



The Contownian

News Magazine

Conemaugh Township Area Middle School/High School February Volume 86 Number 6

Conemaugh Township's Newest

By Asia Zwick

Conemaugh Township High School has just hired a new science teacher. Grades seven and eight are now being taught by Mr. Kendall Swick. He is an ambitious man who has subbed in previous years, and is more than thrilled to be residing here at Conemaugh Township.

Mr. Kendall Swick has subbed at local schools including Somerset, Shade, and most recently Windber, but ended up at Township shortly after he found out about a new job opening. He is a teacher who is all about hands-on learning, engaging in many labs and creating fun activities for students. Mr. Swick is a graduate of Frostburg State University, and holds a degree in elementary and middle school education. In his free time, Swick loves to be outside. Fishing, hiking, playing golf, and watching college football are all some of his favorite hobbies. His favorite part about being a science teacher is getting to see kids learn and helping them grow as people.



To conclude, Mr. Kendall Swick is a happy resident of the Conemaugh Township Area School District. "This is a great area, and the students are great. I love Somerset County as a whole, and this school has such a nice environment and faculty is super helpful," he stated after claiming his decision to go for a job opportunity in Conemaugh Township was not a hard decision. He enjoys being here and cannot wait to see what this new position holds.

M3 Challenge

By Asia Zwick

One of the main focuses throughout high school often seems to be something that involves sports. However, Conemaugh Township has many outstanding intellectuals. The M3 Challenge, a math challenge, is an opportunity for some of our brilliant math students.

The M3 Math Challenge is a program in which the top two math students in 11th and 12th grade sign up to take a paper test. Scores get compared with other schools, but it is not seen as a competition. It consists of rigorous math problems that deal with calculus, algebra, and trigonometry. There are many different types of problems and patterns. If you get an answer wrong, it counts as a zero, but if you do not answer a question, at all it is one and a half points off your grade. Senior Mercedes Mull states, "This is fun thing to be able to participate in, especially if you love solving math problems and if you think math is fun."



In conclusion, there are many non-competition-based events that happen behind closed door right here at Conemaugh Township. The M3 Challenge was a great way for great intellectual students to show off their astounding math skills, all while having fun.



The Contownian

News Magazine

PHOTO JOURNALISM

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL



Brooke Szala hits the mark at rifle.



Quinn Moser readying for a pass.



Cheering on our junior high girls basketball team.



Landon Ray Romesburg at wrestling's military night.

Ava Byer and Jeremiah Elliott supporting their teammates at bocce ball.



Happy Valentine's Day!



Jenna Brenneman inspiring at FCA.



Sam supports his community at Heroes Benefit Dodgeball Tournament.



Damirr Thomas in Mrs. Salem's class.



CT's Groundhog Phil with Mr. Adams!



Cafe 118's cake pop sale was a hit!

SOCIETY

PMEA Advancements

By Lindsay Knieriem

Our Conemaugh Township Music Department has been having a very successful past few weeks while participating in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association. On the weekend of January 29, 11 of our talented students represented CT at the PMEA District VI Chorus Festival.

The host director was Township's David Saylor, and the guest director was our very own Dr. Corey Everly. Four of the eleven students who attended are advancing to Regional Chorus on March 6-8 in Somerset, including Alonna Bracken, Jonathan Fochtman, Michael Folton, Alexa Gardenhour, Landon Weeks, Hayden Lingenfelter, and Evan Grimes. Five of our seniors went and participated in PMEA District Jazz Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles at Tussey Mountain. These talented musicians include Jonathan Fochtman, Landon Weeks, Tanner Hunsberger, Sophia Stango, and Hayden Lingenfelter. Tanner and Alexa represented altos, Jonathan, and Hayden as tenor. Conemaugh Township was represented in each ensemble: Red Jazz Band, Yellow Jazz Band, Modern Band, and Vocal Evolutions. Tanner and Hayden both placed second place in their sections!

Our music department has always been very talented, Good luck to all our advancing musicians!

Going to States!

By Aubrey Johns

PMEA hosts an All-State Vocal Acapella Choir and Conemaugh Township's very own Tanner Hunsberger has been selected to participate in this prestigious honor.

