



The Contownian News Magazine

Conemaugh Township Area Middle School/High School December 2021 Volume 84 Number 4

Women in Stem

By BriElla Harnett

Throughout United States history, the number of women in S.T.E.M. has risen. Unfortunately, the numbers have not increased as much as some hoped for. "Sadly, females have been steered away from the S.T.E.M field, where males are pushed into the field. Only about 28% of the S.T.E.M workforce is females," stated Mrs. Birkhimer. S.T.E.M stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Based on Mrs. Birkhimer's experience with career counseling, "Most females currently in grade 12 are going into the medical field. Currently, nearly 80% of healthcare workers are women."

Fortunately, there are more women going into science and mathematics fields. "When I started college, a majority of my classes were made up of males. Back then, math and science classes were generally reserved for males, and english was reserved for females. However, that is not the case today," stated Mrs. Durica. Based on Mrs. Durica's experience, "There is a strong showing of women in mathematics and science classes."

As years progress, some women still need the confidence to decide on S.T.E.M careers. "I feel that we do a great job of giving girls confidence in S.T.E.M at Conemaugh Township. I believe that we need more women in S.T.E.M. careers," stated Mrs. Birkhimer.

Local Coat Drives

By BriElla Harnett

Due to the cold weather, there are many coat drives popping up locally around Conemaugh Township. A coat drive is usually an in-person drive where individuals or organizations collect physical coats. The coats are then usually counted and sorted before they are delivered to a charity. One of the local coat drives is a coat drive in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The coat drive was orchestrated by the Greater Johnstown Somerset Central Labor Council. They collected over two-hundred coats as well as other winter accessories like hats and gloves. Everything that was collected was distributed to children at the Women's Help Center. Currently, there are no coat drives in the Conemaugh Township area. However, Conemaugh Township School District is always collecting and distributing to families in need. "I think coat drives are really nice, especially in places like Pennsylvania where it gets pretty cold outside. It's very nice to see people helping out in their community and giving back to charity," stated Sara O'Connell.





Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays?

By Brielle Ciarimboli

As the winter season approaches, people all across the world begin to celebrate different holidays, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, etc. Each of these holidays hold their own importance amongst those who choose to celebrate. Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, is often celebrated religiously. However, those who are not religious are still able to appreciate the season of giving. As for Hanukkah, this holiday is celebrated by those in Jewish communities. Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights, and its week-long celebration is equally as important as Christmas. The same goes for Kwanzaa, an African-American cultural celebration. These different holidays, each of which take place in December, hold their own importance in terms of their cultural significance and traditional celebrations. So, why is it that we only say “Merry Christmas?”

The term “Merry Christmas” means exactly what it states– Merry Christmas. This common phrase is used during the month of December and is said by most people while preparing for the holiday season. The popular saying, however, can come across as very ignorant. This is because it only refers to one holiday, when there are several different ones celebrated by other groups of people. If someone were to be out in public, and they are approached by a person saying, “Merry Christmas,” yet they celebrate a different holiday, it can be offensive and viewed as an uneducated response.

So what is the correct term? It's simple – “Happy Holidays!” This term can be used to wish a joyful celebration to all, not just those who celebrate Christmas. If this phrase were to become more normalized, as opposed to “Merry Christmas,” then everyone would be able to feel appreciated and accepted for what they choose to celebrate. So instead of telling everyone, “Merry Christmas” this year, switch to “Happy Holidays” instead. It is more respectful, polite, and accurate.

Staff Editorials

Real Reason for Christmas

By Owen Tomb

The month of December is spent decorating, gift-buying, and making other preparations for the holiday season. While many believe that the Christmas season is just about buying, giving, and receiving gifts, there is much more to this joyful holiday.

