



# TODAY

Volume 33, No. 5  
June 2016

## SAVE THE DATE!

July 12 & 25 EMES Summer Supper & Swim @ 6 PM

July 28 & August 8 K-12 New Family Ice Cream Social Purcell Park @ 7 PM

August 15 New Middle/High Student Orientation @ 7 PM

August 16 New Elementary Family Orientation @ 6:30 PM

August 18 EMES Back to School Potluck @ 6 PM

August 21 Middle/High School Back to School Bash @ 3 PM

August 23 First day of 2016-17 school year



## Compassionate Service to the World – Paul Swarr '45

by Elwood Yoder



Paul and Bertha Swarr in 1955 (courtesy photo)

In the fall of 1944, during World War II, Paul Swarr transferred to Eastern Mennonite School for his senior year of high school and said “this was life-changing for me.” From Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Swarr sang in a choir under the direction of J. Mark Stauffer and gained experience singing in a men’s quartet. His 1945 high school class of over 90 members is one of the largest in EMS history.

Two years after graduation, Paul Swarr sailed to Greece on a ship, tending to a load of 600 mules that were being delivered to war-ravished areas after the end of WWII. He worked with the Brethren Service Committee, and deck hands like Paul were known as “seagoing cowboys.”

Soon after they were married in 1955, a Mennonite church leader asked Paul and Bertha to consider a term of service in Israel. They agreed, and spent thirty years as missionaries in Israel, 1957-1987. Paul worked in a variety of ministries in Israel, and helped to raise up an ecumenical community of Messianic believers in the holy land.

Upon returning to the states, Paul Swarr served as pastor of two Mennonite congregations in Virginia, and worked as an overseer in the Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1993-2000. Paul and Bertha Swarr gave their lives in compassionate service to the world.

In February 2016, Paul and Bertha Swarr attended the 14th annual Kennel Charles Anabaptist lecture in the EMS auditorium. After a speech about the twentieth century Mennonite leader Orie O. Miller (1892-1977), Paul Swarr, 88, spoke publicly during the question and answer time about Miller’s 1956 request that he and Bertha serve in Israel, and the way they agreed to become missionaries overseas. Many in the 1945 EMHS class, like Paul Swarr, went on to serve in missions or church related work, in a variety of ways.

During an April 2016 interview at EMS, Paul Swarr counseled the EMS community to “keep Jesus central in your witness.” Paul’s gentle advice is to keep Jesus at the center of our work and allow other ministries to flow from new life in Christ.



The Swarrs in 1995 (courtesy photo)

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# Service in Community - Nathan Alleman, Ph.D. '93

by Elwood Yoder, Today Editor and EMHS History Teacher

In the summer of 2015, Nathan Alleman invited me, his former history teacher, to breakfast at a local restaurant in Harrisonburg. Twenty-two years after graduating from EMHS, Dr. Alleman, now from Waco, Texas, wanted to sit down and thank the faculty in his high school for teaching him how to think critically. It's a rare moment in a teacher's career when a former student from over two decades earlier seeks out a venue just to say "thank you."

After graduation from EMHS, Nathan studied at Temple University, and then transferred to and graduated from Messiah College. His major was Philosophy, with two minors in communications and peacemaking. Alleman found a "wonderful synergy between these three seemingly unrelated areas." Nathan says that together they gave him a new set of lenses and new languages for understanding the problems of the world. He had no idea where his college studies would take him but he attests that they have served him well in ways he could not have anticipated.

For several years after graduating from Messiah College, Nathan served with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Chicago and Hebron, Israel. Standing and speaking for minority cultures in these two settings helped him understand the way God works in the world and how the kingdom of God is advanced.

After working with CPT, Nathan worked in student life residence at Grove City College and Eastern Mennonite University.

Nathan discovered he enjoyed mentoring students, but he also became fascinated with the way universities were set up and run. From these practical student life work environments, Nathan went on to teach and earn his doctorate at The College of William and Mary, graduating with a Ph.D. in Educational Administration.

Nathan joined the Baylor University faculty in 2010. Professor Alleman admits that "Educational Administration" may be the least thrilling combination of words possible, but he finds it exciting to help students in graduate classes develop new perspectives on themselves and their world.

Nathan and Karen, and their daughter Annabelle, live in North Waco, Texas, part of an intentional Anabaptist community called Hope Fellowship. They have chosen to be part of a multi-ethnic and multi-economic neighborhood where they are not sheltered from the daily struggles that face many residents. "Learning to be Jesus in this setting," Alleman notes, "starts for us in seeing people in need as our neighbors rather than as service projects."

