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Craig County Public Library announces Summer Feeding Program

Summer is right around the corner, and this year, many more households may be worried about the increased expenses the summer months tend to bring. School dismisses soon, meaning the kids will be home, and many will see a drastic increase in their monthly expenses. During the school year, students attending Craig County Public Schools receive free breakfast and lunch daily. However, until now the guarantee of at least two nutritious meals daily is not available during the summer. The Craig County Public Library has partnered with Feeding Southwest Virginia to bring the Summer Feeding Service Program (SFSP) to Craig County. The SFSP aims to ensure all children under 18 years of age (unless 18+ and enrolled in a public school program) have access to nutritious meals throughout the summer. Eligible and enrolled children will receive two food boxes every other week throughout

the summer. "We are unbelievably grateful for the opportunity to participate in summer feeding," said Michaela Crawford, program coordinator for the Craig County Public Library. According to a seasonal food insecurity study conducted from 1995-2001, food insecurity is higher in the summer months, particularly in states offering fewer SFSP programs. The study also found that at least 60% of households see an increase in expenses during the summer months, with an average increase of \$300 per month (in 2001). "More families will feel the pinch this summer as fewer households can maintain with only one parent/guardian working. A household's grocery expense alone could easily mean their monthly expenses have the potential to increase by at least \$400-\$600 per month," explained Crawford. "We encourage families to enroll as soon as possible to ensure their children have nutritious food

options throughout summer." Enrollment forms are available at the Craig County Public Library during regular business hours. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) complete one enrollment form for all eligible children in your household. "Enrollment is continuous throughout the summer; however, there are cut-off dates to qualify for boxes. We must have enrollment forms turned in at least twelve days before the next box distribution, so enrolling as soon as possible is important to avoid missing the cut-off dates and box distributions," Crawford explained. The Craig County Public Library will distribute food boxes and milk every other Wednesday, beginning Wednesday, May 29, and the final box distribution will be on Wednesday, Aug. 7. Food box distribution will be held at Lemon and Vale Cakery from noon to 2 p.m. or 6 to 7:30 p.m. Boxes must be picked up by the

parent/guardian(s) signing the enrollment form. All boxed items and milk are shelf stable. A menu is available for May at the Craig County Public Library, and you can find the menu on display at each box distribution. "We cannot express enough just how thankful we are for Dawn Perkey and Lemon and Vale. Dawn did not hesitate when asked if we could store and distribute food boxes from Lemon and Vale. Without the bigger storage and distribution space, the program would have fallen through, so we are ever so grateful for Dawn's kind and caring nature. We

also thank Feeding Southwest Virginia and the unsung heroes behind the scenes for putting it together. We also thank our volunteers for the time they have already taken to complete training and their willingness to help get the SFSP up and running," Crawford said. If anyone is interested in volunteering, donating, or have more questions regarding the SFSP, please get in touch with Michaela Crawford at the Craig County Public Library at (540) 864-8978 during regular business hours.

-The New Castle Record

Enrollment deadline for box distribution	Box distribution date
May 13	Wed. May 29
May 29	Wed. June 12
June 12	Wed. June 26
June 26	Wed. July 10
July 10	Wed. July 24
July 24	Wed. Aug. 7



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<https://cookcenter.info/coaching>




COURTESY IMAGE

Rural Reimagined electric vehicle spotted at Mountain Lake Wilderness



PHOTO BY BONNIE CRANMER

A Rural Reimagined electric SUV is pictured at Mountain Lake Wilderness. Rural Reimagined aims to "bring electric vehicles, outreach, and education to the rural Appalachian region spanning the states of Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia." Those who are interested in borrowing an electric vehicle for two to six weeks at no cost are able to reach out if they have a valid driver's license, clean driving record, proof of vehicle insurance and are residents of the Appalachian region.

School division offers free parent coaching

Craig County Public Schools is reminding local parents that it is offering a free parent coaching resource and ParentGuidance that connects parents to regularly scheduled meetings with a coach, as well as content created by

therapists. ParentGuidance is offering support throughout the summer. To register for ongoing support from a coach, visit: <https://cookcenter.info/coaching>

-The New Castle Record

Craig County experiences population loss, according to Census

Anita Firebaugh
Contributing writer

Craig County has had a slow loss of population over the last 13 years, with numbers declining by 6.45% since the 2010 Census.

