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Into the Woods explores what happens after “happily ever after”

Hats off to the production staff, ensemble cast and stage crew of the Crestwood High School production of the Stephen Sondheim (lyricist and composer) and James Lapine (book) award

winning musical *Into The Woods* which was presented at the school on November 22 and 23. Those familiar with Sondheim's work know his musicals are sometimes dark,

complex, sophisticated and generally probe unexpected themes.

The plot for *Into the Woods* features some Brothers Grimm fairy tale characters including

See Into The Woods, page 4



Above: The Witch (Sara Mascelli) promises to end the Baker (Alex Elsasser) and his wife's (Nicole Ann Orlando) barrenness if the Baker can find four critical ingredients.

In the woods, Little Red Riding Hood (Julz Martin) encounters the Wolf (Abi Reilley) who tries to convince her to take a short-cut.

Mountain Peaks/
Norberta Kosin photos



Jack (Nate Barron) must tell his best friend, Milky-White (Izzy Reluzco) that he is selling him for five beans.



Cinderella's Prince (Ethan Lieberman) puts the slipper on Cinderella's (Gracie Sinclair) foot and to the utter surprise of her step-

mother (Chloe Caplan) and stepsisters (Juliet Biscotti and Jessica Zimmerman) — it fits.

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Places To Go ... Things To Do ...

DECEMBER

13 & 15

WHITE HAVEN CHRISTMAS CANTATA

This year's White Haven Community Choir will be ushering hearts into the Christmas season with a dynamic musical performance, *He Shall Be Called*, under new Choir Director, Nate Spanos. Spanos is leading this year's choir in a musical that is filled with praise and has a touch of the traditional carols that many know and love as well as contemporary worship songs.

Performances will be held Friday night **December 13** at 7 p.m. and Sunday afternoon **December 15** at 3 p.m. Admission is free and childcare is

provided.

The Community Choir members are from five local White Haven churches including the White Haven United Methodist Church, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church of White Haven, St. Patrick's Parish, and Mountainview Community Church.

Mountainview Community Church is located at 5126 N. Lehigh Gorge Drive, White Haven between White Haven and Weatherly.

DECEMBER 14

COOKIE WALK

St. Jude youth group is planning its annual cookie walk again this year. The popular event will be held **Saturday**,

December 14 from 9 a.m. to noon in the school cafeteria. Anyone wanting to bake cookies can drop them off on Friday, **December 13** from 4 to 7 p.m. in the cafeteria.

COOKIE SALE

The Nuangola Library is hosting its annual cookie sale on **Saturday, December 14** from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the library located at 5150 Nuangola Road in Nuangola. No baking required! Just stop by and select your Christmas cookies from a variety of homemade holiday treats at only \$8 per pound. Need to decorate for the holidays? No problem there will be a variety of festive poinsettias and wreaths from Old Post Farm. There will

be plenty of unique gift ideas from many local vendors and artisans selling a variety of gifts and stocking stuffers. Stop by and make your holidays easier!

SPIRITS FOR YOUR SPIRIT

Please join the Mountain Top Welcome club on **Saturday December 14** from 5-8 p.m. for Spirits for your Spirit. This event is free and open to the public. The Welcome Club will provide free food and a cash bar will be available.

Join them for a fun evening to have your cards read by a medium, get a massage, purchase clean living and holistic products from vendors.

This event is smoke free and

at the Broadway Tavern at the top of the mountain, Route 309 in Mountain Top.

They are still welcoming vendors. Please contact Pam McGovern at pam.mcgovern@century21.com for more information.

CHINESE AUCTION & CRAFT SALE

On **December 14** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Slocum Methodist Church on Blue Ridge Trail in Mountain Top will host its annual Christmas open house, craft sale and Chinese auction.

The church will be decorated as it was in the early 1900s.

See Places To Go, page 5



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Into The Woods ...

Continued from page 1

Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk and Cinderella and weave them into a musical tale that included a baker and the baker's wife who cannot have children after being cursed by the witch next door because his father stole her magic beans. The show takes the audience on an imaginative journey exploring what happened after "happily ever after." Social and moral lessons are learned as the characters realize there are consequences for their actions and the power of community and shared sacrifice.

The cast was truly an ensemble — each complimenting the other with their passionate vocals along with their energetic and enthusiastic performances.

Into the Woods was directed by Mary Catherine Leo, who was also the Musical Director; Joseph Ziegler directed the orchestra; Amanda Zavacky was the costume designer and Sara Mascelli was the student choreographer. There was also a 17 piece orchestra and a stage crew of nearly 20 that included the backstage crew, light, spotlight and sound tech-



The Mysterious Man (Jack Pollock) turns out to be the Baker's (Alex Elsasser) father and accuses him of running from his own guilt.



Above: As the second act begins, the company sings *So Happy — Living Happily Ever After*, but circumstances are about to change.

At right: Rapunzel (Erin Barno) declares that she is no longer a child and wants to go out into the world. The Witch (Sara Mascelli) is furious, cuts off most of her golden locks and banishes her.

Mountain Peaks/Norberta Kosin photos




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Places To Go ... Things To Do ...

Continued from page 2

There will be skilled crafters with their handmade crafts at this event.

There will be a huge Chinese auction with over 100 different prizes. The auction will feature many diverse items such as Christmas decorations, new items and vintage items from the near and distant past,

home decor and gift cards.

There will be homemade food including wimpies, pork barbecue and hot dogs with sauerkraut and chili. There will also be pierogies, halushki and a variety of homemade soups including seafood, chili and vegetable for your enjoyment. Goodies such as homemade cookies, cakes, pies and candies will also be available.

DECEMBER 14 & 15 CHRISTMAS TREE SALE AND SANTA VISIT

The Mountain Top Hose Co. #1 will host its 2nd annual Christmas event which includes visit/photos with Santa and a Christmas tree sale the week-end of December 14 and 15 at the bazaar grounds behind the

firehouse building. The hours are 11 a.m.-2 p.m. each day. Santa will be in his red sleigh that members built for him last year for photo opportunities. Bring your camera to create family memories.

A light menu, including hot dogs for sure and most likely potato pancakes, will be available. Hot beverages will be offered also.

This year they will also have available larger trees as many asked for them last year. The trees will be 5'-7' in height. Pricing has not been finalized, however know that the trees will be as affordable as possible to help assure that anyone who wants a live tree will be able to have one for Christmas.

If you would like to reserve a tree or have any questions, please contact Jared Aigeldinger at 570-239-3393.

Sunday after 2 p.m. Santa will tour Fairview Township subdivisions in a fire truck. Stops will be made to greet the children. On the day of the parade, the sounding of sirens and horns will announce Santa's approaching. The parade route is as follows: Leave station at 2 p.m., turn left onto SR309 S., left onto N. Main Street, left onto Gracedale Avenue, Stop #1 Cavanaugh's parking lot, right onto Woodlawn Avenue, right onto Kirby Avenue, left onto Farmhouse Road, left onto Pine Tree Road, right onto Valley Lane, right onto Farmhouse Road, left onto Longmeadow Lane, right onto Highland Road, Stop #2 Longmeadow Lane and Highland Road, left onto Kirby Avenue, right onto Greystone Drive, left onto Fieldstone Way, left onto Greystone Drive, stop #3 Greystone Drive and Circle Drive, left onto Autumn Court, left onto Valley View Drive, left onto Park Lane, stop #4 Park Lane and Deerpath Drive, cross Kirby Avenue onto Fairview Park, stop #5 Fairview Park at basketball courts; straight on Summit Road to Spruce Street, stop #6 Summit Road and Spruce Street, right onto Spruce Street, left onto SR309 S, left onto Gar-

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Active Adult Centers sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties offer hot noon meals Monday through Friday to people age 60 and over.

If you did not order a lunch and would like one, call the center at 570-868-8517 to check for any cancellations.

Week of December 16

Monday: Pork & pea carbonara, whole wheat spaghetti, Italian vegetable blend, margarine, fruit salad, milk and coffee

Tuesday: Cheeseburger on whole wheat sandwich roll, ketchup, carrot raisin salad, french onion soup, margarine, orange, milk and coffee

Wednesday: Ranch baked chicken, mashed sweet potatoes, green & wax beans, whole wheat dinner roll, margarine, pineapple, milk and coffee

Thursday: Herbed roast pork, sauteed cabbage with noodles, dilled carrots, crackers, margarine, fresh cantaloupe, milk and coffee

Friday: Mustard baked fish with dill, potatoes au gratin, broccoli, whole wheat dinner roll, margarine, oatmeal raisin cookie, milk and coffee

Week of December 23

Monday: Roast turkey, bread stuffing, green bean casserole, roasted carrots & parsnips, margarine, pumpkin mousse, milk and coffee

Tuesday: Whole wheat spaghetti with meat sauce, garlic spinach, minestrone soup, margarine, pineapple, milk and coffee

Wednesday: Center closed for Christmas

Thursday: Turkey Diane, mashed potatoes, brussels sprouts medley, whole wheat dinner roll, margarine, apple bread pudding, milk and coffee

fee

Friday: Cranberry glazed pork loin, butternut squash, brussels sprouts, whole wheat dinner roll, margarine, cinnamon

baked apples with dried cranberries, milk and coffee

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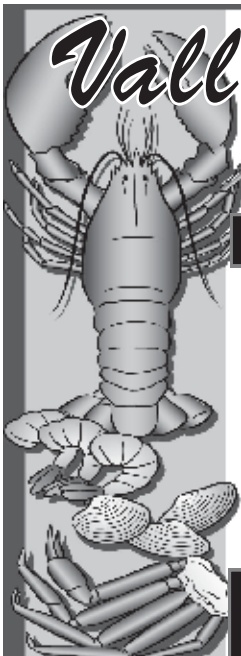
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Crestwood Menu

Elementary Schools

Breakfast available daily. Available daily: peanut butter and jelly sandwich, assorted deli sandwiches and wraps.

Week of December 16

Monday: Toasted cheese sandwich or chicken nuggets, choice of bread or roll; fea-

tured veggies: tomato soup, tater tots, choice of fruit and milk

Tuesday: Walking taco, tortilla chips or cheeseburger on a bun; featured veggies: refried beans, pudding cup with lunch, choice of fruit and milk

Wednesday: Breaded chicken fries with roll or hot dog on

a bun; featured veggies: green beans, cucumber slices, choice of fruit and milk

Thursday: Holiday meal: roasted turkey with gravy, cranberry sauce, dinner roll; featured veggies: au gratin potatoes, steamed corn, holiday treat, choice of fruit and milk

Friday: Mini corn dog nuggets or stuffed crust pizza; featured veggies: sweet potato fries, corn salad, choice of fruit

and milk

Week of December 23

Monday: No school — Christmas break

Tuesday: No school — Christmas break

Wednesday: No school — Christmas break

Thursday: No school — Christmas break

Friday: No school — Christmas break

Secondary Campus

Breakfast available daily.

Grill line open daily with cheeseburgers, chicken patties, grilled chicken and pizza.

Assorted salads, wraps and sandwiches available daily.

Week of December 16

Monday: Turkey pot pie in a bread bowl or chicken nuggets with a dinner roll; featured veggies: au gratin potatoes, cherry tomatoes, choice of fruit and milk

Tuesday: Chicken wing bar with choice of sauce and roll or chicken parmesan on a bun; featured veggies: seasoned fries, celery and bleu cheese, choice of fruit and milk

Wednesday: Hot ham and cheese on a pretzel roll or meatball hoagie on a roll; featured veggies: green peas, Caesar salad, choice of fruit and milk

Thursday: Holiday meal: roasted turkey with gravy, cranberry sauce, traditional stuffing; featured veggies: mashed potatoes, steamed corn, holiday treat, choice of fruit and milk

Friday: National fried shrimp day: bangin' shrimp tacos or Italian stromboli; featured veggies: refried beans, fresh pico de gallo, choice of fruit and milk

Week of December 23

Monday: No school — Christmas break

Tuesday: No school — Christmas break

Wednesday: No school — Christmas break

Thursday: No school — Christmas break

Friday: No school — Christmas break

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American Legion hosts Christmas party for veterans

The American Legion Post 781 in Mountain Top hosted its annual Christmas party and luncheon for the veterans from the Veteran's Administration and veterans from throughout the area.

There was live music and karaoke was provided by Carol Jean Davis and JT as well as veteran Carl Alber from Mountain Top.

Dinner was a delicious turkey dinner with all the fixings, rolls, desserts and beverages.

Employees from First National Community Bank were on hand to assist the veterans with their meals.

The event is organized and held by members of the American Legion, the



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

Karen Kalie, left, from the FNCB Berwick and Laurie Nudo of FNCB Mountain Top enjoy a little comic moment with veteran John J. Wrazien.

American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion. There was a visit from Santa Claus and gift bags were given

to all the veterans from the VA. Some and bingo was played by all following the luncheon.

Cavanaugh's Grille supports Marine Corps Toys for Tots



Cavanaugh's Grille once again is supporting the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. This year's event in support of Marine Corps League 1039, will be held Friday, December 13 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Complimentary pizza and wings will be provided for those who wish to donate an unwrapped gift or \$10 cash. From left are, Jamie Antosh, Cavanaugh's, Tim Janosco and Paul Dixon, Marine Corps League 1039; Kevin Foley, Cavanaugh's.



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Making decorations naturally at NSP

Nescopeck State Park held its annual Christmas Naturally on Friday, December 6 from 3 to 7 p.m. The fun event was all about make and take decorations, families and friends coming

together to create one-of-a-kind tree ornaments and holiday decorations using a variety of natural items such as pine cones, milkweed pods and other natural items.



Seven-year-old Gavin McAlarney, 7, gets some help from his dad Keith pouring paint into a clear plastic ball. They are trying a new way to color the clear balls rather than painting the outside.



Olivia Darraugh colors a birdhouse decoration.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

Connor McAlarney, 7, works on his own special decoration using a variety of items.

Learning is delicious in St. Jude art class

Part of the fun of the new Saint Jude School STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art and Math) initiative is that you can eat your class projects! Students in Mrs. Correll's art class recently enjoyed an afternoon of measurement, baking and decorating as they studied about the Mexican holiday of Day of the Dead. Students discussed the symbols used in Day of the Dead works of art and decorations as they created mini works of art on their cookie creations.



Eighth graders Jenna Medvetz and Addison Burick show off their culinary skills.

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Places To Go ... Things To Do ...

Continued from page 5

den Avenue, right onto Wilkes Lane, right onto Hemlock Terrace, stop #7 Hemlock Terrace / Wilkes Lane / Bow Creek Drive, continue on Hemlock Terrace, left onto Cedar Manor, stop #8 Cedar Manor Drive and Shady Tree Drive, right onto Shady Tree Lane, stop #9 Fairview Elementary Driveway, right onto Spruce Street, stop #10 Spruce Street and Bradley Drive, left onto Kirby Avenue, left onto SR309 S, bear right onto S. Main Street, right onto Lee Avenue, right onto Woodland Avenue, right onto Woodcrest Avenue, stop #11 Woodland Avenue and Woodcrest Avenue, continue on Woodcrest Avenue, left onto S. Main Street, bear left onto SR309 N, left onto Sherwood Drive, left onto Robbins Way (continue around), left onto Sherwood Drive, stop #12 Robbins Way and Sherwood Drive, continue

on Sherwood Drive, left onto SR309 N. concluding between 4:30 and 4:45 and return to station for Santa's departure!

