

Dear Nicaragua,

Dear Nicaragua,
I don't even know where to begin. You were so good! The memories our senior class made while we were visiting are worth being remembered for a lifetime. Oh, and can I just say that your sunshine and warm weather were some of my highlights, literally? I loved being in the sunshine. From the beginning of the trip, there were always things to remember. Managua was fascinating; my eyes couldn't be open wide enough. The sights to see and the metal colored trees along your roads were such a great addition to the buildings and businesses. The two hour truck ride from Managua to León was my first cultural experience outside of the airport, and aside from being parched, I loved it! The food was also delicious: pupusas, stuffed rice, and dirty face were a few of my favorite dishes. Saturday was once again another great experience. Nicaragua, your people are an inspiration! Coming from Lancaster County where our lawns are groomed, our schedules are strict, and sometimes we think our contentment comes from material possessions, I was refreshed. I was refreshed to see a lifestyle that was both content and not exceedingly wealthy. Sometimes I think it works opposite of what we think. It seems to me that those who are the most content are those with the least stuff, and I understand that it probably doesn't always work that way, but there seems to be something to that effect. Saturday we walked some of the



streets around the church and picked up the children from their homes. I enjoyed pulling some Spanish phrases from the back of my memory to interact with them. Sunday we exercised our volleyball skills in the park with the youth group. Monday we split up and offered our service through work projects throughout the community. That was another great cultural experience. Our class split up into four groups, two guys and two girls groups, and ventured out into León. Miss Leanna Martin, who was part of the group that volunteered at a nursing home, was blessed with the task of clipping the elderly men's fingernails, and may I say, she excelled. Monday afternoon we enjoyed the salty Pacific Ocean. Oh, Nicaragua, but Tuesday, Tuesday was such a fun day! We toured the cathedral and all of us girls went to the hospital while the guys had fun getting haircuts from one of your barbers. Wednesday rapidly led us downhill towards our departure on Thursday and even faster down the volcano. Dirty and dusty with shoes full of volcanic rock, we seniors eagerly hopped on the backs of the trucks, anticipating some high winds due to intense speed. Finally on Thursday we packed up and headed back to Managua and then Miami to Baltimore. I greatly enjoyed senior trip and getting to know the missionaries at the Olive Branch Mission while we were there. It was so energizing to connect with, relate to, and encourage those of like-minded faith. My greatest highlight of the entire trip was being able to cultivate relationships with my classmates, my friends, and the missionaries. I was rewarded in relating to and caring about each individual. Nicaragua, my experiences were challenging, strengthening, and exhausting, but oh so rewarding. I would return in a heartbeat!

Sincerely,
Shanda Nissley

Bringing It Home with Mr. B

This was an exciting and enjoyable basketball season! The guys played hard, showed outstanding teamwork, and displayed great character and sportsmanship. The season record for the varsity team was eight wins and five losses. One highlight of our season was that in November we were invited to play in the first annual Calkins Baptist Tip-off Tournament. We had a great time growing as a team, spending time in small group prayer, and on Saturday morning having devotions and prayer time with the other teams. The guys won the championship trophy as well. Dexter Zimmerman was named MVP, while Derek Martin and Kyle Martin were selected to join the all-tournament team. Another highlight was finishing third in the Faith Tournament where the Legends were able to win three games, something EMS had never done before. While defeating Maranatha, the team made 15 out of 16 free throws which translates to 94% accuracy; outstanding!! Great defense also contributed to the wins. With seven seniors graduating, next year will be a challenge, but I am confident that the younger players will step up and that we will have another very successful year.

