

## **BHMR FAQs**

(Updated June 2015)

Welcome to the new and returning members and families of the Brunswick High Marching Railroader Band! The BHMR Band season will be an exciting and active time for you. The following information is to help explain and address questions that you may have regarding marching band activities. Keep in mind that returning band members and their families will gladly help you understand our program.

### What is the function of the BHMR Band?

As well as playing at all home football games, the Marching Band represents BHS at Marching Band competitions that are held usually on Saturdays at different schools during the fall band season. The group also participates in local events such as parades.

### When does the band practice?

Band is a daily class during the school day at BHS. The students also participate in practices on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5 – 8pm. There is a mini-camp held several days before band camp as well as a more intensive two-week summer band camp during the 2 weeks prior to school starting in August.

### How do the band competitions work and what is TOB?

Band competitions are held under the guidelines of an organization known as Tournament of Bands (TOB). TOB is one of the largest competitive band organizations in the country. Founded in 1972 by the National Judges Association, TOB has over 400 active schools. Currently, TOB is divided into Chapters that encompass Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware. Bands compete in one of four groups based on the number of members in the band. Bands compete against bands of similar size. BHS is a Group 1 band; this group is for bands with 30 or fewer musicians and a maximum of 50 including color guard members. Some years we compete with slightly larger Group 2 bands based on scheduling issues. Scoring is done by a group of judges based on aspects of performance including the music and the drill (the visual interpretation of the performance that is done while the band plays) and is on a numerical scale up to 100. After all the bands in a group have competed, they are awarded places. Other categories, such as best Drum Major, Color Guard and Percussion, are also awarded.

### What is the Color Guard?

The Color Guard provides a visual picture alive with message and meaning. Guard members use flags, rifles, sabers and dance as part of the routine that they perform while the band members play. Being a guard member requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, feet and legs. Their performance adds color, fashion, flair, excitement, sophistication and pizzazz to the field show.

### What is the Pit Crew?

The Pit Crew is made up of band supporters (family members, friends, and former band members) and it assists the band by moving drums and other pieces of percussion equipment and props on and off the performance area. Because competitions are a timed performance with penalties assessed for exceeding the allotted time, the Pit Crew plays an important and necessary role in supporting the band.

#### How should I behave in the stands at competitions?

1. It is not proper to enter or leave your seat in the middle of someone's performance. Please wait until the performance is completed before entering or leaving your seat.
2. The time to talk and comment is in between performances and definitely not while a band is performing.
3. It is proper and expected that all spectators will applaud for all of the performers. Some spectators have fallen into the habit of only applauding for their own child's performance, thinking that the amount of applause that a group gets might affect the score. Judges are not affected by spectators' applause.
4. Air horns, cow bells and any other noise making devices in the stands can actually be a detriment to a band's performance. If the judges cannot hear the band perform, they can not give proper credit.

#### What are Chapters?

Near the end of the regular marching band season, there are regional competitions known as Chapter Championships. Chapters are held at different area schools each year. Our placement at Chapters determines whether we qualify to compete at ACCs or perform as an Exhibition Band.

#### What are the ACC's and how can the Railroaders participate?

From the scores awarded at band competitions, bands are ranked. These rankings are used to determine which bands have performed the best throughout the competition season. The top 25 bands in each group as well as each Chapter winner are invited to attend a championship competition known as the ACC's (Atlantic Coast Championships). An invitation to this event is an honor that bands set as one of their goals. Bands can also have the opportunity to be invited to perform as an exhibition band. Competing and Exhibition bands are all scored and can receive awards. This is held at the Hershey Park Stadium in late October or early November (depending on the Group).

#### How can I follow the Railroaders' ranking?

Popular websites for keeping up with band rankings include [www.bluewaveband.org](http://www.bluewaveband.org) and [www.tob-info.net](http://www.tob-info.net). These sources are updated very quickly following competitions and are accurate.

