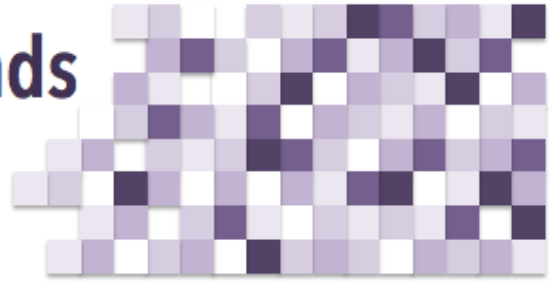


Pioneer High School Bands

Ann Arbor, Michigan

November, 2014 Newsletter

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**I don't
think we're
in Kansas
anymore,
Toto....**



So my family and I decided that we'd go and see 2014's inaugural Symphony Marching Band performance at Pioneer's home football game vs. Edsel Ford. Now, as a native Texan, this might be heretical for me to admit, but football, for me, is really just some vague activity that happens on either side of halftime. And halftime, see, is where it's all at - that's where my kid marches around and blows his horn. Football is like the bread in a sandwich - it can be good, or bad, doesn't really matter since actually, its primary job is to keep your fingers off of the pastrami.

This would have been all well and good, of course, if there actually had been a halftime. We did get to see the band do a very nice pre-game show, which included a great rendition of the national anthem. Sadly, the marching formation, with all of those brass instruments, somehow configured itself into a giant parabolic antenna for lightning and tornadoes, which worked even better than the national anthem did. Eight seconds left to go in the half and the stadium announcer said something about calmly sprinting and screaming towards the exits, and that was that.

Fast forward a couple of weeks to Homecoming, and I'm thinking, okay, we're out of the hurricane season now, let's go back to the football field and see our kids march! And sure enough, the halftime show was awesome - this time including both the Symphony AND Concert bands. Boy, I'm telling you, those kids blew up a storm. Literally. No hurricane this time, but a monsoon for sure, and once again, we were calmly stampeding towards the parking lot.

On the plus side, in addition to "Awesome Musicianship" and "Spectacular Marching Form and Precision", I think we can also add "Drought Relief" to the bands' resume. Well done, kids - we'll see you next year! I'll be the one dressed like Paddington Bear.



For a somewhat drier view of the Band in action, please see the [Google+ photo gallery](#) (Photos: Suzanne Ross)

Things That are Going ON



As I write this, we are in the midst of the Band Candy Sale. By the time this newsletter comes out in its final form, for most of you, the sale will be but a sweet memory. However, since in theory there's a ban on the sale, transfer or possession of candy going on at school, a significant part of the candy purchasing and consumption responsibility in this neighborhood appears to have been placed on yours truly. Sooooo... right now, I am totally hopped up on Baby Ruth bars and am doing everything I can NOT TO TYPE EVERYTHING IN ALL CAPS!!!!!! I LOVE BABY RUTH BARS!!!!!! Ahem.

If for some reason you missed out on the candy and/or didn't have your car washed by these hard-working kids during the Band Car Wash held on October 12th (271 cars washed!), and/or didn't pick up some cool band apparel during the Band Picnic back in early September and the remorse is killing you, well, here's what you do: You make sure you hit our One-Day Only Band Mug Sale at 4 p.m. in the Band Room (Friday 12/12/2014)! Due to the constant demand for Pioneer Band Mugs, and few fall sales opportunities, the PBA will be selling mugs from 8 am to 4 pm in the Band Room. Before class, after class, after school and during lunch, your kids can stock up on these awesome holiday gifts, and you parents can swing by and get some for YOUR friends and relatives, too. Or, be selfish. Buy a set for yourself – these are the best mugs to ever hold liquid, and an absolute steal for only \$8. Two for \$15. A gross for, uh. \$1,080.

Also coming right up – The Band Bowling Party, Saturday 12/6/14, 12 - 2 pm at Colonial Lanes. Nothing says band unity like bowling – everybody had a blast last year – details coming soon on the Pioneer Band Website, but mark your calendars now.



