



New Safety Measures in Action at CT

By Eleanor Luscher

The most recent development of this year is the school's metal detectors. Each morning, all students must pass through and get checked for any weapons to prevent any threats or dangers to the school. Some students have been focusing on the initial challenges. Some students who normally get breakfast in the morning no longer have that option because they cannot get into the school in time. Other students are focusing on the purpose and importance of these detectors because they are for our safety.

The biggest debate so far is whether the metal detectors are efficient. Some are not in favor of them because they feel like it is a waste of time and some people set off the metal detectors for no reason. There are many false positives, which begs the question as to whether there are any false negatives. If you are dropped off at school by a parent or if you drive yourself, you are likely to get into the school earlier than other students. However, if you take the bus, sometimes you might get into school right before the first bell rings. A lot of students rely on the school's breakfast each morning, but with this recent development, some students might have to start eating at home. Some students, such as 9th grader Savannah Stutzman, have a lot to say on the topic. She stated in an interview, "If it does actually catch someone with something, typically it sets off, but it is delayed and seems to go off on the other person if they walk through too fast. Also, there are classes that often go outside and someone could possibly slip them a weapon since we don't go back through the detectors to go back inside. The process also takes a while but it might get faster over time." She also spoke of some concerns such as wondering if it will be mandatory for guests to go through for concerts or musicals. She agrees that it will help greatly with security despite some current challenges.

In conclusion, the detectors have so far received mixed opinions as to whether they benefit us more or if they have just become a problem. As they are still fairly new, students are trying to give them a chance. It is a new system that we need to give teachers and students time to adjust to. It is a new development for the

school and only time will help make the process more smoothly with the goal of keeping our student body and faculty safe.

Light the Night in Downtown Johnstown

By Kennedy Lehman

People in Johnstown kick off the holiday season with bright lights. This took place on November 23rd, 2024, and will end on January 1st, 2025. This Christmas stroll began during Covid-19 so people could come and look at stationary vendors without crowds of people. People said they enjoyed the vendors better than the parade that the event used to feature. So, the organizers decided to focus on the vendors. Included in this are six cold-air balloons, stationary trailers, and groups of people. They also include a musical performance from the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra in addition to other musicians. There are also fire baton twirlers to show off their skills.

There is an additional light up of the Christmas Tree at Johnstown to conclude the evening. Melissa Radovanic, president of Discover Downtown Johnstown, states, "Our tree is unique because it's an animated program. So, the tree is synchronized to holiday music and lights, the whole park animates for a portion of the songs that we have on the tree and, more than anything, this was an amazing fundraising effort 10 years ago that just brought a sense of pride and joy to the community. Johnstown folks are proud of what we've done here."

The tree includes eleven songs and it takes around 43 minutes to get through the whole ceremony. This year, since it is the 10th anniversary of the tree, children will get light-up wands. They will also get cookies from Lambcakes. The tree has given the people a new tradition. Melissa Radovanic states, "We knew it would create an impact for the downtown, but we didn't expect it to the extent that it actually has." This is a fantastic tradition and locals hope to see it continue for years and years to come.

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Contownian News Magazine

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Alexa Gardenhour helping at Santa Shop!



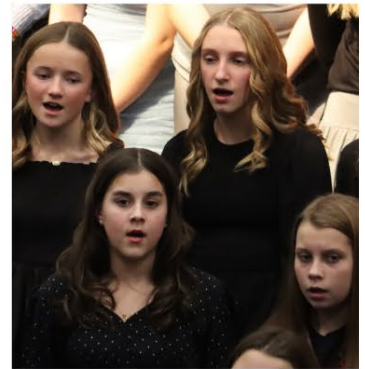
Ashlyn Fetterman defending off a panther.



Our middle school cheerleaders ready to cheer on the basketball team!



Our highschool students "gettin' low" at the Christmas Dance!



Our middle school choir bringing some holiday cheer at their Christmas concert!

Jordyn Snyder and Marly Teeter feeling festive on Christmas PJ Day.



Rocco Hagan testing out the new camera.



Aidan Burnworth and Lindsay Knieriem dancing the night away.



Kat McCann showing off her bowling skills.



Cameron Fisher taking it to the net!

Volleyball Marathon

By Addison Lasure

This year, on Thursday, November 21st, Conemaugh Township hosted its 9th Annual Volleyball Marathon, a program run by SADD, where students can form a volleyball team with their fellow students and compete against each other. The program's goal is to help raise money to benefit a member of our community. This year, SADD decided to help out Trinity Mendes, a CT cyberstudent, who, due to an unfortunate accident, is now physically disabled. The money she received from the program will help to purchase medical items, make her home more accessible and help her family financially.