At that time, the county had 5,190 people. A recently released report from the Weldon Cooper Center for Population indicates that as of July 1, 2023, the county had a population estimate of 4,855. In the 2020 census, the county had a population of 4,892, for a loss of just under 1 percent of the population in the last three years.

The statistics echo a statewide trend of population loss, according to Weldon Cooper. However, it bucks a trend of migration from Virginia's large metro areas into smaller metro areas and rural counties. Many other rural communities have seen slight gains in population since 2020.

"Craig County has not noticed a decline in population," Board Supervisor Chair Jesse Spence said in an email on Feb. 8. "A 6.45% decline in population would only be a few hundred people in a County of this size. I would guess a lot more people than that decided not

to fill out a Federal Census form."

The numbers make Craig County the fourth smallest locality in the state, behind Highland, Bath, and Norton, in that order. Population numbers matter because it determines how federal and state funds are distributed to local governments for various programs and services, such as health care, education, and transportation.

Additionally, county population data is used to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and to draw congressional and state legislative districts, affecting the balance of power and influence in the government. County population data can help businesses and investors make decisions about where to locate, expand, or invest, based on the size, characteristics, and trends of the local market and workforce.

Individually, county population data can affect how much one pays for auto and homeowners insurance, as insurance companies use factors such as population density, traffic congestion, crime rates, and weather conditions to assess the risk of accidents and claims.

What's more, the population of Craig County is expected to buck trends

that show rural county increasing in population and instead continue its decline in population. A map on the Weldon Cooper site indicates that by 2050, Craig County will have a population of 4,264 people, nearly a 13 percent drop by mid-century from the 2023 population estimates.

Between 2022 and 2023, population in both Virginia and the U.S. grew by less than half a percentage point. For Virginia, this is the slowest growth the state has seen since the Civil War. Statewide, there were less than 13,000 more births than deaths in 2022, a big drop from 27,000 more births than deaths in 2019.

Some of Virginia's recent migration trends—including movement from larger to smaller metro areas and from city cores to suburbs—echo longstanding demographic shifts that have been shaping the state's population distribution for close to a century. For example, decades of migration into the Richmond Metro Area and weak growth in western Virginia means that at some point in 2024, the size of the population in the Richmond Metro Area will surpass Virginia's total population living west of the Blue

Ridge Mountains for the first time since before the American Revolution.

However, Virginia is experiencing a change in its demographic trends. In 2023, over three-quarters of Virginia's rural counties outside metro areas had more people move into them than out, the highest share since 1975.

The persistence of remote work is shaping up to be the most impactful demographic trend since expansion of suburbs and exurbs after World War II, according to Weldon Cooper. If the impact of remote work even partially echoes the cataclysmic demographic shift that Virginia experienced during post-war suburbanization, Virginia's population trends will continue to be reshaped by remote work well beyond this decade.

Increased migration is already impacting Virginia's rural counties, particularly in an increase in real estate values. It remains to be seen as to whether or not Craig County will continue its downward population trend or obtain an increase in numbers, possibly as a result of better remote work opportunities or increased traffic from the proposed rails-to-trails project, should it come to fruition.

