

December Calendar

- December 4: MS and HS Basketball vs. Fairview (Away)
- December 7: HS Basketball vs. Schaefferstown (Away)
- December 11: Noon Dismissal!
- December 15: HS Guys Basketball vs. Schaefferstown (Home)
- December 18: HS Volleyball and Basketball vs. Maranatha (Away)
- December 21: HS Guys Basketball vs. Lighthouse (Home)
- December 23: End of Quarter 2 and Semester 1!
- December 23: Noon Dismissal!
- December 23-January 3: Christmas and New Year's Break!
- December 29: HS Varsity Guys Basketball Tournament at Fairview

Thank-you

We would like to express our gratitude to the companies who have kindly sponsored the seniors in raising money for their senior trip by placing ads in the newspaper. More ads are coming next month, so please support these local affiliations! We understand this is a new concept, so if you have any questions or would like to place an ad or coupon next month, please reach out to Taryn Mellinger at 2021taryn.mellinger@ephlatammenonite.com

- The *EXPRESSIONS* Team

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Expressions



**EPHRATA
LEGENDS**

Volume 9, Issue 3

November 2020

Student Publication

Jr's in the Big Apple

Busy - This is the first word that comes to mind when we think about New York City. People walking by, each with their own plans and agendas. New York City is a bustling city, and definitely quite the place, even outside of the field trip experience. From the 28th to the 31st of October, we went on the much anticipated annual field trip to the Ministry Training Center in Queens, New York. The trip was filled with handing out tracts, learning evangelism techniques in classes, and prayer walking. Several of the juniors voiced their takeaways from the trip.



Photo by Micah Harnish

Micah: I personally felt really challenged with stepping out of my comfort zone. It was a little hard at first, striking up conversations with strangers, but in the end, it was really fun and encouraging. I think something I took away from the trip was that Jesus didn't care about what other people thought of Him. He only did the will of the Father, and that's all He was concerned about. He saw a need, and He met it. It's okay to be uncomfortable, but make sure it doesn't rule your life!

Katelyn: One thing that I learned from staying in New York is that we have so much blessing to give to others. We have been given so much by God that we can share with others. Just simply sharing God's word by handing out bibles, or tracts, and asking someone if you can pray for them can really make an impact on them. Another thing that stuck out to me was the culture. The way we live versus the way they live seemed like a whole new world. Not even just the living quarters, but also the food and transportation. Walking, riding a bike, or taking the subway to work is not normally part of our daily routine. I just thought it was really interesting how our lives are so much different.

Lauren: Throughout the time at the MTC, my eyes were opened to the immense spiritual need in NYC and throughout the world. As Christians we have the good news, but as I was challenged in one class on evangelism, the Good News isn't news unless it's shared with others. For me, handing out tracts and starting a conversation with a stranger on the street is intimidating, but it ended up being an encouraging time over all. Although many people did everything to avoid us while handing out Bibles and tracts, the ones that did receive literature made our efforts all worth it. It was also a good experience to spend time with my class outside of the normal school environment and also explore different parts of NYC.

Jack: One thing that I think was cool about MTC was the staff and team there. Lots of them had moved away from wherever they came from to reach out to people in a place they hadn't ever lived in or known. You could see they were really passionate about what they were doing and genuinely cared about the people there. They were really good hosts and made some really good food. They also showed interest in getting to know us and interacting with us, like playing games or just talking to us.

Jenna: On the NYC field trip, I was pushed out of my comfort zone a lot. Walking up to a random person and talking to them wasn't exactly my favorite part. However, as I did it more I got used to it and soon it was more fun than scary. We learned a lot of the evangelism classes at MTC and got a chance to practice what we learned out on the streets. One thing that stuck out to me is we are very blessed to live where we do. We have a lot that we could bless others with but most of the time we don't. One of my favorite parts was being with our class and sightseeing around the city.

As a whole, we grew in our faith and confidence as Christians by interacting with strangers on the streets and staff at MTC and witnessing that God is at work in various parts of the world. In addition, by spending time together as a class, our relationships with each other blossomed. Prompted by the many blessings we've received, hopefully we can continue to pour into the lives of those we encounter in our daily lives.