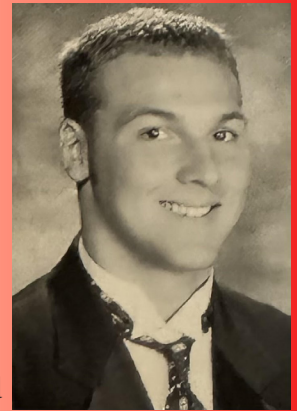
Tanner participated in both the Chorus Festival as an alto and the District Jazz Festival in Vocal Evolutions. Most students don't know if they will make the All-State Chorus until after the Regional Chorus in March. Tanner went through the lengthy process of submitting six videos as a part of her audition. Tanner was one of only 24 students selected out of the entire state of PA and is one of only six altos. She will go to the PMEA All-State Festival in Erie from April 17th through the 20th.

The PMEA is a great way for students who love music to show off their skills. When asked how she felt finding out that she made it to all states she said, "I was overjoyed once I found out because it was my goal to make it to states at least one time while I was in high school. I really enjoy acapella music so I'm excited to make music with 23 other musicians."

February 2024

Alumni of the Month...

Bobby Bridges graduated from Conemaugh Township Area School District in 2008. After graduating from high school, Bridges earned a degree in Geography and Outdoor Recreation Leadership at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. After completing college, he went on to become a white water rafting guide, as well as the manager at Coal Tubin. A few years later, he decided to change his life career by starting his own photography and video production company, called BridgePerspective, LLC.



Bobby Bridges enjoyed all of teachers throughout the years, but Mrs. Pepoy was one of his favorite teachers. Mrs. Pepoy was the weightlifting coach and athletic trainer. Bridges said, "As an athlete, we spent a lot of time with her both in and outside of the classroom. She was always there to help us with school work and real-life advice." While at Conemaugh Township, Bridges was part of the high school football team where he had some of his fondest memories. He loved winning big games and showing his school spirit.

In 2012, Bobby was introduced to his wife, Serena, through a close friend and Township Alumni, Libby Custer. Bobby and Serena Bridges lived in Richland for a few years, but when they had their son in 2021, they made the decision to move back to Township. Bobby stated, "The sense of community the school brings is uncommon in other communities, and we are excited for our son to attend Conemaugh Township in the future." They also became very involved with Conemaugh Township Video Production program, serving as mentors to these new to the field. They are also now members of St. David's church and enjoy spending their free time attending sports games, going to museums, and enjoying nature.





The Contownian

News Magazine

Conemaugh Township's Equestrians

By Ava Byer, Liam Richardson, and Jon Updyke

Many people don't know how to ride a horse let alone anything about the sport of equestrianism. However, three of our very own Conemaugh Township middle schoolers, Zoey Furman, Kennedy Lehman, and Tennyson Keafer, are all exceptional riders and it shows in their rankings.

When Zoey was asked about how she got into horseback riding, she said, "When I was little I rode a horse at the fair and fell in love. My mom also rode horses when she was younger, so we found a trainer when I was five, and I started riding." In her division, Zoey is ranked 7th in rail and in pattern she is ranked 11th out of 120 people. Zoey has placed first multiple times and got high point championships on many times.

Kennedy has been horseback riding since she was five. Her horses' names are Peppy and Cinnamon. She was the reserve champion in the trial division, so she predicted that she may be second in her division. Kennedy has placed first many times in both showing and riding. When asked what made her decide to get into horseback riding, Kennedy stated, "When I first saw it on TV and in movies, I was really interested and thought it looked cool. I also loved horses before I started riding, so that just helped. I was trying out many different sports at the time, so it worked out great." Kennedy says her favorite thing about horseback riding is making new friends, getting the experience with the horses and trainers, and showing and riding her horses.

