking the time to listen and understand the impacts of a cigarette tax on a town and county,” Mike Carper shared. “Since May 30th, we at Gopher Market have seen an increase in cig sales due to the difference between the \$4/carton County Tax and the now \$2/carton Town Cig Tax.”

Gopher Market is in the town of New Castle and IGA Express is in the county.

“We were down 30% between IGA Express and Gopher Market in cigarette sales (our #2 sales product, only behind fuel) after the County cig tax took effect on Jan 1, 2022,” Carper added. “The impact the County \$4/carton cig tax had on our businesses was huge. We were out of line with surrounding counties, driving not only our cigarette sales out of county, but other purchases these customers were buying.”

The Food Country store manager added, “I would also like to thank the council for listening and helping to protect our businesses.”

“They, the Town Council understood what we (IGA Express & Gopher Market) were saying since October 2021 and did the right thing for their businesses in town,” they all shared. “So again, a **HUGE THANK YOU** to the New Castle Town Council for listening to their businesses and maintaining a competitive tax that will not drive business from the town!”

From July 6: CCPS continues to review safety measures

At the June School Board meeting, citizen Brett Stamper spoke on his views on the importance of having a School Resource Officer on campus.

He spoke of the fatal shooting in other schools, killing and injuring students. He also spoke of students in Roanoke and Salem who had drawn a map of the school and posted on social media.

“We have to remember that Roanoke and Salem are only 35 minutes away. Just because we are a small town, we are not immune to extreme violence,” he said.

He spoke of the recent school shooting dominating the news in Uvalde, Texas, where the doors were propped open, giving easy access to anyone who wished to enter. He questioned if “history will repeat itself or get worse if the security of our school doesn’t change.”

“I spoke with students and faculty about the recent shooting at the Craig Botetourt Co-op in 2018, asking about the events that happened in the school while on lockdown during the morning hours in which the active shooter was on the loose,” Stamper shared.

Stamper said that in December 2021, he requested information on the school’s contingency plan.

“Too many times I have heard it is not the school’s job of hiring. I, along with other parents, do not accept this answer anymore,” he declared. “The school must work with the local Sheriff’s Department. There is nothing that you can talk about or spend money on that is more important than this.”

He also suggested the school supplement this position so that there would al-

ways be an incentive to keep the job secure.

“We as a community should make sure that this happens at all costs,” he added. “If someone is going to risk their life for the safety of our children and faculty in our school system, they should be well compensated for it.”

He also suggested continuous training for the teachers and staff for a Crisis Response Plan, quoting the Virginia School system’s mandatory drills. Trace Bellasai shared that the Board does speak quite often with Sheriff Trevor Craddock regarding the situation.

He explained that “It is less of a funding situation, as the sheriff does not have a pool of applicants and is having a difficult time filling his needed positions.”

Bellasai added that they have also talked about forming a Safety Committee in the school, including the sheriff and S.W.A.T. team members in the near future. Bellasai noted that the state of Virginia does not allow anyone else other than law enforcement officers to fill that position, however the Board has considered penning a letter or a resolution. “We are requesting our legislators look at that,” he said.

Superintendent Jeanette Warwick added, “We are working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff’s department, including the responsibilities of the sheriff’s department and the school division. We are hoping to have someone from the officers during lunch times to be in the cafeteria with the students, to have a presence and they are in support of that.”

She noted that none of the sheriff’s current staff have the training to be a Resource Officer. They are also organizing an internal committee which would include mental health assistance. Bellasai added, “We have talked about working with Emergency Services to do drills over the summer when the kids are not here, which would be a really good training.”

Stamper added that he and others in the community would be willing to help.

“As we continue to plan with the Safety Committee, we will reach out to the community to see who would want to help,” Warwick added.

From Aug. 31: Old Salem Church potluck brings heritage to life

For many people, old-fashioned potluck dinners have always been a favorite.