DECEMBER 15 HOLIDAY ROLL SALE

The Altar and Rosary Society of St. Mary's Church, Wapwalopen is conducting a holiday roll sale. The rolls are \$7 each and are available in apricot, nut, poppy, prune, raspberry, and raspberry cream. Prepaid orders may be placed in the collection or by calling Susan at 570-868-6983. Final orders are due by **December 15** and delivery will be Saturday, December 21 after 12 noon. They will be in the meeting room at the rear of the rectory.

CRESTWOOD SENIOR CITIZEN HOLIDAY BREAKFAST

Crestwood School District would like to invite senior citi-

zens (age 60 +) from the Greater Mountain Top Area to enjoy a complementary breakfast and some holiday cheer on **Sunday, December 15** from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Crestwood Secondary Campus, South Cafe.

Buffet style menu includes scrambled eggs with toast, breakfast sausage, crispy bacon, hash brown potatoes and assorted pastries, coffee and tea. The breakfast also includes a made-to-order omelet station.

Additional guests are welcome. Adults \$6; students \$3 (children 5 and under eat free).

DECEMBER 17 MT. TOP CARES MEETING

Mt. Top Cares meets on the third Tuesday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Christ United Methodist Church, 175 S. Main Road in Mountain Top.

The next meeting is **December 17**.

Mt. Top Cares is a support group for those who have been affected by a loved ones substance use disorder.

For more information email mttopcares19@gmail.com or call 570-262-3793.

DECEMBER 21 BIRD SEMINAR AT NESCOPECK STATE PARK

On **Saturday, December 21**, Nescopeck State Park will host Birds and Beans from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. No registration necessary.

Join them anytime in the four-hour time frame to hone your bird identification skills on visitors to the bird feeders while enjoying a hot beverage such as tea, hot cocoa, or bird-friendly coffee.

Park staff will be on hand to answer questions about bird identification, selecting a bird

field guide, winter bird feeding, and other birdy interests you may have. This is a program for all ages with some crafty activities for the kids as well. Take a break from the holiday rush ... come on out and watch birds with them!

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park or make inquiries through the Pennsylvania AT&T Relay Service at 1-888-537-7294 (TTY).

Bureau of State Parks Staff will gladly discuss how to accommodate your needs. With at least three days notice, interpreters for people who are deaf or hard of hearing are available for educational programs.

For more information on any of Pennsylvania's 121 state parks visit DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us (choose

See Places To Go, page 12



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Places To Go ... Things To Do ...

Continued from page 10

Find a Park) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS.

DECEMBER 21 & 28

SAUERKRAUT SALE

On Saturday, December 21 and December 28 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Emmanuel UCC is holding a homemade sauerkraut sale available to purchase for your holiday meals. The sauerkraut will be sold by the quart for \$4.50 no limits.

Emmanuel UCC is located in Dorrance Township at the end of Alberdeen Road. Please call the church office at 570-868-5675 will any questions.

DECEMBER 27 FOOD FUNDRAISER

The American Cancer Society Telethon Committee is sponsoring a food fundraiser to help ease the stress of the holidays. Consider taking a break from the kitchen in January by participating in the American Cancer Society-Greater Hazleton Unit Capriotti's food fundraiser.

You can order 5 lbs. of frozen chicken fingers for \$26, 25 frozen meatballs for \$16, 4 dozen frozen pierogies for \$26 and/or one 9" frozen stromboli for 7.25, keep them in the freezer and just pop them in the oven or on the stove when you need a little extra help.

Order from an ACS Telethon Committee member or call 570-459-1212. Orders are due Friday, December 27 and payment to the American Cancer Society is due with the order.

Your order must be picked up at The First Presbyterian Church, 201 W. Broad Street, Hazleton on Wednesday, January 8, 2020, between 4-6 p.m.

Christmas cantata showcases traditional carols with contemporary worship

This year's White Haven Community Choir will be ushering hearts into the Christmas season with a dynamic musical performance, *He Shall Be Called*, under new Choir Director, Nate Spanos. Spanos is leading this year's choir in a musical that is filled with praise and has a touch of the traditional carols that many know and love as well as contemporary worship songs.

Last year, Spanos worked under the leadership of outgoing Choir Director, Joyce Hergert and he formally stepped into the new role this past September. Hergert led the White Haven Choir for over

10 years and it has become a Christmas tradition for the local community with over 500 people in attendance throughout the weekend. Hergert is "passing the torch" to Spanos and sees Spanos' music education and training as a great next step for longevity of the Christmas Cantata and for taking the choir to the next level.

Performances will be held Friday night December 13 at 7 p.m. and Sunday afternoon December 15 at 3 p.m. Admission is free and childcare is provided.

The Community Choir members are from five local White Haven churches including the



Choir Director, Nate Spanos practices for the cantata.

White Haven United Methodist Church, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church of White Haven, St. Patrick's Parish, and Moun-

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Concert for Rebecca raises domestic violence awareness

The 9th annual Concert for Rebecca and all victims of domestic violence was held on Friday, November 29 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. at Sand Springs Country Club in Drums.

Terry Renninger and his wife, Teresa, of Mountain Top, started the concert in 2010 in honor of their daughter Rebecca who was murdered June 19, 2009 by her estranged husband. The couple holds the free concerts every year to raise awareness about domestic violence and hopefully inspire others who

See Concert, page 14



Terry Renninger receives a check for \$1,254.19 from his daughter Michelle Dattisman and her sons Johan and Hudson. Michelle raised the money on her own.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

The room fills with people in support of the awareness of domestic violence and the Renninger family.



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Concert ...

Continued from page 13

are in abusive situations to get the help they need.

Music was provided by Don Shappelle & The Pickups Band with national music artist Craig Thatcher; John Lukas and Amanda King. The keynote speaker this year was D.A. Stefanie Salavantis. Tammy Rodgers of the Domestic Violence Service Center and Pat Rushton representing Victim's Resource Center gave inspiring speeches on the signs of domestic abuse and the importance of speaking up about things we can see or hear concerning domestic

abuse.

The banquet room was filled with more people this year than previous years. Every year more and more people come out in support of this very good cause and the Renninger family. Admission was free as always and all donations will be sent to the Domestic Violence Service Center and the Victim's Resource Center.

The Domestic Abuse hotline for Victims Resource Center in Luzerne County is 570-823-0765 and for Domestic Violence Service Center the phone number is 570-823-7312 or toll free at 800-424-5600.



Rebecca Renninger



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

Longtime friend of the Renninger family, Janet Zimmerman picks and chooses from the many raffle items available.



Pat Rushton speaks to the crowd on the importance of speaking up if you see abuse, if you hear jokes that are not appropriate against women and calling the appropriate authorities if you see someone hurting someone.



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Santa Claus makes a stop at the Kirby Library to the delight of the children

The Marian Sutherland Kirby Library hosted a special visitor, Santa Claus, at the Library on Tuesday, December 3 at 6 p.m.

Children were lined up to have a special visit with Santa and tell him what they would like for Christmas this year.

Shane East took photos of the special moments and everyone received a photo for a small donation to the library. There were crafts and refreshments in the community room for those not in a hurry to leave the festivities.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos
Kroy Cariot, 6, listens to Santa ask him what he would like for Christmas.



JT Kosmach, 3 and his big sister Emilyn, 6, tell Santa what they want for Christmas. JT is in awe as Santa talks to him.



Gabby Grimm, 6, came to see Santa Claus with her doll who is smartly dressed the same as she is.



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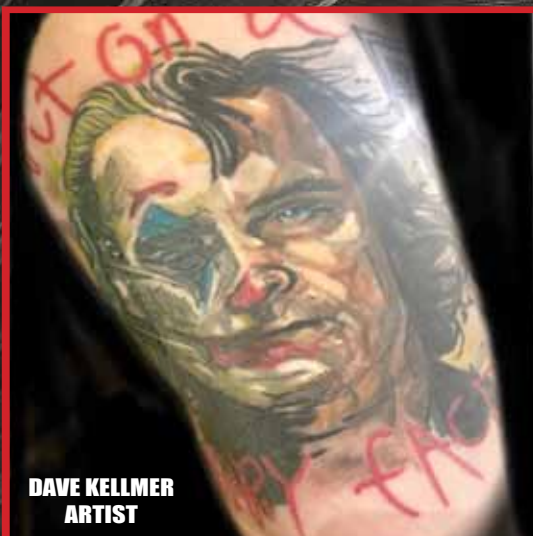
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Seniors enjoy tree trimming at Active Adult Center in Mountain Top

The Active Adult Center located at Wright Manor in Mountain Top decorated its indoor Christmas tree on Tuesday, December 3 at 11 a.m. before lunch was served. Joanne Shaffer and Helen Raduta, both members of the center, spent time decorating the center, for members and visitors who come for lunch.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

Joan Hoover finds the perfect spot to hang an angel for all to see when entering the center.



Otto Eime finds a great spot to hang an ornament.



Phyllis and Thomas Podolak take a minute to put some decorations on the tree.



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St. Jude scouts take part in Feed-A-Friend

St. Jude Parish BSA Troop 60 and Cub Scouts Pack 60 took part in Scouting for Food to provides non-perishable food items for the 35 annual Feed-a-Friend campaign in Mountain Top.

Along with other local Boy Scouts of America units, the Scouts distributed door hangers to homes announcing the food drive on November 16 and picked up the food on November 23.



Pictured from left are some of the scouts who participated in the food drive, Michael Grandzol, Colette Grandzol, Clare Grandzol, William Rutala, RJ Williams, Hayden Fleegle, Quintin Sar-

tori, Cayden Sartori, Aiden Eigenbrod, Liam Truschel, Steven Rowlands, Harrison Vasek, Raymond Mazur, Collin Brenner, Jack Truschel IV, and Samuel Amandola.

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Local clubs light tree at Triangle



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

At the tree lighting, from left are Kiwanis members Chris and Debby Payne, Kiwanis and Welcome Club member Allison Latagliata, Welcome Club member Cindy Elliott and her husband Ed Elliott, Rotary Club mem-

ber Claudia Vitiello, Welcome Club member Shannon Williams, Kiwanis Club member Brian McLaughlin, Rotary Club member John Karyuck and Rotary Club member Shane East.

The annual tree lighting at the Triangle was held on Saturday, November 30 at 5 p.m.

The event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Mountain Top, The Rotary Club of Mountain Top and the Welcome Club of Mountain Top.

It was chilly the night before the ice and snowstorm was to arrive, but members of all clubs came out to decorate and light the tree. After the tree was lit everyone went to Cavanaugh's to have a Get Lit Party to celebrate the Christmas season.



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SOCIAL SECURITY: WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AT AGE 62?

Is 62 your lucky number? If you're eligible, that's the earliest age you can start receiving Social Security retirement benefits. If you decide to start collecting benefits before your full retirement age, you'll have company. According to the Social Security Administration (SSA), approximately 71% of Americans elect to receive their Social Security benefits early. (Source: SSA Annual Statistical Supplement, 2017, released March 2018)

Although collecting early retirement benefits makes sense for some people, there's a major drawback to consider: if you start collecting benefits early, your monthly retirement benefit will be permanently reduced. So before you put down the tools of your trade and pick up your first Social Security check, there are some factors you'll need to weigh before deciding whether to start collecting benefits early.

What will your retirement benefit be?

Your Social Security retirement benefit is based on the number of years you've been working and the amount you've earned. Your benefit is calculated using a formula that takes into account your 35 highest earnings years. If you earned little or nothing in several of those years (if you left the workforce to raise a family, for instance), it may be to your advantage to work as long as possible, because you'll have the opportunity to replace a year of lower earnings with a higher one, potentially resulting in a higher retirement benefit.

If you begin collecting retirement benefits at age 62, each monthly benefit check will be 25% to 30% less than it would be at full retirement age. The exact amount of the reduction will depend on the year you were born. (Conversely, you can get a higher payout by delaying retirement past your full retirement age — the government increases your payout every month that you delay retirement, up to age 70.)

However, even though your monthly benefit will be 25% to 30% less if you begin collecting retirement benefits at age 62, you might receive the same or more total lifetime Social Security benefits as you would have had you waited until full retirement age to start collecting benefits. That's because even though you'll receive less money per month, you might receive more benefit checks.

The following chart shows how much an estimated \$1,000 monthly benefit at full retirement age would be worth if you started taking a reduced benefit at age 62.

Birth Year	Full Retirement Age	Benefit
1955	66 years, 2 months	\$741
1956	66 years, 4 months	\$733
1957	66 years, 6 months	\$725
1958	66 years, 8 months	\$716
1959	66 years, 10 months	\$708

1960 or later	67 years	\$700
Source: Social Security Administration		

If you want to estimate the amount of Social Security benefits you will be eligible to receive in the future under current law (based on your earnings record) you can use the SSA's Retirement Estimator. It's available at the SSA website at ssa.gov. You can also sign up for a my Social Security account to view your online Social Security Statement at the SSA website. Your statement contains a detailed record of your earnings, as well as estimates of retirement, survivor, and disability benefits. If you're not registered for an online account and are not yet receiving benefits, you'll receive a statement in the mail every year, starting at age 60.

Have you thought about your longevity?

Is it better to take reduced benefits at age 62 or full benefits later? The answer depends, in part, on how long you live. If you live longer than your "break-even age," the overall value of your retirement benefits taken at full retirement age will begin to outweigh the value of reduced benefits taken at age 62.

You'll generally reach your break-even age about 12 years from your full retirement age. For example, if your full retirement age is 66, you should reach your break-even age at 78. If you live past this age, you'll end up with higher total lifetime benefits by waiting until full retirement age to start collecting. However, unless you're able to invest your benefits rather than use them for living expenses, your break-even age is probably not the most important part of the equation. For many people, what really counts is how much they'll receive each month, rather than how much they'll accumulate over many years.

Of course, no one can predict exactly how long they'll live. But by taking into account your current health, diet, exercise level, access to quality medical care, and family health history, you might be able to make a reasonable assumption.

How much income will you need?

Another important piece of the puzzle is to look at how much retirement income you'll need, based partly on an estimate of your retirement expenses. If there is a large gap between your projected expenses and your anticipated income, waiting a few years to retire and start collecting Social Security benefits may improve your financial outlook.

If you continue to work and wait until your full retirement age to start collecting benefits, your Social Security monthly benefit will be larger. What's more, the longer you stay in the workforce, the greater the amount of money you will earn and have available to put into your overall retirement savings. Another

plus is that Social Security's annual cost-of-living increases are calculated using your initial year's benefits as a base — the higher the base, the greater your annual increase.

Will your spouse be affected?

When to begin receiving Social Security is more complicated when you're married. The age at which you begin receiving benefits may significantly affect the amount of lifetime income you and your spouse receive, as well as the benefit the surviving spouse will be entitled to, so you'll need to consider how your decision will affect your joint retirement plan.

Do you plan on working after age 62?

Another key factor in your decision is whether or not you plan to continue working after you start collecting Social Security benefits at age 62. That's because income you earn before full retirement age may reduce your Social Security retirement benefit. Specifically, if you are under full retirement age for the entire year, \$1 in benefits will be withheld for every \$2 you earn over the annual earnings limit (\$17,640 in 2019).

