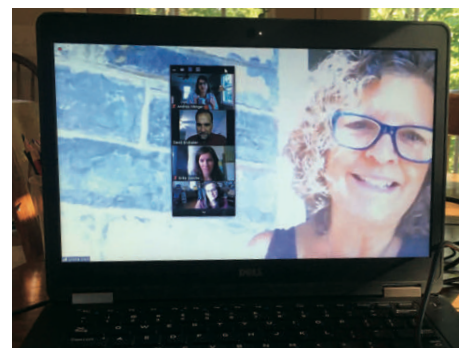


## Building Community in Polarized Times

All faculty and staff took part in a half day Zoom seminar on building community in times of division before school started. David Brubaker, organizational consultant and dean of the school of social sciences and professions at Eastern Mennonite University, facilitated.

The input gave context for how communities, churches, families, and organizations experience division when the broader culture is divided, as the United States is in many sectors now.

“As we head into election season, we wanted to create space for healthy dialogue and practice skills for listening well while remaining true to our own convictions,” explained Paul Leaman, head of



Lynette Mast, kindergarten teacher, contributes to the discussion. David Brubaker, inset, facilitated.

school. As always, he noted, “EMS joins school with families and faith communities to encourage students to develop and express their values and convictions.”

Maria Archer, K-8 principal, presented an updated school-wide policy, “Navigating controversial issues.” The policy says that teachers are responsible to create a culture of trust and safety where basic human rights are honored and where varied perspectives are heard with respect.

To read more about the seminar and policy, go to [easternmennonite.org/news](http://easternmennonite.org/news)



Photo by Erin Kennedy Hess

non-discrimination policies, and assure that grievance filing and processing procedures are in place and accessible. See [easternmennonite.org/about/title-ix](http://easternmennonite.org/about/title-ix)

## Title IX Appointment

Andrea Wenger, director of advancement, has been appointed as the school’s Title IX coordinator. EMS must be in compliance with Title IX of the education amendments of 1972 because the school receives federal financial assistance through its school lunch program. “Compliance is also the right thing to do,” says Paul Leaman, head of school. “Following the guidelines gives structure for caring for everyone.”

The Title IX coordinator’s role is to receive inquiries regarding

## “This is My Story...”

We aspire to be “a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God’s call.”

In Chapel (grades 6-12) we will hear stories this year on belonging. We hope to develop empathy and curiosity about others’ experiences of belonging, or not belonging.

Chapels will be watched in classrooms for COVID precautions. Search for “Eastern Mennonite School chapel services” on YouTube.

*Today is written, unless otherwise noted, by Andrea Schrock '82 Wenger, director of advancement and designed by Lindsey Kolb. Editorial assistance by Erin Kennedy Hess, Christine Glick '93 Fairfield, and Trisha Maust '95 Blosser of the advancement team. Photos by Andrea Wenger and Andrew Gascho unless otherwise noted.*

Send feedback to [today@easternmennonite.org](mailto:today@easternmennonite.org)

Find past issues at [easternmennonite.org/today](http://easternmennonite.org/today)

*In admissions processes, Eastern Mennonite School does not discriminate on the basis of any race, color, handicap, national or ethnic origin, or religion, and admits students to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.*

*The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the school's non-discrimination policies, including its Title IX policy: Andrea Wenger, director of advancement, 540-236-6026. For assistance related to Title IX or other civil rights laws, please contact OCR at [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov) or 800-421-3481, TDD 800-877-8339.*



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# TODAY

Volume 38, No. 1  
Fall 2020

## Save the Date!

**FRIDAY NIGHT  
LIVE WITH EMS!**

**VIRTUAL AUCTION  
Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.**



**HOSTED BY:**  
**Adam Yoder,**  
EMS dad,  
social worker,  
and funny man  
extraordinaire

## MUSIC BY:

**David Berry,** pianist  
**Prince Bellerose,** with  
**Joseph Harder '16**

## AUCTION ITEMS:

- dinners (local delivery)
- travel getaways
- home upgrades
- support EMS
- and more!

Glimpse school life during COVID-related precautions.

Invitation coming to your mailbox. Register online in October!