#### How can I watch the Railroader performances?

You can attend any Marching Railroader performance and can assist with the Pit Crew during football games or competitions if you are interested. Chaperones are also needed for every competition. Band members are transported to the competitions on buses that depart from

and return to BHS. Chaperones always ride the bus with the band members. Family members must provide their own transportation or can arrange carpooling with other band supporters. Pit crew members sometimes ride the bus or drive with the band equipment truck and trailer.

#### What should I expect on competition days?

Before each band competition, a schedule of the day's events will be released that tells the location and projected times of equipment loading, departure, performance and arrival back at BHS. There is a fee to enter a band competition. Tickets are sold at the door and benefit the band organization hosting the competition. However, it is customary for each participating band to receive tickets to sell before the competition. *By buying tickets for your family or friends directly from the Railroaders you support our band because the band retains 100% of these proceeds.* Tickets are generally sold when band members report to the school the morning of the competition. At competitions, the host school sells food and other items.

#### What are Candy Grams, Flower Grams and Air Grams?

Candy and flower grams are a convenient way for parents, siblings and friends of BHMR to send band members candy, flowers and various other nice things after a show. Air grams are read over the PA system as the band comes onto the field. Competitions usually have tables set up to arrange these and all you have to do is give them the band member's name and payment they will take care of the rest.

#### What can band members expect on competition days?

Band students will have a fun but busy day on competition days. An expected schedule will be released prior to competition days. Often, the band will have practice in the morning, prior to the competition. Most of the students take money to buy food which is sold at competitions.

#### How can parents support the band program and what do the Band Boosters?

The BHS music program is very busy and requires the support of parents, families and the community to excel. The Band Boosters are responsible for helping the marching band and other BHS music groups be successful in a variety of ways. One is through raising funds. We do this through participation fees (\$275 per student for 2015-16) and a variety of fundraisers throughout the year. Each student is expected to participate in many fundraisers, to raise an equivalent of ~\$200. We sometimes hold a band competition at BHS in September or October or an Indoor competition in February, and need volunteers to fill the many roles necessary for these large events. Fundraisers include Tag Days – raising money by going door-to-door (supervised and in small groups) throughout the Brunswick, Jefferson and Point of Rocks Communities, running a booth at the Jefferson Carnival, typical catalogue food or item fundraisers, sales of spirit wear, a Frederick Keys Game, and a mini-golf tournament held in September. It is expected that parents participate in or lead at least one of the fundraisers. In addition, your time is welcome and useful for a variety of non-financial needs including fitting band uniforms, chaperoning marching band and indoor competitions, designing and building props, and assisting with the Pit Crew. Most importantly, your support and encouragement of the band director, your child and the other students in the Railroaders program is essential to a

strong band and music program. The BHS Band Boosters is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and donations are fully tax deductible.

#### How can I stay informed about the band?

The Band Boosters organizes all the supportive and fundraising band activities. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7pm in the Brunswick High School conference room. Meetings are open to all and are a good way to get involved, stay informed and to voice your opinion on Booster activities. The Railroader website (<http://railroadermusic.weebly.com/>) is updated regularly along with the calendar of all events (click on events). Please visit this site regularly to stay informed about upcoming events and fundraisers and to view the calendar. You will also want to be a member of our Railroader Band email group. You can apply for group membership and see a history of emails at <http://groups.google.com/group/rrband>. Whether you have email or arrange for phone updates, it is important to have a means of communication through which you can receive current information.

#### What other band opportunities are available at BHS when marching band ends?

BHS students have numerous opportunities to participate in band-related activities throughout the school year. Some of these programs are held during the regular school day while others are extracurricular. The indoor season begins shortly after the marching band season ends, and includes two distinct groups: an indoor guard and an indoor drumline, both of which are joint with students from Tuscarora High School. Other music opportunities include chorus, concert and jazz band, e, and pep band which plays at BHS home boys and girls basketball games. You can learn about these activities by following the website, through railroader band emails, the school and the band director.