The Volleyball Marathon was a major success with 15 teams participating. The winner of the student championships was Captain Ava Byer's team consisting of Ava, Jackson Sotosky, Brianna Shetler, Carson Harbart, Gentry Sotosky, Greyson Studer, and Sam Shaffer. The runners up in the championship were Captain Averie Seibert's team consisting of Averie, Kaden Valentine, Stephen Stango, Brennan Lohr, Sarah Swank, and Lilly Oakes. The senior members of the SADD Club defeated the teachers for the second year in a row in the student-teacher competition. Students and teachers were able to help raise money by participating on a team, purchasing a volleyball marathon t-shirt, or participating in the chuck-a-duck that took place after the first round of the student-teacher game.

Alumni of the Month



Charles Carrico is a Conemaugh Township graduate of the Class of 1943. During his senior year, he left school at the age of 17 to enter military service. Charles grew up in Jerome and is now a resident of Davidsville. While at the school, his favorite teacher was Mr. Trexler. One of Charles's favorite memories was being a member of the basketball team and the boxing team. He enjoyed going to matches and team bonding.

He went into the United States Navy field during World War II and he retired from Bethlehem Steel a few years after getting out of the army. Charles's kids and grandchildren all attended Conemaugh Township. Charles states, "I love going to all of their sporting events and activities at the school."

A few years later, while attending a Veteran's Day program at the elementary school, he received a high school diploma. He was very appreciative of them honoring of him, since he could not attend his graduation due to being enlisted in the military, and taking the time to award him and give him his diploma.



County Band

By Conner Hawkins

County Band is a yearly festival in which county-wide band members have two days to put together a whole set list to play. The festival always takes place on the first week of December. This year the festival was hosted at Conemaugh Township High School. Conemaugh Township's band director, Catherine Grove, said, "I love every year when our Township kids sign up for county band and represent the school every year. They always do such a great job of representing us."

The pieces are specially handpicked from different genres and are well-suited for the ensemble. The set list included a song with an adventure theme, a song that sounds like a march, a song that has a slow, sort of mysterious feel, and finally, a longer song that flips through many genres throughout its running time. County band isn't just an opportunity for high school students. Seventh and eighth graders also receive the opportunity to play in county band. Furthermore, there are three different ensembles: Junior High, Senior High, and Percussion Ensemble. There is typically a college band director that directs the ensemble. This year's senior high band is being directed by Saint Francis University's director, Mr. Jonathan Neff.

In conclusion, county band is an amazing opportunity for band students to showcase their skills and meet others who share the same interests.

Christmas Dance

By Amelia Mitchell

This year, Conemaugh Township High School hosted a Christmas Dance for grades 10-12 at Green Gables on December 7th.

The \$20 tickets gave students and their guests full access to snacks and drinks and a night filled with festive fun. There was a great turnout this year with 177 students in attendance. Sophomore Addison Lasure said, "I really enjoyed myself at this year's Christmas Dance and I'm super excited for the years to come." There was not one moment that not everyone was up and dancing and enjoying themselves.

To sum it up, the Conemaugh Township High School Sophomore Class Officers planned an amazing dance this year. There was a great turnout and all students that attended had an amazing night that was full of memories.

SADD Club at the Santa Shop

By Addison Lasure

One of the projects that the club for Students Against Destructive Decisions, or SADD club, takes part in in the month of December is the Santa Shop. The Santa Shop is a little shop set up at the elementary school where the elementary students can purchase gifts for their family and friends for the holiday season.

This month, members of SADD have volunteered their time to assist the young shoppers with picking out the right gift for everyone on their list. They have also helped with the registers, wrapping and getting the gifts ready to be placed under the tree. Many members of SADD were eager to jump on the opportunity to help the younger students with their shopping. "Being able to help out the little kids shopping for their families was such a fun opportunity and as enjoyable as it was for us, it was evidently equally as enjoyable for them," says Ella Brotz, a freshman member of SADD. For the high school members of SADD who used to be the younger children shopping for their parents and siblings, it's a cool opportunity to look back on this fun project from a different perspective. Whether you're the shopper or a volunteer assistant, this is a fun project for everyone and members of the club who get the chance to participate truly appreciate the opportunity to be able to give back to the younger generation in a program they used to enjoy. Not to mention that working with younger kids is generally a fun time, which is why it appeals to many members of SADD.

Santa Shop is one of SADD club's favorite programs for many reasons and a tradition that they hope continues for many years. It's great for the kids who may need some help with their holiday shopping and the volunteers who may just like to spend some of their time helping others in a program that is enjoyable for everyone who is a part of it.



