



Checkpoints

for our Community

News and Information from Your Bexley Board of Education

Important Upcoming Events

Board of Education Meetings

Mon, April 13 at 6:30pm
Community Room

Mon, May 18 at 6:30pm
Community Room

Delayed Start Days

Tues, Apr 14
Tues, May 19

Kindergarten Registration

Tues – Wed, Apr 7 – 8
Bexley Elementary Schools

BHS Thespians' My Favorite Year

Thur – Sat, May 14 – 16
at 7:30pm
Schottenstein Theatre

BHS Graduation

Sun, Jun 7 at 4:00pm
BHS Stadium

SEE INSIDE

Experts in Bexley

Rich with Opportunities

Bexley Team Wins National Future City



Bexley Middle School eighth graders won the top prize at the national Future City competition held in Washington, D.C in February. Team members are Abby Sharp, Tom Krajnak, Wyatt Peery, Elizabeth Maher, Aaron Hutchison and Truman Haycock. Focusing on eco-responsibility, Bexley's team built "Novo-Mondum," an Icelandic city of the year 2171. BMS teachers Margaret Engelhardt and Dr. Linda Kelley, as well as engineer Mark Sherman, served as their advisers.

Task Force Forming

The current economic situation has lent a sense of urgency to the formation of a school levy Task Force in Bexley. Lower investment returns, rising unemployment and other factors mean that the schools will lose a substantial amount of income tax revenue, as much as \$1.8 million of the district's \$29 million budget, according to Treasurer Chris Essman. School officials and many residents are concerned about the looming prospect of more state mandates with less income to fund them.

Volunteers from the community – young parents with new ideas, together with seasoned levy campaign veterans and school administrators – will meet again this spring to talk about the school district's financial picture. Discussion has focused on the revenue and

expenditures of the Bexley City Schools in light of the economic downturn and Ohio Governor Strickland's plans for the state's schools.

"Regardless of what happens with the governor's proposal, we know that in the next 24 months or so, we have to come back to our taxpayers with a levy," commented Bexley Superintendent Mike Johnson.

Governor Strickland wants school districts to provide all-day kindergarten and smaller classes; he also plans to increase the number of days that students must attend school. Bexley Schools determined last year that all-day kindergarten would cost the school district about \$250,000 per year in additional expenses. In

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Questioning at Cassingham

"What languages do Buddhists speak?" asked one of Cassingham's first graders. "What are Buddha statues made out of?" wondered another. "What is their population?" The questions just kept coming as three first grade classes gathered in MaryAnn Claydon's room to hear about world religions and celebrations.



Cassingham first grader Katie Millard

Inquiry is a vital part of the learning process at Cassingham, which was authorized as an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program school in 2007. The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum framework strives to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who grow to create a better and more peaceful world.

On this particular morning, first grade students sat on the floor listening to Britney Barnes and Allie Habash describe what they have learned about Buddhism in their World Religions class at Bexley High School.

Ms. Barnes introduced the concept of "karma." "If you do bad things during your life, you might end up as a bug or something ugly and gross in your next life," she said. The children giggled.

She also described Buddhists' meditation practice. "Maybe you've seen it on TV, when someone sits cross-legged and chants 'ohm'. They can pray anywhere," noted Ms. Barnes. Teacher Kelly Harris projected a world map on the classroom SmartBoard so the students could point to countries where large numbers of Buddhists live.

Ms. Habash talked about the concept of Nirvana and how the Buddha reached enlightenment, "when you can see things clearly and you're in a perfect state of happiness." First grader Gus's observation that he knows a band called Nirvana lead to a lively series of questions about Buddhists' philosophical teachings. The questions that neither the high schoolers nor teachers could answer made their way on to teacher Amy Dunn's list for the group to research later.

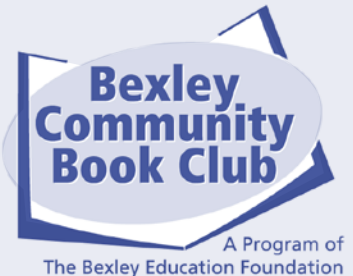
Sonja Hutchison, Cassingham's IB Program Coordinator, is fond of quoting author/educator John Barel: "'Do not ask your child, 'What did you do at school today?' but rather, 'Did you ask any good questions?'"

2008 Story Prize Winner Tobias Wolff

Noted writer Tobias Wolff visits Bexley on Monday, April 27, for the culminating event of the Bexley Community Book Club's yearlong community read of his books.