Lauren Martin, Micah Harnish, Expressions Writers

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The Dark Truth About Thanksgiving

What comes to your mind when you think about Thanksgiving? For many, Thanksgiving is a time of celebration and eating, attempting to celebrate or remember the first Thanksgiving as it was related to us as children. For the indigenous peoples of the Americas however, it is a time of mourning and remembrance. So, how was this chasm of culture and remembrance between mainstream America and Indigenous people created, and what has caused this chasm?

First, there are clashes between histories. Mainstream Thanksgiving glorifies the feast shared between the original peoples and the pilgrims. This feast is celebrated as a time of equality and mutual respect between these two people groups. However, many historians believe that while there was a meal shared between the colonists and the tribe of Wampanoag ca. 1621, it was far from a feast of happiness and equality. The natives of that tribe had just endured a time of sickness and poor crops. Historians believe it was more of a last resort by the Natives as an effort to remain at peace and ally themselves with the colonists to fend off other tribes, than to provide services of generosity. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln announced Thanksgiving as a national holiday and since then Thanksgiving glorified this version of the first Thanksgiving without realizing its later detrimental effects for the native Americans.

Sixteen years after this initial encounter is what the Native Americans remember as the first Thanksgiving. In the years after this feast/treaty between the two people groups, tension was slowly build-

ing. This boiling tension finally surfaced when the colonists broke the treaty formed at that time. Enraged, the Wampanoag chief Mettacomet, or King Phillip as he was called by the English, attacked the settlers. In the bloody battle that would later be known as King Phillip's war, it is estimated that around six hundred native people were massacred. The settlers then took Metacomet's body and dismembered it. They then took his head and put it on a spike and left it there for twenty five years.

So, what comes to your mind when you think of Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving is a time of joy and thankfulness, but for some it is a time of remembering the darkness and mourning the deaths of murdered ancestors. So, this Thanksgiving, along with being thankful for the many blessings you have been given, take a moment to remember the ones who are too often forgotten and to pray for the people who are suffering.

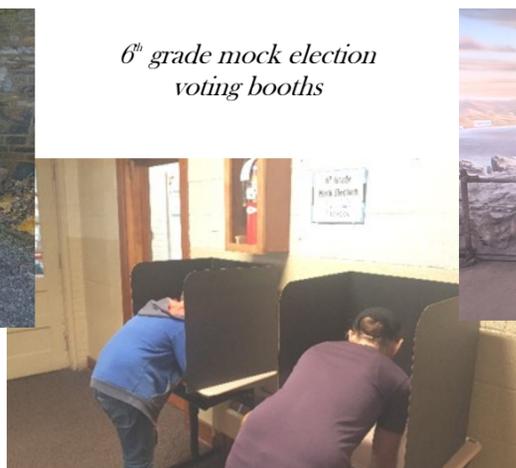


Brianna Stoltzfus, Expressions Writer

Highlights of the Month



6th grade class at Indian Echo Caverns



6th grade mock election voting booths



9th grade trip to Washington D.C Bible Museum

Nanny in New York

Focusing on another 2020 graduate, one of this month's spotlights is on Alisha Weiler. Alisha had this to say about what life has been like since graduation and what she hopes to do in the future:

"September through the middle of October I had the opportunity to serve as a nanny for five weeks in NYC. Dean and Kendra Zimmerman, a couple from my church, took classes at the Ministry Training Center (MTC) while I took care of their children. Living in NYC has been by far one of the best stretching experiences for me. I love the connection that I made with the children and the relationships that were built with the fall LTO (Long Term Orientation) students. God has taught me so much, from patience to trust in Him for the unknown. The culture of NYC has been a very eye-opening experience as well. In the future, I would love to do something involving working with children at possibly a daycare. I'm currently working at Weaver Nut and thoroughly enjoy the relationships I have with my coworkers!"

We appreciated Alisha's compassionate attitude while at EMS and are encouraged to see how she has been serving God with the gifts He's given her!