Christmas Day, which takes place on December 25th, represents the birth of Jesus Christ, hence the name ‘Christ’mas. The idea of God giving us his Son, who would later die to repent for our sins, shows the true meaning of Christmas. It represents God’s love for those on Earth. Some people have a hard time understanding the real reason for Christmas, and feel as if they have to spend hundreds of dollars on gifts. This is not the case, and the real reason for Christmas is just enjoying the Christian faith and celebrating the life of Jesus Christ.

All-in-all, as nice as it is to receive gifts on Christmas, that is not the real reason for the season. It’s important to have an understanding of the holiday being celebrated, in order to fully appreciate its true meaning. Whether or not you participate in Christmas by going to church, spending time with loved ones, or just showcasing your faith another way, the season of Christmas and birth of Jesus is a season worth celebrating.



HIGH SCHOOL



Group of boys tear up the dance floor at the Christmas dance.



Austin Elliot observes the wrestling competition before he takes the mat.



Maeve Cullen looks up the court to make a pass to a teammate.

Contownian

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HIGH SCHOOL

Shopping for Christmas

By Rachel Davis

Do you know what time it is? It is time for Christmas shopping! Get out your notepads and write down some of these tips and gift ideas for the holiday season. You should especially be reading this if you are a major procrastinator so you do not end up waiting until the last minute. It is better to get your shopping done earlier rather than later before all of the good stuff sells out.

Different hacks you can use for this season are to watch out for those sales. Almost everywhere has tons of amazing sales before Christmas, especially on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Before these days come you need to make a list of what you are looking for and how much you plan on spending so you do not go overboard. If you are on a time crunch you should shop for your gifts online. Online shopping makes it easier to access and find specifically what you are looking for.

Here are some gift ideas that you could get for almost anyone. If you are looking to buy for your friends, you can not go wrong with a simple piece of jewelry; whether it is a necklace or a bracelet, they will love it! If you are looking for something a little less pricey, you could decorate a cute basket and put their favorite snacks inside. If you want ideas for your family, definitely go out and look for some cute household items. Since it will still be winter and cold outside, you could get your family some warm cozy blankets and a few mugs to drink some hot chocolate in. Whatever you decide, remember, it is the thought that counts!



FEATURES

Best Christmas Movies of 2021

By Lacie Kamler

Want to know what the best Christmas movies are in 2021? Well, you will find out what the best Christmas movies to watch are. Whether it is with your family or your friends, they are the best!

Number one is “You, Me, and the Christmas Trees.” This movie is about a tree scientist who specializes in evergreens and is tasked with saving a generational family Christmas tree farm with a mysterious disease that is threatening to ruin Christmas and their livelihoods. You can stream this on Hallmark Movies Now. Number two is “Christmas in Harmony.” The movie is about a person named Harmony who is chided into auditioning for a Christmas choir that turns out to be directed by her ex-boyfriend. Stream this on Hallmark Movies Now. Number three is “Love Hard,” which follows Natalie (played by Nina Dobrev), who chronicles her crappy online dating life in LA for a website. She thinks she’s broken the unlucky streak by matching with total Tinder smoke-show, Josh. But when she flies to New York to surprise him, it turns out she was being catfished by the childhood friend of the guy in the profile photos. He agrees to set Natalie up with “photo man,” a dude realistically named Tag, if she agrees to pretend to be Josh’s girlfriend in front of his family in return. Number four is “The Princess Switch 3: Romancing the Star.” “The Princess Switch” franchise followed Vanessa Hudgens as Stacy, the princess of Belgravia, Vanessa Hudgens as Margaret the Queen of Montenegro, and Vanessa Hudgens as Lady Fiona Pembroke as they get into various Christmas doppelganger hijinks. Finally, number 5 is “Christmas With a Crown.” A big city business girl returns home to her small, sleepy town to revive its holiday festival, where she meets a dashing stranger who just wants to learn what Christmas is all about. Oh, and it turns out - he’s royalty!