When asked how she got into horseback riding, Tennyson said, "My girl scouts were having a pony ride at a person's barn and when I rode I really enjoyed it a lot and so I asked my mom if I could do lessons and she said that it was okay." She has now been horseback riding for six years. In her division she is not sure of her ranking because they have only been to one show so far. Her favorite thing about horseback riding is that "you can make friends with the horse and get to know it. It's just a very

fun experience." The highest Tennyson has ever placed in a competition is 4th in the U.S. Her horse's name is Tango and he is four years old. She just got him a few months ago. Tango and Tennyson have been doing a lot of lessons together recently and really starting to bond. Tennyson is very confident in her ability and loves what she does. She can't wait to make more memories with Tango and do more events involving horseback riding in the future.

It is great to read about these ladies' wonderful accomplishments and on behalf of all of Conemaugh Township, we hope they all continue to achieve great things!

Boys Basketball Heritage Championship

By Jon Updyke

The Conemaugh Township boys took on River Valley last Friday in the Heritage Conference Championship at IUP. The Indians had a record of 18-4 and River Valley had a record of 16-6. The game was extremely close with a big crowd the entire game. There was an attendance of 2,400 fans at IUP.



Both teams fought a hard battle, resulting in River Valley coming out on top. Conemaugh Township never really got momentum going. The Indians stuck with the Panthers the

entire time until the end. River Valley's Dom Speal led all scorers with 25 points and shooting a whopping 75% from the field. With only a few seconds left in the game, the score was 43-43 and River Valley had the ball. Speal came off a screen and banked a jumpshot in at the buzzer to win the game 45-43. It was a great game and a thrilling game environment.

The Indians season is not over, as they locked in a win at their district playoffs on February 27th against Tussey Mountain. Our Indians are now facing Windber in a District V title match at UPJ on March 1st. The Indians will certainly look to keep their season alive and chase a 4th straight district title victory.

SPORTS

Athletes...

Colton Lehman is the son of Jill and Jason Lehman. Colton is a three-sport athlete, competing in soccer, swimming, and track and field. His soccer career consisted of AYSO, junior high and varsity soccer, as well as indoor and summer club teams. He was a varsity captain, four-year letterman, a WestPAC Champion in 2022 and a District



V and Heritage Conference Champion in 2023. Colton has been swimming competitively for 14 years. When he was five years old, he started swimming for the Johnstown YMCA swim team which he went to states for in 2015. He later swam for the Latrobe Aqua Club, and

the Ligonier Valley YMCA team, with whom he went to states in 2019. He has been a four-year letterman for Township's swim team, as well as a district qualifier in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. In track, Colton runs the 1600- and 3200-meter races and has been a two-year letterman.

Outside of sports, Colton is a member of the National Honor Society, Rotary Club, Spanish Club, SON (Serving Our Neighbors) Club, and Ski Club. He was a three-year member of Concert Band, and in 2019 he graduated Camp Cadet of Somerset County. He is also a member of the National Ski Patrol at Laurel Mountain Ski Resort and a lifeguard at Menoher Swim Club.

In his spare time, he likes to hunt, fish, lift weights, and do watersports on his family's boat. His favorite quote is, "Don't be bitter, be better." After graduating from high school, Colton plans to attend college for nursing.



GO CT!

... of the Month

Katelyn Turley is the daughter of Angela and Steve Turley of Johnstown. Katelyn has been swimming for seven years, and has made a number of accomplish-



ments throughout her swimming career. She swims for both the high school swim team, as well as the Greater Johnstown YMCA swim team. She also swims at Menoher Swim Club over summer. During her junior year, she competed in the District VI championships. This year, she qualified to compete in them again.

She also lettered both her junior and senior season. Katelyn recently won second place in the 200 and 500 freestyle at the Drew B. Hittie Memorial Invitational, which was held at Somerset on January 27.

In school, Katelyn plays the saxophone in concert band as well as in jazz band. She also plays the piano. She is involved in a youth group, Rotary club, and

National Honor Society. Out of school, she enjoys watching Gilmore Girls, walking her dogs and taking care of

all of her plants. In the summer, she likes helping her mom grow and arrange flowers in her mother's flower farm.



After school, Katelyn plans to attend Brigham Young University in Idaho to get her bachelor's degree in science, specializing in horticulture. Katelyn's favorite quote is a quote from Claire Cook, which says, "If plan A doesn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters."