A writer's workshop with seven Bexley High School student authors begins Mr. Wolff's day; student participants have been chosen for the experience on the basis of their own memoir writings. The author then talks with two groups of Bexley High School English students who have read his works as part of their classes this year. "All of our teachers have been interested in this," said BHS English teacher Janice Yoder. "Freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors are reading Wolff, the short stories, in particular."

In the evening, Book Club patrons will fete Mr. Wolff at Giuseppe's Ritrovo before his 7:30pm appearance and book signing in the Schottenstein Theatre. For tickets or more information, visit www.bexleyeducation-foundation.org or call 338-2093.



Francisco Chavez, a sixth grader at Maryland, works on one of the valentines that his class made for Bexley city employees.

Rich in Opportunities



Bexley seniors Leah Apothaker (left), Dani Moyer (center), and Dan Weisman are among 31 Ohio students chosen for the spring All-Ohio Thespian production of *All Shook Up!*

Bexley High School Principal John Kellogg recently received an email from 2008 grad Libby Ashton, currently a freshman at the University of Michigan. She reflected on her experience in Bexley Schools, remarking on her readiness for the college experience.

"Probably because I walked the same one block route to the same school with the same kids since kindergarten, I failed to appreciate the richness of my English class discussions or the unwaveringly high expectations of my history teachers," Ms. Ashton wrote. "Bexley is full of some of the most capable, engaged, and aware students and faculty in the country. I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to grow with that kind of influence."



Senior Robert Weisbach of the BHS Debate team.

Ms. Ashton also commented on Bexley students' access to a rich variety of extracurricular experiences. "I was a field hockey-playing Torch editor who was best friends with the lead in the fall play and the girl who was voted 'Best Body,'" she marveled. "Apparently that's uncommon."

Bexley is a relatively small school district, with a total enrollment of about 2,100 students. Yet our system is long on programs that cater to all kinds of student interests – for example, in addition to an active theatre program for elementary through high school-aged students, variety of music ensembles for all levels, Green Teams, service organizations and clubs, there are 16 varsity sports at Bexley High School. Last fall, 316 (45 percent) of the school's 708 students participated in a sport. At Bexley Middle School, the total number of athletes was 128 out of 320 students enrolled.

One of the distinct advantages to this kind of intimate environment is the chance to shine. "If I went to a bigger school, I might not be able to do all the things I can do here," said last year's Thespian Society president, Susanna Fried, who was involved theatre production during her years in Bexley.

"Bexley makes a real effort to support opportunities for students to be involved many activities," said Dr. Anne Hyland, the district's Director of Curriculum and Instruction. "We want students to explore all of their talents."



Maryland students (left to right) Juliet Ryan, Angelina Coles, and Danner Rogers.

Task Force *continued from page 1*

Bexley's case, the state would provide no new revenue to implement the program.

Mr. Essman has done the math and figures that the four extra days the governor wants to add to the school year by 2011 will cost Bexley at least \$280,000 in additional teacher pay and benefits.

In addition, proposed changes in the state funding formula mean that Bexley will lose two percent in state aid in Fiscal Year 2011.

The situation gives members of the Bexley Task Force plenty to consider as they determine when to place a levy before the taxpayers, for how much and how long.

Having stretched the current levy cycle an extra year, Bexley expects to be on the ballot by fall 2010. And planning for a future levy is happening while the district is in relatively good shape. "Fortunately, there's not a crisis here," observed resident Howard Schottenstein, who served on the 2003 Task Force and has worked on six past levy campaigns. "The Task Force will create the questions and then find the answers and determine solutions."

Service on the Task Force is open to any interested Bexley resident. For more information, contact Superintendent Johnson at mike.johnson@bexleyschools.org. "When our community's many knowledgeable, intelligent people put their heads together, our school district benefits," concluded Dr. Johnson.

Teens, Drugs and Alcohol

Dr. Peter Rogers, an expert in adolescent substance abuse, will talk to students and parents at Bexley's Cassingham Complex on Monday, April 13 at 7:00pm as part of the district's Parent Education Series. Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at The Ohio State University, Dr. Rogers practices in the Section of Adolescent Health at Nationwide Children's Hospital. His subspecialty is assessing and treating substance-abusing teens and their families.

As is the case in most communities, students in Bexley often feel pressure from a culture of drugs and alcohol that they don't know how to handle. "Students tell us in focus groups that parents sometimes don't address this and then they feel that they are on their own," said Susan Steinman, community member and mental health professional who is assisting school counselors in parent education efforts. "We as a community can do things differently. We can be better."



Bexley teachers (from l to r) Michele Clark, Kim Allen, Mary Byrne and Erin Bailey brainstorm how to make reading aloud sessions interactive. They worked together during a literacy professional development session at Montrose.

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Calendar updates are available
on our web site—
www.BexleySchools.org

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