



Pioneer High School Bands

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN U.S.A.

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A Word from the Editors (Fine. Lots of words. Whatever!):

Hi Folks, and welcome to the November/December 2013 issue of the Pioneer Band Association newsletter. Kim McLean and I (Tim Douthit) will try to put one of these together bimonthly. Fair warning – this is a work in progress. Both of us are relatively new on the band scene here at Pioneer, so please bear with us. My older son is a Sophomore in Concert Band, and I've got a percussionist on deck in 6th grade at Slauson, which essentially means that I, for one, am in this for the next seven years. The seven year hitch, by the way, assumes that a) I'm not tossed out on my ear by the PBA for irreverence, and b) that Mr. Leach and Ms. Waring continue their tenure here at Pioneer. If they leave, the world will be cast into darkness, there will be zombies and stuff, and we'll all have bigger problems than who's writing the newsletter.

Updates and Reminders!

* **Check the Pioneer Band Website frequently** (www.aapioneerbands.org).

The calendar section is invaluable in finding out what's going on and what's coming up in the event that your band member is either not totally on top of things and/or lost the ability to communicate with parents once he or she landed in high school.

* **Volunteer.** If you're not fortunate enough to have a spouse that surreptitiously signs you up for stuff like I am, please volunteer to help out. There is a link on the Band website ("PBA") that will lead you to Volunteer Opportunities. The outstanding success of the Pioneer band program is in no small part due to the support of parents and the community. This truly is one of the best high school music programs in the country, and by helping out, you can ensure that it stays that way.

* **Buy stuff \$\$.** The holidays are just around the corner, and I don't know anybody that wouldn't love to have several Pioneer Bands coffee mugs. Or a sweatshirt with a coffee mug in the kangaroo pouch – guaranteed "most favored son-in-law" status in the bag right there. Just

sayin'. Anyway, contact Marie and Mark Brazeau for details at mariebrazeau@aol.com.

* **WRITE FOR THE NEWSLETTER!** If there is a band topic you have experience or interest in, and it is not represented in the newsletter but you feel it should be, and you've always wanted to see your name up in lights, or in print, or, uh, on a PDF document somewhere, submit your article to me! It's fun – don't be shy. I'll check it for spelling, edit out any pictures of Justin Bieber, and Kim will snap it into place. **EVEN BETTER** – if you have a student in band that would like to write some first-person articles about band experiences that they would like to share, folks, get those to me, too. That would be awesome. I might even tolerate Justin Bieber pics in that case. Probably not, but if it helps motivate your kids, lie. Send things to:

timdouthit@gmail.com





Frigid Temperatures; Hot Music!

Friday evening, October 25th, 2013, gave additional evidence as to why the piano makes a relatively poor marching band instrument. For one, they're a little awkward to carry around, for another, at 27 degrees Fahrenheit, the more fingers you need, the harder things are to play. Which makes it all the more impressive that, for example, the sax players were still rocking it out, even though they might not have been smiling quite as much as the trombone players were.

This was, of course, Senior Night at the PHS vs. Canton football game. The halftime show, with the combined Concert and Symphony marching bands, was a spectacular affair, and a timely infusion of hot music into an otherwise, shall we say, brisk evening. Spectators able to unfold themselves from the fetal positions they had assumed to fend off the elements were treated to "Senior's Choice" renditions of "Crazy Train", "Stayin' Alive", "Don't You (Forget About Me)" and "Pinball Wizard". Despite the fact that these songs were all released before anybody in the band was actually born, the kids absolutely nailed the tunes, while seamlessly moving from formation to formation. The musicianship and precision that Mr. Leach and Ms. Waring elicit from these kids, given the relatively short rehearsal interval, is nothing short of amazing. It's



clearly magic! Has to be. In OUR home, for example, OUR band member has a hard time making it into the kitchen without falling over the CD rack. Cantering through 20 minutes of intricate paces with 150 some-odd of his friends without a trip to the ER would have been impossible to imagine prior to 10/25. So kudos all around!

In case you missed it....