Christmas movies are the best way to sit down, relax, and binge-watch with family and friends or even by yourself wrapped with a cozy blanket, some hot chocolate, and popcorn. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

THE LITTLE CONTOWNIAN

JUNIOR HIGH

Spotlight Athletes of December

By: Madison Roman

The spotlight athletes of the month for December for 8th grade are Alexa Gardenhour and Ethan Matera. Alexa Gardenhour plays soccer and dances. She loves playing soccer at Turfside with her fellow Conemaugh Township Junior teammates. With her neighbors, she plays soccer in her backyard. Alexa dances and participates in tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop, and musical theatre. She enjoys competing in local competitions and being in the school's theatrical musicals. Alexa performs for her local dance studio, Sharron's Dance. The other athlete of the month is Ethan Matera. Ethan plays on the Junior High Basketball Team. He enjoys playing with his teammates, which are also his close friends. In his younger years, he played AYSO Soccer.

The spotlight athletes of the month for 7th grade are Lena Dull and Rocco Hagan. Lena Dull plays on the Junior High basketball and softball teams. She loves playing with her friends and teammates in basketball and softball. The other athlete of the month is Rocco Hagan. Rocco plays on the Junior High soccer team. He does not just play on the Conemaugh Township boys soccer team, but also he plays on many cup teams. He enjoys kicking the soccer ball around with his friends and his sister. His favorite teammate that he plays with is Gentry Stosky

Sugar Cookie Recipe

By: Alonna Bracken

Ingredients:

- 2 ³/₄ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



Continued from Sugar Cookie Recipe

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, and baking powder. Set aside.

Step 2

In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in egg and vanilla. Gradually blend in the dry ingredients. Roll rounded teaspoonfuls of dough into balls, and place onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Step 3

Bake 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden. Let stand on a cookie sheet for two minutes before removing to cool on wire racks.

The Shocking Santa Shortage

By Colbi Hunsberger

Across the United States of America, something has gone horribly wrong. There is a Santa shortage! When kids think of Christmas most think of elves, presents, trees, but most of all, Santa. As you all know he is a man who brings joy and presents. We might not have a Santa this year. The virus, COVID-19, has negatively impacted our world. Many youths visit Santa to tell them their Christmas wishes on his lap. However, due to COVID-19 many Santas can not do their job. This is disappointing to parents and children. Santa's jolliness completes Christmas. The public needs and is counting on Santa. If the kids don't have a Santa, the cheerfulness of Christmas will not be the same.

News

Bella June Chesnutwood, Shawna Spangler, Noah Stultz, Garret Jacobs, Gracyn Bittner

Sports

Rocco Hagan, Vayda Korenoski, Colton Shippey, Dakota Titus, Ethan Coulter

Features

Elanor Luscher, Ember Seymour, Micheala Gindlesperger, Rylan Hillegass, Dylan Tercek, Jason Vandiford

Society

Charlotte Worst, Addison Lasure, Donovan Dadura, Rydell Walylo, Emily Purdy, Landyn Robinson



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

Middle/High School 6-12

Principal.....	James Foster.....	479-4014
Guidance Counselors.....	Kelly Birkhimer & Kara Duplin.....	479-7886
School Nurse.....	Cassey DeBiase.....	479-2324
Athletic Director.....	Jarod Feathers.....	479-4014



School Calendar

The following dates are subject to change:

January 3.....	New Year's Vacation
January 14.....	Act 80 Noon Dismissal
January 17.....	M.L. KIng Day
January 19.....	End of Nine Weeks
January 21.....	One-Hour Early Dismissal
January 27.....	Report Cards Issued
January 28.....	One-Hour Early Dismissal

Check calendar dates on ctasd.org

Deadly Tornadoes in Kentucky

By BriElla Hartnett

Tornadoes, a mobile destructive vortex of violently rotating winds, hit Kentucky on Dec. 13, 2021. An outbreak of tornadoes violently thrashed through Kentucky and other surrounding states including Illinois, Tennessee, and Arkansas. As of Dec. 14, 2021, the death toll of tornadoes is at seventy-four. However, over one hundred people are still unaccounted for.