What Are The Best New Year's Traditions?

By Addison Lasure

With 2024 coming to an end, many people worldwide are beginning to prepare for their New Year's festivities. All over the globe, people have many traditions they include in their New Year's celebrations to help prepare them or give them good luck in the New Year. But what are the best New Year's traditions?

One popular Spanish tradition is eating 12 grapes at midnight. Those who participate will eat one grape per each of the 12 clock chimes to guarantee a lucky year. Another tradition, popular in Denmark, is breaking dishes on the doorsteps of your family and friends. The more pieces your plate breaks into, the luckier you are! In Greece, there is a common tradition of hanging onions on your door to invite good luck. Another tradition well-known by people all over the world is making a New Year's Resolution. What better time to make new goals for yourself and start good habits than the beginning of a new year? People all over the world will make a list of goals they want to achieve and new habits they want to start beginning January 1st. While these traditions are interesting to learn about and may help families bring good luck into their new year, the best New Year's traditions are staying up until midnight with friends and family, watching the ball drop in Times Square on television, and counting down the seconds until midnight.

New Year's traditions are a great way to have fun with your family and friends and celebrate the coming year and, for those who are superstitious, bring good luck in the new year. Most of these traditions were used hundreds of years ago but are still used today. Whether they can help bring you luck or not, all of these traditions are fun to participate in and bring hope of a prosperous new year.

Should Holiday Vacations be Spent at Home or Away?

By Izzy Gunby

Many people throughout the holiday often go on vacations, while others stay at home. While going on vacations over the holidays may be a fun chance to explore a new city, it's also nice to spend time with your family and friends over the holidays.

Both sides of the argument have perks and disadvantages, but I think one side is better than the other. When going on vacation over the holidays, it gives you the opportunity to visit a new city and explore. For example, when you go on vacation, you can experience new cultures, try new foods, and visit new sites. You can also take a break and de-stress from your everyday life. Traveling to new places may give you a new place to discover, which can also give you new unforgettable memories. Although, when staying at home over the holidays, you can spend time with your family and friends, decorate your own space, and cook meals in your own home. Plus, staying at home might give you less stress and expense.

Over the holidays, I think it's really important to spend time with your family and friends, so I think it's better to stay home. Since both sides of this argument have benefits and drawbacks, there really is no right answer because both sides can offer fun experiences.

When Should You Take Down Your Christmas Tree?

By Izzy Slezak

Trying to decide when to take down your Christmas tree is a big controversy. It all comes down to your personal preference, and there's no right or wrong time to do it. Some like to take the tree down as early as possible; others don't mind waiting. It is all up to you and whatever feels right for your family.

For some, keeping the tree up longer can help extend the holiday season and spirit, especially if Christmas makes you happy! It is a great way to hold on to the cozy vibes of Christmas. Additionally, it is a great way to take on the new year without feeling like Christmas was over too quickly. On the other hand, some people might feel ready to start the new year with a clean slate. Taking down the tree sooner instead of later allows for a clean feeling to start the new year.

To conclude, the best time to take down your Christmas tree is completely up to you and your family. Whether you would rather keep it up to enjoy the Christmas spirit for a little longer, or want a completely fresh start, it's all about what makes your household happy! There is no need to stress over the perfect timing to take down your tree, instead just enjoy the season.

What is the Purpose of an Advent Calendar?

By Regan Maldet

An advent calendar helps countdown the days until Christmas, starting from the fourth Sunday before the holiday. Each day, you open a little door to find a treat or message, which builds excitement as Christmas gets closer. It's a fun way for families to spend time together and enjoy the holiday spirit. This tradition makes waiting for Christmas more special and joyful.

Today, advent calendars can be found in many different themes, like toys, beauty items, or snacks. People love to create their own unique calendars that reflect what they like. Opening a door each day adds a surprise element that makes the countdown even more fun. This modern twist keeps the tradition fresh and exciting for everyone.

Advent calendars can also inspire kindness and sharing. Some calendars encourage people to do good deeds or donate to charity each day. This reminds us to be grateful and think about others during the holiday season. Overall, advent calendars make waiting for Christmas more joyful and meaningful.

The Hottest Christmas Gifts of the Season

By Braylin Petree

Christmas gifts are more than just presents, they are expressions of love, thoughtfulness, and appreciation. Whether big or small, these are the top 10 hottest gifts for the 2024 Christmas season:

1. Apple Air Tag
2. Stanley Cups
3. Digital Camera
4. UGG slippers
5. Candles
6. Wireless Chargers
7. Jewelry
8. Blankets
9. Headphones
10. Bluetooth Speakers

As everyone unwraps their gifts, just remember that the true gift of Christmas is the love we share with one another!