Celebrating Our Graduates

CRAIG COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL'S CLASS OF 2024



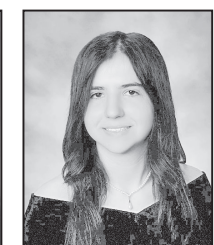
Andrew Duncan



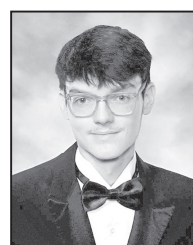
Ashley Cayton



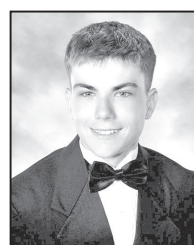
Ava Greenwa



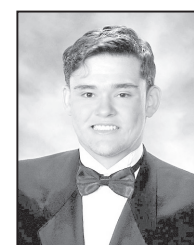
Callie Musselwhite



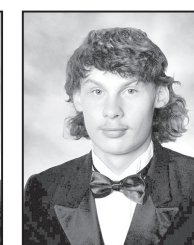
Christopher Hanes



Christopher Matheny



Colton Armes



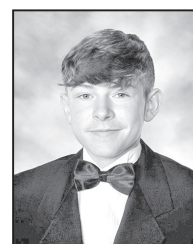
Dakota Caldwell



Emaleigh Radford



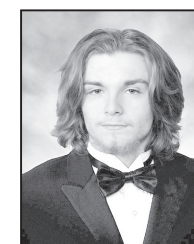
Emily Fowler



Hayden Reynolds



Isaac Caldwell



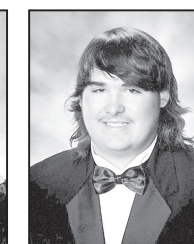
Isaiah Will



Karly Potter



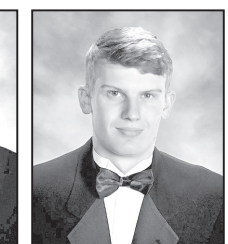
Lily Hutchison



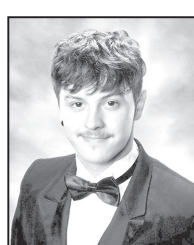
Marcus Keen



Martin Campbell



Matthew Lucas



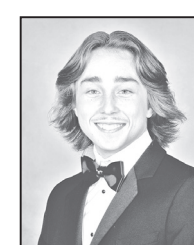
Michael Ramirez



Quinn Caldwell



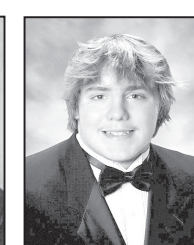
Randalyn Taylor



Seth Parsons



Stephanie Freeze



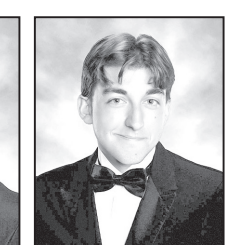
Tyler Fitzpatrick



Tyler Huffman



Will Johnson



William Dressler

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2024



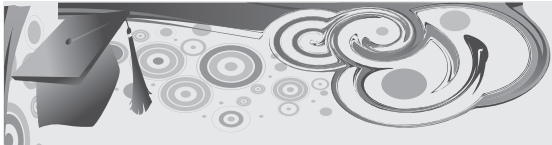
Congratulations

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2024 class of **24**

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.....

GOOD LUCK, GRADUATES!

.....

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Recipe of the Week



Shelly Koon
Contributing Writer

This weekend is the Memorial Day holiday or as most of us think, the start of summer. Pools will be open, and summer sales will be happening. But Memorial Day is much more than that. Of the two holidays that celebrate our military, Memorial Day honors America's military men and women who lost their lives in service to their country. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971 to honor those who served and died while serving in the U.S. military. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries and placing flags or flowers on the graves of our fallen heroes and by flying the U.S. Flag at half-staff until noon. Memorial Day is a day of National mourning so don't wish anyone a "Happy Memorial Day." Instead say "I hope your Memorial Day is meaningful and you enjoy your weekend."

The National Moment of Remembrance Act became law in December 2000. What is the National Moment of Remembrance? The moment was created so Americans would pause their day-off festivities and solemnly remember why they are not at work or school. No matter where they are, Americans at 3 p.m.

are to stop for one minute to reflect on the sacrifices that U.S. military members have made. The time, 3 p.m., was chosen because "it is a time of day when most Americans are likely making the most of the freedoms we enjoy," according to the White House website. Sixty seconds is a small amount of time out of a 3-day holiday weekend compared to what we have asked of our service members. Memorial Day weekend is a time for us to reflect on all of those who gave everything with such an unselfish heart. I am so thankful for them & their families who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This week's recipe is for a patriotic fruit dessert that is easy to make and a hit at most potlucks. They may not be the healthiest kind of salad, but creamy fruit salads are one of my favorite side dishes to make.

