

Newsletter

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOLS

Vol. 36, Number 4

Spring 2011

Many Awards and Honors for Musicians and Musical Groups

The last several months have been very busy for the Exeter Music Department. In addition to numerous entertaining and successful events, many students have attained accomplishments in the county, state, and region. This is a partial list of some of those.

- Thirty-six senior high school students were selected to participate in the Berks Senior High County Band, Orchestra, and Chorus festivals held in February at Conrad Weiser High School. Students were selected based on audition and represented Exeter with students from all Berks County high schools.
- Numerous students were selected to participate in District 10 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) festivals throughout the months of January and February. Jordan Halsey, Erik Potteiger, and Brian

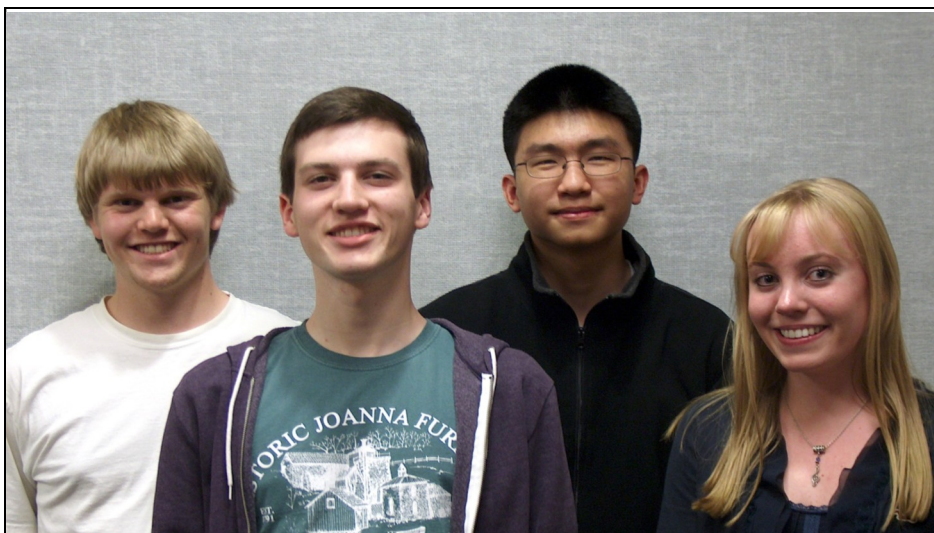
Snelling participated in District Chorus at Easton Area High School, Lauren Genova participated in District Orchestra at Northampton High School, and Lauren Genova and Katherine Stewart participated in District Band at Tulpehocken High School. Junior Erik Potteiger was also selected, based on his re-audition at District 10 Chorus, to participate in the elite Region 5 PMEA Chorus at Parkland High School in February.

- Fifth grader Elise Kohler and eighth grader James Damore performed in February as winners of the RMTA composers contest in their selected age groups. Elise's original musical composition, "Suite: A Day in the Life of a Kid," received a second-place award and James' musical composition, "Barrie's Waltz," received an honorable mention.

- In March Senior Lauren Genova represented Exeter in the 2011 Region 5 All-State Band at North Schuylkill Junior-Senior High School. Region 5 Band encompasses high school students from a 13-county area, combining the best from Districts 7 and 10. Through her intense re-audition at this festival, Lauren was also selected to be a member of the PMEA All-State Concert Band for 2011 and performed at the PMEA All-State Conference in Hershey.
- In April the senior high school String Quartet, featuring Geneva Yawger, Derek Lehn, Risa Cullen, and Graham Cullen, performed for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association state conference in Hershey, PA.
- Thirty-one students in grades 7-9 were selected by audition to participate

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Four Seniors Honored in the National Merit Scholarship Program



NMS honorees: (left to right) Joe Samolewicz, Tim Austin, Michael Wang, and Lauren Genova

Of the 1.5 million entrants, some 50,000 with the highest PSAT/NMSQT® Selection Index scores qualify for recognition in the National Merit® Scholarship Program and four of those are ETSHS seniors. Earning the distinction as a "Finalist" is Lauren Genova, daughter of Ronald and Lynn Genova. Named as "Commended Students" are: Tim Austin, son of Patrick and Kathryn Austin; Joe Samolewicz, son of Joseph and Genevieve Samolewicz; and Michael Wang, son of Qi Wang and Bing Ma. These students are being recognized for the exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the qualifying test used for program entry.