~ Jay Bomgardner

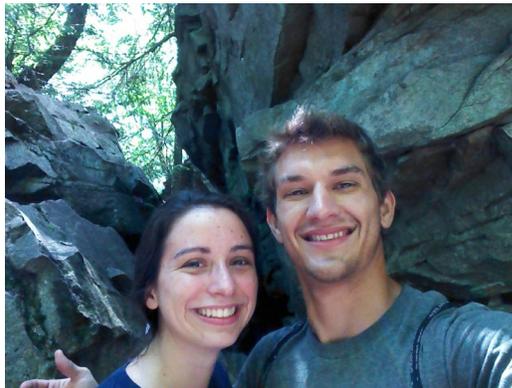
Courting Craze

Early on in our relationship, Kristen and I hiked to a spot beside a nice stream for a picnic before heading to an outdoor orchestra concert. But, after eating our supper, we realized it would take too long to hike back out the way we came, so we ended up crawling up a steep bank on all fours, grabbing tree roots and carrying one or two picnic baskets all the way. We made it up safely and also made it to the concert on time. We went back to that spot once and scaled the steep side again just for old time's sake. - Mr. J

On one of our early dates, Chrystal and I went to Longwood Gardens. While there, she unknowingly went into the wrong restroom. She did not notice the sign, and since the guys' restroom was empty, she didn't catch her mistake. Not knowing what else to do, I stood outside the door to stop any other guys from going in. When Chrystal came out of the bathroom, she was surprised to see that I had struck up a conversation with another guy. When I explained to her that I was just trying to keep him out of the bathroom because she was in the wrong one, she was quite surprised and blushed several shades of red. In the end, it provided many laughs throughout that day and became a standing joke for many future dates! - Mr. Stauffer

"I'm just going to buy this girl a coffee and be home within an hour," I confidently told my parents. I did neither; Tiffany drank tea, and I was not home until much later on that blind date. Instead of being home within an hour, Tiffany and I sat at Starbucks until they closed and then walked around a nearby park. My parents were waiting up for me but eventually went to bed because I returned home so late. Later, as I reflected on the date, I knew that I should probably ask Tiffany out on a second date if I would rather spend my last evening of spring break in Lancaster with her instead of with my family. Though we did have other great dates, the first blind date was one of the most memorable. - Mr. King

Forty-one years ago in February, I asked Lorene out for our first date to a sweetheart banquet put on by our youth group. It was a rainy, foggy evening, and I was 15 minutes late. When I did arrive, I wanted to impress her and I was wearing my suit, and when she saw me, she ran upstairs to get something more formal. While we were driving to the banquet which was a half hour away, I wanted to impress her, so I turned my intermittent windshield wipers on. (I had a Ford LTD 2 and the only optional equipment were the intermittent wipers and an eight track tape player) When it was over and we were exiting the facility, she slipped, and I needed to help her so she didn't fall. When we arrived back at her place, I asked her for another date, she accepted, and the rest is history!!! I only found out later that she thought my windshield wipers were broken because they went on and off and she pitied me. Also, she slipped on purpose to "see if I was sensitive and would care about her." - Mr. Bomgardner



Choices, Choices



My fingers shook as I hit the end call button. I couldn't believe it! I had successfully landed a job in the sales department at

Martin Appliance! My mind rewound back through the course of interviews, research, and phone calls that had gotten me to this point, but one signifying event overrides them all: the 2019 Faith Mennonite High School Job Fair. As a junior in high school, I was beginning to think about what I would like to do for a postgraduate living, and the Job Fair

helped me to see quite a few potential paths. During the event I was able to connect with quite a few potential employers, one of which I am currently working with! The 2020 Job Fair was just as worth while! Even though I and several others who attended the event have a pretty good idea of what we would like to do after high school, it was still a great experience, and it was fun to see what all is out there. This year Faith brought in several businessmen and missionaries to speak on the power of business as a mission and the ability to create and use business to support missions. We were also able to spend time in the gym where local businesses were invited to display their trades, benefits, and job

openings to the high school students. The vendors had a variety of displays, some advertising construction jobs, some in personal care, and yet others in the business industry. It was wonderful to see the level of interest and excitement expressed by all who were part of the event; the excitement of the vendors who are willing to invest in high school students through employment, and also of the students who are excited to use their training and education to become a valuable asset to a business! Thanks to all who were part of the 2020 Job Fair and blessings to those who make decisions based on it!