The entire half-time performance can be seen on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTBkPOuH8EI>



Also, you can check out lots of great photos from the event along with additional content & info on the Pioneer Band's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/aapioneerbands?filter=2>



Solo & Ensemble



SURVIVAL TIPS:

- * Don't leave home without the original copy of the piece (no xeroxes allowed). All measures must be numbered for the judges.
- * Bring a cell phone. Have your kid bring a cell phone. Franklin High is a big, sprawling place, and on 1/25/14 will be awash with kids running pell-mell through the joint trying frantically to get from practice room to performance room. **MAKE SURE TO HAVE YOUR KID TURN OFF HIS/HER PHONE BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE!!!**
- * Get there early. Parking is a bear – you'll probably have to park across the street. There IS a drop-off driveway in front of the school if you're hauling a Marimba, though.
- * Bring some cash. They do serve "coffee" and "food".
- * **IMPORTANT:** Check the Pioneer Band Website "Expectations" section **WELL** in advance of the festival. You will find tons of helpful guidance to prepare you for the festival. For example, the MSBOA requirements for the sheet music that will be used are intricate, not to say Byzantine, and you'll need help to navigate those, and other procedural waters. See: http://www.aapioneerbands.org/calendar/se_information.html
- * Finally: Relax! The "adjudicators" are music professionals, and are overwhelmingly nice folks. At the end of the performances, they will provide friendly suggestions along with their critiques. These judges are there to help promote and enrich your kids' musical experience.

Curabitur labore.Ac augue donec, sed gravida

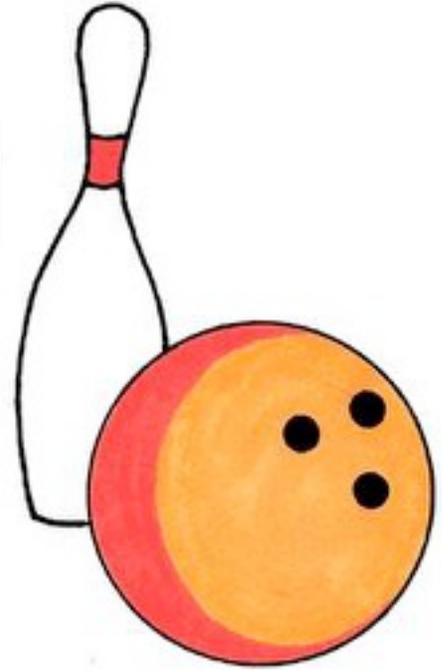
If you're new to the scene, you may be wondering what you were writing those \$10 checks for in late October. Well, those were for applications to the Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) District Solo & Ensemble Festival, scheduled to occur **Saturday, January 25th, 2014** at Franklin High School in Livonia. Participation is mandatory for Concert and Symphony Band members, and strongly encouraged for Varsity Band (very, very strongly). Now, the term "Festival" was, I think, added to the proceedings in order to lend an air of levity to it all; to put you in mind of traveling minstrels, jesters, the video for "You Can Dance If You Want To" by Men Without Hats, that sort of thing. And yes, these festivals should be fun, but should also be taken seriously. There is a dress code, for example, and running around with air horns is generally discouraged. From MSBOA's website:

"Solo & Ensemble Festivals are an opportunity for individual students from member schools to perform a selection of their choice for adjudication. District-level festivals are held in late January through mid-February. Each student or

group of students is evaluated by one judge and rated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the highest rating possible. Students or groups that earn a rating of 1 (or "Superior") are qualified for State Solo & Ensemble Festival which is held in March. The basic structure of State Solo & Ensemble Festival is the same as District, but the students are held to a higher standard. Soloists in grades 10 through 12 must perform Proficiency Exams which include scales and sight reading. Students and ensembles that are chosen for the Michigan Youth Arts Festival Honors Band, Orchestra, Soloists and Ensembles come from the highest rated events at the State Festival."

So yes, this is, at some level, a competition, but the bigger picture is that it helps prepare our band members for the incredibly varied environments in which performances occur, as well as familiarizing them with concepts such as professionalism, stage presence, appropriate practice and preparation, and cooperation and coordination with ensemble members and other peers. In short: real life!

Bowling Party!



Saturday, Dec. 7th, 1:00 - 3:00

At Colonial Lanes, 1950 S. Industrial

Free for Varsity Band members!

\$5 at the door for Concert & Symphony Band
members

Pizza, pop, salad & shoe rental included for all.

Send an email RSVP to: cpagebogen@yahoo.com

Please bring a dessert if you can!