The Annual Old Salem Church Homecoming Potluck is one of those. This year over 60 people attended, as some thought the weather would rain it out, but it didn’t.

Gleeful chatter was heard from beginning to end and smiles and hugs were of abundance.

The afternoon started with a warm welcome from organizer, Jean Bradley.

The tables were laden with a smorgasbord of delicious homemade foods and desserts, as everyone seemed to get all they could eat and take some to the elderly who weren’t able to make it.

Many years it has been hot or rainy but this year there was a cool breeze which made the day very comfortable for most.

It has never seemed to bother anyone that there is no water or electricity at the

old church, so only a one-seater outhouse is available.

People sat under the trees at tables, while others brought their own chairs to enjoy the outdoors. Some were able to get a seat on the picnic tables under the pavilion.

After dinner, there was a service in the church which was decorated in Black-eyed Susan’s and Queen Anne’s lace was placed in quart canning jars by LeeAnn Mattox.

Jean Bradley’s granddaughters, Kallie and Kammie Fisher, read special devotions.

Bradley reported that they are still working on some things in the church, as donations had come in for more repairs to be able to be done. Also, to pull a tree out and put in a Christmas tree.

She also announced that her project this year was to get pictures of any couples who had been married in the little church. There were two present, Ann Looney and Virginia Veasey who were great friends and seated together at the service.

The ladies tried to remember their dates. Looney was married Sept. 2, 1955 and Veasey got married June 29, 1951.

“I would like to have a 5x7 print of everyone married in this church to put up on the wall,” Bradley said.

Bill Frazier, current pastor of the New Castle Christian Church, delivered a special message.

First, he shared a story about a man who called a church, asking to speak to the head hog at the trough. The secretary responded, “Excuse me?” He repeated himself that he wanted to speak to the head hog at the trough. The secretary wasn’t sure she heard correctly, but said to him, that if he wanted to speak to our preaching minister, you will have to show a little respect and dignity and call him Mr. Frazier or Preacher Bill. The man said again that he wanted to speak to the head hog at the trough. The secretary told the man he couldn’t speak about him like that. The man responded that he had a donation of \$10,000 to give to the church. The secretary immediately responded, “Hold on just a second, I think the big fat pig just walked through the door.”

He read in Matthew 13: 44, “The kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovers hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it and went and sold everything that he had to buy the land. Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant who is on the lookout for a choice pearl. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything that he had and bought it.”

He added that the Kingdom of Heaven is “that valuable.”

“We search for so many things in life, but some things are in our own back yard,” Frazier added with another story.

He talked about the Sinking Creek valley and its beauty.

And, he talked about how many churches have now closed their doors in Craig. Churches that were once alive and serving people in the community.

“We sometimes forget about what is most important, souls. All people are precious in God’s sight,” Frazier said. “I remember when I was

a part of the rough bunch, but God can do something with any of us.”

He read Matthew 19, which said that Jesus traveled through towns to announce the good news of the Kingdom of God, healing all illnesses. When Jesus saw crowds, He had compassion on them.

“Jesus has compassion on us,” Frazier said. “The most important thing is the relationship with Jesus Christ; therefore, we have to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send more workers into the field to share the Good News.”

He continued, “That is what our job is, to be a witness. To be human as Jesus became when He came to us.”

Frazier quoted the scripture in the Bible that he said he doesn’t like that Jesus said, “When I come back to earth, will I find faith?”

He concluded that all be a part of spreading the Good News so that no more churches close and all will have the opportunity to be saved.

Upon dismissal, people continued to enjoy socializing for quite a while.

Bradley announced that pending the COVID-19 virus in Craig, they will decide in a couple months if they will have the annual Candlelight Christmas Service at the church in December.

From Sept. 14: Speakers share bushels of knowledge with local farmers

Craig County is known for its agriculture. The county strives to maintain its agricultural legacy and to train others to become self-sufficient as well as learn the possible availabilities of assistance and better technology.

The Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a meeting, with a lineup of speakers who gave community members a wealth of knowledge.

A number of board members, Emily Nolen, the agriculture teacher of Craig County High School, and some of Nolen’s students and Future Farmers of America members were present.

The FFA members led the meeting with a prayer, The Pledge of Allegiance and information of what they are doing at the school and the new Land Lab.

The catered meal was provided by the conservation district team.

Each speaker emphasized that they will be the liaisons to help each person work through all the steps.

Abbey Pierson, district coordinator at Mountain Castles, studied at Virginia Tech and settled in New Castle with her husband about three years ago. He is also a pilot who learned to fly at the glider port in Craig. She has worked with Mountain Castles for a year.

“They started serving Craig County in 1945, as Natural Bridge Soil and Water and then in the 80s it split off and was named Mountain Castles named after New Castle and Fincastle and the mountains that surround them both,” Pierson shared.

She noted that they have received a lot of funding from the Virginia Department of



The manager and staff at The Gopher Market are very happy to see sales continue to rise again.



The Gopher Market is advertising their strong point in sales today, “They have the cheapest prices of cigarettes in the county now.”



As many arrived early, the little kids had fun. Piper put on gloves and went around as Elsa from the movie “Frozen” and was freezing people.



Ann Looney and Virginia Veasey were both married in the Old Salem Church back in the 1950s.



Brett Stamper addressed the School Board concerning safety measures at CCPS.

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The Monroe County Health Center is **seeking bid proposals for snow removal** for the **Craig County Health Center and Craig County Dental Center** in New Castle, VA. Proposals should include snow plowing, salt or liquid de-icing to parking lots and walkways, and shoveling of entrances and ramps. All interested parties are required to be Licensed and Insured. For more details, and to arrange for site inspection, please contact Chris Terry, Facility Manager, at 304-772-3065 x144.

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Year In Review

from page 5

Conservation Integration to support crop sharing programs.

"One of our biggest strengths is that we are local," Pierson said. "We are governed by a local volunteer board of directors."

She explained that members of the public can sign up for conservation plans field-by-field and not all at once if needed, adding stream exclusion with flexible buffers, including crop sharing, drilling new wells, putting troughs in, stream crossings, nutrient management plans, cover crops, as well as manure pack barn or composting (a convenient way to store the manure) and they can help to put up a pad with an attached manure storage or a pack barn so that it can be spread when needed.

Many other services are available. The district's office is in Bonsack.

Derek Hancock, district conservationist for Roanoke, Craig and Botetourt counties, shared how he helps with natural resources conservation services that are paid for by the Department of Agriculture.

He is married to his wife, Amanda, and has three boys.

"I am pro-ag and pro-forestry," he said. "I am all invested and am here to help anyone anyway I can."

Hancock graduated from Ferrum College with a bachelor's in agriculture and has been with the conservation district for 13 years. He discussed the importance of "getting your toolbox together."

"When you start something on your farm you need a toolbox full of these partners here who are present," he said. "When you are running your errands, include a visit to the offices and know the partners that are available to help each farmer, who can help bring economic development to you and your farm. Our programs have some serious supplements."

His agency serves in two ways, with technical assistance to answer questions or guide people in the right direction.

"You may have a problem on the farm such as evasive species, the pastures aren't performing, guidance on how to take a soil sample, crop rotation, how to deal with animal waste or nutrient management," he said.

He added that some may need financial assistance, giving two programs, the EQUIP and CSP, the Conservation Stewardship Program which is a 5-year program.

"This is like a thank you payment for doing it on your farm and the better that you are the more money that you can make in the program," Hancock explained. "Other things can help to accentuate this program such as rotational grazing or fertilizing soil samples."

He emphasized the first and most important thing is for landowners to get him on their land to look at it and evaluate what programs could be of benefit.