~ Tim Burkholder

Spellin' with Buzz

Buzz, the bee, rapidly approached Ephrata Mennonite School. He had heard that EMS was hosting a Spelling Bee. Buzz didn't know what a spelling bee looked like, but he was about to find out. He flew into the gym and was instantly overwhelmed by the amount of people that flooded and flowed into all the corners of the room. There were tables set up on the stage where families could sit and enjoy their delicious meals that they bought at the food stand as well



as a coffee bar in the corner. A temporary stage was set up to the side of the gym where the spelling would take place and all the chairs were watching attentively. First up was

the first through third grade spelling bee; Parker Fox of Clay Elementary was the champion speller in that category. The fourth through sixth grade bee was won by Ephrata's own sixth grader, Ryan Weaver. Finally, the middle school to adult bee was triumphed by former EMS teacher Nate Waldron. All the spelling bee contestants did a great job at trying out tricky words with innumerable syllables that they may not have heard before. In reality, many of the words were not as difficult as exaggerated above, but that's beside the point. After the bees, patron John Rutt was willing to offer his auctioneering talent to support the junior class in their fundraising efforts for next year's senior trip. Following the short auction, the winner of the chess tournament was announced. Congratulations to senior Patrick Zimmerman for claiming the title against last year's defending champion Mr. Joshua Good. After the bees and chess champions, the Bible bee took place. With Bible trivia questions too difficult for the average pastor, contestants dropped like flies (or bees in this case),



but Mrs. Sharon Yoder kept the faith and won the prize. After the Bible bee, the micro-pong tournament winner was announced. Congratulations to Chris Beiler on his championship win!

Aside from the activities of the evening, many of you may have heard about the tragic loss of one of the patron mothers, Fay Burkholder. Fay had been on a cancer journey and had just completed chemo recently. She was looking forward to becoming a "free bird" in March; we now understand the reality of this statement. Please continue to keep the Nevin Burkholder family in your prayers. ~ Shanda Nissley

SCHOOL LIFE

Pink or Blue!?

Hearing about the arrival of a baby is always exciting, but isn't it even more exciting when it's your own teacher having the baby?! I believe the third graders would all heartily agree to that. A few months ago the third grade teacher, Mrs. Burkholder, announced to her students that she would be having a baby shortly after school lets out this year. To make it even more intriguing, she recently had a gender reveal party for the students. There was a piñata stuffed with either blue or pink candy, and the students happily tore into it, blood pressure running high, ecstatic to discover what the child would be. The first few whacks were just a warmup, but before too long an eruption was sent upwards from the boys when blue candy of all sorts poured out from the piñata. Of

course, who would be more dramatic but the boys to know that Mrs. Burkholder is having a boy? While the girls may have been disappointed by that part, they have to admit that it's exciting either way. As a school



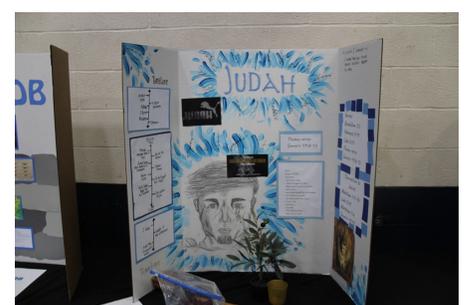
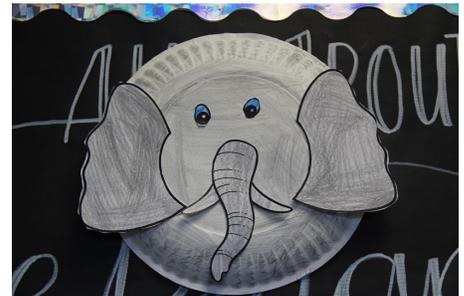
we want to wish Mrs. Burkholder and her husband the very best as they prepare for a new baby and the ministry of parenthood. We are thankful for the last ten years she has

