

Strayer Jazz Band bets you can't name that tune ...

It's new!

Musicians write new songs all the time, especially the kind that people listen to on popular radio stations. Apparently, new jazz pieces are harder to come by. The Strayer Jazz Band will soon debut a new piece, "Finding You," commissioned from composer Jon Manness in Los Angeles.

Band Director Joe Santanello contracted Manness to write the piece. "While there's a lot of really good music available for a middle school band, this provided us a really unique opportunity to play a piece that's going to meet the strengths of our group," Santanello said. "I knew exactly what our strengths are and I got him to write for that. The piece is also designed to challenge the students in areas where they need musical growth, so it is educational as well as entertaining. This piece features an extensive trumpet solo, and we have a fabulous 8th grader [Ron Jon Cubbage], who is going to play it."

When the composition arrived, hot off the presses, jazz band members practiced together by sections. Pre-vacation rehearsals were split into saxophones, trumpets, trombones and rhythm section.

"It's not hard to learn when we do it with just other saxophone players," said Christian Holman, a saxophonist.

Post-vacation rehearsals bring together the full band. Santanello is planning a full band rehearsal with Manness via Skype in late January or early February.

Sara Galloway and Kelly Brecker said they were excited about the opportunity. "Mr. Santanello told us he is helping to keep music alive!" Kelly said.

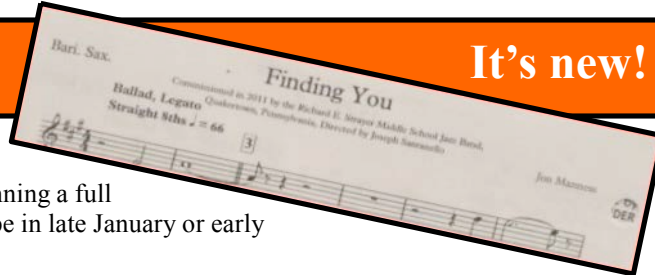
The Strayer jazz band will participate in several jazz band festivals all over Bucks and Montgomery counties. Professional musicians and educators will offer the students praise and constructive criticism to guide them in their development as jazz musicians.

"Mr. Santanello told us the judges will be impressed because they've never heard the music before," Sara said.

Two weeks into 2012, Santanello said he's pleased with the band's progress.

"The most important thing I've learned so far as a band director is that kids often believe, or are told, that they are not capable of being a great musician. I believe it is my job to challenge and encourage them as much as possible to break that thought. This year's jazz band is once again proof that these young musicians are capable of incredible things!"

You can watch a video about the project at Comcast 968, Verizon 34 and www.qcsc.org.



Strayer readers win prizes from Achieve 3000 for sticking with Teen Biz reading program!

by Chris Verchione and Joe Schaffroth, QCHS seniors

Students in Mike Huff's Reading Support Class at Strayer are excited by the progress they are making in their reading ability. They read news articles posted in the online program called Achieve



3000, formerly known as Teen Biz. They recently won an award for their efforts and collected lots of prizes.

The Strayer students read two articles a week. The high interest, non-fiction stories come from news stories all over the world. Achieve 3000 rewrites the stories for numerous ability levels so that students can use the program from middle through high school. Some students at QCHS also use the program.

Before reading a story, students answer Thought Questions into an email that Huff receives. They read and summarize the story, then answer questions to determine their understanding. There are also verbal spelling tests. The program records student results.

Huff offers incentives to students to keep reading. The class entered a contest called Reading Rocks. By reporting how much they read in a day and a week, the Strayer kids outscored many other students using the program across the country. So Achieve 3000 sent them pencils, rulers, book marks and other paraphernalia.

The students said they think they are improving their reading ability because the stories are interesting. Christian liked reading about shark fins in California. Jose and Rose thought the story about McDonald's adding fruit to kids meals was interesting.

Taylor said, "The articles are interesting because you learn about real things that happen in the world. They make you a better reader."

Huff said Achieve 3000 is just one small part of the SMS reading program. It helps differentiate for students of varying abilities.



Small group learning helps students at FC

by COTY GIBSON, QCHS sophomore

Alan Hunsicker and Tony Carty teach a math class together at the Freshman Center. Students are lucky that the teachers split them into groups based on their individual needs. The teachers sit in with the small group to help them relearn what they struggled with on an assessment. Students who understood the material the first time around are put into a group together to work on practice problems.

Students say the small groups help them to concentrate and learn the math. They have memorized a QCSD theme: "Every student, every question, every time!" And they appreciate the teachers' sense of humor.



Holiday symbols create shapes for motivating math lessons

Fifth grade students in Ronnie Rother's 5th grade class at Pfaff put a little ho-ho-ho in a math lesson before vacation. Addressing math learning targets for geometry, students measured and calculated the area for the rectangle, triangle and circle in a Santa hat. They applied formulas, checked for accuracy with calculators and challenged themselves to use fractions as the measurements.



Students also wrote and told holiday jokes. For their final challenge, they caught bubbles from a Santa machine that blows bubbles onto a piece of green paper. They slapped down the bubble to create an imprint of it, then calculated its area before it melted away!

Third graders research holiday traditions

Third graders in Jen Strauss, Lori Zuber, and JoAnn Klee's classes at Neidig Elementary School shared what they learned about holidays celebrated in the month of December.

Students chose a topic and used their research skills to learn about the history, traditions, and celebrations surrounding Christmas and Hanukkah around the world. The students created picture books, posters, and power point presentations.

On December 20 they invited parents into their classrooms to share their research with them.



QCEF funds raised go toward student technology

The Quakertown Community Education Foundation continues to raise money for student technology. The spring golf tournament will be held at a new course since Center Valley Golf Club closed. The committee will get the word out as soon as plans are solidified.

The 2011 BJ's membership campaign raised \$880, and the "Honor a Teacher with a Gift to the QCEF" raised \$500. Many teachers and administrators were honored for their work with the students of the Quakertown community by parents and staff members.

The faculty members honored ...

At Quakertown Elementary: Mr. Wysocki and Mrs. Casale; Miss Musial, Ms. Maddon, Dr. Winters.

At Trumbauersville Elementary: Mrs. Butz, Mrs. Godshall, Mr. Giampa, Mrs. Scheetz, Mrs. Bigenho, Mrs. Deiley, Mr. Garger, Mrs. Rodenberger, Mrs. Werner-Martin, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Rivera and Mr. Moczydlowski.

At Pfaff Elementary: Mrs. Silvius, Ms. Keosyeon, Ms. Rutledge, Ms. Zorzi and Dr. Lock.

At Strayer Middle School: 6B Team of Teachers

Administrators who were honored ...

At the Facilities Department: Mr. Barry Hillegas, Mr. Kelly Harper, Mr. Rob Christine.

At District Services Center: Dr. Laverick-Stone, Dr. Holler, Mrs. Camuse
Cabinet Members: Dr. Lisa Andrejko, Superintendent, and Mrs. Kathy Metrick, Assistant Superintendent.



Freshman Center: Raising spirits and book funds



Freshman Center library staff members spread holiday spirit and raised some funds for new books by selling candy grams among the student body. For 50 cents, a student could purchase a candy cane and send a personalized holiday message to friends or teachers. All proceeds of the four-day sale went to the purchase of library books.

On December 23, the "library elf," Judy Lenhart, dressed in her appropriate singing elf hat to deliver the treats to classrooms.

Tina Haney, librarian, said, "Business is booming and the students love the holiday spirit and the treat."



QCSD's Finest!