Example: You start collecting Social Security benefits at age 62. You continue working, and your job pays \$30,000 in 2019. Your annual benefit would be reduced by \$6,180 (\$30,000 minus \$17,640, divided by 2).

Note: If your monthly benefit is reduced in the short term due to your earnings, you'll receive a higher monthly benefit later. That's because the SSA recalculates your benefit when you reach full retirement age, and omits the months in which your benefit was reduced.

Other considerations

In addition to the factors discussed here, other financial considerations may influence whether you start collecting Social Security benefits at age 62. How do other sources of retirement income factor in? Have you considered how your income taxes will be affected?

What about personal considerations? Do you plan on traveling, volunteering, going back to school, starting your own business, pursuing hobbies, or moving to a new location? Do you have grandchildren or elderly parents whom you want to help take care of? Every person's situation is different.

For more information

Social Security rules can be complex. For more information about Social Security benefits, visit the SSA website at ssa.gov, or call (800) 772-1213 to speak with a representative. You may also call or visit your local Social Security office.

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Adopt a Single Mom for Christmas

Project helps make holidays brighter for single moms

Donna Nelson knows what it is like for a single mom to raise a family.

She has dealt with the financial issues faced by a single working mother.

She knows the loneliness, social isolation and depression many single mothers face because they don't have the connection and social outlets that other mothers have with more family and financial resources.

She also understands the pressures on single mothers at the holidays.

So, when she heard about an adopt-a-mom program started by one of her friends in upstate New York to provide gifts to moms at Christmas, she was

inspired to start a similar program in northeastern Pennsylvania. This year, the project will hold its third annual Adopt a Single Mom for Christmas program.

The Adopt a Single Mom (AASM) Project of Northeastern Pennsylvania is a grassroots non-profit organization. Its mission is to create a movement providing direct support to working single moms throughout the year by filling the gaps in their life with a network of resources and support.

The most prevalent gap faced by single mothers, Nelson said, is lack of an adequate support system for social and emotional support, often leaving them feeling isolated, lonely



Donna Nelson

and unsupported.

"They are the families overlooked as needing support by

the community," she offered.

Another gap single working mothers often face, Nelson noted, is a lack of financial stability. "Only about one half of single mothers in our area get child support," Nelson stated. "And that is often inconsistent." As a result, single mothers often must work second and third jobs to keep up the lifestyle they want for themselves and their children.

They are the women, Nelson explained, who lack the financial resources to get through a financial hardship and yet make too much money to receive financial assistance from community and government-funded programs.

Adopt a Single Mom is help-

ing fill in those gaps for single working mothers through community engagement, comprehensive mentorship programming to fill the gaps on real-life challenges of personal well-being, finances, relationships, and career enhancement, and social and emotional enrichment experiences for both mom and children throughout the year.

Community engagement, Nelson explained, provides single working moms with the connection to resources available to them along with opportunities to participate in social events without feeling guilty about spending money

See Adopt, page 23



Happy Holidays!

Don't Have A Silent Night ...

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Adopt ...

Continued from page 22

on themselves.

To help single mothers deal with the stresses of the holiday season, Nelson's project once again is sponsoring the Adopt a Single Mom for Christmas program. The goal of the program is to provide 100 single working mothers with a \$100 Christmas gift. Since single mothers often sacrifice filling their own needs to take care of their children, Nelson emphasized the gift is for the working mother and not for children.

Working mothers who want to apply for a gift can fill out an application on the program's web site, www.adoptasingle-mom.org. Referrals can be made at the same site. "We ask people to tell us their story," she explained. "It doesn't have to be a sob story. Just tell us about your life. Are you working? How many jobs. The number of children you have; their age." Nelson emphasized the Christmas gift project is for working mothers, but they do not ask for documentation.

People can support the Christmas project by donating or volunteering. "We need

Nelson's project once again is sponsoring the Adopt a Single Mom for Christmas program. The goal of the program is to provide 100 single working mothers with a \$100 Christmas gift.

volunteers to shop, wrap and deliver gifts," she explained. Shopping is done at Boscov's. "We pick out what gifts we buy.

We buy a lot of 'comfort stuff' for our moms," she noted. Opportunities to donate or volunteer are also on the web site. She noted volunteers are needed throughout the year. "We can use babysitters throughout the year, she explained.

Besides the Christmas project, Nelson is planning other efforts to support and empower single mothers. She is planning a 10-month empowerment/mentorship program called Thrive, a structured program focusing on careers, healthy relationships and individual health and well-being.

She, along with volunteers, is planning a community

resource event for January 14. The event will help participants identify possible new career opportunities along with resources available in the community. She said Career Ling, various employers, and social service agencies have agreed to participate. She commended the employers and agencies for agreeing to participate in the event to be held in the evening. "Our moms are working. They don't have the opportunity to go to agencies that are open 8 to 4 or 9 to 5," she explained.

Information on all Adopt a Single Mom programs is available on its web site and Facebook page.

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Wilkes student Richard Supkowski presents engineering senior project

Wilkes University mechanical engineering student Richard Supkowski of Mountain Top presented a senior project on November 23. The event was attended by faculty, friends and family. Engineering students in the University's College of Science and Engineering are required to complete a senior project as part of the requirements to complete their degrees.

Supkowski was part of the student team who worked on the project, entitled *Zephair Drones*. The students created a self-stabilizing drone for the delivery of motion sensitive packages.

Supkowski worked with faculty advisor Jamal Ghorieshi, professor of mechanical engineering, and Yong Zhu, associate professor of mechanical engineering.

Crestwood school board holds ceremonial ribbon cutting at field house

The Crestwood school board recognized its late member Joseph Kaminski at a ceremonial ribbon cutting of its new field house on Friday, November 29.

Kaminski's widow, Sue Kaminski was given the honor of cutting the ribbon along with their son, Josh.

Board members said Sue Kaminski was asked to cut the ribbon to recognize the efforts of her late husband in bringing about the building.

School board president Bill Jones said the approximately \$4 million building is nearing completion and the board wanted to recognize Kaminski for his dedication to the district and the project.

The new two-story field house is located behind the high school near the football field.

"Joe, he was really dedicated to making Crestwood a top school not only in the area but the state," Jones said of Kaminski. "He was a great board member who would always listen to both sides and then decide. But most of all he was a true gentleman and was great friend and cared deeply about are students and taxpayers."

The Kaminski family was joined at the ribbon cutting by school board members Bill Jones, president; James Costello, vice president; Maureen McGovern, secretary; Randy Swank, treasurer; Al Miller, Bill Thomas, Anna Hollock Bibla, Barry Boone and Ron Sturgeon. Also present were superintendent Robert Mehalick, solicitor Jack Dean, John Gorham, secondary principal for student affairs. Head football coach Ryan Archangeli also attended along with several football players.



Sue Kaminski and her son Josh cut the ribbon of the new Crestwood High School field house. School district officials at the ribbon cutting included solicitor Jack Dean, Barry Boone, Randy Swank and Al Miller, board members; superintendent Robert Mehalick, secondary principal for student affairs John Gorham, Bill Jones, school board president, Ron Sturgeon, Anna Hollock Bibla, James Costello, Bill Thomas and Maureen McGovern, board members.

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Happy Birthday

Mandy West will celebrate her 8th birthday on December 12. Mandy attends Fairview Elementary in Mountain Top and is in the second grade.



Members of American Legion pack Christmas boxes for Troop overseas

Members of the American Legion Post 781 and Auxiliary Unit 781 Mountain Top packed Christmas boxes for troops overseas on Saturday, December 7 beginning at 2 p.m. at the post home.

It is always a lot of work to organize the event but is also very rewarding knowing that many of our troops will have something to open for the Christmas holiday.

Before the boxes were packed members of the Legion and Auxiliary collected and sorted many personal, food, drink and goodie items that were donated by the community.

Last year 121 packages were sent, and the cost of postage was approximately \$3,000.00. This year will be the same.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

Above: Auxiliary member Audrey Tkatch packs one of over a hundred boxes to be sent overseas to our troops.

At right: Sharon Gancarcik, Auxiliary member, packs a box with some candy for a lucky service member overseas.



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We've Got Mail ...

Thanks for making Feed A Friend successful

Dear Editor,

This year's Feed A Friend project was a huge success thanks to the help of so many caring and giving Mt. Top area businesses, groups, and individuals. We were able to provide the fixings for a Thanksgiving meal to 107 Mt. Top area families. Meals included all of the traditional items such as a turkey, cranberry sauce, canned vegetables, stuffing, potatoes, gravy, as well as fresh foods such as carrots, celery, onions, and potatoes. We were also able to provide eggs, milk, bread, and butter. The families also had the choice of either an apple or a pumpkin pie.

It takes many volunteers to make it all possible. It is not possible to thank everyone individually; however, there are a few that were instrumental in making the project a success. Kara at Carone's Market, thank you for dealing with basically everything associated with our fresh food purchase and dealing with my many phone calls. Carone's Market for great prices on the items we needed and selling/collecting numerous bags of food to fill our barrels. Thank you also to Carone's for the monetary donation to the project and being instrumental in getting Bimbo Bakeries to donate all the bread. Weis Markets thank you for the donation of paper bags and baked goods. The Boy Scouts under the direction of Mike Hill for picking up donations and delivering them to St. Paul's. William Lassiter thank you for picking up and delivering the turkeys to St. Paul's for distribution. To all the businesses who allowed us to put a money canister on their counter, or a food box

in their business, and to the people who filled them up, we thank you. Thank you to all the groups who ran food drives and helped us sort all the food. Thank you to the folks and groups who provided large cash donations. Please know that no deed went unnoticed, no matter how small. You have all in some way helped make Thanksgiving better for many of our neighbors in need. In addition, the Mountain Top food bank shelves have been stocked with over 13,000 pounds of food. God bless you all and may you all have a blessed holiday season.

Kevin and Terry Scott
Feed A Friend coordinators

GFWC thankful to businesses that supported auction

Dear Editor,

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (Mountain Top Chapter) would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all of the following local businesses who generously contributed goods and services for our recent Craft Auction, held on November, 17th 2019:

10X Fitness, Kings Pizza, 3 Guys Restaurant, Komaqi Sushi & Chinese Food, Abe's Hot Dogs, La Napoli Restaurant, Adelina's Restaurant and Pizzeria, Lowes, Auntie Lizzies, Michaels, Barry's Floral Shop, Inc., Milk House Creamery, Boxes & Bows, Gifts and More, Mohegan Sun Arena/WBS Penguins, Butcher Bob's, Mountain

Top Eagle, Chalet Restaurant, P & D Pet Supply, Kozy Cup, Sand Springs Country Club, Crestwood Pharmacy, Sand Springs Top Grill, Crystal Nails, Soul Shine, Design Works by Dawn & Ivy, Steinbrenner Auto Sales, George Burger & Sons, Steve Shannon Automotive, Gino's Shoe Store, Triangle Pharmacy, Honey Hole Winery, Weis Markets, Junie G's, Zolli Hair Studio.

Their donations enabled the GFWC to continue our mission of dedication to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.

GFWC clubs and clubwomen are the fabric that binds not

only the Federation, but the communities in which they live and work.

Thank you all again, and we look forward to your continued support in 2020 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Gaylene Hunter,

President GFWC

Laura Fontenova,

Auction Chairperson

Leigh Michel,

Auction Co-Chairperson

Letter to the editor policy

Mountain Peaks welcomes your thoughts on any subject or issue.

All letters must be signed to be published. Email your letters to publisher@mt-peaks.com or mail to Mountain Peaks, P.O. Box 218, Mountain Top, PA 18707.



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Santa Claus makes a stop to visit children in Slocum

The Slocum Township Volunteer Fire Co. held its annual children's Christmas party on Sunday, December 8 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the fire hall. The children enjoyed pizza, hot dogs and other

snacks and beverages. Each child was able to visit with Santa and tell him what they would like for Christmas. There was live music and Christmas songs to ring in the season.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos
Santa listens carefully as Riley Hudzik, 9, tells him what she would like this year for Christmas.



Connor Davis, 4, whispers all his Christmas wishes in Santa's ear.

Legion family visits nursing homes



Rodney Aton enjoyed the visit from the American Legion family and for the chance to chat with Legion members.

The American Legion Mountain Post 781 family recently paid a visit to Smith Nursing Home and Mt. Top Senior Care in Mountain Top to visit with resident veterans and hand out a few Christmas gifts. Members of the Legion, the Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion visited with 30 veterans.

We're dumping tons of wishes your way for a

***Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year!***



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Saint Jude Principal List recipients from left: 8th grade students Lainey Conway and Francesca Basalyga, 7th grade student Grace Tedford and 6th grade student Matthew Mascarenhas.

Saint Jude Principal List recipients

Congratulations to the Saint Jude School Principal list recipients. Students must maintain an overall average above a 95 in all subjects.

Local resident and King's senior selected for Model UN Conference in Germany

Mountain Top resident and King's College student Alison Moyer was recently selected to participate in a model UN Conference at the University of Erfurt located in Germany. Moyer will represent Slovakia and serve on the General Assembly Plenary at the conference.

Moyer is a senior economics, Spanish, and philosophy triple major. She is the editor-in-chief of the college's newspaper, "The Crown," managing editor for the college's yearbook, president of the Economics and International Business Club, secretary of the Rotaract Club, and a Writing Center tutor. She is a member of the Sigma Kappa Tau service-based sorority, Student Alumni

Association, and the college literary magazine, "SCOP." Alison is a recipient of the college's faculty scholarship, and a member of the Aquinas Society, Phi Sigma Tau, Omicron Delta Epsilon, Delta Epsilon Sigma, and Alpha Mu Gamma honor societies.

In preparation for the trip, the group of students have been researching topics that have been posed to their assigned committees, and each committee pair has written a position paper that reflects Slovakia's position on

those topics. They have also been strategizing about which other countries will likely be in agreement with their positions.

Prior to the start of the formal sessions, student delegates will participate in cultural tours that will take them to the Point Alpha Memorial, which marked a US observation post on the border between East and West Germany; Wartburg Castle, where Martin Luther translated the Bible into German; and Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



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Distribution center employees in industrial park erect gigantic Christmas tree

Employees of a warehouse/distribution center in the Crestwood Industrial Park are helping to spread Christmas joy in Mountain Top and around the country.

Employees of King of Christmas Trees recently erected a giant Christmas tree in the parking lot of the warehouse located at 333 Crestwood Drive. The tree attracts the attention of passers-by,

but also gives a hint of the work that goes on inside.

Headquartered in Miami, FL, King of Christmas Trees is one of the largest retailers of online Christmas trees in the country. The company began in November 2012 as a small Christmas tree outfit with a vision of providing the highest quality artificial Christmas trees. Since then, the firm has expanded to

create an online store that delivers natural-looking trees to customers all around the country. The Mountain Top distribution center is one of three the company operates in the United States. Others are located in Houston and Los Angeles.

King of Christmas Trees has a goal of spreading as much joy as possible each holiday season. The Mountain Top warehouse recently shipped a donation of holiday sweaters and Christmas trees to The Sparkle Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a difference in the lives of women and children, especially at the holidays.