Red, white and blue cheesecake salad
Ingredients:
8 ounces whipped topping thawed
1 small package cheesecake pudding powder (3.4 ounces)
2 cups vanilla yogurt (about 3 6-ounce yogurt containers)
16 ounces sliced strawberries
1 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
2 cups mini marshmallows
Instructions:
In a large bowl mix together the yogurt and pudding powder. Fold in the whipped topping. Cover and refrigerate to allow it to set up for about an hour. Add the sliced strawberries, blueberries, and marshmallows right before serving. Keep refrigerated.
Recipe tips:
You can add so many different delicious things

to red, white, and blue cheesecake salad. Add More Fruit: Add fresh raspberries, cherries, or blackberries! Add More Texture: Add in slivered almonds, shredded coconut, or acini de pepe. (This will make it taste like frog eye salad but that is another article!) Cheesecake Pudding Substitute: If you cannot find it or just do not have it on hand, swap out the whipped topping and pudding powder for 8 ounces of cream cheese, 1/2 cup sugar, and 2 cups heavy whipping cream all whipped together. If you have leftovers of your red, white, and blue cheesecake salad, cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap or transfer to an airtight container. It will stay good for 3-4 days. If you are planning to make this salad ahead of time, I recommend storing your pudding mixture and fruit separately until ready to serve.



COURTESY PHOTO



CONGRATULATIONS!

CLASS of 2024



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CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

1. 007 Connery
5. Presides over meetings (abbr.)
9. Trefoil
10. Father of Paris
12. Asian nut for chewing
13. Machine gun from the air
16. The communion table
17. His razor
18. Father
19. Doctor of philosophy
22. Cologne
23. Black tropical Am. cuckoo
24. Diversifies
28. Razor author 14th C
31. Maple sugar fluid
32. A corp.'s first stock offer to the public
34. The premier bike race

42. References
43. Extremely high frequency
44. Actress Farrow
46. Not good
47. State of annoyance
48. S. China seaport
51. Bengal quince
52. Provide the means
54. A large and imposing house
55. Excessively fat
57. Spars
58. Former wives
59. Repeat
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Podetiums
2. Frankenberg river
3. Feel ill
4. 12th state
5. "Anything Goes"

6. Daily time units (abbr.)
7. Cagiva __: motorcycle
8. Drug agent (slang)
9. Study of poetic meter
11. Ceremonial staffs
12. Russian pancake served with caviar
14. Supervises flying
15. Large Australian flightless bird
16. As fast as can be done (abbr.)
19. Before
20. Hall of Fame (abbr.)
21. Constitution Hall org.
24. Atomic #35
25. Ducktail hairstyle
26. Independent ruler
27. Oval water scorpion
29. Modern London Gallery

30. On top
33. Identicalness
35. 2002 Olympic state
36. Tease or ridicule
37. Arrived extinct
38. Opposite of begin
39. Ol' Blue Eye's initials
40. South Am. nation
41. Type of salamander
42. S. China seaport
44. Woman (French)
45. 007's Fleming
47. __ Domingo
49. A French abbot
50. Gorse genus
51. An uproarious party
53. Point midway between E and SE
54. A waterproof raincoat
56. Spanish be
57. Of I

OPINION

News from the 9th: D-Day Memorial and the Crooked Road



Morgan Griffith
Representative

You may be asking yourself what the D-Day Memorial in Bedford County and the Crooked Road have in common.

But what they share is that both are in Virginia's Ninth District, and both have been mentioned in National Geographic Magazine.

In a June 2002 National Geographic article based on untold stories of D-Day, Bedford's D-Day Memorial received attention for its historical contributions to World War II Remembrance. The article estimated that the town of Bedford suffered the most fatalities on June 6, 1944 per capita of any community in America.

Photos of the Hoback brothers, who died storming Omaha Beach, are shown. The photos were donated to the National D-Day Memorial Foundation in the fall of 2023.

National Geographic also shared a photo from the 2001 Dedication Ceremony of the National D-Day Memorial.