Alisha Weiler

Lauren Martin, Expressions Writer

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I have a problem and I feel like I know what I should do, but I just don't want to accept it. A lot of my friends and peers have this habit of complaining a lot. I join in too, but I know that I shouldn't. How do I stop? Also, is there a way for me to help others to stop without looking like a goody two shoes?

Yours truly,
Secretly Sick of It

Dear Secretly Sick of It,

You are right that you should not continue to feed into the culture of complaint. While complaining may seem relatively harmless compared to other bad habits, it changes your life more than you realize. Complaining actually affects your brain in very negative ways. When you repeat certain behaviors, like complaining, your brain's neurons branch closer together in this pattern. Eventually these connections become semi-permanent and whatever the repeated behavior was, like complaining, becomes default. Neuroscientists like to refer to this saying, "Neurons that fire together, wire together".

Complaining affects your brain in other ways as well. Stanford University conducted research which revealed that complaining shrinks the hippocampus. This is the part of the brain that deals with problem solving and intelligent thought. And that's not all. Complaining also causes your brain to release the stress hormone cortisol. The extra cortisol released by the brain from continual complaining can impair your immune system and make you more vulnerable to things like high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. This is no joke.

You mentioned how others around you complain as well. This is because our brains can unconsciously copy the moods of those around us. You yourself do not have to be complaining to be ill affected. Simply being around complainers can affect you, sort of in the way secondhand smoke affects those who aren't actually smoking.

That was a lot of information about how complaining is harmful, but how do you stop? You do the opposite. You build the habit of positivity. Repeat positive behavior, like naming what you are thankful for, till your brain's neurons wire together to create a productive default. Gratitude reduces your stress hormone levels considerably. It requires a conscious effort, but it can be done. Every morning, take some time to think about what you are grateful for. Thank God in your prayers and thank others as you go about your day. Acknowledge all the good you see until it becomes natural to do so.

As for your friends, you don't have to explicitly tell them to stop, you can encourage them to stop in ways that are less obvious. Set the example, and add positivity to their negative comments. Help them to learn positive brain patterns by making your gratitude and forward-looking comments contagious. It takes a stretch, but sometimes it's worth any ridicule and judgement you may receive.

Best regards,
The Editor

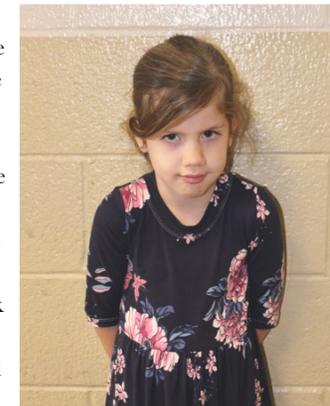
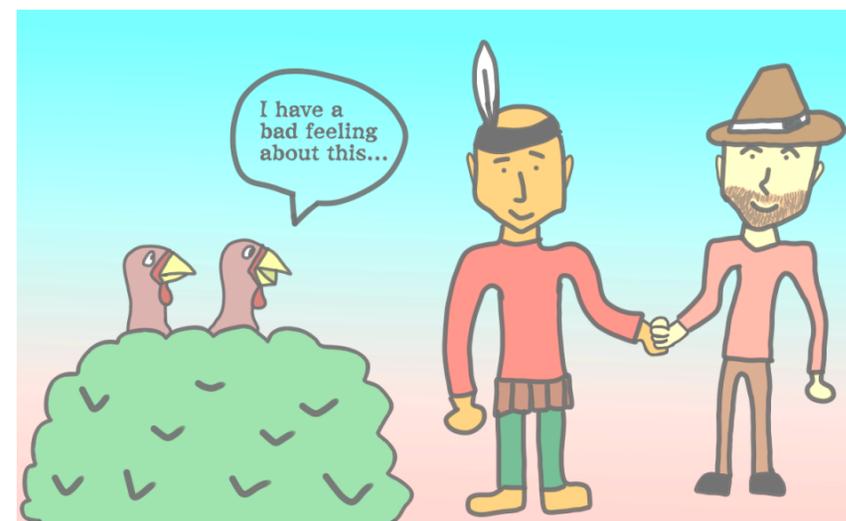