The Contownian

News Magazine

Drone Killing in Jordan

By Alison Matera

Following a drone attack, three United States soldiers were killed in Jordan and more than forty other service members were injured. The troops were following an aerial system attack at a military base near the Syrian border, and reports state that the troops were in Jordan to support Operation Inherent Resolve.

Sergeant William Jerome Rivers of Carrollton, Georgia, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders of Waycross, Georgia, and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett of Savannah, Georgia were the soldiers killed in this accident. The U.S. Department of Defense stated, “Sargant William J. Rivers was 46 years old and served in the Army Reserve as an interior electrician, Spc. Kennedy L. Sanders was 24 years old and served in the Army Reserve as a horizontal construction engineer, and Spc. Breonna A. Moffett was 23 years old and served in the Army Reserve as a horizontal construction engineer.”

All three were assigned to the 718th Engineer Company, 926th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, stationed out of Fort Moore, Georgia. This all occurred early in the morning at the logistics support base which is located at Tower 22 of the Jordanian Defense Network. 350 soldiers were deployed at the base. In a U.S. department of Defense article, following the attack, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said, “I am outraged and deeply saddened by the deaths of three of our U.S. service members and the wounding of other American troops in an attack last night against U.S. and coalition forces, who were deployed to a site in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border to work for the lasting defeat of ISIS. These brave Americans and their families are in my prayers, and the entire Department of Defense mourns their loss.”

There was also a briefing at the Pentagon early in the month which discussed that along with the three deaths, forty other service members were also injured in the attack.

The team also discussed that it was unclear who is responsible for the attack. Later in the week, the President and his national security team stated in another briefing that over 150 attacks on U.S. and coalition facilities have occurred since October. This most recent attack is the first to kill U.S. service troops, along with being the first attack in Jordan.

Shooter’s Parents Charged

By Matalyn Mauzy

According to a court ruling, a woman had failed to take the proper care of her son and it resulted in four deaths at the Oxford High School. Ethan Crumbley was a 15-year-old in 2021 when he went to Oxford High School in Michigan and killed four students and injured seven. He had pleaded guilty to all 24 charges and was sentenced to life in prison without parole. Some of his charges include terrorism causing death and four counts of first degree premeditated murder.

Recently, Ethan Crumbley’s parents have been convicted of involuntary manslaughter. Accounts state that the teen had been struggling and the parents failed to take notice of him. He was caught drawing violent images on his homework and watching graphic shooting videos in class. His parents were notified of these acts the morning of the shooting. They decided to not take Ethan home that day. The school suggested that they get him help and also provided mental health services. His parents were unsure to take him home because he would be home alone and the school was worried that he was going to take his own life. They sent him to class and told the school they would get him help for his mental health. Ethan had obtained the gun he used in the shooting from his parents. A jury foreperson informed ABC News that Ethan’s mother, Jennifer Crumbley, was the last adult with the gun. Jennifer said to the court, “It was my husband’s responsibility to take care to put away the gun safely.”

The mother of a school shooter was convicted of involuntary manslaughter for the deaths of the four students at Oxford High School. The students were 17-year old Madisyn Baldwin, 16-year-old Tate Myre, 17-year-old Justin Shilling, and 14-year-old Hana St. Juliana. Jennifer Crumbley’s sentencing is scheduled for April 9th.

Leap Year Facts

By Kendra Huber

Once every four years, we experience something called a leap year. While this is a practiced part of our calendar, many know very little about this practice. Here are several little known facts about leap years:

1. 4 million people in the world are leap year babies
2. Leap year babies are called leapers or leaplings
3. There is a one in 1,461 chance of being a leap day baby
4. Every year divisible by 4 is a leap year
5. Every year divisible by 100 is not a leap year
6. Getting married in a leap year is considered bad luck in Greece, so many couples try to avoid it
7. Women often choose this day to propose marriage to men
8. Mark Foster was born on leap day
9. If the year is divisible by 400, then it is a leap year

To conclude, the leap year and its unusual facts trace all the way back to the Egyptian Empire. Enjoy your extra day of February this year!