As a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, I was present at the 2001 Dedication Ceremony where President

George W. Bush was invited to attend and give remarks.

The spectacular event gave wind to a burgeoning Virginia landmark that is celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Normandy invasion on June 6.

For events at the Memorial, link here: <https://www.dday.org/80th/schedule/>

A separate Virginia historical centerpiece was recognized earlier this year, as National Geographic released an article entitled "Why southwest Virginia is the birthplace of country music."

The author, Mike MacEacheran, details his trip along the Crooked Road and discusses the profound history of country music in the region.

The Crooked Road, celebrating its 20th anniversary, spans 333 miles across the Ninth District, with one end in Rocky Mount in Franklin County and the other end at The Breaks in Dickenson County, Virginia.

I was Majority Leader in the Virginia House of Delegates when I voted for passage of House Bill 909, legislation sponsored by Delegate Bud Phillips designating the Crooked Road as Virginia's Heritage Music Trail.

At the 2004 ceremony when the bill was signed into law, bluegrass legend Dr. Ralph Stanley was present.

Dr. Stanley and his brother Carter, both of Dickenson County, had successful musical careers, particularly in the bands The Clinch Mountain Boys and The Stanley Brothers.

A song of Dr. Stanley's, "O Death", is featured in the popular Coen Brothers Film O Brother, Where Art Thou? His performance won the 2002 Grammy Award for Best Male Country Vocal Performance.

The producer of the film's soundtrack, T Bone Burnett, credits his visit to Bristol as inspiration for the award-winning soundtrack.

The Ralph Stanley Museum in Clintwood will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

To see special events at The Ralph Stanley Museum, please visit: <https://ralphstanleymuseum.com/>

2024 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Carter Family Fold. Located in Hiltons in Scott County, the Fold pays tribute to the famous Carter Family. The trio of A.P., Sara and Maybelle, among the earliest recording artists in country music, is considered the "First Family of Country Music."

June Carter continued the family's legacy, accumulating five Grammy awards during her musical career. June married Johnny Cash.

Special events at the Carter Family Fold can be found here: <https://carterfamilyfold.org/>

The Carter Family were the first to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Carter Family hit commercial success after the 1927 Bristol Sessions. Along with the likes of Jimmie Rodgers and Ernest Stoneman, the breakout sessions helped put Bristol on the map.

As a result, we have the Birthplace of Country Music Museum. The Museum, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, details the stories and impacts of the 1927 Bristol Sessions that unleashed the "big bang of country music."

The museum hosts festivals and a range of different exhibits and provides opportunities for the region to learn about its roots.

To see what is happening at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, a link is here: <https://birthplaceofcountrymusic.org/visit/>

I was surrounded by country music as a child. Growing up in Salem, Lakeside Amusement Park attracted countless country music personalities and entertainers, with stars appearing from Conway Twitty to Rick Nelson.

Galax is the popular home to the Old Fiddler's Convention. Held for nearly one hundred years, the convention attracts scores of musical competitors that play the fiddle, banjo, mandolin or guitar. The dates of this year's convention are August 5-10. Governor Youngkin attended the 2023 Old Fiddler's Convention and recognized its importance to Appalachian music.

Governor Youngkin proclaimed this year the "Year of Country Music" as Virginia celebrates all these milestones and anniversaries.

It is an honor to represent a region home to such rich musical traditions. I look forward to the joy and fun these festivals will bring not just this year, but for many years to come.

VDOT Roadwatch

Interstate 81 NIGHTTIME LANE AND RAMP CLOSURE PLANNED ON SOUTHBOUND INTERSTATE 81 NEAR SALEM - As part of the Interstate 81 widening project in Roanoke County near Salem, a nighttime lane and ramp closure on southbound I-81 are scheduled for Thursday, May 23, so barrier wall can be repositioned, and traffic switched into a new pattern.

Weather permitting, starting at 11 p.m. on Thursday, May 23, southbound I-81 will be reduced to one lane between mile markers 138 and 136 until 5 a.m. on Friday, May 24. In addition, the ramp from southbound I-81 onto Wildwood Road at exit 137 also will be closed from 11 p.m. until 5 a.m.