poured into teaching third grade at Ephrata Mennonite School. My class was privileged enough to get her for her first year, and when I think of that year, I think of the trip to Oregon Dairy, read aloud in the Book Nook, hanging out on the couch, and performing the story of Elijah. It was definitely a memorable year, and one thing that we all remember is how lucky we thought we were to be the class getting a new teacher. Thank you, Mrs. Burkholder, for pouring your heart into teaching all of us. Your kind character, patience, and ability to have fun is something all the students you've invested in will remember. Throughout your years here you've touched more lives than you realize and have been a vital part of our community. Best wishes in this next phase of life!

~ Hadassah Martin

STUDENT WORK

Artistic Expression



Theo's New Purpose

"She loves me, she loves me not, she loves me, she loves me not." The imaginary flower petals fell to the ground. Theo Teddy Bear was beginning to think he was never going to find someone that loved him. He was getting to be an old teddy bear. When he had been younger, Theo had been loved by a little girl. She held him every night when she fell asleep, and he smiled with his big button eyes. But now Theo was often left just sitting on the top of the bed; he wasn't held very much any more. Theo was more or less tossed around and occasionally buried under the covers only to be found two weeks later. It pained Theo when he thought of how he was once needed and loved. It became easy for Theo Teddy Bear to pity himself, especially since he was placed directly in front of the calendar. This particular month was February, and Theo couldn't help but see the big heart drawn around February 14th. The little girl that had loved him was now eighteen, and she was no longer interested in holding her teddy bear. She still mentioned his name every now and then, but even so that was only

when she made her bed and placed him on the top of her pillow. Still, Theo's heart swelled when he heard her say his name. He remembered that cheery little girl's voice that always made him beam with excitement. One day when Theo was feeling particularly unloved, the once little girl flew into her room and flopped onto her bed. Bursting into tears she grabbed Theo Teddy Bear and held him close. Theo was confused as to why she was crying and why all of a sudden he was being held again, but he decided that he didn't need to ask what was wrong, he just needed to be a friend. As the sobs subsided, the grip on Theo loosened, and he heard her stammer out through the tears, "Th-Th-Theo? I'm afraid of growing up!" At that moment, Theo understood why he had been held less and less in the past ten years. He understood that it wasn't because no one loved him, but because the one who loved him the most was growing up. He had remembered being warned about this from his friend Baby Blanket. Theo was ashamed of himself. He had spent a larger portion of the last ten years pitying

himself for not being loved, when actually he had been the one that wasn't loving. Theo realized that his own selfishness had hindered him from understanding that the little girl was growing up. His head was spinning; then he heard her speak again. "I know that I need to grow up, and I'm enjoying it, yes. But oh, there are so many unknowns, and the unknown is scary." She continued, "But I know that Jesus is with me, and he will guide me. I can trust Him!" Theo saw her smile. The tears had stopped streaming, and there was a peaceful look on her face. She closed her eyes and fell asleep. Theo smiled. When she woke up, her little sister bounced into the room grinning and singing. Little sister's eyes fell on Theo, and her eyes got wide, "I didn't know that you had a teddy bear! He's such a cute little teddy bear. Can I have him?" Theo's heart leaped! He would be given a second chance! Now he could change his attitude and not be so selfish and love the little sister. Theo was excited for what was ahead!