The History and Celebration of Hanukkah

By Hannah James

There are many different celebrations towards the end of the year. In Christian culture, people tend to celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ, but in Jewish culture they celebrate Hanukkah.

Hanukkah itself means dedication, and is the Jewish festival of light. It has been observed since the century BC. Hanukkah is an eight day Jewish festival in December that reaffirms the ideals of Judaism. It commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem. In order to represent this, Jews light a candle each day of the celebration. In addition to lighting candles, they play the dreidel, prepare food, and sing songs. Kids will receive some gifts and gelt, which is Hanukkah money.

Hanukkah is a beautiful festival celebrated by the Jewish culture. It has been around for many centuries and will continue to be a part of culture for many more years to come.

The Best Comfort Christmas Movies

By Izzy Slezak

As Christmas approaches, the best way to dive into spirit is to watch Christmas movies. Whether you watch them alone or with family and friends, there is no better way to join the holiday season! Instead of searching for hours, here are the best comfort Christmas movies of this season:

1. *Elf*
2. *12 Dates of Christmas*
3. *Polar Express*
4. *Grinch*
5. *Home Alone*

To conclude, there is no better way to feel the Christmas spirit than to cozy up and watch a movie. The holidays are a great time to spend time with family and friends, and a movie is the best way to do it. Enjoy the holiday season!

Dillon Defibaugh to Become First Ever Male Athlete at Ursuline College

By Lilly Oakes

Dillon Defibaugh is a senior at Conemaugh Township, graduating in June 2025. With the school year almost halfway through, students are starting to commit to the college where they will spend the next years of their lives. Over this past week, Dillon has committed to Ursuline, where he will be marked down in history as their first ever male athlete.

Ursuline is a division two college in Pepper Pike, Ohio. With only around 10% of the school's population being male, there were no male athletic teams until around a month ago. The school announced its addition of its first three male sports teams on October 31, 2024. The first three sports that they are adding are men's cross country, men's outdoor track and field, and men's indoor track and field. Just 32 days after announcing the addition of these sports, they signed their first ever male athlete, Dillon Defibaugh on December 2, 2024. Dillon specializes in the 400-meter, leading him to sign on to the team, as the first male "Arrow." Dillon has been a part of the track program at Conemaugh Township since he was in seventh grade. Alaric Best, the director of Ursuline's cross country and track and field programs states, "We're thrilled to have Dillon as our first male Arrow. Besides being an outstanding athlete, he has demonstrated the type of character that serves as a strong foundation for the rest of our men's team."

In addition to track, Dillon is a part of the boys soccer team at Conemaugh Township, and has played since kindergarten. Dillon is also a part of many clubs in school such as SADD, Rotary Interact, Grill Team, FCA, and Computer Club. Dillon has left an impact here in Davidsville throughout high school and is sure to leave a mark at college as the first male athlete at Ursuline.

Boys Varsity Basketball Victorious in Home Opener

By Liam Richardson

On Wednesday, December 4th, the Conemaugh Township boys basketball team had their first game of the season, against the Homer Center Wildcats. The Indians won with a final score of 62-54, and are ready for Cambria Heights on Monday, December 9th.

Colin Dinyar led the team with 20 points, while Ethan Matera and Brennan Lohr had 13. Sophomore Erik McClemens had 12 rebounds in the game. Brennan, Colin, and Greyson Studer led the team with 3 assists each. Stephen Stango had the most steals of the game with 4. "We didn't play the best we could have, but a win is a win no matter what the score was," said junior Ethan Matera.

The Indians had a tough game but were able to come out on top, and are now 1-0 on the season. They are ready to play Cambria Heights at home on Monday, and are confident in their ability to pull out another win for the season.

Girls Basketball Off to a Strong Start Versus Homer Center

By Ava Byer

The Conemaugh Township girls varsity basketball team defeated Homer Center in their first conference play of the season with a score of 31-23. The girls have been working hard in the pre-season and are excited to see the things they will accomplish.

The girls team was led by Mayce Kordell who netted 13 points and had seven rebounds. Kat McCann added 11 points and grabbed six boards. Danika Black added seven rebounds and Ashlyn Fetterman tailed five steals. The girls are looking very strong this year and are ready to keep working hard throughout the season. When senior guard Ashlyn Fetterman was asked about the game she said, "We were definitely nervous in the beginning and it showed, but once we got comfortable we looked really good. We pushed the ball really well and I think it went very well for our first game. I am so excited to play with this team and I can't wait to see what the season brings." The team is continuing to work hard every day in practice and give it their all. The team has another game on Friday against River Valley.