Photo by Laura Patches

Gobbling and Guffaws



Drawing by Jackson Good (11th) / Edited by Natasha Hoover (12th)



Drawing by Jenna Martin (9th)

Stuco Update

Pumpkin spice lattes, hunting, and blankets are a few things that come to mind when thinking of fall. For Stuco, the fall barn party is a pretty important part of the fall. After planning for several weeks, roughly ninety secondary students and chaperones gathered at Kevin and Charlene Weaver's farm on November 13 for a fun evening together. The evening consisted of supper, chilly hayrides, and some entertaining games of Train Wreck. There was also free time which was filled with lively games of Spikeball and swat. Others opted to gather around the campfire to keep warm. All in all, the evening was enjoyed by many but would not have been possible without the willing chaperones or kind hosts. Additionally, Stuco is planning another iced coffee and donuts sale before Thanksgiving break and also looking to have Christmas activities in December.



Photo by Lauren Martin

Lauren Martin, Stuco Secretary

Sports Update

Volleyball (Girls)

	MS	JV	V
Legends vs Solid Rock (11/2/20)	Loss		Loss
Legends vs Faith (11/6/20)		Win	Win
Legends vs Central (11/6/20)			Win/Loss
Legends vs Gospel Haven (11/7/20)			Loss
Legends vs Schaefferstown (11/7/20)			Win

Basketball (Guys)

	MS	JV	V
Legends vs Faith		Loss	Loss

Building Update

• **Fundraising:** - We have the funds to close on the land! We are excited to announce that a group of donors has committed 1.1 million (over 5 year commitments) to our project. These commitments, along with the equity we have in our current building/land bring the total to approximately 4 million dollars raised. We are 1/3 there!

• **Building Design and Construction Update:** We have partnered with Hoover Builders and Cornerstone Architecture to develop 3D images and a virtual tour of the new school. Check these out at our website! We are currently getting bids/prints for all the mechanicals of the building. We will be ready to build soon!

• **Community Events:** Thanks to all who came out to our November 12 information meeting (as well as those who watched online). When we will finalize the land purchase, we will hold ceremonial "ribbon cutting" and "ground breaking" for our community. We will also at that time do a formal press release in the local media. More info coming...

• **Prayer Points:** Pray God would raise up prayer partners and able donors. Pray that EMS would flourish for the glory of God. Pray for the Board as they make decisions. Pray that we can begin construction next summer, if the Lord wills it.

• **Kingdom Giving Thoughts:** Ask the Lord how you can help. Every penny counts and the widow's mite is worth a lot to God. While we do need a few "big" donors, the healthiest institutions are those that have many small donors. And a final bit of "Kingdom" truth is that the greater blessing is reserved for the giver! Jesus taught there is more blessing in giving than receiving. When we provide the opportunity to give to God's work, we provide donors with the opportunity to receive a greater blessing! Together we can build his Kingdom!