On Sunday, Dec. 12, before the tornados occurred, President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Kentucky, which provided federal aid in eight counties after the tornadoes destroyed homes and left thousands without power. President Biden planned to travel to Kentucky on Dec. 15, 2021, for a storm briefing and to survey damage in Mayfield and Dawson Springs. Out of the seventy-four dead, twelve of them were children. The youngest victim was only two months old and the oldest victim was ninety-eight years old. . "When I think about the destruction in Kentucky, I feel devastated. It hurts knowing that so many people lost their lives, houses, and loved ones during the outbreak of those tornadoes," Laci Fetterman stated.

Countless homes have been destroyed and countless families have been torn apart. There is currently a fund that will be used to pay for the funerals of all the people who died. As of Dec. 14, 2021, the fund has accumulated almost \$10 million.



The tornado aftermath in Mayfield, Kentucky

HIGH SCHOOL

Christmas Concert

By Sydney Thomas

Every year in December, the senior high band and choir have a Christmas concert. This is an opportunity for anybody in the Conemaugh Township community to come out and watch the performance. This performance is done by students in grades 9-12 who participate in either band, choir, or both. Miss Kasun conducts the band students and Ms. Lingenfelter conducts the choir.

This year's Christmas concert was held on Thursday, December 9th in the Conemaugh Township Auditorium starting at 7pm. The senior high choir performed first and the senior high band followed. The band played from a selection of five songs. *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*, *Dargason*, *Nutcracker*, *Sleigh Ride*, and *Santa Baby*. Conemaugh Township Sophomore Sophia Stango said, "I love playing the Nutcracker and hearing everyone's parts come together." The choir sang from a selection of five total songs, but the Girls Ensemble featured an additional song including, *Antiphonal Deck the Hall*, *A Doo-Wop Christmas (With You)*, *The Holly Bears the Crown*, *The First Noel/Pachelbel's Canon*, *Have You Seen The Baby*, and Girls Ensemble piece *Heaven's Rose*. Conemaugh Township Sophomore Tanner Hunsberger commented, "I enjoy getting to sing as a choir again and hearing everything really come together."

The Christmas Concert is a time for both the senior high band and choir to show off their performance skills they have been practicing for since school started. This is also a great opportunity to spread some holiday cheer throughout the community. The senior high band and choir will have another concert in the spring to end the school year.



Sophia Stango and Callie Parker sing "Sleep Baby Sleep."

Alumni Of The Month...

Gary Black graduated from Conemaugh Township Area Middle/High School in 1991. After High School, Gary attended Juniata College to play basketball and major in Elementary Education.

To call Gary active at CTHS would be an understatement. Along with being a part of the Archery and Conservation clubs, Gary was a member of the basketball, football, and baseball teams. Gary's favorite High School memory came his senior year, when the varsity basketball team made it deep into the Pennsylvania State Playoffs. The team made it to the final four game played at Pitt against Clairton in 1991. "Playing sports in High School was a great way to meet new people. I still use sports today as a way of meeting new people and helping young kids grow physically and emotionally," stated Gary. Gary's favorite teacher was Mr. Hempfield because he was, "so goofy, he actually made science kind of fun."

Gary decided to leave college when he was offered a job by Gallikers as a truck driver. He has been with the company for 28 years. Gary is nothing short of a family man and outdoorsman. His favorite pastime is hunting, fishing, and camping with his 4 kids who all attend Conemaugh Township Area School District.



Gary Black



Wrestling Season

By Alex Gregory

With the winter time here, the Conemaugh Township wrestling team is quickly starting their season off. The team is welcoming a new face this year, with new head coach Brian Heinrich taking over the Indians wrestling crew. The boys started off their season on November 19th, and are making great progress already.

With seven people on the team, the team has been working very hard for the past few weeks in hopes of a successful season. When asked about his opinion on how the team is looking, junior wrestler Austin Elliot said, "The team is looking pretty great. We're hoping for a successful season this year because of all the hard work and determination we have shown day in and day out."