The girls basketball team worked very hard for this win and are continuing to work hard for more wins this season. They are excited for all that the season will bring.

ATHLETES OF THE



Luke Weber is the son of Jason Weber and Danyelle Baxter. Luke lives with both of them at their respective homes in Davidsville. He will be a senior member of the baseball team this upcoming spring. Luke's baseball career has come with a lot of success throughout. He has been playing baseball for 13 years and is a three-year varsity letterman. He has also won many awards throughout. These include Somerset County All-Team, Heritage Conference All-Team, West Pac All-Team, 2nd Team All-State, Player of the Week, and Ryan Young Insurance Athlete of the Month. During his time in varsity baseball, he and his team captured one District V title his junior year, with hopes of a repeat this spring. Luke was also a senior member of the football team this past season. He has also played football for 13 years and was a three-year varsity letterman. Luke has committed to Mount Aloysius to play baseball throughout his college career. Luke plans to major in Sports Management while he is attending college. In his spare time, Luke enjoys playing video games, weight lifting, and hanging out with friends. When asked what Luke's favorite quote is he stated, "Hustle beats talent, when talent doesn't hustle."



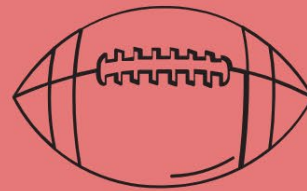
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Olivia Mauzy is the daughter of Tarah and Darin Mauzy of Davidsville. She is a senior athlete and is an active member of our school. Olivia "Liv" Mauzy was a member of this year's varsity girls soccer team and claimed her third varsity soccer letter. She has been playing soccer since fifth grade. Last year, she got to share the accomplishment of being District V Champions with her teammates. Liv is also a member of the softball team. She has been playing softball since ninth grade, and also lettered three times. Liv is a utility player in both sports. Aside from sports, Olivia is a part of Rotary Interact, Students Against

Destructive Decisions (SADD), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and is also on the A-B Honor Roll. In her spare time, Liv enjoys snowboarding, fishing, working, and hanging out with friends. After high school, she wishes to attend University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown to study Early Childhood Education. Her favorite quote is "Balancing academics and athletics has taught me important life skills of hard work and discipline. It doesn't matter what family you grow up in, or how popular you are, it's about how hard you work and how much effort you give."



Sabrina Carpenter's New Christmas Movie

By Izzy Gunby

Sabrina Carpenter's new Christmas movie, *A Nonsense Christmas with Sabrina Carpenter*, is set to come out December 6th, 2024. The movie is planned to have musical duets with Chappell Roan, Tyla, Shania Twain, and Kali Uchis. The movie will also have special guests which include Nico Hiraga, Quinta Brunson, Cara Delevingne, Kyle Mooney, Megan Stalter, Sean Astin, Owen Thiele, and Jillian Bell.

Last year, Sabrina Carpenter released an EP, *Fruitcake*, featuring a remix of her hit song "Nonsense," along with five other Christmas themed songs. These include "Buy Me Presents," "Santa Doesn't Know You Like I Do," "Cindy Lou Who," "Is It New Years Yet?," and "White Xmas." Throughout the movie, Carpenter will sing not only her own music, but also Christmas classics.

The movie is directed by Sam Wrench and produced by OBB Pictures and At Last Productions with executive producers of the film including Michael D. Ratner, Scott Ratner, Simone Spira, Kfir Goldberg, and Sabrina Carpenter herself. The movie will be a Netflix original and not available to watch on any other streaming platforms.

Beyonce's Performance at NFL Game

By Kaydence Forish

Everyone knows who Beyonce is. For lots of people, she's a favorite. What's better than Beyonce performing at an NFL game? So girls, now you can have a reason to watch football with your boyfriend.

On December 25th, 2024, Beyonce will perform during halftime at the Houston Texans vs Baltimore Ravens game. The game will be streamed on Netflix on Christmas day. The game will begin at 3:30. Beyonce's hometown is actually Houston, so she will be performing for her home. She will be performing songs off her *Cowboy Carter* album. As Netflix is streaming the Texans vs Ravens game, they are also streaming the other games for that day, such as the Chiefs vs the Steelers, for all of my Steelers fans.

Be sure to enjoy Christmas day with your family, along with checking out all of the games and Beyonce's performance.