[easternmennonite.org/auction](http://easternmennonite.org/auction)

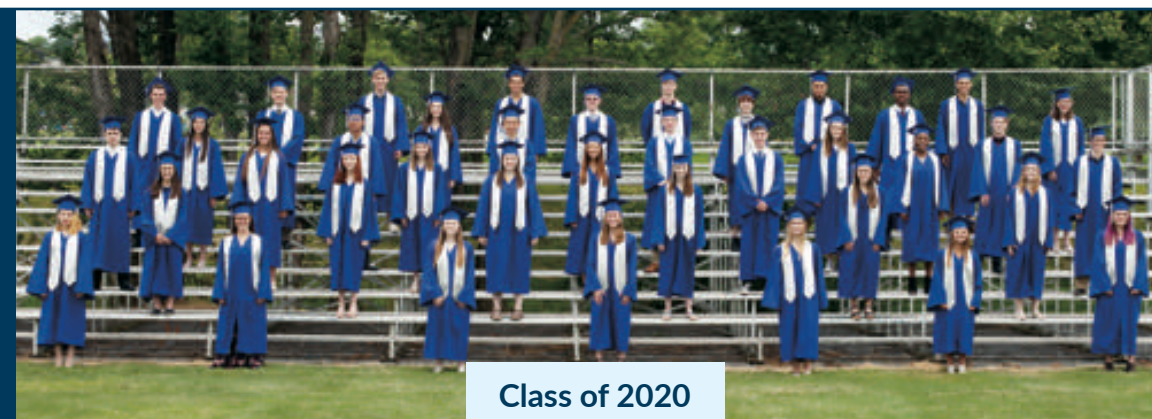


Students review their schedules while they await a health screen check in with Justin King, high school principal, on the first day of school.

## 2020-21 School Year Launches

August 25 we welcomed 354 new and returning students, K-12. We reviewed home health screening procedures, pumped hand sanitizer, sprayed desks, followed arrows on the floor, limited bathroom use with a new pass and hook system, wore face coverings, and kept physical distance as much as possible. We also practiced online learning tools for if and when those are needed. Our whole community – teachers, administrators, staff, students, families – are working to keep each other safe!

Read more about launching the school year with COVID-19 precautions at [easternmennonite.org/news](http://easternmennonite.org/news)



Class of 2020

## HOMEcoming REUNIONS CANCELLED!

**With regret, we cancelled the traditional Homecoming Weekend activities scheduled for Oct. 16 to 18 due to COVID-19.**

Those whose class year ends in 0 and 5 were scheduled to gather this year for five-year reunions. Some classes are considering alternative ways to connect virtually. Some are considering joining friends next fall for a reunion with the class immediately behind them. **Watch for a letter from your class reunion planner.**

Contact Erin Kennedy Hess in the advancement office if you have ideas for virtual gatherings, or with questions, 540-236-6025 or [advancement@easternmennonite.org](mailto:advancement@easternmennonite.org)

## 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.

## VISION:

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

## FOLLOW US:





D. Keith '55 and Ellen Slabaugh '55 Helmuth, recipients of the Lifetime Service Award for 2020.

Photos courtesy of Keith Helmuth

## Keith and Ellen Helmuth '55 Lifetime Service Award

D. Keith and Ellen (Slabaugh) Helmuth, both class of '55, of Woodstock, New Brunswick, Canada, are being honored with the EMS Lifetime Service Award for 60 years of creation care in personal and professional settings.

"They were environmentalists before it was popular," wrote former roommate and lifelong friend, James Lapp, in his nomination, describing them as "humble and unsung."

The couple had hoped – before coronavirus – to celebrate their 65-year class reunion at Homecoming Weekend. Instead, the group – which has a record eight married couples from the class – will connect virtually.

Keith and Ellen have pursued environmental education, organic farming, community economic and social development work, writing for publication and public presentation, the founding of Quaker Institute for the Future, and book publishing on environmental themes.

"Everything started for us from the standpoint of service and community," writes Keith, reflecting on their journey.

"Jim Lapp and I were roommates for our senior year at EMHS," writes Keith, noting that "Jim, Joe Longacher, Leon Stutzman, and I were especially good friends in those days and ever since."

Leon and Keith were roommates in their junior year of high school, and Keith and Joe were roommates for their first year at Eastern Mennonite College. "So I had the great benefit of a close association with each of these remarkable men in those formative years."

A photo of Jim and Keith in their pajamas in their dorm room recently came to light. The window in the photo "is the one from which I waved to Ellen on Nov. 17, 1954, after she had given me a lovely Buxton leather wallet for my birthday," recalls Keith.

Keith wrote extensively about the couple's passion to nurture a small corner of creation while sharing broadly through relationships, entrepreneurship and writing to influence others for the greater good.

See the full article at [easternmennonite.org/news](http://easternmennonite.org/news)



Andrew Jenner '00, honored with EMS' Community Engagement Award in 2020, with Rachel and their children.

Photo by Katie Schmid

## Andrew Jenner '00 Community Engagement Award

Andrew Jenner '00 is EMS's 2020 Community Engagement Award recipient. Jenner has connected with local and international readers for more than 15 years on everything from city council to obscure science-y things, always committed to truth telling.

As co-founder of the free, online independent news source, *The Citizen* ([hburgcitizen.com](http://hburgcitizen.com)), Jenner's journalistic endeavors currently serve Shenandoah Valley readers, even as he works full time in the solar industry.