The Indians wrestling team kicked off the season on December 10th, 2021, in an away match against Ligonier. The jr. high and sr. high came out with wins. Come out and show your support this wrestling season!



John Haburcsak gets his hand raised after his victory against Meyersdale.



Rifle Start-Up

By Taylor Shaffer

The Conemaugh Township Rifle team has been practicing for the last few months. The first match was Monday December 6th at home (Jerome Sportsman's Range) and they were all very excited to kick off the season.

Ruby Korenoski, a returning member of the rifle team was asked, "How is the season going so far, and what are your goals for this season?" She responded, "We haven't had any matches yet, but I'm excited for the new members who have been improving their scores each night at practice and showing their potential. We lost a lot of seniors last year, but we still have some awesome returning shooters who are consistent and eager to improve. Our goals for the season are to just do the best we can. We would like to win as many matches as possible, and most importantly try our best every time we get on the line. We all hope to set some new personal records as well."

Most people are not familiar with a typical rifle match. Rifle is a three position sport. These positions are prone (laying down), standing, and kneeling. They hang targets and wait for instructions from Range Safety Officers to commence firing. They have an intense procedure because safety is most important. Rifle shooters have 10 minutes for prone, 20 minutes for standing, and 15 for kneeling. After they shoot all three positions, they receive a score sheet which gives them a score out of 300 because each target is worth 100 points. Then the top 5 scores are added together for a team score - which is compared to the opposing school to see who wins. There are also JV shooting relays. JV shooters only shoot prone.



Sierra LaPorta adjusts the gun for the perfect shot.

Athletes...

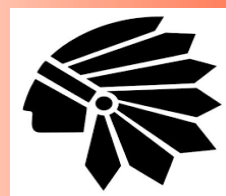
Jackson Byer is the son of Brian and Melanie Byer of Jerome, Pennsylvania. Jackson is an exceptional athlete, a great student in the classroom, and a very involved member of the senior class at Conemaugh Township.

Jackson is a 4-year letterman in football and was selected as an All-State Defensive Back during his junior year season. He has also earned 4 varsity letters in basketball and is a 3-year letter winner in baseball. In addition to his All-State football selection, Jackson has been recognized as an All-Conference player in football, basketball, and baseball. He has also been awarded 2 track letters and 1 letter in golf. In addition to his numerous athletic honors, Jackson also excels in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities as a member of National Honor Society, the Vice President of Rotary Interact Club, a Journalism Editor, a Grill Team member, and a member of S.O.N. Club.

When he is not on an athletic field, in a gym, or studying, Jackson enjoys golfing with friends, hanging out with his family, and working at the Yak Shak. His future plans include majoring in marketing and playing college basketball.



Jackson is escorted by his proud parents during senior night!



Brielle Ciarimboli passes to an open teammate in a game against Mcconnellsburg.

of the Month

Brielle Ciarimboli of Jerome is the daughter of Stacey and Scott Ciarimboli. Brielle is a part of the varsity soccer and varsity track and field team at Conemaugh Township. In soccer, Brielle has lettered all four years and was awarded the Somerset County Junior MVP in 2020. Brielle has also been the captain of the soccer team for her junior and senior year. As captain, she explained, "It has been a pleasure being the Girl's Varsity soccer captain these past two years. I love the girls on the team, and I'm so proud of everything we've accomplished." In track and field she lettered all four years and was a part of the West Pac All-Conference Team in 2021.

Academically, Brielle is the president of the Rotary Interact club. She is also a member of the SADD club, SON club, and FCA. Brielle is in the National Honor Society and made the Honor Roll every year of her high school career. In Brielle's free time she enjoys hanging out with friends and family, shopping, playing sports, listening to music, and attending other CT events.

Brielle's future plans include attending University of Pitt at Johnstown to major in Psychology.