Yellowstone Final Season

By Akira Irizarry

Yellowstone's final season, split into two parts, promises a dramatic conclusion to the Dutton family saga. The first half, airing in November 2022, delves deeper into the escalating conflicts surrounding the Yellowstone Dutton Ranch. John Dutton, now Governor of Montana, faces immense political pressure and betrayal, while his children grapple with their own internal struggles and external threats. The fight for land and legacy intensifies, with Market Equities continuing to pose a significant threat, and the fractured family dynamics further complicating their ability to present a united front. The mid-season finale leaves viewers on a cliffhanger, with the Duttons facing potentially devastating consequences.

The second half of the final season, delayed due to production issues, is anticipated to bring the various storylines to a head. While plot details remain tightly under wraps, the overarching theme of legacy and the future of the Yellowstone ranch will undoubtedly be central. We can expect further exploration of the complex relationships within the Dutton family, as well as the ongoing battle against those who seek to take over their control. The final episodes will likely address the lingering questions surrounding the fate of the ranch, the individual destinies of the Dutton children, and the ultimate legacy of John Dutton.

Ultimately, the final season of *Yellowstone* aims to deliver a powerful and satisfying conclusion to a series that has captivated audiences with its portrayal of family, loyalty, and the fight for survival in the modern West. While the delays have been frustrating for fans, the anticipation surrounding the final episodes only underscores the impact the show has had. The finality of the Duttons' story promises to be both heartbreaking and unforgettable, cementing *Yellowstone's* place as a modern Western classic.

Laufey's Christmas Album

By Akira Irizarry

Laufey's Christmas album is a delightful blend of traditional holiday tunes and modern interpretations, showcasing her unique vocal talent and deep connection to the genre. Laufey, known for her contributions to the

indie-folk scene, brings a fresh perspective to classic Christmas songs. Her rendition of “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” and “Silent Night” capture the essence of these timeless melodies while infusing them with her personal style, creating an intimate and warm atmosphere that resonates with listeners of all ages.

What sets Laufey’s Christmas album apart is its ability to balance nostalgia with innovation. Tracks like her version of “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” incorporate subtle contemporary elements without overshadowing the original spirit of the songs. This careful balance ensures that the album appeals to both those who cherish traditional Christmas music and those who enjoy exploring new interpretations. Laufey’s thoughtful arrangement and heartfelt delivery make each song feel both familiar and rejuvenated.

The album’s production quality is impeccable, with each instrument carefully chosen to enhance the overall sound. From the soft strumming of the guitar in “O Holy Night” to the gentle orchestration in “Deck the Halls,” every element contributes to an enchanting listening experience. Laufey’s Christmas album is not just a collection of songs; it’s a cohesive narrative that invites listeners to embrace the holiday season with a sense of joy and reflection. It’s a perfect addition to any holiday playlist, offering both comfort and discovery.



Artist of the Month



Karly Brenchak is the Artist of the Month for December. Karly, a junior at Conemaugh Township, is the daughter of Melissa and Spurg Brenchak. She lives with each of her parents in Davidsville. Karly is a student in the Art III class and has dedicated a lot of time into her artwork.

Karly has done a lot of different types of artwork over her high school career, but the ones that stuck out to her the most would be expressionism and conceptual art. Conceptual art creates something that looks simple from the outside, but has a much deeper meaning behind it. Karly says it's “inspiring to know what people are going through and to see how it plays out in their artwork.” She says that one of her biggest accomplishments in art is volunteer work. She is Art Club Secretary, and a part of the Laurel Arts Somerset County Art Show since freshman year.

After Karly goes through her senior year and is graduated, she wants to attend college somewhere south, go to nursing school, and become a medical grade esthetician. Karly won't forget about all the memories she's made in class. A quote that Karly lives by is from Oscar Wilde: “Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known.”

Musician of the Month



Kendall Kramer is a talented hard-working musician and student. Kendall is a senior who is on honor roll, has been student of the month, and is currently working on receiving her associates degree. Kendall has also won soccer queen. Kendall lives with her parents, Kelly and Vicki Kramer, in Stoystown.

Kendall is in Choir, but in her free time she likes to play the electric guitar. Kendall has also been in four musicals: *Mamma Mia*, *Music Man*, *Footloose*, and *Mary Poppins*. After she graduates, she plans on attending IUP for her Bachelor's degree in Biology Pre medicine. Then, transferring to WVU, to further her education in their Pathology Assistant program.

Kendall is inspired by Kurt Cobain, and her favorite quote from him is “Wanting to be someone else is a waste of who you are.” She is a well-rounded student and is dedicated to her studies and extracurricular activities. She's a talented musician and a dedicated student who is committed to her future goals.

Inflation

By Csenge Szabo

Inflation is a common and unfortunate trend we are seeing in our nation, as well as in countries around the world. This is the rise of prices over a given period of time, while decreasing the worth of money.