Ways to Combat Seasonal Depression

By Braylin Petree

Seasonal depression is related to changes in seasons, and it typically begins and ends at about the same times every year. Many people experience seasonal depression because of the shorter days. Consider some of these approaches to keep your spirits up this year:

1. Go outside while the sun's out
2. Exercise
3. See your friends and family
4. Get on a schedule
5. Prioritize social activities
6. Manage your work

Seasonal depression happens during certain seasons of the year, most often fall or winter. It is thought that shorter days and less daylight may trigger a chemical change in the brain, leading to symptoms of depression. Regardless of the cause, always seek the help of a professional or trusted adult if you are experiencing depression symptoms.



The Real Story Behind St. Valentine and Valentine's Day

By Alexa Gardenhour

Valentine's Day is a holiday associated with love, romance, and admiration. However, the origin of Valentine's Day is not exactly filled with love or romance. No one has actually pinpointed the exact origin of this holiday, but it was thought to have started in Ancient Rome. St. Valentine was one of two saints preaching the good word in Rome. The date of his death is February 14th, which happens to be Valentine's Day.

According to multiple resources, St. Valentine was a Roman priest who secretly married couples to spare the husbands from war. This was how Valentine's Day became represented as love and romance. He spread the word of love and good Christianity all around him. He was later arrested for continuing to try and convert people to Christianity. He refused to renounce his faith, and was eventually executed. February 14th was the date he died, so the Catholic Church honored him by making this day Valentine's Day. Although the exact origin of the holiday is not widely agreed upon, it is widely recognized as a day for love, admiration, and romance.

Although Valentine's Day is a reflection of love and romance for each other, it surely didn't start out like this. The origin of this holiday is much darker than what is seen. However, it has become a very popular and loving holiday.

Winter Fun Activities

By Kendra Huber

Although many dread the winter season approaching, there are still many ways to stay active. It becomes tough with the weather conditions, but there are many activities to keep yourself occupied even when the temperature drops. Below is a list of winter activities to stay busy this winter season:

- Go ice skating
- Find a escape room
- Make hot cocoa
- Try a new recipe
- Learn to knit
- Host a party with friends
- Try skiing, snowboarding, or snow tubing
- Attend a Tomahawk hockey game
- Have a bonfire
- Go on a winter hike
- Start a new television series
- Bake cookies
- Build a snowman

To conclude, there are numerous ways to stay busy this winter season. Staying occupied is a great way to pass the cold winter months.



Scotty McCreery in Johnstown

By Luke Haight

Coming soon to the Cambria County War Memorial is Scotty McCreery. He is bringing along his *Cab In A Solo Tour* to Johnstown on March 14, 2024. If you don't know Scotty, he is an American country singer and rose to fame after winning the tenth season of *American Idol* in May 2011. After he won *American Idol*, he released his debut studio album *Clear as Day* in October 2011, and it was certified platinum in the United States. Scotty continued to produce many successful albums up to today, but one of his greatest hits was his single *Five More Minutes* released in July 2017. Scotty became the only country music artist in history to chart a song without the backing of a record label. To continue, the *Cab In A Solo Tour* was named after Scotty's latest single. He will be joined by Anne Wilson as direct support and Greylan James and Noah Hicks on select dates. On the tour, Scotty said he is singing his greatest hits and said he might even share a few songs from his upcoming new album.



Kanye West and Ty \$ Album

By Marly Teeter

Kanye West and Ty \$ have recently been coming up with a new album titled *Vultures*. Other artists joined in the collaboration include Offset, Chris Brown, and Freddie Gibbs. There are many other popular artists featured. The anticipation for *Vultures* has been long, but fans are staying patient.

The original release date has been changed around 3 different times, from December 15th to the 31st, and now February 9th, 2024. They had a *Vultures Rave* in Miami with a promised start of midnight. Regular tickets were

\$200, VIP tickets were \$600, and a table was rumored to be \$10,000. Nearly two and a half hours later they started the rave because they couldn't hook up West's phone to the audio system. Although there has been a long wait, some of the songs on the album seem to be exciting. One song everyone has been talking about that West previewed on social media is "Everybody". It includes an insertion of Backstreet Boys' 1997 hit "Everybody (Backstreet's Back)." Lil Baby is also featured on the already popular song. Other features on songs include Nicki Minaj and Young Thug. North West, Kanye's supportive daughter, got her moment to shine on the new song "Slide" and test out her rapping skills.