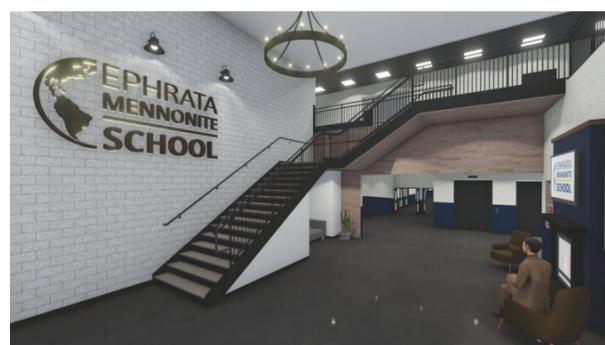
Joshua Good, Administrator



Amount raised for the new school



Two possible representation of the future EMS building



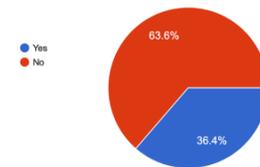
The Issue of Voting

Kassidy Zimmerman, Expressions Writer

If the year 2020 were a person, he would be the most unheralded, conniving, annoying, grinchiest grinch of all. Like a person who grew up with lemons in their heart and salt in their veins. We all expected 2020 to be our year. It was to be the year for big changes, the year to lose those 10 pounds. But, for many, it unfortunately was not. I do not want to be one to question God's will or timing. However, I must admit that I may or may not have done a bit of interrogating it throughout this year. After the new president-elect was announced to breath-holding citizens across the country, the interrogation of God's will became ever more present within me. The idea of trusting God in a time of doubt was like taking a bite of a mealy apple. Yet as our editor asked for a volunteer to construct a write-up of thoughts on the 2020 election, it was not the idea of trusting God that drew me in. It was why the Anabaptist culture found the idea of voting either repulsive or indispensable. The inner investigative journalist within me prodded me into raising my hand for the specific assignment. And so my deep dive into the issue of voting began.

In the first step in the process, I conducted a survey among eligible voters here at school. I formulated an email with a Google survey attached. Since only five seniors were qualified to vote I decided to go with the wiser among us, sending it out to the staff and faculty here at EMS. On the Google survey, I raised two questions. The first being, "Did you vote in the 2020 election?" The second being, "Did you vote before the 2020 election?" Of course, unsurprisingly responses flooded in. (All participants were anonymous.) Just as I had suspected, the results were predictable. In the first question, "Did you vote in the 2020 election?" 14 people stated that they had voted. Standing on the opposite side, 19 people shared they had not voted in the 2020 election. For

Did you vote before the 2020 election?
33 responses



my second question, "Did you vote before the 2020 election?" 12 people said they voted prior to 2020. 21 people did not vote before the election. While studying the individual responses, I noticed that 3 people voted in this election for the first time. I also noted that 2 people had voted before but chose not to participate in this year's election. This might not seem like a huge significance but placed on a wider scale people were more likely to vote in the 2020 election. My survey showed me that our Anabaptist culture does place a huge significance in voting. The statistics of choosing to participate in this year's election were almost split in half. Even four years prior, a third of the participants had voted. My survey simply showed me that the controversy around voting is ever-present among Anabaptists.

Secondly, I interviewed two teachers representing two different viewpoints. I chose two teachers who I thought would be good candidates and firmly understood what they believed and why. (Both interviewee's identities will remain anonymous.) I asked a series of five questions. I began with "Do you vote?" Teacher A responded with, "Yes, I vote," while Teacher B stated, "No." Question two was, "Why do you vote?" Teacher A responded with, "I vote out of a sense of civic duty and responsibility. Our government was designed on the premise that citizens should be informed participants in the selection of leadership, so I try to be informed and participate." Teacher B had no response because they didn't vote.

"Have you received pressure from around you to vote/not vote?" was my third question. Teacher A: "I have not been pressured to vote or to abstain from voting." Teacher B: "I receive pressure 'to vote' from other Christian voices in the larger society as well as from my church." My fourth question was, "Were you raised to vote/not vote?" Teacher A's response was, "Voting was largely left up to the individual in my upbringing." However, Teacher B's response was, "I was taught not to vote as a child, though I was also taught it wasn't necessarily a 'sin' to vote. I was taught that if we vote it would put us in a weird position if the candidate we helped elect then asked us to go to war." My fifth and final question was, "Does voting affect kingdom citizenship?" Teacher A stated, "The motivation behind a person's voting can affect an individual's kingdom citizenship. Voting which is motivated by party loyalty or a worldview which views voting as an extension of Christian beliefs is problematic." Teacher B said, "I advocate for not voting. I think voting brings unhealthy and entangling alliances with partisan politics. Further, it belies a faith in the state to fix social problems. It belies a belief in the state's tools, that being coercion and violence, as being well used rather than the way of suffering love and the cross as taught and exemplified by Jesus. I think as citizens of the Kingdom of God we function as ambassadors with regard to the kingdoms of this world. So, I would advocate that yes, voting does begin to compromise the effectiveness of kingdom citizenship." I concluded that teacher A believed out of civic duty that one should vote. Residing in this country puts a responsibility on a citizen's shoulders to do their part in making the government work. Teacher B's responses revealed that they believe that Christ's kingdom is, as Christ himself said, "not of this world." By voting for a worldly kingdom it can put a Christian at risk to fundamentally change who they view as a stronger leader—the government or God.