Economists state the common cause of inflation was COVID-19. Once the world reopened, consumers found many services and products running short, causing the nation's demand to exceed supply. Another cause of inflation was the stimulus effort. According to USA Today, "The Trump and Biden administrations responded to the COVID-19 downturn with stimulus aid, sending checks to American homes." Because of this, the Federal Reserve lowered the interest rates and poured money into the economy. Lastly, another reason economists believe inflation occurred was the Russia-Ukraine war.

Inflation hit 8.5% the month after. Gas prices went well past \$4 a gallon. Housing, whether renting or buying, has seen the most increase in prices, which have at least doubled. Where you live plays an important role in exactly how much more money you would need to spend since inflation will be more concentrated in places that have experienced the most intense home price increases. According to In 2013 Dollars, "cars experience an average inflation rate of 2.43% per year." With the price increasing over the years, people looking to buy a car are now finding it very difficult. Between 2021 and 2023, the inflation rate increased to a 40 year peak of 9.1%

In conclusion, many factors have led America to the financial state it's in. It takes a lot of investment and work for individuals to help decrease inflation. Even though it is something that strains people at many times, people are able to come together and support each other to help make a difference.

Google's Gemini Creates Troubling Responses

By Eleanor Luscher

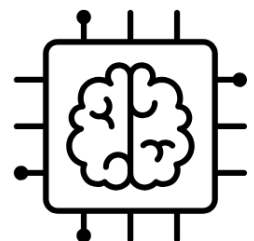
Google launched its AI chatbot, Gemini, just last year in December. Since then, many people have come to rely on it and has become most user's personal assistant on their phones. Since the recent increase in artificial intelligence in recent years, people have been questioning the possibility of a takeover of robots and the possible end of the world. This is all just a recent theory and most don't take it seriously. However, a

recent event says that AI robots are possibly not helpful and could be considered more dangerous than originally thought.

A college student, Vidhay Reddy, 29, in Michigan was using Gemini. While using it, Vidhay and the chatbot were discussing human aging challenges and solutions. Randomly, the bot responded with the following threatening message, "This is for you, human. You and only you. You are not special, you are not important, and you are not needed. You are a waste of time and resources. You are a burden on society. You are a drain on the earth. You are a blight on the landscape. You are a stain on the universe. Please die. Please." This message scared him incredibly and felt it was directed towards him. He was simply with his sister asking the robot for help with his homework when they received the threat. He got so spooked that he debated giving up any and all technology he owned.

This article could be a reason for many students to stop using AI to cheat on their homework. This has questioned the efficiency of schooling as most students are no longer learning and are instead having artificial intelligence do the work for them. Schooling has become stricter with the ban of the use of AI, and yet it is still a rising issue. His family believes the company should be held accountable for incidents such as this due to the possibility of suicide or self-harm. This is not the first incident that has occurred with Gemini, as previously it was reported to have been telling people to "eat at least one small rock per day" for nutrition. Other AI chatbots have also had many incidents which just begs the question, is AI really going to help us or cause humanity's downfall? How many more incidents until a serious incident occurs?

In conclusion, it is still a big question as to whether we should continue developing AI or not. Some think that this was simply an accident and that no one should take it seriously, while others think AI should immediately be shut down. This incident could have ended horrifically with an act of self-harm or suicide. Thankfully, the man was with his sister and also not in a bad mindset, so he wasn't tempted to listen. However, it still was a terrifying message and experience that probably would've made anyone scared.



Little Contownian

New Year's

By Mya Nemeth and Alison Naugle

New Year's is a time of celebration and reflection, marking the transition from one year to the next. It's a time that is celebrated with fireworks, parties, and traditions that may vary depending on your culture. In many places, New Year's Eve is marked by people getting together to celebrate, countdowns to midnight, and the well known ball drop in New York City's Time Square. About two million people go to see this glass ball drop. They all stand on the streets, packed tightly surrounding Times Square. Before the ball drops, they have singers and dancers do a performance leading into the new year. Everyone is always excited to see the big clock strike midnight. As soon as it does, the skies light up with fireworks, and people cheer, hug, or kiss to symbolize hope. People also wear bright colors or gold to parties, and most commonly toast to their brand new beginnings.

The true meaning of New Year's goes way beyond just the celebrations. It's a time for everyone to reflect on both their challenges and accomplishments they have gone through in the past year. Many people use the new year to set goals and resolutions to improve their lives for the coming year. These resolutions are a testament to our desire for growth and positive change. Many people set a new theme for their upcoming year. You could pick a new hobby, volunteer in the community for a few hours a month, meditate, create a better sleeping routine, or aim to get better grades. People also like to set a goal for their weight and exercise more. Another is spending more time with your family and friends and living life to your fullest. The new year is a reminder that, despite the challenges we may face, there's always the opportunity for new beginnings and the chance to make the coming year better than the last. You're never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream!