In 2017, King of Christmas Trees donated thousands of Christmas trees in Houston to underprivileged families and to those affected by the natural disaster, Hurricane Harvey. In 2018, the company donated to families in Wilmington, NC after hur-



King of Christmas Trees employee Nick Vinson of Ashley is shown standing by the 25-foot high tree he helped erect.

ricane Florence. In addition, it donated to victims of the fires which ravaged Northern California.

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White Haven Area Library holds holiday quilt and craft show

The White Haven Area Community Library hosted its 9th annual Holiday Quilts & Crafts Show on Saturday, December 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event was spread over two venues: the historic DeWitt Homestead, a restored Victorian home circa 1875 located at 231 Wilkes-Barre Street, and the White Haven Area Community Library at 121 Towanda Street.

There were demonstrations of hand quilting by Kathy Oross, fiber spinning by Carol Pirolli, wood crafting by Liam's Luck Wood Crafts, felting by Linda Kistler and Pysanky egg art by Margie Bogash.

A wide assortment of beautiful, interesting, or old quilts, loaned by area residents were on display throughout the beautiful historic homestead.



Pat Rader admires a holiday quilt made by Wanda L. Burchie.

Local crafters and artisans offered a variety of handmade items including knit and crocheted items, wood crafts, pet products, soaps and lotions, jams and jellies, paper crafts, painted glassware, pins, photographic prints, metal art,

wreaths and floral arrangements, painted gourds, pot-pourri, tie dyed creations and many more items for holiday shopping.

Delicious hot cider was served at the DeWitt House and a concession stand offer-



Kathy Nuss watches Carol Pirolli fiber spinning.

Mountain Peaks/
Claudia Strycharz photos

ing homemade soups and delicious baked goods was located at the Engine House. Holiday

gift basket raffle tickets were available for sale at the Engine House.

Happy Holidays!

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[†]To qualify for the \$350 direct deposit offer, account holder must open a new personal checking account at the FNCB Mountain Top branch and set up and receive \$2,000 minimum in direct deposits for two consecutive statement cycles within 120 days of account opening. A qualifying direct deposit is defined as a recurring direct deposit of a paycheck, pension, Social Security or other regular monthly income electronically deposited by an employer or third party agency. [‡]To qualify for the \$150 debit card offer, new account holder must meet the direct deposit qualification and make at least 12 purchase transactions within 120 days of account opening with their FNCB Bank Debit Card. Only debit card transactions processed by merchants and received by the bank as Point-of-Sale (POS) transactions count towards qualifying debit card transactions. Debit card transactions processed by merchants and received by the bank as ATM transactions do not qualify. To be eligible for both offers: the primary account owner may not be or have been a primary or secondary account owner on any checking account with FNCB Bank within the previous six months. Your checking account must remain open in order for you to receive the reward(s), which will be credited to the eligible account within 60 days after all conditions have been met and be labeled "Descriptive Deposit Mountain Top Bonus – DD" for direct deposit and "Descriptive Deposit Mountain Top Bonus – DC" for debit card. Other restrictions may apply. Offer valid as of October 21, 2019 and is subject to change or withdrawal at any time without notice. Customer is responsible for any tax implications. Offer cannot be combined with other promotional offers.



Pictured from left are participants Swati Sharma, Autumn Lont, Richie Lont and Simran Sharma.

Piano students present recital

Piano students of Mary Jane Kotansky presented a recital at Highland Park Senior Living center in Wilkes-Barre on Sunday, October 27. The students entertained the residents with a variety of pieces, which included classical, television and movie themes, as well as some Halloween-themed music.

Participating students include Swati Sharma, Autumn Lont, Richie Lont, Simran Sharma, Hannah Fauerbach, Paige Devlin, Lilah Hilal, Liam Dobash, Sydney Millard, Kira Millard, Anna Morris, Ellie Morris, Keira Shybloski, Jane Yoho, Nevaeh Tidwell, Eva Tidwell, Avery Sherman, Mia Correll, Kia Esfahani, Michael Enochs, Alexis Panzik, Ella Panzik, Kaitlyn Gaughan, Mark Mikle, Alex Marich, Jake Marich, Trinity Cortese, Josh MacDonald, Aidan Brakvatne. The piano studio is located inside EK Fitness in Mountain Top.

Saint Jude classes celebrate Feast of Saint Francis



Pictured with their newly blessed animals are, row 1 seated from left: Lorelai Verni, Lila Millard, Karly Welgosh, Myra Patel, Emma Ackourey, Landon Skutnik and Gracie Holtz; row 2: Avery Hudak, Andrew Petros, Blake Silva, Reba Fetter-

man, Grace Truax, Zachary Stahlnecker, Joseph Gomba; row 3: Kerry Blaum, Henry Arcangeli, Brady Sorber, Amelia Morgan and Melissa Patrick. Standing with the children is Deacon Gene Kovatch.

In October the kindergarten and preschool classes at Saint Jude School learned about Saint Francis and his abiding love of animals. Deacon Gene Kovatch spoke with the children about Saint Francis and taught the children about the act of blessing special objects. He, along with the teachers, helped the children

to make the sign of the cross on their stuffed animals using holy water to bless the toys brought from home.

The Saint Francis stuffed animal blessing is an annual tradition at Saint Jude School, one Deacon Kovatch looks forward to each year.

Wyoming Valley Art League holds third annual Fine Taste, Fine Art fundraiser

Officers and Board Members gathered to welcome approximately 200 guests to the Wyoming Valley Art League's Third Annual *Fine Taste, Fine Art* fundraiser which was held on November 7 at the Circle Centre For The Arts, home of the Wyoming Valley Art League in downtown Wilkes-Barre.

Attendees enjoyed specialties from Le Manhattan Bistro, The Mary Stegmaier Mansion, Jonathan's, Benny Brew Company, Michael Mootz Candies, Istanbul Grill, Franco's, Amberdonia Old World European Bakery, Letts Eat Indian Restaurant, El Zocola Mexican Restaurant, Rodano's, The Luzerne County Community College Culinary Department, Metz Culinary Management, Abide Coffeehouse, The Atrium Restaurant, and Josh Cellars Wines.

The evening was highlighted with acoustic music by The Husty Brothers.



Pictured from left are: 1st row: Patricia McMahon Lacy, Kathleen Kroll, First Vice President; Allison Maslow, Board Secretary; George Brown, Robert R. Husty, Coordinator and Donald Armstrong, President;

2nd row: Karen Natishan, Robert Borwick, Tim Evans, Howard Grossman, and David Nieman; 3rd row: Rodney Kaiser, Christopher O'Donnell, Christopher Lacy, Tony Brooks, and Bill Browne.

St. Paul's Preschool and Playschool welcomes WTVFD

In celebration of Fire Prevention Month in October, St. Paul's Preschool and Playschool at St. Paul's Church in Mountain Top welcomed the Wright Township Fire Department to teach the children about fire safety and how firefighters are community helpers.



The 3 day afternoon preschool class.



The 2 day afternoon preschool class.



The 5 day morning preschool class along with the 2 day playschool class.



The 3 day playschool class.

Immanuel Christian School celebrates 40th anniversary at 4th annual *Dessert Evening of Hope*

Immanuel Christian School celebrated 40 years on Saturday, November 9, at its fall fundraiser, the 4th annual *Dessert Evening of Hope*. They welcomed a large crowd of people into a festively decorated space that included large circular balloons floating above the tables and placemats with personal messages from the students who attend the school. The evening started with tours of the new educational space that they share with Buenas Nuevas/Good News Church on Hemlock Street in downtown Hazleton. One could hear classical music in the background being played by the school strings ensemble consisting of violins, cello, and bass. Attendees networked and viewed artwork and historical yearbooks. High school students served dessert to guests and the Lion and Cub choirs sang an upbeat

version of Psalm 100 in front of a 40th anniversary backdrop. Entertainment was provided by a local improv comedy group called TBD Improv. The improv comedy group members include faculty and staff from Immanuel Christian School.

Event speakers for the evening were Daniel Boehret, 5th and 6th grade teacher and Susan Selby, CEO. Selby said that the 40 year anniversary is "remarkable" and she shared a long list of items for celebration including that the school continues to grow in enrollment, has added an Academic Principal, has a growing Board of Trustees, and has a new educational space. Selby also shared that for the first time ever the Hispanic and non-white population of the school outnumbers the white population. "The opportunity for stu-

dents to have friendships with others from a different cultural background is essential if we are to care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." She closed the evening asking those in attendance to support the mission of the school financially and highlighted a "40 for 40" campaign in honor of the school's 40th anniversary where the school is hoping to gain commitments from 40 people to give \$40 month for 40 months for student scholarships for low-income students. Seventy percent of the students at ICS are low-income families.

Boehret has been teaching at Immanuel Christian School for 36 years and spoke about why faculty and staff have sacrificed so much over the years to serve students in greater Hazleton. He referenced the Good Samaritan Bible story



where a traveler stops to help someone who is bleeding and lying on the side of road and explained that faculty and staff take that scripture to heart. He shared story after story of students he knew who came to Immanuel Christian School over the years seemingly discouraged or beat down, meta-

phorically bleeding, but later grew into people with hope and determination. In sharing about why he and others invest in students, he said, "It wasn't our idea. We were just following the one who stopped to help us," and he encouraged those in attendance to stop and do the same.

Community tree lighting held in Wright Township

Mountain Top On The Move presented a community tree lighting and night of song on Saturday, December 7 beginning at 5 p.m. in front of the Wright Township Municipal Building. The event was sponsored by First Keystone Community Bank. Members of the Fairview Elementary chorus sang several Christmas songs and then Mountain Top's Special Olympic gold medalist Aaron Keller flipped the switch lighting the trees. Christmas caroling commenced and light refreshments were served inside.



Special Olympian Aaron Keller lights the Christmas tree to the delight of everyone attending.

Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos



Above: Members of the Fairview Elementary School choral group perform several Christmas and holiday songs for everyone before the lighting of the tree.



At right: Jacob Elliott, 7, helps himself to a cookie inside after the tree lighting to get warmed up.



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News in Brief ...

Mullery announces \$237,600 in state grants for area

State Rep. Gerald Mullery, D-Luzerne, said the county will benefit from \$237,600 in state grants approved for improving parks and community space for residents and visitors to enjoy.

"This is critical funding which helps us make necessary upgrades and improvements that benefit not only users of the parks, but also

enhance our water supplies to protect the environment," Mullery said.

The three grants and their associated projects are:

White Haven: \$182,600 for the borough's Rail Yard Park development project. Work will include the construction of plaza areas, pedestrian walkways with ADA access, storm-water management measures, fencing, lighting and utilities, and other related improvements.

West Hazleton: \$30,000 for

the borough's 5th Street Playground development project. Plans include installing new play equipment with required safety surfacing, ADA access, landscaping and related improvements.

Wright Township: \$25,000 for its Municipal Park development. Work includes renovation of a pavilion, basketball and tennis courts, new play equipment with safety surfacing, ADA access and other related improvements.

"The park gets a lot of traf-

fic from day cares, schools and youth groups. I am really excited for this and the kids," Wright Township Secretary Pam Heard said.

The grants were awarded through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Community Conservation and Partnerships Program, which provides financial and technical assistance to local governments, river and trail organizations, and trusts, and other nonprofits for planning, acquisition

and development of park, recreation, conservation and greenway projects.

Fire departments urge winter safety

You know what is coming.

Each year fire departments ask you to be prepared and to be cautious in the winter. At home, be sure your heating devices are cleaned and in good shape. Chimneys for wood burning need to be cleaned annually. Furnaces need to be serviced, including an inspection to make sure there are no blockages in chimneys that would cause a carbon monoxide build up in the home. If you are using a plug in heater, plug it directly into an outlet without an extension cord so there is no risk of overheating the cord and causing a fire.

On the outside, keep your walks and driveways clear

See News in Brief, page 36

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News in Brief ...

Continued from page 35

to avoid slipping and falling. This benefits you, the delivery or service people who may be coming to your home and emergency responders should you experience a need for emergency service.

As always, clearing deep snow from a fire hydrant located near your home is important. The hydrant does not have to be directly in front of your home. A hydrant even 1,000 feet or more away is service to your home. Talk with your neighbors and make a plan to dig out the hydrant when the snow is deep.

Lastly, drive at appropriate speeds for the weather conditions. Four wheel drive vehicles can easily fishtail out of control and definitely will have much impaired stopping ability in the snow and ice. Consider the risk to yourself, others and emergency services

while driving in poor conditions.

Mountain Top Hose company to participate in grant giveaway

As part of the grand opening promotion of the new Fidelity Bank at 1 South Mountain Blvd., the bank is conducting a contest and will be awarding a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to one local non-profit organization that impacts and better the life of the residents of the community. Fidelity has contacted the Hose Company

and encouraged them to participate in the program.

Applications outlining the need for and purpose of the request were due to the Bank by December 6. A panel from Fidelity will then review the applications and pick five finalists that best fit the criteria of the program by January 10. The general public will then be encouraged to stop at the new bank between February 1 and April 10 to vote for their favorite charity. The organization with the most votes on April 10 will win the \$15,000.

The Hose Company's plan for the grant is to use the

money to purchase equipment that will be used to clean its firefighting turnout gear. The leading cause of sickness and death to firefighters is cancer. Cancer causing carcinogens are encountered in its operations. The carcinogens not only remain on the gear after an incident, but can permeate the gear if not removed and may cause skin cancer. The awareness of this situation has significantly come into the spotlight in the past 10 years. It is highly recommended that protective gear be

cleaned after use to reduce the exposure to carcinogens.

The equipment consists of an extractor (washer) and a dryer. The cost of this equipment is \$17,300, plus approximately \$3,000 to install the plumbing and electrical services needed to operate the machinery. If the Hose Company is successful in obtaining the grant the balance of the funds needed to purchase and install the equipment would come from its savings.

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Immanuel Christian School announces honor roll

Glen Cathers, Academic Principal, from Immanuel Christian School in Hazleton announces first quarter Honor Roll students for the 2019-2020 school year. Immanuel Christian School uses a 7-point grading scale. A student must have an average of 94 or above to achieve First Honors, and 90 or above to achieve Second Honors. Following are students from the Mountain Top, White Haven, Drums, Sugarloaf, Freeland, Weatherly and Berwick areas who have achieved Honor Roll.

First Honors: Grade 1: Carol Clarke, Weatherly; Jacob Hoffman, Mountain Top; Grade 2: Landon Cole, Sugarloaf; Tyson

Hess, Weatherly; Elizabeth Medina, Mountain Top; Hannah Pehala, Drums; Aryanna Perez, Drums; Emma Stanley, Freeland; Grade 3: Adelyn Roman, Drums; Grade 4: Karina Kuchar, Weatherly; Logan Sima, Drums; Grade 5: Donovan Arias, Sugarloaf; Grade 7: Shelli Selby, Freeland; Grade 10: McKenzie Kapuschinsky, Drums; Kallen Selby, Freeland; Grade 11: Livia Sandu, Drums; Abraham Selby, Freeland

Second Honors: Grade 1: Mark Mitchell-Switzer, Berwick; Grade 2: David Medina, Mountain Top; Nikita Mitchell-Switzer, Berwick; Grade 6: Elainel Morel, Freeland; Grade 8: Alexandra Collora, Weatherly

Fourteen McDonald's restaurants donate to Allied Services dePaul School

Recently, the Mueller family presented a scholarship check in support of Allied Services dePaul School for children with dyslexia, as part of their Dyslexia Awareness Month French Fries promotion in October.