Jenner's 2018 transition from freelance journalism to a 9-5 job was "a little bit like I finally got called up to the big leagues," he says. "I got a few hits and now am on to something else." His journalistic "hits" include publication with *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, and the *Chicago Tribune*.

While freelance journalism brought Jenner the satisfaction of being published in respected outlets, he learned that "forces

completely beyond my control were making what once had been a way to earn a decent living no longer tenable... That's how I wound up in the solar industry."

This new professional chapter now has him pursuing his journalistic passions on evenings and weekends.

*The Citizen's* content is "pretty basic stuff," Jenner wrote in the August 2, 2020, weekly email "round up" of coverage. "... and more often than not, that's the whole point – little daily FYIs concerning things that might affect you or your neighbors in this little place we're lucky to call home."

Andrew "never would have guessed" he'd end up in the Valley and counts himself lucky to have lived in Kenya from ages 6-13 with his parents. "I have a bunch of fond memories of what seemed to me like big adventures through parts of the world that few people who don't live there ever see."

The experience "probably made me more comfortable than I would have been otherwise, being in situations where I'm different than everyone else, or in being in unfamiliar places," he says. "It also gave me a perspective on material comforts that manifests itself nowadays in me lecturing my kids about how they have no idea how lucky they are."



Self portrait with capybaras in São Paulo, Brazil, while reporting on bird watching activism for *Birding* magazine.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Jenner

The Jenner family returned from East Africa to the United States in 1996 and settled in Harrisonburg on Andrew's 14th birthday, where his mother began a position with the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, and he began ninth grade at EMHS.

As a student in both high school and college, Jenner had no inkling that his future might include a career in journalism. He recalls high school English teachers Ernie Martin and John Leonard encouraging him in his writing.

And, as he grew older, he began to tap into his personal intrigue with a well-crafted piece. "In my senior year of college," he recalls "I remember reading a piece in *The Atlantic* that helped me realize how well-written content can have a real impact on people."

After college and a year in Germany, Jenner worked for Valley newspapers while completing an MFA in creative nonfiction writing from Goucher College, Towson, Md.

Read the rest of Andrew's story, including media advice for today's teens, at [easternmennonite.org/news](http://easternmennonite.org/news)

Andrew will share in Chapel Oct. 16 at EMS with a video link shared on EMS chapel YouTube channel.

## Farewell and Welcome

We said farewell to the following faculty this summer:

- Brian Buchanan – 17 years, band, and digital recording teacher, auditorium and general technical expert
- Claudia Fencer – one year, anatomy & physiology and AP biology teacher
- Lee Good – 11 years, middle and high school science teacher
- Laurie Loucks – one year, English for International Learners
- Susan Melendez – nine years, 6th grade teacher
- Kierra Sauder – three years, high school English teacher

New EMS employees this fall:

- Nick Gardner – band teacher and auditorium sound technician
- Merridy Nagey – teacher assistant, 4th grade
- Mark Gormto – English 7 & 8 teacher and drama coordinator



(L to R) David Berry, Andrew Fairfield, Wendy Malvaez, and Scott Rogers

- Leah Huyard '17 – teacher-in-training with Larry Martin in 6th grade
- Gwen Lantz – library assistant
- Thomas Mitch – science 7 & 8, anatomy & physiology, environmental science teacher
- Karen Suderman – English for International Learners
- Michelle Weaver – teacher assistant, Spanish
- David Berry, assistant professor and chair of the music department at Eastern Mennonite University, member of Divine Unity Church in Harrisonburg, and EMS parent.
- Andrew Fairfield '03, representing the Central District of Virginia Mennonite Conference, pastor of Christiansburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.
- Wendy Malvaez, co-pastor at Manantial de Vida Mennonite Church and EMS parent.
- Scott Rogers, realtor with Funkhouser Real Estate Group, member of Asbury United Methodist Church, and EMS parent.

More on these appointments at [easternmennonite.org/news](http://easternmennonite.org/news)

New Board of Directors members:

Four new members beginning two-year terms on Eastern Mennonite School's Board of Directors bring diversity of denomination, life experience, and race.

## Racial Equity Group Update

A new group made up of any interested faculty and staff met weekly this summer to begin the long-term work of looking at all aspects of school life through a racial equity lens.

Participants reported on what they were learning about anti-racism and drafted proposed additions to the school's strategic plan for review by the Board of Directors.

All departments are challenged to review curriculum through a racial equity lens, and each employee will include a professional development goal this year related to the topic.

Julianne Ross continues to add library resources of diverse voices. Student leaders launched an Anti-racism Student Association. Two new high school electives were added: African American history and African American literature.

[easternmennonite.org/racial-equity](http://easternmennonite.org/racial-equity)



Rahel Lema '21, student club leader, on left, and Shannon Roth, right, government and US history teacher, at a recent meeting.