During our breakfast meeting last summer, Dr. Alleman said that the gift EMHS gave him had little to do with his GPA. Now with tenure at Baylor, the largest Baptist University in the world, Nathan concluded that "at each subsequent level of education I have become more aware of how well I was prepared to critically reflect on the world around me and on my own beliefs as well. These 'higher order thinking skills' are what I challenge my graduate students to develop and apply in their work as university administrators. That my foundation in these abilities," Dr. Alleman concluded, "began in high school was an amazing advantage."



Nathan Alleman, Ph. D. '93  
Assistant Professor, Baylor  
University (courtesy photo)



Nathan Alleman his wife Karen and daughter Annabelle pictured here in Waco, TX (courtesy photo)

# Service

# More With Less

by Paul Leaman, Head of School

You may be aware of re-structuring, scheduling and grading scale changes at EMS beginning in the 2016-17 year. We'd like to take this opportunity to present what these changes are and how they will benefit EMS. To create a healthy bottom-line, while providing competitive opportunities for students, our middle and high schools are moving to an eight period day beginning next fall. This change will offer students schedule flexibility, additional course choices, and better opportunities to manage the stressful balance of academics and co-curriculars, while also allowing the school to reduce its expense budget with fewer full-time equivalents on staff.

This change also allows high school students to earn 32 credits versus 28 under the old structure. An eight period days gives flexibility for students to preserve part of their day for independent study projects and or study halls during extra busy seasons, thereby easing the stress for students who play sports, sing in choir, act in drama, and select heavier academic loads. Additionally, we hope students will broaden their horizons by taking more electives of interest in their expanded day. Although we prioritize face-to-face learning experiences with our teachers, students choosing online course options will gain additional support from teacher coaches.

The well-known Mennonite cookbook "More with Less" sums up our planning efforts for next year ... more student opportunities at a slightly less cost to the school. A more financially secure future will benefit all of us in the long run. These changes will be felt most by our supportive employees, who through faculty committee, worked with administration on creating this new model. EMS teachers will be working extra hard to provide this new schedule, teaching six of eight periods; with one of these assignments being more supervisory in nature to preserve a reasonable instructional load.

Additionally this spring, faculty also supported adjusting the EMS grading scale to 10-points per letter grade so an "A" will cover the range of 90% – 100%, a "B" 80 – 89% and so forth. In addition to being easier to remember and communicate, teachers will have more latitude in developing thought-provoking questions and assignments with less fear of challenge dropping a student's grade. This change was processed as a task force which included parent, student and faculty input.

We hope this summary provides insight into the changes taking place, and as always, we welcome your feedback as well as your prayerful support as we navigate next year and beyond.

In the August issue of *Today* we will spotlight other exciting changes we hope to accomplish. Our master plan calls for one K-12 campus with plans underway for elementary school permanency, site and traffic flow improvements, and an auxiliary gym.

But as for now, our current year's budget needs your help. Going into the year we knew heavy endowment subsidy was required. We are blessed to have this option; however, such actions cannot be sustained. Between now and June 30, we need your contribution help equal to \$642/student for a total of \$242,617 . . . just to meet our heavily subsidized budget. Any assistance you can provide preserves our savings for the K-12 campus plan project.

As you consider giving to our year-end, think of EMS students past, present, and in the future. All share the common thread of community support and the stewardship of doing more with less to benefit others. Thank you for considering a gift of student sponsorship in honor of those students special to you.

May God bless you for being part of EMS' ministry today and tomorrow!



Seventh graders rest from their bike journey in Harper's Ferry, WV. (Photo by Andrew Gascho)

## VISION:

*Eastern Mennonite School aspires to reflect Christ's light as a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God's call.*





EMS Touring Choir performs at Camp Menno Haven in Tiskliwa, IL as part of their E-Term tour. (Photo by Staff)



Camryn Landes '19 cleans an elderly person's home as part of her Washington, D.C. service E-Term. (Photo by Staff)

Sixth grade enjoyed fishing with their teacher Larry Martin. (Photo by Linda Hensley)



Asheville E-Term students clear the French Broad River of tires, debris and brush as part of their service immersion. (Photo by Staff)



Hanley Rooker '24 and Mac Lehman '24 worked with Kindergarten teacher Barbara Miller to make Italian ice during their "Cooking Around the World" Mini E-Term at EMES. (Photo by Maria Archer)

## 2016 E-Term and Explore Week Highlights

Each spring EMS comes alive with intentional experiential learning opportunities for our students. Although experiential learning happens in the classroom daily and on field trips, this annual week-long commitment creates opportunities for students and teachers to participate together in meaningful experiences not generally available in a typical school curriculum. Curricularly, these experiences are designed to address one or more of the following focus areas: learning a new skill or skill building; service learning; cross-cultural awareness; and academic enrichment.