The McDonalds stores at Sans Souci Highway, Hanover; Keyser Ave., Scranton; Wyoming Ave, Wyoming; South Side Shopping Center, Scranton; 1127 Northern Blvd., Clarks Summit; Memorial Highway, Shavertown; Route 309, Mountain Top; West Tioga Street, Tunkhannock; South Main St., Old Forge; Route 6, Eynon; Brooklyn St., Carbondale; Bell Mountain Village, Dickson City; 1236 Wyoming Ave., Scranton;



From left, Jim Brogna, Vice President for Strategic Partnership Development, Allied Services; Suzanne Rickard, Principal/Director, Allied Services dePaul School; Christina Mueller, Albert Mueller and Carol Mueller, owners/operators of the Greater Scranton McDonald's restaurants that organized the month-long fundraiser.

South Bethlehem participated in the effort and sold 47,375 orders of fries which equated

to roughly \$12,000 in scholarship funds for children with dyslexia.

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Crestwood guidance department holds Instant Decision Day

The Crestwood Guidance Department in partnership with local and state universities hosted its inaugural Instant Decision Day recently.

Students had the opportunity to meet one on one with admission counselors and receive on the spot acceptance letters from local colleges and universities.

Representatives from Kings, Misericordia, Marywood, Wilkes, Keystone, Bloomsburg, East Stroudsburg, Kutztown, Shippensburg, Mansfield, Clarion, and Lock Haven attended over the two-day event.

Secondary Campus teachers supported student's post-secondary goals by wearing attire representing their college of attendance, prompting engaging conversations throughout the day.



Senior Amber Wehrenberg meets with Sean Stout of Bloomsburg University.



Senior Carrie Kraynak receives an acceptance letter from Wilkes University representative Ian Schreffler.

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Piano students present Halloween-themed recital

The Conservatory at Wilkes University recently presented the students of faculty member Diane Shuleski in a festive Halloween themed recital.

Classical and traditional solos for piano were performed.



Students who participated in the 1 p.m. recital, from left, row 1: Natalie Fedor, Max Weihbrecht, Rose Hancuff, Apollonia Bruno, Emma Kane, Ava Kozemko and Julien Lacroix; row 2: Jeremiah Wells, Artem Smagin, Melissa Schlifka, Sophia Fiedorczyk, Ariana Fumanti and Jenna Vincenti; row 3: Anna Smagin, Justin Stefanowicz, Rio Bantell, Edward Hartmann, Brendan Shibzda, Lexi Fumanti and Mrs. Shuleski. Also participating was Levi Nordstrom.



Participating in the 3 p.m. recital, seated at the piano: Pauline Villafuerte, from left, row 1: Sabian Bunnell, Kiana Ghorieshi, Zane Villafuerte, Charlie Medico, Rhea Mascarenhas and Eric Gee; row 2: Carlee Fine, Aubrey Macri, Aarav Gupta, Kylah Kelly and Sophia Medico; row 3: Jennis Bunnell, Edward Patrick, Luke Wielgopolski and James Lavan.

Happy Holidays!

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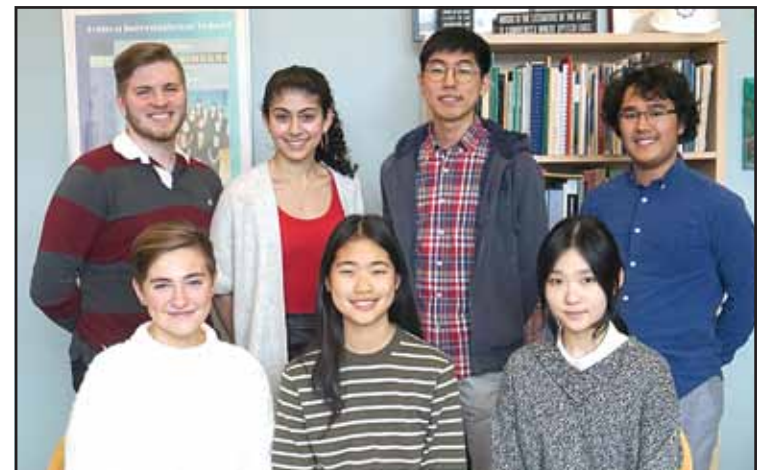
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Wyoming Seminary students named to District Chorus Festival



Seen following the announcement of the PMEA District Chorus Festival participants are, seated from left: Rhianna Lewis, Yifei Liu and Yuwei Chen; standing: Jared Bozinko, Christina Kaspar, Edward Jang and Oliver Lew. Not present for photo: Aishani Chauhan.

Eight Wyoming Seminary Upper School students recently were selected to perform in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District Chorus Festival, which will be held at Marywood University on Jan. 16-17, 2020. The festivals are organized by the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association and honor students for excellence in voice and instrumental music.

The students named to the District Chorus are senior Jared Bozinko, Mountain Top; senior Aishani Chauhan, Shavertown; sophomore Yuwei Chen, Shanghai, China P.R.C.; senior Edward Jang, Seoul, South Korea; junior Christina Kaspar, Dallas; junior Oliver Lew, Dallas; sophomore Rhianna Lewis, Scranton; and junior Yifei Liu, Beijing, China P.R.C.

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News in Brief ...

Continued from page 36

None of the fire companies in Mountain Top have this equipment. It is their intention to share the use of the equipment with the fire companies, so the entire Mountain Top community would benefit from its availability. They need to be able to protect themselves in order to best protect our community.

If they are among the finalists, they will do an aggressive campaign to notify the community to get out and vote. Blasi Printing has offered to do a "get out and vote" postcard for them to mail to residents. Others have indicated a willingness to provide donations to be used toward postage and publicity. Note that a person can vote as many times as they wish during the period, with a vote being cast upon each visit to the bank.

Rice hoping for grant to solve dam problem

Rice Township is hoping a grant from a state program aimed at repairing unsafe dams will resolve the long-standing Ice Lakes dam problem.

Supervisors voted at their December 2 meeting to apply for \$508,883 from the H2O PA. The grant program was established over a decade ago to provide for grants for the construction of drinking water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer projects; the construction or renovation of flood control projects; and the repair or rehabilitation of high-hazard unsafe dams.

The resolution authorizing the grant application indicates the funds will be used to bring

the dam into compliance with state law.

Township officials have been dealing with the Ice Lake dam issue for over four years. In late summer of 2015, property owners around the lake notified the township, which owns the lake, that the water level was dropping. At the time, engineers determined the problem was a valve in a drainpipe in the dam.

After several delays beyond their control, in December 2017 supervisors awarded AR Popple a \$179,500 contract for repairs the dam. However, in mid-May, the contractor halted work on the project, leaving behind a muddy lakebed. The township subsequently hired attorney Raymond Wendelowski to negotiate a settlement with Popple's bonding company. That negotiation

did not bring about an agreement, prompting supervisors to vote to file a lawsuit against A.R. Popple and its bond company, Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Co. to recover costs associated with project.

To get the project completed, supervisors advertised for bids on the project in March,

but none were received. A second advertisement in June resulted in four bids. Latona Trucking was the lowest of the four bidders at \$490,833. Other bidders were James T. O'Hara, \$591,760; Ken Rauch Excavating, \$621,709; and

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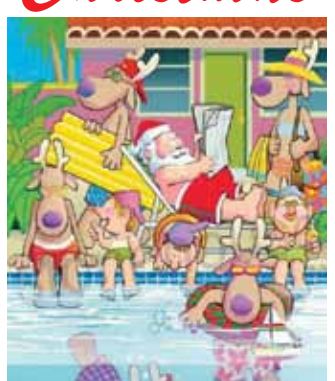


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News in Brief ...

Continued from page 40

Linde Corp., \$864,805. The township previously received a Local Shares Account (gaming) grant and a grant from the state Department of Community and Economic Development to be used for the project. Township secretary/treasurer Jeff Beck said in June that \$135,000 remained from those grants.

Rice Township to apply for gaming grants

Rice Township supervisors voted at their December meeting to apply for over \$800,000 in gaming grants to be used for

road improvements.

One application is for \$599,984 for paving, double tar and chipping and base repair of various roads throughout the township. While supervisors did not specify which roads would be repaired, they noted that if the grant is received one third of the township's roads would be repaired.

Supervisors also submitted a gaming grant application for \$232,400 to be used for the installation and upgrading of the stormwater management system on a section of Heslop Road.

In other news ...

Supervisor approved a reso-

lution that members of the police department will not be required to contribute to the police pension plan in 2020. They also approved a lease agreement with Purma, Inc., new owner of the Ice House Pub for use of the former Rice Township fire department property as a parking lot. The property is owned by the township.

Supervisor Robert Pipech, roadmaster, thanked residents for their cooperation and participation in the fall leaf collection program. He noted two dumpsters were filled with leaves, saving the township close to \$30,000 in expense. Pipech said the program allowed township crews to focus on road patching and preparing vehicles for winter weather.

Township engineer Andrew Pasonick reported he is awaiting the go-ahead from the county Office for Community Development to advertise for bids for demolition of the former fire company social hall. He said the county is awaiting approval from the state Historical Commission.

Supervisors will reorganize Monday, January 6 at 7 p.m.

Supervisor recognized for service

Long-time Fairview Township supervisor Robert Orloski Jr. was recognized for his service to the township at the December meeting of the board of supervisors. Orloski did not seek re-election this year.

Police Chief Phil Holbrook Orloski with a citation and plaque from the police depart-

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News in Brief ...

Continued from page 41

ment in recognition for his 15 years as supervisor and thanked him for his service. Supervisor Mike Iorio also thanked Orloski for his years of service.

Orloski thanked residents of Fairview Township for electing him and for their support. He also thanked members of the fire company, past supervisors, the street department and police department for their support and hard work. He singled out former police chief Joe Intelicato and Holbrook along with members of the police department for their cooperation and support.

Wright fire tax won't really help department

Wright Township's proposed 2020 budget includes a .2 mil fire tax, but that levy won't really help the volunteer fire department move forward with plans for part-time paid drivers, according to department officials.

The fire tax of .2 mils is expected to generate \$109,362 revenue which will go directly to the fire department. The tax is intended to take the place of the township's annual contribution to the fire department which is approximately \$100,000. The 2020 budget calls for the township to also pay \$38,000 for fire hydrant costs and \$21,467 workman's compensation insurance, all required by law.

Fire Chief David Pettit said that the proposed budget and tax plan do not address the issues raised by firefighters at the supervisors October 14 work session.

"There are major issues with the proposal and (it) doesn't address future and current issues," Pettit stated. "They are basically using the fire tax to pad their budget, which is understandable but it does nothing for us now or in the future," Pettit added. He said the tax may hurt the fire department's fundraising efforts since residents may halt their donations since they will be paying a tax designated to support the fire department. The department holds a bazaar each summer along with an annual mailing.

In addition to the fire tax, supervisors plan to increase the property tax from .7516 to .8 mils in order to fund the proposed \$2,486,010 budget.

The .8 mil property tax rate is expected to bring in \$437,448 for the township's general fund. Including the fire tax, the total 2020 tax hike amounts to .2484 mils, bringing the total millage to 1 mil. The proposed 2020 budget is an increase of \$309,442 from 2019. Last year, supervisors cut spending by \$378,762 in order to avoid a tax increase.

The combined fire tax and general fund tax hike will mean a property tax increase next year of \$24.84 for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation. The 1 mil total tax rate means a home assessed at \$100,000 would pay a total of \$100 in property taxes in 2020.

Supervisors are scheduled to vote on the 2020 budget at a

special meeting on December 19 at 4 p.m.

Fire department leaders asked supervisors to consider enacting the fire tax at their October work session. In order to meet the demand of providing fire service to Wright Township, department officials said they are looking to implement part-time paid firefighters beginning in the first quarter of 2020. Their plan is to staff the department with one firefighter on duty 12 hours a day, seven days a week in 2020.

Beginning in 2021, the staffing would change to 24-hour coverage seven days a week with two paid, part-time firefighters. The paid part-time staff would be supplemented with volunteers.

In order to cover all the department's operational costs and provide full coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, fire department officials estimated a fire tax of mil to 1.1 mills would be required. That

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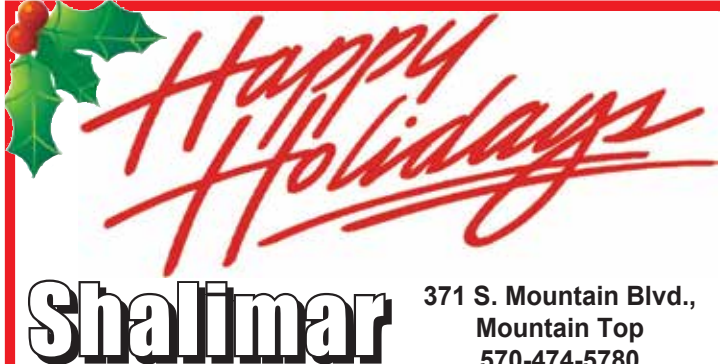
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News in Brief ...

Continued from page 42

tax, they said, would cost each household an estimated \$146 to \$161 annually.

Fire department officials estimate the annual cost for 2020 would be approximately \$230,000, plus the cost of insurance. For 2021, the cost

to operate the department with two paid part-time firefighters would be approximately \$428,000.

Meanwhile, Fairview and Rice Townships adopted their 2020 budgets last week with no tax increases. Fairview Township's 2020 budget amounts to \$1,765,240 with a property

tax of .85 mills plus an additional .0003 mill fire tax. Rice Township's 2020 budget totals \$2,084,985 with a property tax of .26 mills.

Fairview supervisors adopt budget

Supervisors adopted the

township's 2020 budget totaling \$1,765,240. Property tax will remain at .85 mills plus an additional .0003 mill fire tax.

Supervisors also adopted an ordinance officially recognizing Mountain Top Hose Co. No. 1 as the official provider of fire service for the township and authorizing a list of their activities.

In other news ...

Secretary/treasurer Barbara Wasiakowski gave an update on the trap, neuter, release (TNR) feral cat issue in the absence of resident Gina Snyder. Resident Gary Tredinnick stated the TNR was very suc-

cessful and thanked the supervisors for going this route. Jeff Vetashick, Grove Street commented on the TNR issue and noted that the number of stray/feral cats in his neighborhood dropped from 25 to 3.

The board's annual reorganization will be held Monday, January 6. The regular township meeting will follow. Barry Jacob, who was elected supervisor in the recent election will take office January 6.

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Santa visits children at Mountain Top Senior Health Care and Rehab



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

Two-year-old Skye Steffy enjoys sitting on Santa's lap.

Santa Claus made a stop at the Mountain Top Senior Health Care and Rehab on Saturday, December 7 from 10 a.m. to noon in the beautifully decorated waiting room. Santa had his elf Rachael Cooper on hand to assist with the children. There were light refreshments for everyone who came.

Scouts collect for the White Haven food bank



Scouts, Cubs and adults from Pack & Troop 25 with some of the food being unloaded and sorted.