He added, "There is nothing that I will be seeing or doing or working with you on that I will report on to anyone, as we are here to help you. We can help design systems and work with you and cater to your operation. It will all be up to you in your decision."

"You can take the paperwork and just use it in your fireplace if you choose," he added with a smile. "To go forward and learn about resources that are available to get this done, we start working on your prescription. There is some yearly paperwork that is required, but it always seems to definitely be worth the time for everyone, for the exchange in benefits and assistance."

Hancock added, "I will show you the one that pays you the best with the least amount of money out of your pocket possible."

Matt Bumgardner, a Farm Service Agency farm loan specialist, shared that his organization loans money at a low interest to help in work-

ing with these programs, when needed.

"I partner with all the banks in the area and back their money up. We have a guarantee program. We also have a youth loan program designed to offer kids from ages 10 to 20 in an agricultural type of project," he said.

WP Johnson, FSA representative, personally farms 900 acres in Bedford County, including wheat, soybeans, corn, barley, oats, hay and cows.

"You name it, and I will try it," he said. "My job in economic development is to invest in your community. I am here to try to make your farm more profitable as 90% of my business is to give you money. My methodology is to help you pay the banks off, by increasing your profitability."

He emphasized that if farmers want to do a project on their property or are struggling with cash flow, they should call, as there are many options available.

He spoke of a few including, disaster assistance.

"We do a lot with crop insurance (floods, lightning strikes, avian attacks from animals that you cannot control legally), those things that attack your animals and your operation we can reimburse you for," he said.

He gave an example where a farmer put his hay up along the side of a field and the river got up and destroyed it and another example where a barn burned with their hay. Their program can help reimburse that value loss and help in the of natural disaster.

"Hay is a value to your farm. If you have animals and no hay to feed them, you don't have the income," Johnson said. "We can help you through all the steps needed to qualify."

He covered many options including pastures, corn, silage, hemp and financing different equipment with an easier payoff option. There is also a program that helps people who raise Christmas trees, grapevines or fruit trees to replace them when they die.

Denny McCarthy, of the Virginia Department of Forestry, shared that the agency is the state entity in Virginia that serves private landowners.

"Seventy-five percent of all the forest land in Virginia is private land," he said. "And this forest land contributes about \$30 billion a year to the economy in Virginia primarily through timber sales."

"Our agency was born and bred in 1914 with two primary mandates. The first is to suppress wild land fires, as we respond to fires where the local fire departments hoses cannot reach and the second mandate is to plant trees on lands," he said.

The agency has several nurseries to support this effort, growing about 48 different species.

"I spend the majority of my time working with individual landowners, visiting their properties, giving them advice and guidance on how to manage their properties to meet their specific goals," McCarthy shared.

He added that he spends most of his time writing management plans for landowners who have more interest in wildlife management like raising bigger deer, attracting more turkeys, etc. and still brings the Smoky the Bear program to many counties.

He went over the hardwood management program and suggested a fundraiser to the FFA, where they can buy 1,000 trees for .12 each and resell to landowners in small bundles.

He can also provide lists of forest consultants who help landowners to sell their timber.

Scott Stevens, with Bank of Botetourt, shared that they have always been into ag lending, including real estate, equipment or livestock.

He added, "My office is my truck and I come to see you!"

It was noted that when people say "agriculture," they think farming but there

were so many different career speakers that aren't farmers.

Farm Bureau shared many ways that the organization can help communities.

"There is the federation side and then there is the insurance side," shared Jeannie Dudding. "The federation includes the \$40 per year dues that are paid, which much of it is reinvested back into the county through scholarships, ag in the classroom, ag promotion, 4-H and FFA programs."

Mark Campbell, district field services director, encouraged all in attendance to become a Farm Bureau member to help continue representation in Washington, D.C.

He discussed some of the bills that were proposed in Virginia in 2022. One of the proposed bills mandated stream fencing. Farm Bureau representatives opposed that with other organizations.