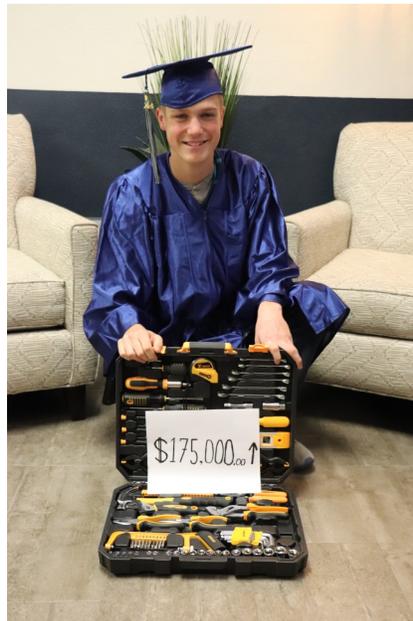
~Shanda Nissley

EDITORIAL

Beyond the Cash Crop

Miss Martin and I stared agape at the final statistic represented on the calculator. According to the 2020-2021 school year tuition rates, a fee well in excess of \$65,000 is required of any party planning to participate in a 13 year Ephrata Mennonite School experience. To place that in context, at the recommended property down payment suggestion of 20%, one could purchase a beautiful investment property with an appraised value of roughly \$325,000! If that \$65,000 was invested in a mutual fund averaging 8% interest and compounding annually for the same 13 years, its projected value would be well over \$175,000! Just for fun, if that \$175,000 were invested in a property while applying the same "20% down rule," it could, in theory, have an appraised value of \$875,000! So why, if we could be the proud owners of bookoo bucks and huge houses, would we sink our hard-earned income into something that we could get for free? The answer is

simple: the investment value of Christian education is greater! Every



student who turns the tassel on graduation night at EMS should be proud to exit with over \$175,000 worth

of knowledge, wisdom, and experiences. Together, these tools lay the groundwork for success in the workforce, college, relationships, home life, and church! I am thankful for the opportunity to gather these tools in a safe, Christian environment, and I am very excited to see what kind of impact they will have on my post-graduate life! Thank you to the board, administrators, teachers, and especially to the parents for choosing, or helping your children to choose, to invest in Christian education! Shelling out the up front cost in an investment is not usually fun, but experiencing the yield is always exciting! As students who represent the investment of many, we need to be mindful and intentional about maximizing our investment capital, time or money spent investing in an investment, as we move towards the end of the year! The tools that we will gain will make it worth the effort I am sure!

~Tim Burkholder

Stuco Update

During the month of February, two events occurred in the EMS community by the coordination of the Student Council. The first event that came into play was the annual Spikeball tournament. After a highly competitive four and half hours of intense Spikeball play, two team victors came to claim the gift card prize; Keri and Kevon Weaver claimed second, and Jeremy Weaver and Kelsey Rutt claimed first. The next Friday consisted of praise and worship in the morning led by our very own Vice President Derek Martin. This next month will hold our annual Junior and Senior Banquet and school spirit week. The Junior and Senior Banquet will be very extravagant, and the cuisine will not be in any way disappointing. Along with these two annual events will be the usual Friday praise and worship and iced coffee and donuts. The month of March will be bustling and will not be lacking in exciting events!

~Rondre Weaver

March Calendar

- 2nd-5th: Spirit Week
- 4th: MS Intramural Volleyball Game
- 9th: MS basketball game vs. Fairview
- 9th: HS Basketball game vs. Schaefferstown
- 11th-13th: Bible Quiz Retreat at Black Rock
- 13th: Junior/Senior Banquet
- 17th: MS Volleyball vs. Gehmans
- 26th: HS Volleyball vs. Terre Hill
- 27th: HACC Health Careers Exploration Day
- 31th: Stuco HS Gym Night

Academic Fair

This year the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders all participated in the annual Academic Fair event which took place this month. The 6th graders did their projects on the Latin American countries which was headed up by Mrs. Heisey; Jamal Wenger was awarded first place for his project on Columbia. The 7th graders did their projects on science which was headed up by Mr. Mummert; first place was given to Hailey Martin who studied different bread molding. Lastly, the 8th graders did their projects on different Bible characters which was headed up by Mr. Priest; Julia Zimmerman took first place for her project on Adam. Thanks to all the students who put hard work into their projects. The night was a success in all its refreshments, fulfilling fellowship, and artistic articulations.

~Rondre Weaver

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Learning to Serve

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