

# Trumansburg Troubadour

STUDENT EDITORS: CASSIE PROCTOR & RENEE MORRIS



## News From the Board of Education

### What's the Budget?

By Cassie Proctor

The beginning of a new year; time for new resolutions and, for TCSD, time for a new budget.

At the Board of Education meeting on Monday, January 13, the new budget had not been fully calculated. So far, that is if all things remain the same, increases have been projected in four areas: health insurance, the teachers retirement system, the employee retirement system, and contractual salaries (district wide). The increases, assuming all currently funded positions remain, are as follows...

- Health Insurance- about \$184,473\*
- Teachers Retirement System- about \$273,479\*
- Employees Retirement System- about \$33,033
- Contractual Salaries- about \$299,418

\*revised on 1/17/14

The above represent an increase of \$790,403 over the previous fiscal (budget).

Bell and Superintendent Michael McGuire also discussed with the board the additional difficulties they face with the new budget.

First, the local levy has been kept relatively constant over the last several years, thus limiting revenue. From the 09/10 school year to the 13/14 school year, the net total of additional revenue collected from the levy equals only \$399,990 over what the district would have collected had the local levy increases remained flat (0%) during that same time period.

Secondly, the amount of state funding has decreased significantly, mostly due to the Gap Elimination Adjustment. The GEA is the result of the state's anticipated revenue not being enough to cover the expenses. To fill the gap caused by the shortfall, the state issued the GEA in the state aid numbers of all the school districts in the state. According to *What Is the Gap Elimination Adju.*, "it is a

negative number, money that is deducted from the aid due to [each] district." Since 2010, the GEA has reduced TCSD's state aid by \$7.3 million! The GEA for the 13/14 year alone was \$1.5 million. The number is yet to be determined for the upcoming school year.

The final difficulty is the district's dependence on the "piggy bank" reserves. These reserves resulted from a review of 08/09 and 09/10 school years' budgets revealing an excess \$8.1 million fund balance, and therefore the district was prompted to create a 10 year spend down plan. This school year, the district is projected to use \$1.9 million of the reserves! The district has become dependent on the reserves, drawing from them for funding. For example, over the last few years, the employee retirement system has been completely funded out of these reserves. Bell stressed the need for the district to decrease its dependency on them to avoid "falling off a cliff" sometime in the near future. The amount of spending can fluctuate depending, again, on the amount of state aid issued for the upcoming year.

At the meeting, the board was also requested to add into the new budget, another half position to the 3.5 math positions in the high school. The request was made by high school algebra teacher, Mimi Duncan, due to her concerns regarding the board's goal to increase the number of students achieving college and career readiness by 20%, which would include scoring an 80% on the Math Regents. Duncan argued that, with only 3.5 teachers, the math department is stretched thin and therefore can not provide students the extra help they require to meet such expectations. She revealed that of all 61 of her current algebra students, only one is receiving extra help. Out of all her students, 59 took their eighth grade state math test

at Trumansburg, and 52 of these students failed it. She expresses that "there is no Duncan Hocus Pocus that is going to get kids who have those kinds of previous math test scores to all of a sudden pass an even tougher exam, let alone score an 80 or above" with the limited time she has to help them. She feels, with an additional half a position, that the teachers of the high school math department will have more time and flexibility in their schedule to provide some of the extra help needed to get the students to succeed and meet the board's goal. Whether the board is able to meet this request remains to be seen.

On February 12, Bell and McGuire led a budget forum for parents and teachers interested in learning about the upcoming budget. For those who could not make this meeting, all the information is present on the Trumansburg Central School District webpage. The finalized 2014/2015 budget is to be presented on May 20th.

On February 27, the principals from all three schools held meetings with their staff to discuss the suspected cuts and reductions that the new budget would bring. All staff who are most likely getting cut or getting their hours reduced were notified at this meeting. When asked the names of these teachers, high school principal, Mr. Koeng replied "It is confidential. I cannot release anymore information until it has been officially released to the public at the Board meeting on Monday, March 10th." For more information on upcoming staff cuts, please see article *Upcoming Staff Cuts* on page 2.



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Letter from the High School Principal
- ◆ Backstage review of the High School Drama Club's performance of "Grease".
- ◆ Annual Dodge Ball Tournament
- ◆ Update on the 2014/2015 district budget
- ◆ Clubs, art and music in the school district
- ◆ Articles from an elementary student and two middle school students

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*Your Input is Appreciated!*

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TCSD  
FOUNDATION



*Upcoming Staff Cuts*

By Cassie Proctor

During the board meeting on Monday, March 10th, it was made public that there will be a budget increase of \$790,403 over the 2013/2014 budget. Unfortunately, this increase means that the district can no longer afford to keep the staff it currently has and now must cut some positions. This time of the year is always the hardest on everyone in the district, students and staff, as the relationships they have built with one another through the year, or in some case, years, are torn apart. The rest of the staff must then fill the holes created by such cuts, adding more work to their already large workload. Mrs. Wiggins, principal of the elementary school says that these cuts will mean larger classes for both third and fourth grade, about 23 students per class. Mr. Cisco, principal of the middle school, says the same will occur in his school, with an average of 2 to 3 more students added to each class. The total, district wide, cuts have been calculated to 7.33 FTE. FTE stands for full time equivalent. It is used to convert positions such as half

time to their equivalents if they were full time positions. This is the cuts broken down...