Rap music lovers should be excited for this album coming out soon. There are many popular artists along with it and songs people are impatiently waiting for. February is coming up soon and we'll all be able to see what the hype is about.

Experience at Punxsutawney

By Marly Teeter

On February 2, Groundhog Day has been an annual event since 1887 to celebrate. Every year before this year, this day has never been super significant and I usually just hope for an early spring. It's never been really exciting, until this year. It was a very new experience for me and changed the way I feel about Groundhog's Day.

To get the whole Groundhog's Day experience, you have to be at the celebration from 3:00-7:30 in the morning. The trip from Johnstown to Punxsutawney is about an hour and a half, so we initially left at 1 am. After getting three hours of sleep and a redbull, I was pretty energized. We parked at the Walmart and waited in a pretty long line for the shuttle to Gobblers Knob. Once we got there, we were so excited to see what it was all about. There was a big bonfire, gift shop, coffee, and bands playing. You wouldn't even have known it was so early in the morning by the way everything was going on. So of course, we bought some hot chocolate and sweatshirts at the gift shop. After that, we went over to the fire and there began to be a lot more people than we expected. There was barely any room to stand around it and get warm, people had to take turns being in the front. It was starting to get late and we were anxious to know whether Phil was going to see his shadow or not. All 42,000 people there were all starting to crowd around the stage and see Phil

POP CULTURE

come out of the stump. When he did, we were surprised to know that he did not see his shadow, and there is an early spring coming this year!

Overall, we now know that we should dress warmer than we did and bring things to keep us entertained. We can't wait for an even better experience with Punxsutawny Phil next year.

Heartbreaking Death of Toby Keith

By Marly Teeter

After 62 years of making country music and dozens of tours, Toby Keith tragically died on February 5th from stomach cancer. Toby Keith became popular for his songs in the 1990s, and will forever be a legend to country music listeners.

His songs portrayed lots of patriotism and are a perfect use on the Fourth of July. Some of these include, "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue", "Made in America", and "Beer for my Horses." Some of his other hit songs were a huge hit with the college crowd like the classic "Red Solo Cup." Keith had a very successful career with more than 60 singles on the Hot Country chart over his career. Before his singing career started, he was offered a job in the oil fields starting at \$50,000 at 18 years old. After that, he spent a few seasons as a defensive end for the Oklahoma City Drillers. But as he was playing, he found he was making more consistent money playing with his band in Oklahoma and Texas in the Red Dirt Roadhouse Circuit. He quickly took off his music career in Nashville and released his debut record, *Toby Keith* in 1993. "Should've Been a Cowboy," was played 3 million times on radio stations and was the most played country song of the 1990s. His singing career was extremely successful after this, and he had dozens of songs charted.

Toby Keith left us with so many great songs to play on repeat. "How Do You Like Me Now?!" has always been my favorite song to play on a sunny day. This upcoming summer, I hope everyone plays his hits and remembers him as a great influence on country music.

Musician of the Month

Mercedes Mull is a senior at Conemaugh Township High School. She lives with her parents Lisa and Douglas Mull. She is a percussionist, so she plays the mallets, marimba, and xylophone. Mercedes was a part of the marching band as a color guard and performed in the Gaming halftime shows. She is Vice President of the National Honor Society, TSA President, and the President of the Rotary Interact Club. She has won many events in TSA, placing and winning at the district, state, and national level. She was also the Challenge Program's student of the year in 11th grade. Finally, she has placed in commentary debate in the past two years and won the academic category in OYW. Her future plans are to attend college and major in aeronautical engineering, and also possibly obtain a pilot's license. When recounting her musical department experiences at CT, she stated, "I really enjoyed my marching band experience this year, and I wish I would've joined sooner. I'm glad that I've continued to participate in band, and decided to rejoin choir this year as well."