"We had members to come as far away as Bristol to speak enrichment against this mandate and it was because of that that it did not pass," he shared. "I do not believe that there has been a louder voice than the Farm Bureau in promoting funding for soil and water conservation."

He noted many other grassroots efforts that Farm Bureau is active in, includes legislation in D.C. and Richmond.

Dudding added that members were encouraged to attend the annual producers meeting, where they will have a veterinarian to speak on the tick issue.

She also discussed the Farm Bureau discount app button which will pull up discounts in whatever area individuals live in or are vacationing in.

Leeann Mattox, Young Farm committee chair, shared that they had joined up with a small group from Montgomery County. They are doing projects with them. She said that she is looking forward to learning the ropes of her new position and helping teens to grow in agriculture.

Teens from 18 to 35 are welcome to join the group.

Mary Hunter shared that their goal is to promote the importance of agriculture by helping with fundraisers to help the agriculture department grow and improve.

She added that she was very excited about seeing the new Land Lab up and running and continuing to grow.

"We are now working on some grants to develop the left-hand side of the property," Hunter added. "We'll be pleased to have your expertise as well as your time and any donations that you would like to give to help with fencing, additional laughs stock and building up the program."

They currently have a handmade quilt they are selling raffle tickets to raise funds.

The new Farm Bureau agent, David Brown, introduced himself. He shared that he would welcome a visit to anyone's home to discuss how he may assist.

Door prizes that were given out.

From Oct. 12: Fall Festival brings a colorful day of events

With vendors aligning Main Street and vintage cars and trucks along the side streets, the Annual Fall Festival in Craig County offered a day of fun on Saturday.

The event was organized by the Craig County Historical Society.

Participants could start their day off at the Old Hotel with breakfast and a tour of the building, as relics were in every room as well as members making rugs and spinning.

Throughout the day, a different music group took the stage at almost every hour and on the other end of the festival, Tim Leftwich provided music with his equip-

ment.

Laughter seemed to permeate the air as people shook hands and hugged. Some were so happy to see high school classmates after over 30 years.

Big smiles seemed to be a natural response from most everyone.

Vendors were happy to serve the ones who visited their booths.

Some served food, while other had raffle tickets and their items to sell.

A newcomer this year was Nathan Menefee, with his Grinnin' Possum Fishing Lures.

Menefee shared that he drove a tractor trailer for years and when people asked how he was doing, he would respond, "I'm grinnin' like a possum!"

"They were always wondering what I was up to," he said with a possum grin.

However, Menefee hurt his arm a while back and had to go on disability.

He had been making lures for himself and his sons to use to fish and decided to start making more and sell them.

"That is how I ended up doing this as I got time to do stuff now," he said. "I have five grandkids, four boys and another boy I helped to raise. He keeps me on the creek all the time now."

There were many vendors who had lots of sweets to eat, and other foods including homemade jellies and breads. There were even free back massages given.

This year, the little league Cougar football team had a booth to raise funds to help buy the needed uniform equipment to protect the players. They sold barbeque with sides, cupcakes and hot cocoa. They sold out, which pleased the parents and players.

Raffle tickets to win a kayak, guns, jewelry, TVs, food and more were sold. Many of the local first responders depend on this opportunity to raise funds to be able to purchase their needed equipment to serve our community.

Midday, there were two dancing contests, a flat-footing and jitterbug.

As people danced, the judges looked upon everyone to see how they were doing. Again, smiles and laughter were of abundance.

Winners of the flatfooting were, Charles Swain who took first, second was Teresa Fisher and third was Tammy Alls. Everyone who danced seemed to enjoy their time.

It was the first year for the jitterbug contest. No adults got up to dance. However, the toddlers and small kids decided not to waste good music and danced the entire dance.

The society decided to make them winners and gave them a medallion. Their grins were priceless.

The Future Farmers of America group had many options for the kids to enjoy including animals to feed and pet, bull roping, a sac race and a raffle.