Music Department Accomplishments

(continued from page 1)

in the Berks Junior County Band, Orchestra, and Chorus festival which was held in April at Kutztown High School.

- From April 29-30, the Marching Band traveled to Winchester, Virginia to participate in the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. The group placed first in their division in both the Firefighters' and the Grand Feature Parades, placed third overall in the Grand Feature Parade and earned the "Director's Award." The color guard won "Best Auxiliary Unit" in the Firefighters' Parade.
- At the All-East Orchestra Festival, junior cellist Graham Cullen placed third out of twenty-one cellists, which indicates that Graham is the third best high school cellist in the entire Northeastern United States! He earned the opportunity to perform with the conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and other top high school students from throughout the Northeast region in Baltimore, MD.
- Senior Alison Schwartz was selected as one of 10 high school students throughout the state to participate in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association 2011 Future Music Educators Honors Symposium. Alison was chosen to participate based on her fine high school record, dedication to musical ensembles, excellent recommendations, her intent to study music education in college, and her serious preparation towards her career choice.

Reminder: End-of-Term Calendar Date Changes

Due to the number of inclement weather days this past winter, the last student day of the 2010-11 term will be Friday, June 10. Both June 9 and June 10 will be early dismissal days with secondary students being dismissed at 11:30 a.m., grade 5-6 students at 12:15 p.m., and K-4 students at 1 p.m.

Summer School Options for Enrichment and Support

Dr. Warren Mata, Assistant Superintendent

Once again, our school district is pleased to offer a wide variety of summer programs for our students. We will be offering both enrichment classes and support classes this summer.

A number of fun enrichment classes for students from kindergarten through 12th grade are currently being developed. Some course titles include: Beginning Guitar, Summer Moviemaking, Theater Workshop, World Languages, Arts and Crafts, Cooking for Kids and many more. These classes vary in duration and are scheduled between July 5 and July 29. Classes will be held at the Lorane Elementary School and the Senior High School. Brochures with more detail are on the district's website (www.exeter.k12.pa.us). Additionally, a limited number of hard-copy brochures are available at the Administration Building and the school offices.

Support programs designed to strengthen the academic skill/knowledge of our students have also been developed.

- The Kindergarten through 2nd Grade Reading Program is a highly specialized program connected with our Response to Intervention initiative at the K-4 schools. This program will be held at Lorane Elementary from July 5-July 29 and the program contact is Mr. Craig Sell, Assistant Principal at Jacksonwald Elementary.
- Teachers in the Park: Bridging the Academic Summer Gap...a specialized program for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.
- Math Fact Academy: Mastering the Math Facts...a fun, hands-on math program for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.
- Our Secondary Summer School Program (7th-12th grade) will be an online offering available at cost to students and parents. Detailed information about this program is available at both the JHS and SHS Guidance Offices.

There is a charge for all summer school offerings with the exception of our K-2 Grade Reading Program which is grant funded.



The Junior High Science Olympiad team earned fifth place in the Regional Competition held at Kutztown University after earning medals in nine out of 23 events. The award winners included: Nicole Farnham, Heather Heim, Stephanie Heim, Amber Ferreira, Taylor Powell, Erin Murphy, Maia Kunkel, Ryan Henrie, Sim Anand and Christiana Nicoloudakis. The whole team qualified for the State Competition in April and Heather Heim, Stephanie Heim and Nicole Farnham placed 4th in the Experimental Design category.

Frequently Asked Questions About the 2011-2012 Budget

1. What is the timeline for the Budget Process?

Under Act 1 the District goes through the process of preparing a preliminary budget which is adopted in February, and a proposed final budget process which is adopted in June. The timeline for the budget process is mandated by Act 1. The key budget dates in the 2011-2012 budget preparation process are: Preliminary Budget Adopted - February 15; Board adopts a Proposed Final Budget - May 17; and Board adopts Final Budget and sets Millage - June 21.

2. What are the District's major revenue sources?

The District receives its revenue from three major sources: local, state, and federal. The District's 2011-12 proposed budget reflects local revenue of \$44,156,871 or 73% (before any tax increase); state revenue of \$15,671,215 or 26%; federal revenue of \$603,905 or 1%.