Cubs and Scouts from Pack and Troop 25 would like to thank the many generous residents who donated to the White Haven Food Bank through the Scouting For Food Program held on November 9 by the youth. Over 20 Scouts and Cubs with their parents helped distribute bags

and then collected the canned food and non-perishable items which were delivered to the food bank, sorted and stacked for use by the food pantry. They collected almost 1600 items for the White Haven Food Pantry through the generosity of the residents of the White Haven Area.

Roots Salon on the Avenue
570-285-3035

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Laura Dotzel
rootssalonontheavenue@gmail.com

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Learning is fun at St. Paul's Preschool

St. Paul students have been enjoying some hands on learning.



Above: Children in the 3 day afternoon class, built and created their very own structures with a STEM project.



At left: The morning class enjoyed a recent "Science Thursday" by following a recipe to making scented play-doh.

Several graduates of Luzerne County Community College are working at WBRE-TV



Shown at the WBRE Studio are, front: Tony Ingargiola '93, Dunmore, photo journalist, WBRE-TV; standing, from left: Pat McHale, Kingston, production assistant, WBRE-TV; Katherine Lachette '97, White Haven, executive producer, WBRE-TV; Tim Haberski, West Pittston, digital executive producer, WBRE-TV; Tom McHugh '72, Mountain Top, professor and chair, communication arts, LCCC; Anthony Cundro '18, Hazleton, photo journalist, WBRE-TV; Rachel Vitale '15, Wilkes-Barre, news producer, WBRE-TV; Bonnie Brennan Lauer '87, Shavertown, director, alumni relations, LCCC; and Thomas P. Leary, Kingston, president, LCCC.

President Thomas P. Leary and other College officials recently visited the WBRE-TV news station to meet with the LCCC graduates and to discuss the important role they play in the community as the College's alumni. The LCCC Alumni Association presented each of the graduates with a gift.



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*Maryellen, Wendy
Norberta, Claudia, Pat*

570-868-3070

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Worship Together ...

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**Services: Sunday 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.
Saturday 6 p.m.**

JP Bohanan, Pastor

**175 S. Main Road, Mountain Top
570-474-6060**

Rev. JP Bohanan invites everyone for worship on the Lord's Day. Professionally staffed nursery available during the 9:30 adult Sunday School hour and the 10:45 worship service.

Holy Communion is served the first Sunday of every month. Sunday School: Children in Pre-K thru 4th grade meet during worship from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grades 5 thru adult meet at 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve worship services: At 7 p.m., the family ser-

vice will feature a short musical production by the children. At 11 p.m. they will hold a Reflections Service with a celebration of the Lord's Table. Both services will feature candlelight.

Adult Choir practices Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. Cherub Choir, Kids Choir, Adult Bell Choir and Kids Bell Choir also practice on Thursday evenings.

Christ Church offers a community Cancer Support Group meeting the last Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Grief Support Group meets by appointment. Breakfast Fellowship Group meets at the Chalet, Thursday at 8 a.m.

Mt. Top CARES (Community, Advocacy, Recovery, Education, Serenity): This is a peer-

to-peer support group for those affected by a loved one's substance use disorder. The goal of CARES is to offer a safe place for people to share their story, find support, understanding and empathy. Contact the church office for schedule.

For more information: church office: 570-474-6060, church email: ChristUM-ChurchOffice@gmail.com; Pastor's email: bohanan.jp@gmail.com. Web: Christonthemountaintop.blogspot.com.

CONYNGHAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Calvin Collins, Pastor

**411 Main Street, Conyngham
570-788-3960**

Religious studies are at 10 a.m. Prayer Circle meets on the first and third Wednesday at 4 p.m. in the church library. Brothers in Christ meet every Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

Church office hours: Pastor Calvin will be available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. At all times, he will be available for pastoral care and concerns and may be reached at 570-788-3960. Hours are subject to change due to visitation.

The church secretary is available Tuesday 10:30-12:30, Wednesday 10:30-12:30, and Thursday 9:30-1:30. Other secretary office hours are available; call 570-788-3960.

Hours are subject to change for emergencies and holidays.

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Services: Sunday 10 a.m.

**Michael & Kim Pickreign, Pastors
3577 Church Road, Mountain Top
570-678-7231**

Services are casual and family friendly. They are a group of believers passionate about sharing the gospel of Christ, healing broken hearts and seeking liberty for all who are oppressed.

Cornerstone Food Pantry is available for anyone who is in need. Pickups are available Sundays after the service, around 11:45 a.m. and by appointment.

The church is handicap access-

See Worship, page 50

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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 49

sible. For further information contact Pastor Pickreign.

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Services: Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Louis Aita, Pastor

**7768 Blue Ridge Trail, Dorrance
570-868-5675**

The Sunday School will hold its Christmas party on Saturday, December 14, at 10 a.m. They will also assemble fruit baskets for homebound members. Each child is asked to bring a couple pieces of fruit for the baskets. After all that hard work, they'll enjoy a pizza party at noon.

Also on December 14, they will practice for the Christmas program. This is a dress rehearsal and they need everyone at the church at 1 p.m. The program will be presented on Sunday, December 15, during the worship service. We have heard many names for our Savior. This Christmas the cantata will reveal many of the names used to describe Jesus. With scripture passages explaining the origin of the songs and hymns containing references to Jesus' many names, the choirs will bring to light the history of including such references as Emmanuel, King of kings, and Lion of Judah. Please come hear the cantata which will be presented on December 15 during the worship service.

On Saturday, December 21 and December 28 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Emmanuel will have its homemade sauerkraut available to purchase for your holiday meals. The sauerkraut will be sold by the quart for \$4.50 no limits.

Teen Talk is for anyone in 7th

grade and above. They meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. to talk about God and Jesus, how their lives are influenced by them and how they can be an influence to others.

If recycling, place the cans in large bags and drop them off in the large crates at the back of the lower parking lot.

The Wapwallopen Ministerium Food Bank is housed at Emmanuel UCC and is open by appointment only. All contacts are kept strictly confidential.

If you are in need of pastoral care, call Pastor Lou Aita at 570-582-9550 or email him at aitatl12@ptd.net. E-mail access is emmanuel_ucc@hotmail.com and the website is emmanuel-ucc.org.

FAITH CHURCH DRUMS

Service: Sunday 10 a.m.

Keith Evans, Pastor

**4 Rittenhouse Place, Drums
570-599-8123**

Faith Church Drums (formerly Valley Community Church) offers a unique and inviting place to and for worship. There is one worship time on Sundays with a blended service which includes contemporary choruses, a hymn, responsive reading, a time of reflective corporate prayer, and inspiring/dynamic preaching. The worship setting includes bistro tables with padded chairs, and a few rows for traditionalists.

The Holy Grounds Cafe is open every Sunday as they serve coffee, soda, tea, juice, bagels, snacks, and more.

Dinner Church Community Ministry. Once a month F.C.D. offers a free meal to the community.

Upcoming events: Ignite

See Worship, page 51



Pictured from left: Patricia Lavan, Director of Development RHC; Kim Grzybowski CRNP, McKinney Clinic; Attorney Stephen Bach-

man, Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top; Tiffany Tankalavage, CEO RHC; William Yevich, CMA RHC.

Rural Health Corporation's McKinney Clinic receives donation from The Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

Rural Health Corporation (RHC) is pleased to announce the receipt of a generous donation of \$500 from The Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top. These funds will be used at RHC's McKinney Clinic for the urgent needs of its patients. The McKinney Clinic located on

39 E. Jackson Street in Wilkes-Barre provides healthcare for the homeless. RHC is a federally qualified health center providing care to the community since 1971. For more information on RHC locations and health care services provided, please see www.rhcnepa.com.

New Years Eve Concert Celebration
Michael O'Brien and Son - AGT Finalist: Joseph O'Brien
and Jesse Comrie - Christian Rapper
New Years Eve: Tuesday, December 31st at 6pm
@ Faith Church Drums...

\$10 @ the door



Additional Performers, Activities,
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www.faithchurchdrums.com
4 Rittenhouse Place - Drums, PA 18222

Worship Together ...

Continued from page 50

Young Adults (ages 25-40) children/teens of adults are invited every 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Every Sunday in December is "The Sounds of Christmas". Sunday, December 22 10 a.m. Earl Matthews in concert. Earl has a unique gift in music. He is a fantastic pianist and vocalist. His vocal style is similar to Michael W. Smith. He has a passion for God, worship and people! Tuesday, December 24, 7 p.m. Christmas eve evening service at Faith Church Hazleton Campus; Tuesday, December 31 from 6:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. 1st annual Christian New Years Eve celebration: Michael O'Brien, Joseph O'Brien, 2018 America's Got Talent finalist; Jessie Comrie, Christian rapper.

For information you can check www.yourvcc.com.

**FAITH UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**
Services: Sunday 8:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Scott O. Miller, Pastor
1448 Slocum Road, Wapwallopen
570-200-5388

Pastor Scott and the congregation invites all to join worship service. Holy Communion is offered the first Sunday of the month.

Sunday School is held from 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for children ages 4 through 14.

You can email Pastor Scott at somiller@susumc.org or call him at 570-200-5388. Find them on Facebook at [newhopewapwallopen](https://www.facebook.com/newhopewapwallopen).

**GOOD SHEPHERD
CHURCH**

Services: Saturday: 6 p.m.
Sunday: 8 & 9:30 a.m.
Rev. Michael J. Kloton, Pastor
Route 309, Drums

570-788-3141

The Faith Formation registration form for 2019-2020 is now available to be downloaded. Please go to the "Downloads" page of their website for the printer-friendly (PDF) form.

Please note that the new day/time for confessions is Saturday from 5-5:30 p.m. Fr. Kloton will hear confessions during Advent on Mondays from 7-7:50 a.m. and Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. There will not be a communal Penance service at Good Shepherd before Christmas.

The Head Start Giving Tree is up and decorated with gift tags. Parishioners are asked to select a tag, purchase a gift, and return the wrapped gift and tag by Sunday, December 19.

The Valley Food Pantry has asked the church to collect canned fruit cocktail for the Christmas boxes, and all area churches have been asked to collect coffee, flour, and sugar. The deadline for donations is Monday, December 16. Please check expiration dates.

The next quarterly Baptismal preparation class with Deacon Jim will be held on Tuesday, December 17, at 6 p.m. This class is mandatory for all parents wishing to baptize their children. If you are unable to attend this class, there is a class



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

Youth group member, Leeta Prater, 14 serves some mashed potatoes to Ann Marie McCluskey.

Turkey dinner enjoyed by many at Paul's

St. Paul's Church in White Haven held its 6th annual free community Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings on Wednesday, November 27 from 3 to 6 p.m. in the social hall. The dinner was free for anyone wishing to enjoy a home cooked dinner that included roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, sweet potatoes, vegetables, dinner rolls, drinks, and of course, all types of delicious desserts including pumpkin pie!

at Immaculate Conception Parish on Tuesday, December 10, at 6 p.m. Please register by calling the parish office.

As the parish breakfast is growing, more help is needed – setting up tables, serving, and clean-up. The Confirmation students are always welcome

to help! We always strive to make sure all patrons enjoy a great breakfast. Please call Barbara Lawrence at 570-788-1676 if you have any questions or want to join the team.

Tuesday night bingo at Good Shepherd Church starts with an early bird game at 6 p.m. They play 22 games each week and payouts range from \$50 to over \$500. Regular games pay \$100 each. The kitchen opens at 5 p.m. with special soups, sandwiches, beverages, ethnic foods and a variety of other goodies including fries, pretzels, candy, chips, and more. They also provide complimentary coffee, tea, and cake to

Celebrate the birth of Christ
Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 7 p.m.



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See Worship, page 52

Worship Together ...

Continued from page 51

players and volunteers.

GRACE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Brian Korner, Pastor
Blue Ridge Trail, Slocum Twp.
570-868-6298

An old fashion Bible believing church still using the 1611 King James Version Bible and singing old favorite hymns.

Mid-week fellowship and prayer meeting is the first Wednesday of every month. Meal at 6 p.m. and prayer meeting at 7 p.m. Some fluctuations with this service can occur, so please call before attending to confirm.

Sunday School classes for children of all ages will help them learn at their level.

Children will love Junior Church during the Sunday morning service. Kids K-4 through 6th grade will be excited as they sing, learn memory verses, get prizes and hear preaching at their level.

A well equipped, well staffed nursery is provided for infants and toddlers.

The church has a bookstore, "Growing in Grace." They have a good selection of KJV Bibles, music, and various other items.

To contact the church call 570-868-6298 or email Kornerb@Truevine.net.

HARVEST CONYNGHAM VALLEY

Services: Sunday 10 a.m.

Jeff Butala, Pastor
475 Main Street, Conyngham
570-788-1055

Come and experience verti-

See Worship, page 53

Children enjoy breakfast with Santa at St. Jude's

The annual Saint Jude Breakfast with Santa was held on Saturday, December 7 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The menu included pancakes, scrambled eggs, hash browns, sausage, juice and hot cocoa. Crafts were available

along with coloring pages and a candy cane for each child. Tickets for the event were \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (12 and under). Professional pictures with Santa could be purchased for \$10 each which included a keepsake ornament.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos
Madison Dougherty, 3 and her brother Jack, 2, have a great visit with Santa and tell him what they would like for Christmas.



Two-year-old Dominic Zucco is only interested in Santa Claus' bells.



Standing with Santa Claus are brothers Brock Smolinsky, 3 and big brother Carter, 5.



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Samuel A. Desiderio, Supervisor

Worship Together ...

Continued from page 52

cal worship and unapologetic preaching of God's word! Harvest CV seeks to develop grace and truth worshipers who share the good news of Christ with boldness!

Sunday children's ministry is age specific. Each child is loved and cared for by approved and responsible adults and youth support staff. At Higher Ground, each child is valued and taught the Word of God in age appropriate ways that encourage children to learn and enjoy their time in Harvest's Children's Ministry.

Everyone is encouraged to join a small group. Find one that fits your schedule. Contact info@harvestcv.org or indicate "Small Group" on the Friendship Register during a church service, or simply ask someone how to get more involved in small groups. Groups are currently gathering and forming.

For more information visit harvestcv.org or Harvest Conyngham Valley on Facebook.

MOUNTAIN TOP BAPTIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Dale Mooney, Pastor
865 Church Rd., Mountain Top
570-868-6863

Mountain Top Baptist Church invites you to join them for services. They offer a fully staffed nursery for all Sunday worship services for ages 0-3.

Sunday School for all ages is held on Sundays at 10 a.m.

Wednesday night at 7 p.m. is a Bible study for the adults. There is a Bible study class for teens and younger ones have fun in the Kids4Truth Club with singing, Bible lessons, memory verses and other activities.

The Kids 4 Truth clubs

curriculum and program is a local-church-based children's education ministry that utilizes a lesson time, a TruthBook time (memory and recitation), a song time, and a reward time in order to fortify young hearts and minds with the essential teachings of the authentic Christian faith.

The primary goal of this program is to help boys and girls know, love, and worship God by grounding them in essential Christian truth. Kids 4 Truth clubs work to ensure that boys and girls of all ages will learn what Christians believe and why they believe it.

The Kids 4 Truth clubs program and curriculum have become a dynamic platform for the church to teach boys and girls 120 of the most important truths of Scripture – in an understandable, useful, and memorable way.