As I sat back and looked over the two interviewee's responses, I saw it boiled down to the last question in the interview. "Does voting affect ones kingdom citizenship?" Let me make one thing clear. Voting is not a heaven or hell question. One does not end up in heaven for voting or not voting. But I do believe, like Teacher B, that when a Christian begins to rely on the government more than God to fix worldly problems, it becomes an issue. Isaiah 12:2 says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." When Christians become so fearful of the future and they feel that the only thing in their power to do is voting then voting has affected their kingdom citizenship. Voting can become a divisive issue in Anabaptist culture. My fear is that relationships have been destroyed over the issue of voting. In fact, I know that relationships have been destroyed and churches have split. In all reality, allowing something as simple as voting to get in the way of our call to love our brothers and sisters is not Christ-like. It is evident that the Christian church has allowed voting and other political involvement to infiltrate into the Christian faith. I am not going to leave you with a "You must vote," or "You must not vote." However, I will challenge you to ponder what you believe. Decide whether or not you wish to vote and decide why. Is it out of fear for the future or another reason? As we continue to face the hurdles of 2020 and the years following, I encourage you to pray for our leaders. It is a Christian's duty to pray for one another. We must not get bogged down in who would have been a better president but, we must push on, encouraging one another in faith.



Don't Waste Your Life

How easy it is to lounge on a bed or comfy chair and scroll through Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, or any social media app and waste an hour, two hours, or even four or five hours? Maybe not all in one sitting, but throughout the day you find yourself tuning out those around you to tune into lives you don't know. It certainly is tempting, isn't it? Social media appears to be more satisfying than it is. But that isn't the point.

It is so easy to get caught up in just living. Getting from one day to the next, ticking everything off your daily to-do list, and trying to not mentally crash. Because of the constant social pressures and thousands of distractions and paths we traverse it is easy to forget why we are alive and living. Not only that, but we forget *how* we should live. That doesn't mean we don't know the answer; our lives are meant to glorify God. But how often do we think about God? How often do we focus on doing the right thing? How often do we *desire* to glorify God?

Some of you may skip this article because you are thinking that you are doing enough, you have time to fix what you might need to fix, but the truth is, you don't. Teenage years are crucial for many things. This time of our lives sets the precedent for the rest of our lives.

Every moment matters. Every action matters — every word and every thought. When we reach judgment, our teenage lives will not be exempt from judgment because we were 'young' or 'didn't know any better' as some adults tend to say in response to our behavior. No, every single part of our lives will be judged. This means we need to be focusing on God now, not later. Not after we are done with high school or when we have more time. This applies to anyone, at any age, not just those in school. It is never too late to follow God, yet it is never too early.

We need to be careful that we don't waste our lives on social media or just 'living'. We are alive for a reason, but at times we hardly live out the reason. Recently I was sitting in a Bible class and Mr. Priest asked a sobering question, "If you found out, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God was not real, how would your life change?" It is a soul-searching question. Are our lives connect-



Photo by Laura Patches

ed to God or do we just think they are? It might change our friend circles a bit and we would probably stop going to church, but how would it affect our actions? Our feelings? I think the answer to the question is our understanding of how much we waste our lives on the world. Revelation 3:15-16 admonishes, "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." We either must follow the world or we must

follow God, but we need to follow one wholeheartedly. It is pointless to live a half-hearted, lukewarm life. Do not waste your life being lukewarm, trying to please everyone but really living for nothing.