3. What is property value assessment and how does it impact the District?

- Assessment is a value of real estate and is the key factor in determining how much revenue the district will bring in from real estate taxes.
- In the last three years the District has been impacted significantly by assessment appeals. Property owners, both residential and commercial, have been requesting a reduction in their assessment based on the economy and the theory that their assessment value has been reduced.
- 2009 Appeals - \$11,655,800; 2010 Appeals - \$6,138,200; 2011 Appeals - \$5,483,000 – totaling \$690,000 less in property tax revenue.

4. What are the District's major expenditures?

Summarizing the District's expenditures by function or departmental activity the 2011-12 proposed final budget which totals \$63,080,099 currently reflects:

- \$36,093,364 or 57% on instructional programs;
- \$16,354,178 or 26% instructional support services;
- \$1,506,694 or 2% on non-instructional services; and
- \$9,125,863 or 15% on other financing uses.

5. Why does a District have limited control on making budget cuts?

- Schools are controlled by state regulations and mandates which it has no control over. The District is required to serve all students and provide for their needs. Special Education costs, in particular, have been increasing annually at rates that far exceed the Act 1 index.
- Funding of the Public School Retirement System is mandated by law. Most District employees are required to be part of the state's retirement system. Contributions are made by the employee, the district, and the state. The state mandates the employer contribution percentage.
- Cyber/Charter Education Costs are mandated. Currently, the net cost to the District is \$430,000. Governor Corbett has proposed cutting all reimbursement to districts for tuition costs, which would cause increased costs.
- Salaries and benefits are the largest part of the District's budget or 68%. Most of the employees are covered under a collective bargaining agreement which makes it difficult to make changes to staffing. Currently state code does not allow a district to furlough teachers due to economic reasons. Schools may only furlough through attrition or by demonstrating enrollment declines or drastic declines in course enrollments.

6. What has the administration and school board done to resolve the budget challenges other than raising taxes?

- In anticipation of the budget challenges resulting from the economic downturn, the Board made the decision to not open a fourth K-4 elementary in 2011-12, but continue to operate three K-4 buildings. This decision avoided approximately \$1 million in general fund expenses on an annual basis.
- The District continues to look at all options which include: (a) additional revenue sources; (b) conservation of energy and supplies; (c) deferring spending including library book purchases, capital improvement projects; (d) reducing non-essential/non-mandated programs; (e) department cuts in supplies, equipment, staff development; (f) evaluating all positions to determine need and if best practices are being achieved; (g) not filling positions upon retirement or resignation. The district has identified 13 positions that will not be filled in 2011-12.

As of April 12, 2011 the District has identified \$2.4 million in budget cuts. This figure will grow as the staffing budget is finalized for 2011-12.



Spring is the Busiest Time for Grounds Keeping

Kenneth Pitts, Director of Facilities

Spring has sprung. For many of us at our homes we've already started planting flowers, cutting the grass for the first time of the season, maybe even thinking about spring cleaning. As we survey our own properties we see a host of things that must be done.

For the district grounds crew, spring is always the most challenging season. In addition to cutting the grass, lining the athletic fields, grooming the infields, and erecting the equipment for games, the grounds crew has many other springtime duties. They serve as the backup for the building custodial staffs, are the supplemental help for setting up for the end-of-the-term concerts and shows, transfer food to empty the cafeteria store rooms and coolers before summer, move items and supplies for program changes and student records, and assist with every other thing that needs a helping hand! And let's not forget that Mother Nature will not cut us a break with the fastest growing season of the year, regular rain showers that cut productivity, and a lot of new vegetation.

Not too long ago, the plows came off and good riddance to them! During the winter season the spare blades were sharpened, all the equipment was maintained, painted and made ready to function. There is very little time in spring for repair and maintenance; we must be ready to go from the first mowing to the last playoff game inning. The district has 19 major turf playing fields as well as large green spaces throughout the district's 232 acres. When Owatin Creek Elementary comes on board, we will add three more fields and another 90+ acres. Fortunately most buildings have "wild" green space reserves that are required for storm water purposes that are not maintained or groomed normally, but that still leaves an average of 30 acres per grounds crew person to maintain. So just like the old commercial, "It's time to make the doughnuts," for the grounds crew at Exeter, if the sun is shining, "it's time to cut the grass, again and again and again." Happy spring!