Artist of the Month

Bennie is a senior member of our art program and is currently enrolled in Art II. Bennie's art style can be expressed through a variety of ways, ranging from painting with acrylics or watercolor to creating pieces through embroidery. Some of their major accomplishments include ink drawings, color block paintings, and forms of realism, such as art made from a simple candy bar. Bennie finds inspiration in abstract art or pieces which people made out of his own imagination, specifically pieces that you normally don't see in the art community because that's what makes the art special and inspiring. Bennie lives in Davidsville with his parents Jerry and Tiffany. After graduating, Bennie plans to be a scheduler for LifeLine Medical Center to help people get medical attention and mental health that they are seeking. On the side, Bennie hopes to start a small art business and continue to pursue his love for art. "Painting is just another way of keeping a diary," quoted by Picasso, strikes inspiration in Bennie. When asked about this quote, he chose it because it "is like a constant progress each day, including progress in myself as an artist."





The Contownian

News Magazine

Should Public Speaking be Mandatory?

By Alison Matera

When in high school, public speaking is a mandatory class needed to graduate. However, lots of people wonder if it should be a requirement or if it should not. I feel public speaking should be mandatory for many reasons.

Public speaking is a very important life skill. Lots of people think public speaking is only useful for your job. However, it can be very helpful in people's private lives for milestone events like giving a toast at a wedding or birthday party. Since public speaking is required at a young age it can give people a stronger start in life. Talking in front of people not only helps in your social life, but can also prepare you for your future. Public speaking is essential for today's workforce for a great reason. It does not matter what your job is, you will probably have to stand up and talk to a group of people. The final reason public speaking should be mandatory is because it is more relevant than some other subjects. While students may question the relevance of some other classes to their futures, the importance of public speaking is very obvious.

The idea of making public speaking mandatory is to make students more prepared for the world of work and ensure they have access to the tools that will be more effective. I feel that just having this class can really help people get ahead.



Staff Editorials

Should Students be Required to be Involved in Activities Outside of School?

By Liam Richardson

I feel like students should be required to volunteer in after school activities. They don't have to be involved with the school, but students should do at least some activity that is better than going home and sitting inside all day. Three main reasons why students should be required to participate in after school activities are that they will learn how to work with others well, they'll become responsible, and they'll have a more improved mental health than someone who doesn't do anything after school.

Making students volunteer in after-school activities is important because it helps them learn how to work with others and be responsible. When students do things like help out with clubs or sports after school, they learn skills like teamwork and how to manage their time better. Doing these activities also lets students see different parts of life and understand people who are different from them. It's a chance for them to find out what they're interested in and what they're good at outside of class. Volunteering also teaches students to care about others and want to help them. Plus, being involved in after-school activities has been shown to help students perform better in school and improve graduation rates. So, when students have to volunteer in after-school activities, they not only learn important skills for themselves but also become better people who can help make the world a better place. Lastly, volunteering for after school activities can help your mental health drastically. Someone who is involved in a club outside of school is going to look forward to that practice or meeting happening, causing them to naturally be more happy. While saying if you have nothing to look forward to, you're just going to go home to the same thing every day, having nothing really fun, or nothing that you really enjoy to look forward to.

In conclusion, students will be much better off participating in after school activities than not. They can work with others well, learn to become responsible, improve their mental health, and learn what they're good at from all of this. Finally, there is always something for students to do after school, and there are always groups for anyone with any interests, so there are no excuses!

JUNIOR HIGH

Facts About Cupid

By Alayleiah Coleman

February 14 was Valentine's Day. This holiday is usually seen with the symbol of Cupid. Cupid comes from Roman Mythology. They say that Cupid was a god, born from Mercury and Venus. Mercury was a messenger of the gods, and Venus was the goddess of love. So, it makes sense that Cupid is the messenger of love. However, some sources say that Cupid's father was Mars, the god of war. This would make sense why Cupid used arrows since they were used in war. His arrows, though, made people fall in love. This lets people know to love each other rather than be violent to each other.