They also had face painting and Julian Dooley had his face painted like a skeleton.

The Marshall Reynolds Memorial Car Show seemed to be a big hit as there were so many entries that they ran out of room. "We love seeing all these people bring their vehicles!" Jackie Reynolds Taylor shared.

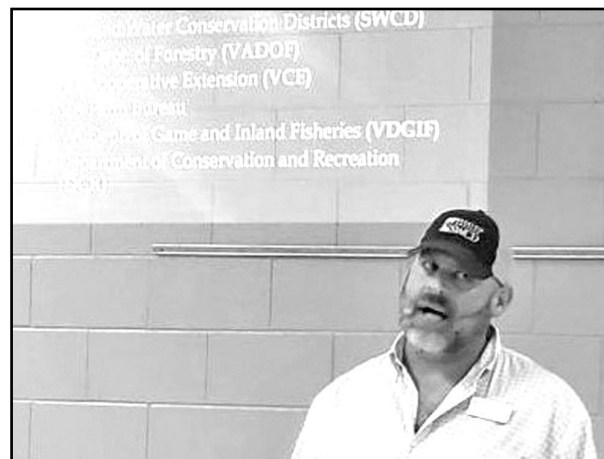
There were vintage vehicles that had more clearcoat than could be imagined, antique sports cars that brought back memories for many who enjoyed sharing their personal stories with the owners and the huge mud trucks that the kids wanted their pictures taken with.

To end the day at 4 p.m., the vendors lined up to the winners of the many drawings and raffles.

Though the day ended, there were people gathered in little groups chatting and smiling.

As all ended, the street was quickly cleaned up.

From Nov. 9:



Derek Hancock, district conservationist for Roanoke, Craig and Botetourt counties, shared how he helps with natural resources conservation services that are paid for by the Department of Agriculture.



WP Johnson, FSA representative, works in economic development by investing in the communities to make farms more profitable.



Denny McCarthy, of the Virginia Department of Forestry, shared that the agency is the state entity in Virginia that serves private landowners.



Clay Bowman and Magnolia Beaudoin happily danced their hearts out during the first Jitterbug Contest at the Fall Festival and took home the awards as no adults entered. Their grins were priceless, and their dance moves were well received.



The Marshall Reynolds Memorial Car Show brought in a number of notable vehicles, including what the kids were calling the "Monster truck," the Hillbilly Deluxe all decked out for Halloween.

Fairgrounds dedicates announcer stand in memory of Sammy Huffman

When people said the name Sammy Huffman in Craig, most everyone knew the man.

He was bigger than life, with a smile and a heart that matched.

He had been the emcee at the Craig County Fairgrounds derbies for many years until his untimely death two months ago. Many felt the heartbreak of losing him so early in life and were saddened. Facebook was flooded with posts of pictures and

memories.

At the annual Fall Demolition Derby on Oct. 8, the Fairgrounds Association dedicated the announcer stand, (or "tower" as Huffman called it), in memory of Sammy Huffman.

They redid the roof and added a huge 8-foot-long metal sign that said, "BIG SAM'S STAND" in memory of Sammy Huffman. The picture on the sign is of Huffman leaning against one of his crashed-up derby cars with the saying, "Play Times OVER!"

Randy Dillon designed and made the sign.

"He had such a great passion for the demo derby," BJ Oliver shared. "We felt that we wanted to do this."

At the derby, the associa-

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ROCKET HOOP BOYS IN "STINGER SHOOTOUT" THIS WEEK, GIRLS RETURN TO HARDWOOD WITH HOME GAME TUESDAY

The Craig County boys' basketball team will be competing in the "Stinger Shootout" at Brookville High School this week. The two day tournament will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, December 28 and 29, in Lynchburg.