We're Proud of All These Good News Items

- The Literacy Council of Reading-Berks recently announced that the Exeter students were the top fund raisers in the 2011 "Readers Win" campaign with nearly one-third of the countywide total money raised coming from Exeter students. Jacksonwald Elementary placed first in the county in total dollars raised and second in dollars per student enrolled. These students were among the top fourteen earners in Berks County: Taden Welsh, a sixth grader at Reiffton; Sam Orzolek and Austin Brown, both Jacksonwald first graders; Madison Levensgood, a Jacksonwald third grader; Shane Hoover, a fourth grader at Jacksonwald; and senior high students Logan and Mitchell Gettis.
- Fifth grade student Matthew Ward won 2nd place in the law essay writing contest sponsored by the Berks County Bar Association. He will receive a \$100 savings bond and is invited to attend the Law Day Luncheon with his parents and his teacher Anna Zielinski at the Reading Crowne Plaza Hotel.
- The hours of before-school and after-school study sessions at Reiffton and the Junior High certainly paid off. After four hours of competition, two Exeter students placed first and second in the local "You Be The Chemist" Challenge at the BCIU. This year there were nineteen competitors. Eighth grader Steph Heim garnered first place and sixth grader Trent Morris placed second. Both advanced to the state level competition at Penn State Main Campus in early May. Challenge teacher Debra Lorah served as the moderator and JHS science teacher Tracy Powell and JHS gifted teacher LeeBeth Cranmer serve as advisors.
- The Reiffton teams were very successful in the 2011 Spring Stock Market Game. A fifth grade team, comprised of Bridgette Bussler, Abbey Smith, Bryn Gautieri, Audra Nemirow, and Katie Riley, took first place out of 41 teams. Their stock purchases had a 6.5964% return which was admirable in this difficult financial market

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SHS Science Olympiad Team Scores in Competitions



The Senior High Science Olympiad team captured first place in the Regional Science Olympiad held at Kutztown University in March. Receiving first place medals in various events were Colin Hancock, Caitlin Plank, Lauren Genova, Michael Wang, Brook Bi, and Katie Price. Second place medals went to Katie Price, Katie Murphy, Darby Reedy, Shannon Fischer, Michael Wang, and Colin Hancock. Michael Wang, Janelle Hartman, Colin Hancock, and Stephanie Kramer earned third place medals, while Joe Ambrosi, John Newcome, Ryan Andrieux, and Matt Goodman received fourth place awards. The following students earned awards in the State Olympiad at Juniata College in April: second place was awarded to Michael Wang and Janelle Hartman, fourth place finishes went to Katie Price, Caitlin Plank, Michael Wang, Lauren Genova and Colin Hancock. Lauren Genova and Katie Price also earned a fifth place finish.

More Good News Items

(continued from page 4)

time. Another Reiffon fifth grade team placed third. Those students were Faith Kehinde, Olivia Moyer, Lauren Goldberg, Alexia Texter, and Sierra Posey with a 2.1967% return on their investments.

- The winners in the BCIU County-wide Secondary Art Show at the Goggleworks were: Linsay Bittinger, a first place in oils, a first in pencil, third place in pastels, and the Reading/Berks Guild of Craftsman Senior 2-D work award; Missy Walsh, third place in oils; Bonnie Hill, a first place in illustration and a first and honorable mention in tempera; Alexandra Weis, third place in tempera; Alyssa Newmoyer, first in 3-D open; Aiden Miceli, third place in calligraphy; Brandon Reimer, first place in B&W photography; Amanda Smith, honorable mention in hand-built pottery; Emily Orischak, first place in color photography; Zach Britt, honorable mention in B&W photography; and Alyssa Wagner, honorable mention in color photography.
- In the 2011 Wyomissing Art Institute's Yocum Gallery Show Linsay

Bittinger won the Jack Coggins Award which is a \$250 Overall Best of Show prize. Corina Piller won an honorable mention award.