If the traffic pattern change cannot be made because of weather, the lane and ramp closure will be rescheduled for the following week on Tuesday, May 28 from 11 p.m. until 5 a.m. on Wednesday, May 29. Once the barrier wall has been moved, southbound I-81 traffic using the exit 137 off ramp will be shifted into a new pattern and traveling on a different portion of roadway.

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION PROJECT EXIT 137 TO EXIT 141 - The \$179 million design-build project to widen both directions of I-81 between mile markers 136.6 and 141.8 from two to three lanes is underway. Work is being performed along a five-mile section of both northbound and southbound Interstate 81 in Roanoke County and the city of Salem. Barrier wall is in place along the shoulders. Two lanes of I-81 traffic in each direction are expected to remain open during the project with periodic lane closures scheduled during nighttime hours or outside of peak travel times as needed. Drivers can expect the following lane closures and upcoming traffic impacts in this area on northbound and southbound I-81:

ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS:
WORK ZONE SPEED: Drivers should adhere to posted 60 mph speed limits in the work zone and allow space when following a vehicle. Narrow spacing in lanes due to barrier walls, lack of shoulders and lane shifts in various locations, are present.

TRAFFIC SHIFTS ON WILDWOOD ROAD: Expect a work zone with traffic shifts and narrow width on Wildwood Road after exiting I-81 southbound on exit 137 heading towards Salem. Southbound and northbound I-81 exit and entrance ramp narrows are possible at Route 311.

TRAFFIC SHIFT ON EXIT 140: Drivers may experience periodic lane closures that require a quick merge into traffic onto Thompson Memorial Drive

from the southbound exit ramp of exit 140. Work zone located at bottom of the ramp for work on the I-81 bridge at the underpass.

RAMP CLOSURES: Ramp closures are possible during nighttime hours, 12 a.m., to 5 a.m. Drivers should watch for message boards dates and times the ramp will be closed.

LANE CLOSURES: Alternating left and right lane and shoulder closures during nighttime hours between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, are possible. Lane widths will be reduced to 11 feet. Nightly lane closures may be in place along the right lane with possible nightly ramp narrows as needed for guardrail and shoulder strengthening.

The project also includes replacing six bridges, widening two bridges, installing approximately 2.6 miles of sound barrier walls along northbound I-81, improving the southbound exit 137 off-ramp intersection at Wildwood Road and adding interchange lighting at exits 137, 140 and 141. Expected completion in early 2026.

I-81 NB & SB BRIDGE REHAB OVER ROUTE 100 AT EXIT 98 - Work is underway on the I-81 rehabbing of the northbound and southbound bridges over Route 100 at Exit 98. Lane and shoulder closures may be in place on Route 100 north and on I-81 northbound and southbound, 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. Flagging operations may also be in place on Route 100 north for up to eight-minute slow rolls. Both northbound and southbound on and off ramps at exit 98 for I-81 traffic will remain fully operational for the duration of this project. Estimated completion date is summer 2024.

I-81 NB & SB DECK OVERLAY AT PEAK CREEK MILE MARKER 95.7 - Repair work has begun on the northbound and southbound bridges on I-81

over Peak Creek near mile marker 95.7. This repair work will require nighttime single lane closures for the duration of the project. Lane closures may occur nightly from Sunday night through Friday mornings between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. For the deck overlay process, lane closures may be in place between Sunday nights through Friday mornings.

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Region 1C track meet is at Giles High School today

Giles High School will be the site of the Region 1C track meet today, Wednesday May 22nd. The meet is scheduled to begin at 10 am.

The Rockets participated in the Pioneer District meet at Giles last week. Narrows swept the meet with the Green Wave boys scoring 200 points and outpointing second place Eastern Montgomery, who had 145. The Narrows girls also outscored second place East Mont, 173 to 112. Craig had 20 points in the boys' meet and 14 in the girls' meet.