MOUNTAINTOP FAMILY CHURCH

Services: Sunday 9 & 10:30 a.m.
Brian Knorr, Pastor
209 S. Mt. Blvd., Mountain Top
570-474-0900

MFC invites families to church on Sundays during the contemporary services. Come a few minutes early for a continental breakfast with coffee, tea, bagels, and danishes.

KidsTown Children's Ministries takes place during both services for children 8 weeks old through 6th grade. The certified KidsTown staff provides a safe environment for children to grow in their relationships with God and with others.

Two Christmas Eve services will be held on December 24: 5-6 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. They invite everyone to come celebrate the birth of our Savior with special Christmas music and sharing the Christmas story together.

There will be no playgroup on December 26. There will be no Ladies' Groups, Men's Group, Starting Point Youth, Ground Zero, Royal Rangers or Girls Ministries on Wednesday, December 25 and January 1. All Wednesday groups will reconvene on Wednesday, January 8.

Ground Zero56 meets every Wednesday evening from 6:30-8 p.m. and is for all students who are in 5th and 6th grade.

Starting Point Youth is for students who are in 7th-12th grade and meets every Wednesday in the Youth Room. There is a snack shop open from 6-6:30 p.m. and the youth service is from 6:45-8 p.m.

Contact the office or email debbie@mfcchurch.com for information.

MOUNTAINVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

Service: Sunday 10 a.m.
Brook Selby, Pastor
5126 N. Lehigh Gorge Dr., White Haven
570-443-9438

Mountainview is a family church. They believe that through their relationships with one another and with Jesus, they will experience the freedom, confidence, and the full life that is available to them. Their mission is to provide an environment where anyone can encounter Jesus' love and guidance.

Every 4th Sunday is Family Sunday, when the children stay in the service and the church shares communion together.

The church will hold Thursday Family Faith Nights. There will be dinner together followed by the various kids' groups. While adults wait for

See Worship, page 54



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Happy Holidays!

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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 53

their kids they can take part in a class called Christianity 101 which will be an opportunity to explore questions about the faith. Dinner, fellowship, fun and spiritual growth all in one night! How awesome is that?

For updated information on Mountainview Community Church, their small groups, and various activities, please visit www.mountainviewnepa.org and Facebook page: MountainviewFMC.

Mountainview is located about 1 mile from the Rt. 437 intersection in White Haven.

MT. ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Services: Sunday 9 A.M.
Pastors: Bob Thomas and
Rev. Fran Fink
Lily Lake Road, Slocum

Come worship in a real country church. Built in 1891, Mt. Zion still has no running water

and uses an outhouse for their rest room facilities.

On Sunday, December 15 Sue Gannis will be the special guest speaker.

Pastor Bob Thomas will lead the worship service on December 22.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service will be at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited to stay following the service for refreshments and fellowship as they celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. A sandwich platter will be provided and they are asking everyone to bring a covered dish, dessert, or goodie to share with all.

Pastor Bob Thomas will lead the Christmas Eve service.

Mt. Zion Church wishes everyone a blessed Christmas season!

For more information regarding the church services and activities, please contact Diane

See Worship, page 55

Christmas program held at Mountaintop Family Church



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

The younger children in the FunTown and KidsTown classes read a poem for everyone.

Mountaintop Family church held its annual Kidstown Christmas program on Saturday, December 7 at 6 p.m. at the church. The FunTown and KinderTown classes, ages 2 through kindergarten, performed a welcome poem and sang two songs. Following their

performances, the UpTown Class presented "The Secret Snowflake County" for everyone. Everyone in the audience was excited to see the kids perform. They put in a lot of time and hard work in order to perform so well for their family and friends.

Merry Christmas and
Happy Healthy New Year

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Season's Greetings from
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474-5355

Worship Together ...

Continued from page 54

Webster at 570-379-3713.

NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Services: Sunday

8:30 & 10:30 a.m.

Pastor: John Broglin

**570 S. Main Road, Mountain Top
570-868-5155**

New Life Community Church, invites you to come and worship the way it used to be.

Join them for a candlelight Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. as they celebrate.

All ladies are welcome to join in for a time of fun and fellowship on Tuesday, January 7 at 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome to come sample some delicious ways to prepare wild game at the annual Beast Feast on Saturday, January 11 at 6:30 p.m. Cost is only \$3.

Everyone is welcome to join them for a time of Bible study on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MOUNTAIN TOP

Services: Sunday 11 a.m.

Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.

**9 Chestnut Street, Mountain Top
570-474-9951**

You are invited to join in worship on Sunday, December 15, the third Sunday of Advent. The message will be delivered by Pastor Neil Partington. A carry in luncheon will be shared following worship. Come and celebrate the Christmas season with the church family.

Sunday School begins at 9:30 a.m. Classes are available for all ages.

The choir practices every Thursday at 7 p.m. If you are interested in this ministry and would like to participate in the Christmas Cantata please stop by or contact Choir Director/Organist Bill Blannett.

All friends and church family are invited to join in corporate prayer for this time of the church's transition. Prayer will be held between Sunday School and church, about 10:20 a.m.

Please donate your food items weekly to be given to the Mountain Top food bank. The need is great for packaged items, mayonnaise, coffee and sugar canned corn, red beets, variety soups and cranberry sauce are also needed.

They will also be collecting supplies and clothing (new) for Brandons Forever Home. A bin will be located in the narthex. If you have questions please contact Nancy Badal or any of the Presbyterian Women's group.

2020 dates to purchase bulletin covers to honor or recognize someone are now available. A month's supply of bulletin covers is \$35. Flowers are also available to purchase for \$35 for the vases or a special arrangement for the pedestal. Contact Lisa Bachman to schedule flowers or call the church office.

Poinsettia and Christmas wreath orders are being taken until December 15. Poinsettias are \$6 and wreaths \$14. They must be paid for at time of order.

Looking ahead: December 14: Mission cleanup round 2 if needed. December 29: All reports are due to prepare for the annual meeting which will be held in January.

The church office is open Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Email: pbychmt@verizon.net. If you have any questions about the church or its

ministries please call 570-474-9951 or find them on Facebook.

STAIRVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday 10 a.m.

Scott O. Miller, Pastor

**Stairville Road, Mountain Top
570-868-5640**

The congregation invites you to come and worship with them this Sunday. Communion is celebrated every 1st Sunday of the month. There is plenty of parking behind the church.

Choir practice is every Thursday at 3 p.m.

The J.O.Y. Circle meets every second Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the large fellowship hall. They make

the plans for all church events, new members are welcome.

ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Services: 9 a.m.

Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

Oliver Brown, Pastor

**827 E. County Road, Wapwallopen
570-379-3878**

Pastor Brown conducts Bible Study on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month beginning at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Third Sunday in Advent will be held on December 15 at 9 a.m.; Fourth Sunday in Advent

will be held on December 22 at 9 a.m. Mid-Week Advent services will be held every Wednesday evening in Advent at 6 p.m. They will be held in the church basement beginning with refreshments.

The Sunday School Christmas program will be held during the worship service. They will be doing the Christmas Story combined with the Little Drummer Boy. Christmas Eve Service will be held at St. James on Tuesday, December 24 at 7:30 p.m.

The annual Christmas program will be held during the worship service on December

See Worship, page 56

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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 55

22 beginning at 9 a.m. There will be no Sunday School classes. There will be no Sunday School classes on December 29.

St. James annual Christmas dinner will be held on December 14 at 6 p.m. in the social hall. Everyone is invited to attend. Bring your family and friends. There is no charge but a free will offering will be received. Watch for the sign-up sheet in the narthex or call Eileen Hoffman at 570-379-3503 or Floyd Rinehimer at 570-379-3633 to make reservations. There is always plenty of food, but sign-ups are helpful to know how much food to prepare. The meal is followed by singing carols and decorating the tree in the sanctuary. Kids especially enjoy this part of the evenings events. Anyone willing to help with this should plan to stay for about a half-hour after the dinner.

Christmas baskets for shut-ins will be assembled on December 15 by the adults while children are in class. Help would be appreciated by

parents who would normally be dropping off their children.

Boy Scout Troop 300 continues to meet at St. James Lutheran Church on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m.

Cub Scout Pack 379 meets on Sunday evenings from 6-7 p.m. Kindergarten through 5th grade boys are welcome to join. Call Billy Jo Scott at 570-854-3755 for more info.

ST. JUDE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Services: Saturday 4 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 & 11 a.m.

**Father Joseph J. Evanko, Pastor
420 S. Mt. Blvd., Mountain Top
570-474-6315**

Confession and Benediction, Mondays during Advent from 7 to 8 p.m. This year confessions are each Monday during Advent, December 2, 9, 16 and 23 so that they can get away from the busyness of holiday preparations and enjoy some quiet time with Jesus. On December 9, confessions will be at 6 p.m. and no Benediction.

Advent by Candlelight will be held on Sunday, December 15

at 6 p.m. in St. Jude School cafeteria. Guest speaker is Mandy Chapman, Regional Director, CarePortal. Please contact Theresa Kline, 570-239-0959 or Suzanne Modrovsky, 570-578-3986 for more info.

The Youth Ministry will be selling poinsettias after all Masses the weekend of December 14/15. Proceeds will benefit the Youth Ministry program.

Bambinelli Sunday: Bring Baby Jesus to Church Day! Families are invited to process in with their Nativity Christ Child figurines at the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses on Sunday, December 15. Figurines will be placed on the altar and blessed during the Mass. History: St. John Paul II began this tradition as a way to bless the nativity scenes of the faithful put up in their homes. Contact Carrie, cgrandzol@stjc.org for more info regarding Caring Kids' Club and Bambinelli Sunday.

St. Jude's 13th annual Lessons & Carols concert will be held Sunday, December 22 at 4 p.m. in the church. The concert tells the story of our salvation history in Christ and features the Music Ministry,



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

Michael Weiss helps himself to some salad.

Christmas dinner held at St. Paul's

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Mountain Top held its annual Christmas celebration on Sunday, December 8 beginning at 5:30 p.m. with a family-style Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. Immediately following the dinner everyone was invited to attend the Hanging of the Greens at 7 p.m. The Hanging of the Greens service takes you on a journey of what the holy season of Advent means and how to prepare ourselves for Christ's arrival. There was special music and readings on the significance of the decorations used throughout this season.

Christmas pageant, and guest instrumentalists.

This school year join your friends for a fun night of ser-

vice, games and snacks. Once a month starting at 7 p.m., the youth group will meet in St. Jude School cafeteria to work on a service project. They will also have games and snacks! Feel free to invite friends too! Youth night dates are: January 14, February 11, March 10, April 4 and May 14.

It's the 4th annual Cookie Walk at St. Jude Church to benefit the Youth Ministry Program! Support St. Jude's Youth Group while stocking up on your favorite Christmas cookies! The date of the Cookie Walk is Saturday, December 14 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in St. Jude School cafeteria. \$10 per container until sold out. Attention bakers of St. Jude

See Worship, page 57



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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 56

Parish! When baking your Christmas cookies, will you please bake up a few dozen for the cookie walk? Drop off is Friday, December 13 from 4-7 p.m. in St. Jude School Day Room. Please drive behind the school and use the Day Room doors. Call Tricia at the Parish Office, ext. 228 or email tscanlan@stjc.org.

The following items are needed for the Mt. Top Food Bank: Boxed soup mix instead of Ramen noodles, noodles, rice, boxed macaroni and cheese, vegetable soups, cream soups, baked beans, jelly, peanut butter, canned fruit, tuna, ketchup, mayonnaise, pudding, jello, sugar, hot chocolate and coffee.

The Parish office hours are Monday-Thursday: 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday and Saturday: closed and Sunday: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**ST. MARK'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH**
Services: Sunday at 11:15 a.m.
285 Pond Hill Mt. Road,
Wapwallopen
570-735-8531

Are you looking for a relaxed but traditional family church service? The congregation of St. Mark's invites everyone to join them as they share God's Word and celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday.

St. Mark's is a small country church with a big Christian heart! They believe they are called to: Be the body of Christ: His heart, His hands, His voice!

Like them on Facebook, "St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pond Hill PA", to see pictures and announcements.

Santa Claus makes a stop at St. Mary's

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Dorrance held its annual children's Christmas party on Sunday, December 8 beginning at 1 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Saint Theresa's Guild sponsors the Christmas party for children of the parish through donations and the annual turkey bingo. This year 116 children of the parish registered for the fun event which also included lunch.



Jullianna Urban, 3, receives a gift from Mrs. Claus and Santa.



Twins Austen and Xavier Moreillon, 7, enjoy their lunch before Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive.

Hailey Domyan, 2, didn't want to sit on Santa's lap, but felt more comfortable with Mrs. Claus.



Mountain Peaks/
Claudia Strycharz
photos

ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Services: Sunday 10 a.m.
Rev. Daniel FitzSimmons, Rector
3085 Church Road, Mountain Top
570-868-5358

St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church is an inclusive and modern Episcopal Church

that incorporates into its liturgy the best of both Catholic and Protestant traditions while remaining open to new directions from the Holy Spirit.

Celebrate Christmas in Mountain Top. Everyone is welcome to join them as they celebrate the birth of our Lord

See Worship, page 58

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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 57

Jesus Christ with a special Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist at 7 p.m. preceded by the choir performing Christmas carols at 6:30 p.m.

AA meetings: Mondays year round in The Common Room at 7 p.m.

Sunday School: Sundays year round in The Common Room at 10 a.m.

The Book Nook: Stop by and visit the Book Nook, where you can select from a wide selection of books at very low prices. The Book Nook is open on the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Book donations are welcome and much appreciated.

St. Martin's Choir: Everyone is invited to participate and attend choir rehearsals, which are held on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Sunday mornings at 9 a.m.

Everyone is welcome to celebrate Holy Eucharist with them on Sundays. For more information, visit stmartintimeless.org or call Janeann Lokken at 570-868-6895.

ST. MARY'S OF DORRANCE

Services: Saturday 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m.

Father Joseph Evanko, Pastor
3529 St. Mary's Road, Dorrance
570-868-5855

The church warmly welcome all visitors! Contact the parish office if you would like to become a member of the parish.

Christmas ministry sign-up sheets for EMs, Lectors, and Altar Servers are in the sacristy.

Christmas trees and window candles are available in honor of, or in memory of a loved one. Please call the parish

office for more information.

Adult Christmas choir will practice on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in the church. Please see Keri with questions.

Oplatek: Sharing of the oplatek (pronounced opwa-tek) is the most ancient and beloved of all Polish Christmas traditions. Oplatek is a thin wafer made of flour and water, similar in taste to the hosts that are used for communion during Mass. The Christmas wafer is shared before Wigilia, the Christmas Eve supper. Suggested donation is \$3 per package.

The Angel Tree still has a few tags. With the late Thanksgiving there is a short turn around with the gifts this year. Please bring your gifts by Sunday, December 15. Please call the office if you expect a delay. They will be delivering gifts December 17.

Religious Education classes are held weekly on Sundays

from 10-11:15 a.m. Please call Stacy Panas with any questions or concerns at 570-332-3801.