In High School, students select from a variety of faculty-planned "E-Term" trips which this year included: birdwatching; service, silence and solitude at Headwaters Lodge; marine biology in Hilton Head, SC; service through the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Asheville, NC; Washington, DC service; exploring eastern Pennsylvania; golfing; learning to turn wood; cultural trips to Nashville, TN or New York City; sewing & service; and the Touring Choir tour to MSC music festival.

For Middle School "Explore Week," sixth graders delve in to studying water, canoeing and camping out together. Seventh graders study the body and bike the C & O railroad and spend a day of learning in Washington, D.C. Eighth graders study their larger community through a cultural tour of Philadelphia.

At the Elementary level, students in grades K-5 enjoy a "Mini-E-Term" of courses after brainstorming topics of interest with faculty. We hope you enjoy these small glimpses of the 2016 Explore Week and E-Term at EMS!



Hilton Head E-Term students take advantage of the surf during their marine biology experience. (Photo by Alan Liu '16)



18 dresses were made in the Sewing and Service E-Term for the "Dress a Girl Around the World" organization. (Photo by Staff)



Eighth graders Ginny Miller, Abbie Cresawn and Julie Weaver (left to right) plan for their Philadelphia trip. (Photo by Andrew Gascho)



Paige Hutcheson '23 and Emma Jenkins '23 display the puzzle that they created during their "Math, Puzzle, and Game-Making" Mini E-Term at EMES. (Photo by Maria Archer)



New York City E-Term students served at the Trinity Lutheran Church soup kitchen. (Photo by Staff)



# EMMS Service Learning 2016

by Rebecca Yutzy, Middle School Team Leader

Some say that middle schoolers are similar to adults in nursing homes: they want desperately to be able to contribute to society, they just don't have the "wheels." At EMMS, we provide students the "vehicle" to make service possible. We believe that "compassionate service to the world" is important at the middle school level--where students have a strong desire to help. Service is beneficial as an influence that can shape kids' lives by instilling a sense of gratitude for what they have and helping them understand more about the world around them.

Each Thursday morning, I accompany a group of around 8-10 students in 7th grade to a service project. Going beyond the school walls and using our energy to help others is a highlight of our week. When the weather is cold, we volunteer at Gift and Thrift, whose proceeds benefit Mennonite Central Committee. When there, we often check games to be sure all of the pieces are there, wipe store shelves, and check and price seasonal items.



7th graders enjoy their time in service learning projects while they work to give back to our community. (Photos by Rebecca Yutzy)

When the weather is warm, we volunteer at Vine and Fig, a New Community Project, where we've volunteered for several years. New Community Project's mission is to serve those from difficult life circumstances while imagining ways to live more sustainably. Our projects include picking garden vegetables, pulling nails out of wooden pallets, painting,



7th graders Gabe Albers (foreground) and Liam Hughes (background) sort donated games to ready them for sale at Gift & Thrift.

weeding, and turning compost (while we learn about the science behind it all). We work alongside others who are often marginalized, broadening our world and strengthening our ability to empathize. We also meet and work with several adults who have dedicated their lives to serving this population and enriching our world.

*Today is published six times a year for families, alumni and friends of Eastern Mennonite School. We value your input. Send your feedback and story ideas to: [today@emhs.net](mailto:today@emhs.net).*

Look for previous issues of Today online at <https://issuu.com/easternmennoniteschool>

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## MISSION:

*Eastern Mennonite School joins home and church in calling students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service in the world.*

## National Honor Society Emphasizes Service

Service is one of the four pillars of the National Honor Society. Students perform eight or more hours of service each year they are members of NHS at EMHS, four of which are leadership service hours. These seniors joined 24 juniors who were inducted into the NHS chapter at the school on March 21, 2016, joining 31 senior members. Pictured from left, are Amy Kirk, Lucia Martinez, Caroline Bell, Jaden Hostetter, and Shihui Stella Huang. EMS alumna Brooke Hostetter '09 addressed the students and parents at the Induction Ceremony sharing about her term of service in Peru. (Photo by Elwood Yoder)