Craig had a district champion in senior Tyler Fitzpatrick, who won the discus with a toss of 140' 4". Tyler also took a third in the shot put, putting the shot 40' 6.5"

Several other boys also placed for the Rockets. Carter Calfee was fifth in the 100 meter dash and Caleb Fields took fifth in the discus. Calfee was also eighth in the 200 while Fields was 13th in the shot put.

Other highlights for Craig included a seventh in the 200 and

a ninth in the 100 by Jaycob Wolfe. Brad Arthurs took eighth in the 400 and 10th in the long jump while Wyatt Huffman was 10th in both the 100 and 400 meter dashes.

Casey Hutchinson and Tristan Dooley were 12th and 13th in the 200. Peyton Fields was 10th in the discus and 16th in the shot put and freshman Carter Price took 14th in the shot.

For the girls, freshman Kailyn Jones placed in three events. Kailyn was third in the 400 meters in

1:07.9, fourth in the 200 at 29.64 and fifth in the 100 in 14.30. Brook Wright took two sixth place finishes with a 65'9" effort in the discus and a 23' 5.5" heave in the shot put.

For this week's region meet athletes will have to finish in the top three to advance to state or meet a standard. Fitzpatrick has already qualified for the state meet with his season performances.

The state meet is scheduled for May 31 and June 1 at James Madison University.



Kailyn Jones placed in three events at the Pioneer track meet.



Tyler Fitzpatrick is the Pioneer District discus champion.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Craig County baseball team is in Region 1C tournament

The Craig County baseball team is scheduled to open the Region 1C tournament on Thursday, May 23rd. The Rockets will take on defending Class 1 state champion Auburn in Riner.

Craig County lost a third place game in the Pioneer District tournament at Eastern Montgomery on Monday, 8-3. With the loss the Rockets are now 5-12 on the season.

Hayden Reynolds and Matthew Lucas split time on the mound

Monday. The Mustangs took a 6-0 lead with three runs in the second and three in the third but Craig trimmed the advantage to 6-3 when the Rockets plated three in the top of the fourth. That was the end of their scoring, however, and the Mustangs put two insurance runs on the board in the bottom of the fourth.

Last week the Rockets opened the Pioneer District tournament with an 11-2 loss to Parry McCluer in Buena Vista. The Rockets struck first with

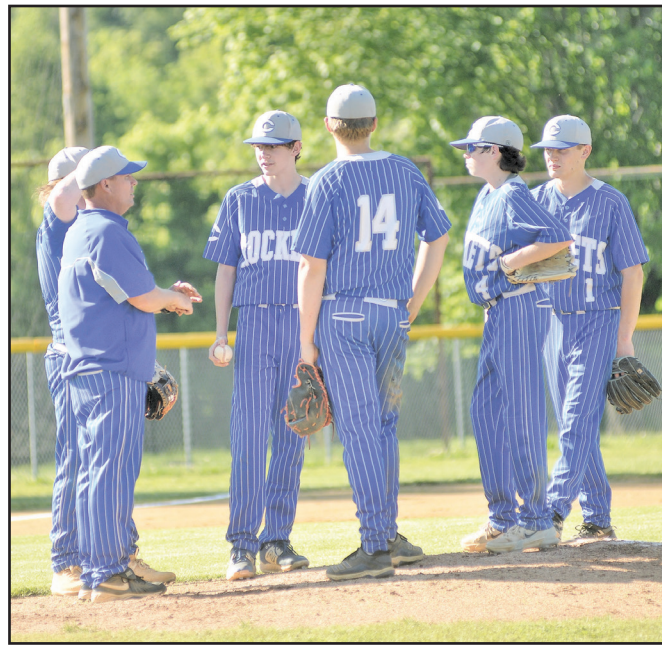
a run in the first inning and trailed just 3-2 after three and a half innings before the Blues tacked three on the board in the bottom of the fourth, then scored five runs in the sixth to put it away.

Craig had five hits, including two by Reynolds, and Hayden also drove in a run. Jaycob Wolfe singled, walked and scored twice for Craig and Drew Duncan and Joseph Charette also had hits. Wolfe had three stolen bases.