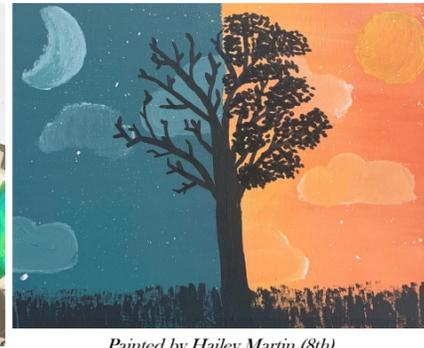
Taryn Mellinger, *Expression* Editor

Crazy Artsy

Within the elementary and middle school art classes, many of the students have demonstrated great talent! Miss Ronica, the art teacher, chose a few pieces of art to display.



Drawn by Jillian Good (8th)



Painted by Hailey Martin (8th)



Drawn by Taylor Hurst (8th)



Created by Cianna Smucker (1st)



Jeremy Weaver

Planning for the Future

Another one of this month's alumni spotlights is Jeremy Weaver. Although Jeremy misses school, he has been keeping himself busy with volleyball tournaments and hanging out with friends. He also works full time as an electrician doing residential and commercial work. Jeremy does, however, plan to further his education. He plans to attend Elnora Bible Institute. There, he will be studying Matthew, Revelation, and Daniel along with taking an Apologetics class. He says he wants to allow that education to strengthen his Christian faith and help him understand his Christian beliefs. Jeremy is also planning to Israel this summer in June 2021. Jeremy is always willing to help and encourage people. If he could give one piece of advice to the students at Ephrata Mennonite School, he says it would be to put effort into your friendships and studies because you will never regret the effort you put into academics and friendships while at school.

Brianna Stoltzfus, *Expressions* Writer

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Weighing the Dating Decision

Laura Patches, *Expressions* Writer

I am going to tell you a love story. It's a true story, not dramatic or mushy. It's plain and simple, which is not something you get much of nowadays.

It begins in a land not so very far away at a high school not so unlike Ephrata Mennonite. The curtain opens on a teenage girl, living life, oblivious of the admiration of one certain young man. You probably already see where this is going. The young man asks her out and she is surprised. Of course she is surprised, but she agrees. It does not take long before the teenage girl gains an admiration for the young man as well. They fall in love and they continue to date in high school. They graduate. And some time later they get married. They have kids and they live happily ever after. The end.

I told you it wasn't dramatic.

Now what do you think? This romance began in high school and they dated in high school. Can this be? Is this allowed? How does this work?

Well, as evidenced by this story, this *can* be. Was it allowed? I don't know, but this certainly didn't stop them. How does this work? Well, that is a bit complicated. You see, relationships are complicated and cultural norms change over time. Dating, at any time, comes with various challenges. If you are entering into a relationship, you are bound to get hurt no matter what age or situation you are in. You must think carefully about what you really want and take wise advice into consideration.

When you are in high school, you are still learning who you are, and where you want to go next in life. You may not yet have definite plans for what

you want to do after you graduate. Everyone else around you is in the same boat. So when you choose to date someone in high school, you are choosing to date someone who probably also is unsure about their identity and their future. You may both graduate and realize that your paths are going in entirely different directions.

So why is this important? If you come to that realization, you can just break up, right? Yes, right... ish.

Breakups are hard, that's nothing new, and there is nothing wrong with it. However, the time that we committed to that person, we lost to other things. Dating is a commitment, and there is always a sacrifice involved. When you are young, and hormones are raging, you don't always realize what sacrifices you are making. Looking back, you may wish you had not rushed into a commitment that you didn't fully realize you were making. You may regret the lost time you could have spent with other friends and family. The time you should have spent focusing on school work, strengthening your relationship with God, and developing strong character. Don't get me wrong, as seen in the story above, dating in high school does work at times. But may I suggest, that such happy stories as these are getting fewer, and that you should not be so intent on thinking you shall be an exception.

Relationships can bring much joy, but it is best if they are pursued when both parties are ready. Listen, pray, and allow God to be your center. In the end, everyone's decision will be different. There is no perfect answer. You must decide for yourself.



Ryan (Bible teacher) and Janelle (librarian) Priest on their second date.



Tyler and Brianna (6th grade teacher) on their first date.



Mr. Jesse (music teacher) and Kristen Weaver on a date.