Craig will open play tonight, Wednesday, against the host Brookville Bees at 7 pm. The first

game of the night will tip off at 5:30 pm when Appomattox takes on Staunton River. The first night losers will play for third place on Thursday at 5:30 pm, and Wednesday's winners will meet for the Stinger Championship at 7 pm Thursday.

"I'm excited to take part in a Christmas Tournament this year,"

said Craig County coach Ryan Frazier. "It will be the first Christmas Tournament we have been in since I started coaching here. I'm looking forward to the boys getting to experience the atmosphere and team building going to a Christmas Tourney."

Cameron Shepherd, who had previously coached at Craig

County, is the Brookville head coach so that adds an extra element of excitement to the Rockets' opening night matchup.

"Cameron is a friend of mine so it will be nice to see him and compete against him," said Frazier. "We're looking forward to the opportunity."

The Craig boys will open the

new year next week with back-to-back games at Eastern Montgomery on Tuesday and home with Bath County on Wednesday, January 4.

The girls will return from a break of close to three weeks when they host Eastern Montgomery next Tuesday, January 3rd, at 7 pm.



The Craig County girls return the court next Tuesday at home under coach Brock Jones.



Ryan Frazier has the Craig boys in a Christmas Tournament in Brookville this week.



Cameron Shepherd is a former head coach at Craig County who is now leading the Brookville program.

PROFESSIONAL BOX LACROSSE ASSOCIATION BRINGS THE SALEM MAYHEM TO THE SALEM CIVIC CENTER



When the new "Salem Mayhem" box lacrosse team debuts this Friday night at the Salem Civic Center at least three of the players will be familiar to local lax fans. Former Old Dominion Athletic Conference players Joey Dishaw, Chad Fisher and Josh Davis are all on the roster for Salem's newest professional team, which will open at 7 pm at the Salem Civic Center against the Hampton Hammerheads.

The Mayhem is one of nine teams in the Professional Box Lacrosse Association (PBLA) debut season. Also in the league are three teams located in New York state, the Elmira

Renegades, Syracuse Spark and Binghamton Bombers. The Jim Thorpe All-Americans are in Pennsylvania, the Trenton Terror are in New Jersey, Hampton, VA is home to the Hammerheads, Charlotte, NC has the Bootleggers and the New England Chowderheads will split time between Manchester, New Hampshire and Springfield, Massachusetts.

"As an organization, we are absolutely thrilled about having a team in Salem," said PBLA commissioner Steve Donner. "Both the city and the community itself have a long history with the sport of lacrosse, and we know that the PBLA will help add to that illustrious tradition by bringing America's fastest growing, and most exciting professional sport to the city of Salem"

Box Lacrosse is a mix between regular lacrosse and

ice hockey. The dimensions of the playing surface are the same as hockey but the game is played on artificial turf. There are boards surrounding the playing surface, like hockey, and each team will field six players at a time, a goalie with two defensemen and three forwards.

"Every seat is going to be a good seat for this fast-paced action!" said Wendy Delano, Salem's Director of Civic Facilities. "The Indoor lacrosse set-up will be a perfect fit in our facility and it will be exciting to see the Salem Civic Center look somewhat like it did in the old pro hockey days with the dasher boards, protective panels, and fast-paced action."

The Salem Mayhem roster features elite athletes under the guidance of Coach Lindsay Sanderson. He is the former general manager

and head coach of the Philadelphia Wings, and he is a member of both the Ontario and Canadian Lacrosse Halls of Fame.

A player draft was held to stock the team and Kyle Leeming, a goalie from Virginia Wesleyan, was the Mayhem's first round pick. There was also a tryout camp in Raleigh to fill out a roster of about 20 players and three men with local ties were selected from about 60 who tried out. Dishaw and Fisher both played for Roanoke College while Davis played for Virginia Wesleyan. All three were teammates at Salem High for three years.

"I was on line one day and saw this advertisement about a new league," said Davis. "Then I saw there was going to be a team in Salem so I decided to try out. I got a call from coach Sanderson and he

asked me if I knew of anyone else in the area and I told him I knew some guys for sure."