**Not to
Toot our
own
Horn,
but....**



Oh, man, so many levels. But seriously, folks, yeah, the band has fun, yeah, the picnic was wonderful, etc. etc., but underneath all of this is some fundamentally great music education and, as a result, outstanding music performance. Frankly, the AAPS band program ranks as one of the best in the country. Recent evidence of this comes via the Foundation for Music Education's "Mark of Excellence/National Wind Band Honors" project, in which the 2013-2014 Pioneer Symphony Band received "National Winner" status in the New Music category. We were also "Commended Winners" in the Class AAAA category.

If you take a look at the website, you'll notice something right away. Practically each and every band in the top end of the various categories were from Texas. In fact, there were only FIVE non-Texas bands represented in these honors out of 224 entries from 35 states. And we were one of them, which is awesome.

By the way, about the Texas thing - 'cause you're probably scratching your head, wondering, Texas? What makes these bands so good? Don't Texans mostly just play harmonica by campfires and yodel? Well, yes, that describes the older ones. Not the younger ones. 'Cause, you see, as alluded to in my intro, the thing around which all Texas high schools revolve, like moths around a candle, is football. Now, if you don't actually *play* football, you can at least be *associated* with football by playing in the band. And bandliness is next to footballsiness, so the competition to get into band and stay in band is FIERCE. These Texas bands come to play, y'all, and to be ranked among them (musically, if not philosophically) is a high honor, indeed.

In addition to the whole-band honors, there were also some individual standouts. Recognized as Outstanding Soloists for their solos in *Candide*: Jonathan Lynn (Alto Sax), Ellen Sauer (Piccolo) and Anna Hayman (Oboe). For their solos in *Redline Tango*: Griffin Roy (Clarinet), Kevin Tian (Soprano Sax), Ian McKenny (Trumpet) and Michael Shapiro (Clarinet). Excellent work, everybody, and as always, hats off to David Leach and Nancy Waring for making it all come together so well!



Foundation for Music
Education's Mark of
Excellence/National Wind
Band Honors Project Results
[website.](#)

**MSBOA Solo
and
Ensemble
Do's and
Don't Do's.**



I wrote a bit about this last year 'round this time, and encourage you to dig through the newsletter archives for the full story. However, the bumper sticker version follows, perhaps useful for the folks new to the band scene this year with freshman band members:

The \$10 dollar registration fee that you paid in October, has bought your band member an adjudicated performance slot on Saturday, Jan 31, 2015 at the Franklin High School in Livonia for the first part of this process. This is a great opportunity to perform, perhaps just a smidge outside of the comfort zone, and receive constructive criticism from trained music professionals as part of our student's ongoing musical development. Plus it's required of Concert and Symphony band members. So there.

Some Tips:

- Bring a cell phone, have your kid bring a cell phone (but turned OFF during the performance). Livonia Franklin is a maze of interconnected secret passageways and inconsistently numbered rooms. It's easy to get lost, so phones will help re-locate people for the ride home.
- Immediately beyond the front door will be a check-in desk where they will give you your room location(s) and any adjustments to your performance schedule. Go there first to get the lowdown on how your day will work.
- Bring your walking shoes. Parking is a bear, and often the only spots available are across the street in the neighborhoods. You can drop your kid off at the door and then go park, but chances are the chauffeurs will need to hoof it a bit.
- Bring some cash - there are plenty of food, drink and knick-knack vendors afoot at the Festivals, and sometimes these are hard to avoid.
- Bring some patience - if your student is doing both a solo and an ensemble piece, these can, depending on scheduling, be separated by several hours. Make sure everybody's portable reality devices are fully charged before you go.
- **IMPORTANT:** Check the Pioneer Band Website "Expectations" section WELL in advance of the festival. Like, do it now. You will find tons of helpful guidance to prepare for the festival and thereby prevent mishaps once there. For example, the MSBOA requirements include recital length minimums, dress code guidelines, and Medieval copyright infringement penalties. See:
http://www.aapioneerbands.org/calendar/se_information.html

Finally, relax and have a good time - the judges are on your side and are there to help you out. There's no reason to stress, and anyway, stress will ruin your embouchure, and those are expensive to replace.



Pioneer Band Website
Expectations - aka:
[MSBOA Solo and Ensemble
Do's and Don't Do's.](#)