The church is looking for parishioners who would like to partner with the seventh and eighth grade students to journey with them as they prepare for Confirmation. Your commitment would include praying for them, and offering them encouragement and support via cards and letters. Call the parish office if you are able to share your love of the Catholic faith with one of the young adults, or if you would like more information.

The Knights of Columbus is looking for a few good men! If you are interested in giving back to your church and community and having fun while doing it call John Baab 516-241-5297.

Office hours are Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. or by appointment. In case of emergency call 570-474-6315

and follow prompts for emergency.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Services: Saturday 5 p.m.

Sunday: 10:15 a.m.

Rev. Peter O'Rourke,
Sacramental Minister
411 Allegheny Street,
White Haven
570-443-9944

St. Patrick's Church welcomes all to visit and worship with them. Contact the parish

office if you would like to become a member of the parish. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

St. Patrick Church sponsors the Giving Tree Project. The United Methodist, St. Paul's Lutheran, & Presbyterian Churches participate in this project along with White Haven Lions & Marine Corp Toys for Tots. Giving Tree tags are on a tree in the entrance to the church. They give to those

See Worship, page 59

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Worship Together ...

Continued from page 58

in need in the community by taking a tag or multiple tags, purchasing the gift on the tag, wrapping the gift and taping the tag on the gift with the family # showing. The gift must be returned to the church by Sunday, December 15 at 11:30 a.m. The number on one side of the tag identifies the family who is the recipient. The Giving Tree Project is their way of sharing resources with other families in the community at Christmas.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: During Advent, in addition to confessions on Saturday afternoons from 4-4:30 p.m., Fr. O'Rourke will also hear confessions on Thursday, December 19 from 6-7 p.m.

Breakfast with Santa: Sunday, December 15 in the Parish Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Adults: \$9, children ages 3-10: \$4, children under 3: free.

Faith Formation (CCD) class-

es for grades Pre-K to 8th are held in the Parish Center from 9 to 10 a.m. every Sunday.

Youth folk group is looking for new members! Practices are held on Thursdays from 5 to 5:45 p.m. in the church.

The Rosary is recited each Tuesday at 5 p.m. The Miraculous Medal Novena is prayed each Tuesday morning after the 8 a.m. Communion Service.

Weekday Masses are held on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 8 a.m.

If you would like information about joining the Knights of Columbus, please contact Jim Curto at 570-443-8494.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Services: Sunday 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Michelle Kaufman, Pastor
316 S. Mt. Blvd., Mountain Top
570-474-6616

The congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of

Mountain Top encourages you to join them for worship this week. The following is a brief summary of upcoming worship and service opportunities.

Bible Study is held every Thursday at 1 p.m. They welcome interested persons to attend. Have some fun with learning; only 2 hours a week with a knowledgeable teacher. Snacks provided.

Please join them for Christmas Eve services on December 24 at 7 or 10 p.m. to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts and homes!

Bell choir rehearsals for the month of December are the 15th with dress rehearsal on the 21st from 7-8 p.m. Concerts will be held on December 22 during the services.

The youth will be singing at the Mountain Top Senior Living facility on Sunday, December 15 at 2 p.m. The residents always appreciate having the kids there.

The youth Christmas party will be held on Wednesday, December 18 from 6-8 p.m. at St. Paul's. Fun, games and food will fill their time together. Everybody is asked to bring a gift (\$10 limit) for a gift exchange (same sex as participant.) The youth will be participating in the 11 a.m. service on December 22.

The hoagie group needs new volunteers! If you can help, please contact the church secretary for more information 570-474-6616.

The first Sunday of each month has been declared "Food Bank Day" and they ask that members bring non-perishable food items in order to keep up with the demand for food.

Every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 7 p.m. AA meetings are held, at 6:15 p.m., on Wednesdays Weight Watchers meetings are in session. Every Thursday NA meets at 6 p.m. Stress & Anxiety Management: Every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

The church office is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Services: Sunday 9 a.m.

Sunday School: 10 a.m.

Janelle Rothrock, Pastor
418 Berwick St., White Haven
570-443-9424

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday at 9:15.

Sunday school for ages preschool through confirmation classes, is from 10 to 11 a.m. throughout the school year.

Activities at St. Paul's include: youth group for those in grade 4 through 12 the first and third Sunday at 6 p.m. Quilters on Monday at 9:30 a.m., Adult Bible Study on Tuesday at 7 p.m., community lunch each Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish House.

The Sunday School children will be proclaiming the good news on Sunday, December 15 with their Christmas Pageant.

ST. PAUL'S DRUMS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Adult Sunday School: 9 a.m.

Rev. Debra L. Hebden, Pastor
335 W. Butler Drive, Drums
570-788-3051

Pastor Debra and the congregation invite you to worship with them every Sunday. Fellowship time follows the service. Holy Communion is offered on the first Sunday of the month. Ongoing ministries include Tuesday evening Bible Study at 6 p.m. For more information, contact them at www.stpaulsdrums.com or Email: stpaulsdrums@gmail.com.

WHITE HAVEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Services: Sunday 9 a.m.

3rd Saturday 5 p.m.

Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

David Botzer, Pastor
900 Buffalo St., White Haven
570-443-7153

White Haven UMC welcomes everyone in the community to worship with them. Communion is shared the first Sunday of the month. A contemporary communion service is held on the third Saturday of the month at 5 p.m.

Sunday School welcomes children Pre-K through 5th grade. Youth Group welcomes those in 6th-12th grade. Both meet every Sunday at 10:15 a.m. following worship.

If you are in need of pastoral care, call Pastor Dave at 570-443-7153.



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Slocum United Methodist Church recently celebrated its 160th anniversary

By Claudia Strycharz
Correspondent

The Slocum United Methodist Church recently celebrated its 160th anniversary with a special service on Sunday, October 27, 2019. Reverend Larry Leland, Lewisburg District Superintendent, gave words of greeting to members of all three churches, which include Faith, Stairville and Slocum United Methodist Churches. Carl Peters, a lifetime member of the historical church, told the long history of his church to a full sanctuary.

The Methodist Church was founded in 1784 by John Wesley. It began when he started the Methodist movement in England. John Wesley (1703-1791) was born in Epworth, England, the son of a Church

of England clergyman. He graduated from Christ College in Oxford, England and for a short time was a missionary in Georgia. In 1738 he had an intense religious experience while at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London and soon afterwards began to preach throughout the country. He was a prolific preacher and writer, and his writings provided a foundation of standard doctrine and interpretation to guide the new Methodist movement. In 1784, he sent instructions to America for the formation of a separate Methodist church for the United States.

Slocum UMC was founded in 1859 and on August 29 of that same year the land for the original church was purchased from William and Ellen Brown



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

Reverend Larry Leland the Lewisburg District Superintendent came to the special service celebrating the 160th anniversary of Slocum

UMC and gave words of greeting to the sanctuary filled with members of all three churches in the New Hope Charge Wapwallopen.

for \$1. The church was to be called The Methodist Episcopal Church and was built on the corner of Slocum and Schmid

Roads. It was deeded to Benjamin Lear, Benjamin Vandermark, Abram Arnold, Steven Lee, George Moore, John Hawk

and Charles Stair and their successors. They were also the

See Slocum, page 61

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Slocum ...

Continued from page 60

trustees of the church at that time.

The man chosen to build the new church was William Brader and the cost to build it was \$500. The church was built on the land where the Slocum Park is today. On December 1, 1860 the church was dedicated by Reverend Reuben Nelson and he gave the address. William Kealey was the pastor. The building served all denominations until each denomination could build its own church. The church provided a place for worship as a union church but was deeded as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Slocum.

Charles Clark was ordained pastor in the Slocum church on February 20, 1870 and was the great-grandfather of

Reverend Carolyn Clark who served as the pastor the Slocum Church in the early 1990s. Other churches in the area began to sprout up as they were needed, and in 1873 the Stairville Methodist Episcopal Church was built at a cost of \$1,800. Reverend Josiah Wagner was the pastor at the time. The Evangelical United Brethren Church was built in 1890 and is now the Faith United Methodist Church on Slocum Road. The Epworth League was formed in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Slocum on May 17, 1894 and this was the precursor of the present-day Methodist Youth Fellowship.

Lifetime member Carl Peters of Slocum UMC tells a story told to him by his grandfather Frank Peters, when he was a boy. It was a Christmas service and Santa was passing out candy and oranges to the chil-



The original Communion Set dated from around 1880 sits on top of a piano in the sanctuary.

Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photo

dren when Santa bumped into the Christmas tree that was lit with candles. Well, you can imagine the chaos when it started a fire! Everyone panicked and ran out of the church and a bucket brigade was started with water from the well of William Brown. They were

able to put out the fire and save the church. This was when the church was still located where the Slocum Park is.

Around 1907 it was decided by Winfield Jones, Stanley Stackhouse and James Moore to dismantle the church and move it to its present site on

Blue Ridge Trail in Slocum. There were churches in the area of Slocum Road and there was a need for a church at the end of the township where the church sits now. Land was purchased from Stanley W. Stackhouse and his wife Alice on

See Slocum, page 62

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Slocum ...

Continued from page 61

June 1, 1908 for \$40. Under the direction of William and Frank Stair the building was moved and erected in the same year. During the time of the move church services were held in the schoolhouse that was next to the church site. There was no bell tower and it was during that time it was decided to build one. Oliver S. Weister was the pastor in 1908. Elsie Oglin said of the dedication "It was a beautiful day".

The Men's Brotherhood was formed in June of 1913 and their motto was "Do all the good you can, all the ways you can, for as long as you can". At their second meeting, it was decided to build a shed at the rear of the property. After \$15 was collected the project was started and soon completed. The Ladies Aid Society served lunch for all the workers. The shed was used to house the horses during church services. During the early 1900s Carrie Boyer hosted meetings, guilt-ing and dinners for everyone.

Inside the church in those early days there were two bracket lamps with reflectors that were mounted on the wall on each side of the alcove. Gas lamps provided the main lighting for the church. They were suspended by an iron rod which could be lowered and raised by a rope attached to a wall. The church was heated by a pot belly stove. The stove pipe ran through the center of the ceiling to the center chimney. There was a settee used by the minister and the presiding elder that is still in the church located behind the organ. The original pulpit is located in the vestibule and the pulpit bible is dated 1868. The original silver communion set is from around 1880 and is still in the church. There are also several



Lifetime member of Slocum UMC, Carl Peters, recounts the long history of the historical church.

old Methodist song books that date to 1849 and do not have music notes. On the piano in the church are also early Methodist discipline books and a book of John Wesley sermons dated 1844.

The church finally arrived into the 20th century when electric lighting was installed on May 25, 1930 with additional repairs being made in 1936. In 1944 there was extensive remodeling done with new pulpits, baptismal and an enclosed railing on both sides of the platform.

The first supper was served by the W.S.C.S Ladies Society in 1961, of which Carl Peters' mother Hilda Peters was president. Carl received a phone call in the fall of 1968 from Tillie Oglin asking if he had the candy forms for the candy the choir was selling. He told her that they were at the church and he would get them when he was going to see his dad, Winfield was in the hospital in Nanticoke. To his surprise

when he opened the door smoke billowed out. He ran to get help and the Slocum Fire Company put out the fire which was in the oil burner located in the basement. Carl says, "It was meant that I go to the church that afternoon, God was truly with us". After the fire a central heating system was installed through the generosity of their neighbor Nelson Kovaleski.

Over the years since, new windows and a public address system were installed. A new organ, a lighted cross on the top of the steeple, new pew cushions and new curtains have been installed. New lighted outside lamp posts were also installed, and the church has been completely re-sided with restoration vinyl siding.

The Slocum United Methodist Church has come a long way in 160 years, and they pray will be there for many more years to come. During the fall the church is beautifully decorated and at Christmas the church is just a spectacular site to behold with its old-fashioned decorations.

Sunday service is at 11:15 a.m. and the church is located at 1185 Blue Ridge Trail in Slocum. Stop by and join them for service; you will leave with a wonderful experience of our Lord to take with you.

Editor's note: A special thank you to Carl Peters for his historical information and stories of the church he grew up in.



Mountain Peaks/Claudia Strycharz photos

The sky cleared after the special service held on October 27 brightening up the gorgeous historical church.

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MOUNTAIN TOP Motivated seller! Custom built home! Newer roof & HVAC system. 1st flr mstr & laundry, theater rm, hot tub, 4 car gar, whole house generator & much more! MLS# 19-6313

JILL H. 854-1171

\$365,000



MOUNTAIN TOP Stately 2-story w/4BR, 4BA, finished LL, heated inground pool on large private lot. Large mstr suite w/sitting area, vaulted ceil, 2 add'l rms in LL.

MLS# 19-3895

ANTONIO 262-7652

\$350,000



MOUNTAIN TOP New const. rare find ranch home. 3BR, 2BA, open flr plan, HW in kit, LR, DR, quartz counter tops, PVC rear deck, seeded lawn, paved driveway, sidewalks. Must see! MLS#19-5743

EVELYN 715-9336

\$279,900



MOUNTAIN TOP To be built in Spring 2020. Corner lot. Layout subject to change.

MLS# 19-6012

MATT 714-9229

\$269,900



MOUNTAIN TOP Great home w/tons of potential on 4.67 ac. Nicely renovated 2 sty w/5BRS, 2BA. Newer roof, HVAC, windows, siding, oversized garage.

MLS# 19-5029

TRISTA 715-9350

\$239,900



MOUNTAIN TOP Beautiful 2000+ sq.ft. bi-level on 1+acre. 3 bdrms, 3 baths. Mod. kitchen w/granite & new appliances, deck, plus more! MLS# 19-5122

DEE 905-7259

\$236,900



MOUNTAIN TOP Prime lakefront w/50ft frontage on Lake Nuangola! Motorized boats & jets skis welcome on this lake! Home being sold "as is".

MLS# 19-3433

LISA 715-9335

\$224,900



MOUNTAIN TOP Call today before it's gone! Move in ready home. Features 4BR, 2BA, finished LL, updated kit, new carpet, 1 car garage. MLS#19-6225

EVELYN 715-9336

\$194,000



MOUNTAIN TOP Home & neighborhood on quiet cul de sac. Freshly painted, new carpet, metal roof, 4BR, 2BA, fin LL, deck, gar., patio, recently paved driveway.

MLS# 19-5982

JILL 715-9322

\$189,500



MOUNTAIN TOP 4BR 2 sty full of charm & character. Formal DR & LR, original wdwrk & hdwd flrs, 2BA, 1st flr ldry, FR, 3 season rm, 2 car gar., & large lot.

MLS# 19-5583

LINDA G. 956-0584

\$184,500



MOUNTAIN TOP Spacious ranch. Hdwd flrs in kit, LR & BR's. Kit updated w/corian. Newer BA w/handicap shower & granite, newer furnace, fenced yard, 2 car gar.

MLS# 19-3075

LINDA W. 574-3404

\$179,900



MOUNTAIN TOP 4BR ranch, large kitchen that opens to LR w/woodburning frpl. Hdwd flrs, 3 season rm, efficient heating an a/c.

MLS# 6293

MIKE 501-7584

\$169,900



MOUNTAIN TOP Charming historic church/home combo w/endless possibilities. HW flrs, stained glass, 2BR on 1st flr., 1 car att'd garage. MLS# 19-4592

STEFANIE 951-6724

\$115,000