Duncan started on the mound and

took the loss. He allowed just two hits in three innings but he walked seven. Lucas pitched the last three innings and gave up two earned runs while striking out three.

The Rockets will have their work cut out for them against Auburn. The Eagles come into the week at 19-1. Their only loss was to Class 4 Blacksburg to open the season in March and they avenged that loss with a 2-0 shutout win over the Bruins in April.



BRIAN HOFFMAN PHOTOS

Left, Craig County baseball coach Jason Lucas (left) visits the mound during Monday's game. Behind Jason is Joseph Charette and, left to right, are Hayden Reynolds (with ball), Drew Duncan, Cameron Huffman and Matthew Lucas. Center, Craig's Luke Potter takes the throw at home but it's a shade late to nail a sliding East Mont player in Monday's district tournament game in Elliston. Right, Rocket centerfielder Jaycob Wolfe shades his eyes from the sun as he prepares to catch a fly ball against the Mustangs.

Softball team will open Region 1C tournament Thursday

The Craig County softball team will play either Fort Chiswell or Auburn to open the Region 1C tournament on Thursday of this week. The Rockets are coming off a big 24-14 win over Narrows in Monday's Pioneer District tournament third place game in New Castle.

The Rockets come into the regional at 4-9 after Monday's win. Craig opened the Pioneer tournament with a 20-1 loss to Eastern Montgomery last week in Elliston.

Craig started strong against East Mont, scoring their only run of the game in the top of the first inning. Lily Hutchison hit a triple

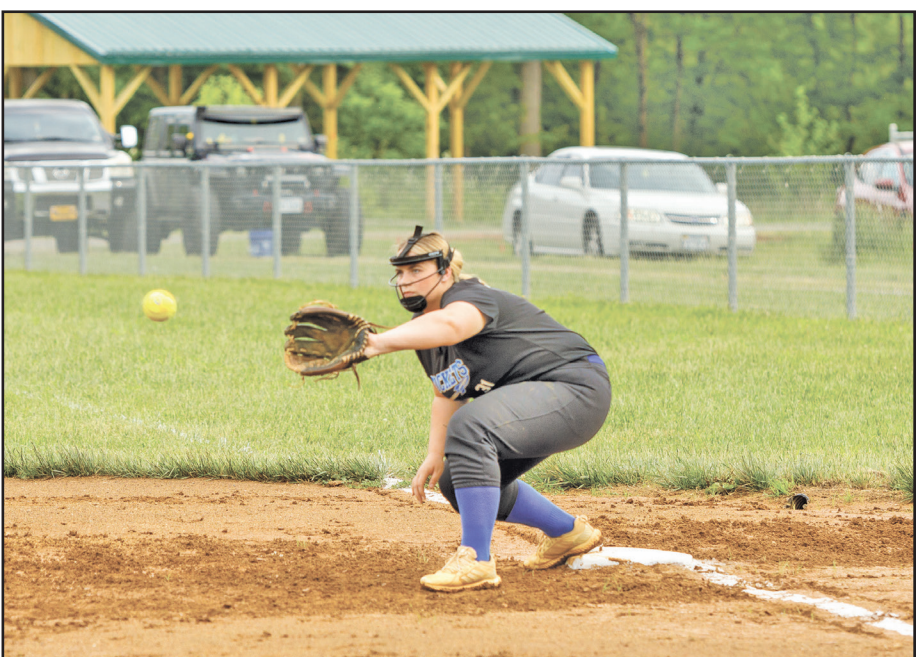
and Jenna Boitnotte followed with a perfect bunt to bring Lily home and take a 1-0 lead.

"That would be the only run we'd score all game," said Craig coach Elaina Wolfe-Carper. "East Mont just did a better job than us at putting the ball in play, and we fell apart on defense with 15 errors while East Mont had an errorless game."

The bats came alive Monday in New Castle as the Rockets came from behind to rally late in the game and take a big win against Narrows, giving the girls third place in the district tournament and a better seed for the region.



Layla Dooley(left) runs down a ball in the outfield as Randalyn Taylor closes in.



Karly Potter takes the throw at first.

CHELSEA LOUDEN PHOTOS