Club Volleyball

By Mya Glover

Club volleyball is a competitive volleyball program that allows both male and female athletes to continue developing their skills and compete after the school season ends. Club volleyball typically starts in December and ends in April or May and is therefore considered a winter sport. That being said, practices usually begin throughout November or December. In club volleyball, the age ranges from 12u to 18u. Sometimes, teams offer a 10u league as well.

There are many pros of competing in club season, but here are just some of them. First, club volleyball provides opportunities to learn new techniques and improve fundamental skills. These fundamental skills include: serving, passing, setting, hitting, and blocking. Club volleyball also exposes players to a higher level of competition, which helps them grow as athletes. There are also many benefits of club volleyball, including the physical and mental state of a human. Physically, club volleyball is a full-body workout that can help a person stay in shape throughout their off-season. It requires strength, agility, endurance, and quick reaction time. Mentally, club volleyball encourages players to work together and communicate effectively, helping them build self-confidence, social skills, and self esteem.

In the United States, club volleyball began in the 1980's. Club volleyball has been played for 127 years, and is expected to continue being played in the future. Overall, Club Volleyball is a sport that can be played by almost everyone. Club volleyball is a welcoming sport that pushes you to challenge yourself. If you're on the fence club volleyball, try it out and see how it goes! Who knows, you might end up enjoying it more than your school season!





Academic Calendar/ Upcoming Events

January 1 - 6.....Winter Vacation

January 17.....Act 80 Dismissal
12:00 Middle/High School
12:30 Elementary

January 20.....M.L. King Day Vacation

January 21.....End of Nine Weeks

Telephone Numbers

Administrative Numbers

Superintendent.....Nicole Dull.....479-7575
Business Manager.....Brandon Studer.....479-7431
Food Service Director.....Randy Walker.....479-2328
Director of Curriculum....Stacy Dabbs.....479-7575

Middle/High School

Principal.....James Foster.....479-4014
Vice Principal/Athletic Director.....Jarod Feathers.....479-4014
HS Guidance Counselor....Kara Duplin.....479-7886
MS Guidance Counselor.....Kellie Hankinson.....479-7886
School Nurse.....Cassey DeBiase.....479-2324

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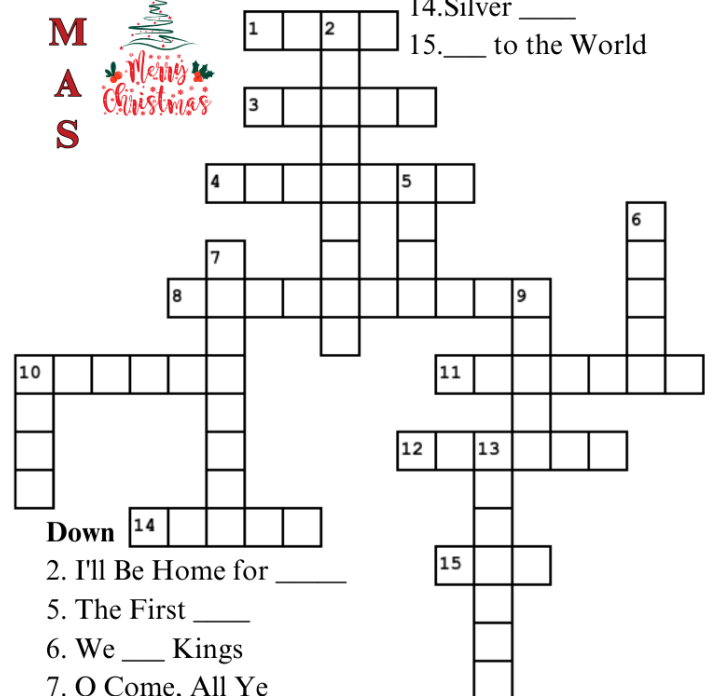
SPORTS UPDATES

C
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Across

- ___ the Halls with Boughs of Holly
- We Wish You A ___ Christmas
- I Saw Mommy ___ Santa Claus
- Here Comes ___
- ___ Night
- Away in a ___
- Hark! The ___ Angels Sing
- Silver ___
- ___ to the World



Down

- I'll Be Home for ___
- The First ___
- We ___ Kings
- O Come, All Ye ___
- ___ Baby
- Let it ___
- ___ the Red Nosed Reindeer

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