Fisher had just moved back to the area after spending four years in Montana. Chad has been an ice hockey player since he was a kid and he feels that will be a big benefit with the Mayhem.

"I've played ice hockey all my life and the size of the playing surface and the boards are the same," he said. "Box lacrosse originated in Canada, and it's a lot like hockey."

The game is more physical than lacrosse played outside, and Dishaw found that out in a hurry at the tryouts.

"Cross checking is legal," he said. "I wasn't expecting that and I got hit pretty good, but you also have more padding in box lacrosse. You have pads to protect your kidneys and ribs and I never wore pads like that in high school or col-

lege."

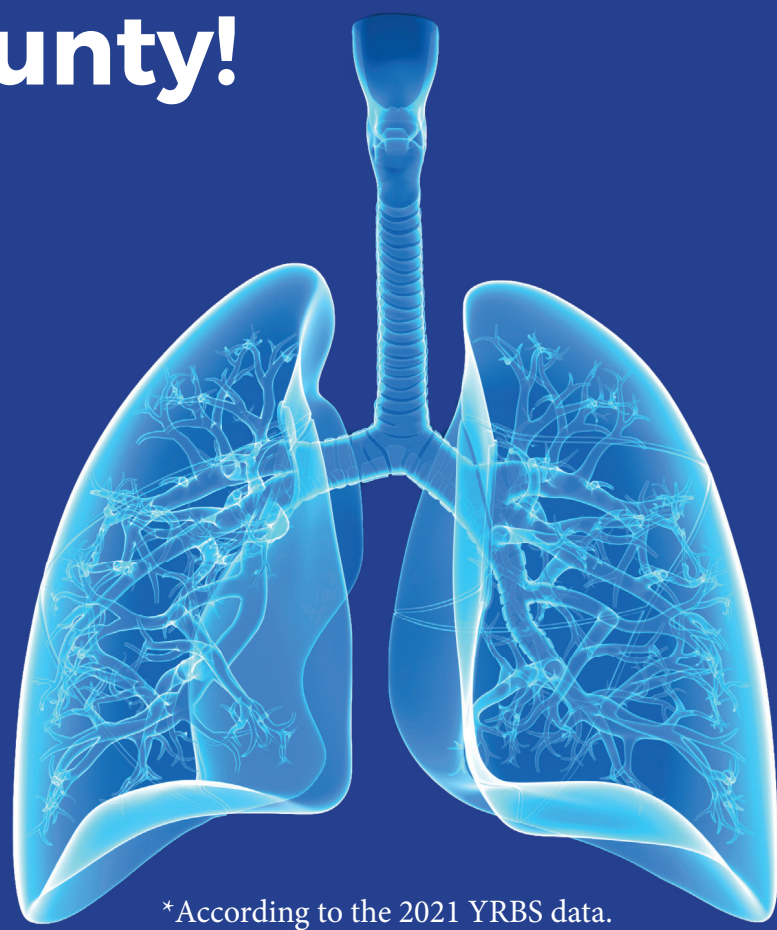
The Mayhem will play seven home games through April 1 as well as seven road games. The local players will receive \$500 per game along with travel and equipment expenses. Dishaw, Fisher and Davis will wear the same numbers they had in college. Dishaw will be number five, Davis is 19 and Fisher will be 20.

"They asked us what number we wanted and we all picked our same numbers," said Fisher. "I never played box lacrosse before but I think it's going to be a lot of fun."

Tickets for Salem Mayhem games are now on sale. Single Game Tickets are \$15, \$20, and \$25. Season Tickets are \$99 and \$149. Tickets can be purchased at the Salem Civic Center Box Office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and online at www.ticketmaster.com.

Kudos to Craig County!

82% of Craig County Middle School Students and **69%** of High School Students protect their lungs and do not vape.*



*According to the 2021 YRBS data.



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