Linsay Bittinger

- ETSHS students in the Technology Student Association (TSA) recently participated in both the regional and state competitions. Advisor Terry Lorah reports that at both events the

number of competitors, the pursuit of perfection, the meticulous projects, and the ingenious solutions were very impressive. In the team events, the "Manufacturing Prototype" team of Vince Mowad and Kyle Cuddeback placed second in the regionals and eighth in the states. The "Video Game Design" team of Ozzy Hine, Max Hirneisen, Cody Seyfert, and Rob Miller earned a third in regionals and eleventh in states. Other teams that won awards in the regional competition were the "Structural Engineering" team of Ricky Sturz and Brandon Reimer and the "Technology Problem Solving" team consisting of Ricky Sturz and James Weir. In individual events, Ricky Sturz captured a first place in regionals and a second place in states with his self-designed, home-built plane. Samantha Dalton earned a third place award in "Desktop Publishing" in the regional competition.

- The ETSHS Mock Trial team earned the title of Berks County Mock Trial Champion after competing against the Governor Mifflin team on May 3, appropriately designated as Law Day. The awesome student lawyers were freshmen Tommy Dolan, Hunter Ahrens, and Toriey Waldman. The credible witnesses were played by freshmen Alex Paul, Stephen Lambriodes, and sophomore Matt Goodman. Stephen Waldman served as the scorekeeper and Shea Grimmer and Matt Seifert were the film crew. SHS social studies teacher Deborah Lambdin serves as the team advisor. The championship case involved the estate of Simone Langston, a woman who died of cancer, vs. Dr. Lefu Harrison. The jury consisted of real-life lawyers and other people who volunteered their time. The final trial was scored using a rubric and was heard by The Honorable Judge Jeffrey Schmehl in Courtroom 7B at the Berks County Courthouse.

Lausch Challenge Students Create "The Great Fire" Play



After reading *The Great Fire*, a Newberry Honor book written by Jim Murphy which recounts the riveting story of the events leading up to the Great Fire of Chicago, the Lausch Challenge students decided to write a fast-paced musical as their culminating project. The play was performed for all fourth grade students and was under the direction of Debra Lorah, Challenge teacher and aide Kay Andrews.

Education Foundation Funds New Student Response Systems

The Exeter Community Education Foundation (ECEF) recently donated over \$16,000 to the school district to purchase nine student response systems for use with the district’s interactive white boards and projectors. The response systems, or “clickers” as the students call them, allow students to interactively respond to questions and allow teachers to measure class understanding. The systems were distributed to teachers at Jacksonwald, Lausch, Lorane, Reiffton, and the Senior High. Because the systems are portable, they can be used by all teachers in a school.

Students like the systems because they allow everyone to have a voice. Teachers like them because it allows immediate feedback on whether the class understands the concept being taught.

One new feature of these systems provides teachers and students greater flexibility in designing questions and providing responses. The new systems are no longer limited to yes/no or multiple choice responses. They include a “texting” feature that allows students to provide more detailed responses.

The ETSD’s Technology Coaches, Scott Schaeffer and Todd Wegman, recently demonstrated the systems at Family Math Night. Students and parents were impressed. According to Schaeffer and Wegman, these systems “take kids to a 21st century learning model where the students are more engaged.” They allow the teachers to perform ongoing assessments and adjust their lessons to student performance.

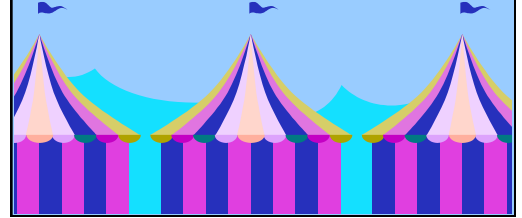
The ECEF is a non-profit foundation dedicated to enhancing the education of students in the Exeter Township School District. For more information visit www.exetereducationfoundation.org.

Exeter May Days

May 20 & 21 3-10 p.m.

**Exeter SHS Grounds
Food, Games, Rides &
Non-stop Entertainment
Fireworks on Saturday Night**

Sponsored cooperatively by Exeter Parks and Rec Department and the six ETSD APTs



WHAT'S INSIDE . . .
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The Exeter Township School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and in compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The district will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, disability, or handicap. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact Mrs. Elizabeth Weber, Compliance Officer, 3650 Perkiomen Ave., Reading, PA 19606.

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