CT Elementary Wrestling

By Rolly Walylko

States for wrestling are coming up soon for CT elementary and junior high wrestlers! This will be a really challenge to accomplish, but if a wrestler places in the top three, he or she will go to Pittsburgh to wrestle all ten areas. PYW, also known as Pennsylvania Youth Wrestling, is one of the most exciting parts of wrestling because wrestlers will get to represent their own school. There are still practices going on, and they are getting more intense. A wrestler can only make it to states if they get 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place on Sunday, February 18. There will be thousands of spectators who are going to watch states, and many families will be there to support the wrestlers. Come show your CT spirit at states (date TBD) and wish them good luck!

Update: Rolly Walylko (6th grade) and Landon Huffman (8th grade) qualified for Pennsylvania Junior Wrestling Youth State Championships.

Happy Birthday George Washington!

By Jaxson Crum

George Washington was born on February 22, 1732. Here are some interesting facts about our first president in honor of Presidents' Day and his birthday:

1. His father's name was Augustine Washington and his mother's name was Mary Bell Washington.
2. When he was six years old, he was gifted a hatchet and supposedly chopped down his father's favorite cherry tree.
3. When he was 21, he was sent to take on the Ohio River Valley as the British General. This battle started the French and Indian War.
4. On December 16, 1773 the colonists boycotted and dumped over 92,000 pounds of tea. This started the American Revolutionary War where George Washington was the lead general of the colonists.
5. After his victory, George Washington became the first ever President of the United States.
6. On December 14, 1799 George Washington sadly passed away due to pneumonia.

Usher Returns

By Claudia Shaffer

The 1990s super star, Usher, has returned to sing at the Super Bowl halftime show! It's been about ten years since his last solo album, *Hard II Love*, which was released in 2016. Along with many other hits, he performed one of his most famous songs, "Yeah!", which was #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for 12 whole weeks! He just recently dropped a new album two days before his Super Bowl performance. Maybe he'll gain the popularity he once had in the past. Even though Usher was an amazing fit for the Super Bowl halftime show, I personally think Taylor Swift would be absolutely perfect for this opportunity. I guess we will have to wait and see if it'll be her lucky chance next year!





The Contownian

News Magazine

Academic Calendar

- March 11.....Act 80 Day - No School for Students
- March 20.....End of Nine Weeks
- March 27.....Report Cards Issued
One-Hour Early Dismissal
- March 29.....Easter Vacation

Upcoming Events

- March 6-8PMEA Region III Choir
@ Somerset
- March 11 from 1-3 pm.....Tea with Mary Event
- March 14-17.....Musical



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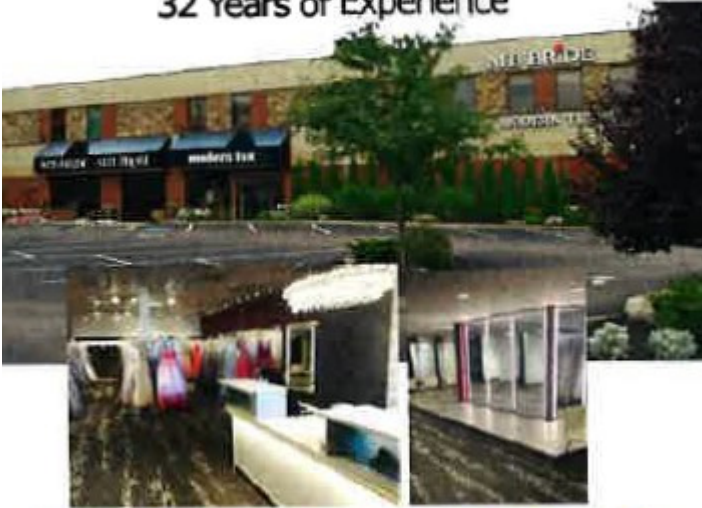
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Business Manager.....	Brandon Studer.....	479-7431
Food Service Director.....	Adam Thomas.....	479-2328
Director of Curriculum.....	Stacy Dabbs.....	479-7575

Middle/High School 6-12

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Vice Principal/Athletic Director.....	Jarod Feathers.....	479-4014
HS Guidance Counselor.....	Kara Duplin.....	479-7886
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