- The elementary school will lose 2.0 FTE.
- The district will lose .5 FTE of a school monitor.
- The district will lose 1 FTE of a school monitor.
- The district will lose .5 FTE of a school monitor.
- Grades 7-12 will lose .5 FTE from the social studies department.
- Grades 7-12 will lose .5 FTE from the math department.
- The Spanish department will lose .83 FTE.
- Grades 7-12 will lose .5 FTE from the ELA department.
- And grades 7-12 will lose .5 FTE from the science department.

The community has taken action against these cuts. All three schools have sent information home with students about writing to our legislators, asking them for more support. If you would like to contribute

- Go to the district webpage, under "You Can Make A Difference", click the link to "Contact Your Legislators", and scroll down to the sample letters. Please print and sign letters to four legislators and return them to school
- If you or your children would like to write a personal letter, it would happily be included
- If you do not have access to a computer or printer and would like a copy of the letter, please contact Jody Latini at 607-342-2205.

For a closer look at these cuts, as well as past cuts and their effect on the district, please see our next issue, coming soon.



*“the district can no longer afford to keep the staff it currently has and now must cut some positions.”*

*Behind the Curtain of "Grease"*

*What It Was Like Backstage*

By Anna Redmond



There might not be much to say about the actual work of the crew; we moved set pieces and tried, and

failed, to keep everyone quiet but, there is certainly something to be said for the experience. It leaves you with a different perspective of all theater. These days every time I go to see a performance I am forced to consider the hard work that's gone into it, and I find myself frequently cringing in sympathy when the set or the props don't go on quite right or if the lighting cues are off. Crew creates an environment that leads to a certain familial bond, as the success or failure of the show is de-

pendent on your ability to work smoothly as a team. There's something magical about sharing everyone's anxious energy at the top of the show and in the triumph when it's a success. It's not always easy to put yourself out there and join into the cast or crew, but for me and for many others the rewards have always been well worth the effort.

*“There's something magical about sharing everyone's anxious energy...”*



*Junior Reporters*

*Articles from the Elementary and Middle Schools*

**Who's The Boss?**

By Lily Brainard, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

I thought Mrs. Wiggins was the boss of the school. I just learned today that the real boss of the school is you. Mrs. Wiggins is not the boss of the school because our community elects people to the Board of Education to run our school. The way they do this is by having meetings once a month or so. Last month they talked about the 2014-2015 budget. I found all this information on the school website at <http://tcsd-ny.schoolloop.com>. The Board of Education hires a Superintendent and 3 principals to run the schools every day. The superintendent is responsible for operation of the school district. Also, he reports directly to the Board of Education. The principals help the Superintendent run the schools every day. Each principal's job in the school is to make sure that the kids are safe and learning things each day. Today I learned that the principals are not the boss of the school, but there are a lot of people that help run the school including me and you.

**We Are Two Sixth Graders**

By Jack Masters and Dante Munoz, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

We are two sixth graders that went on the Cayuga Nature Center (CNC) field trip. The point of this field trip was to get the grade to work together (not that we weren't already). We got to do a lot of outside challenges at CNC. At one of the challenges, our group had to keep our feet on a block and balance all together holding hands and leaning back. After every block we succeeded on there would always be a smaller block to try next. The size of the block decreased down to the size of the diameter of a small bowl. Another challenge was where there was a web with holes that had enough space for a person to get through. The trick was that it was off the ground and you could not touch the edge of the hole you were going through. Every time the whole group got one person through one hole you could not allow any other person through that hole. We had to pick people up and literally pass them through the hole to get to the higher parts of the web. Then at the very end the whole grade got together and climbed the ropes course one at a time. It was very high up in the trees. At the top there was a balance beam made of a steel cable and we walked across it. There were two different cables one with something to hold onto and one had nothing to hold on to. We were harnessed in so we were safe.

Our field trip was part of the Trumansburg Kids Explore & Discover program of the TCSDF Foundation. We had a lot of fun on this trip.



High School Club News

By Ashlyn Lightbown

Charles O. Dickerson High School's eclectic mix of extracurricular clubs is one of the many reasons our school is the admirable, successful place it is. The attention and care put into each of these clubs, and the inviting atmosphere contributes to the large following they possess. Many of these associations have intriguing events that have just occurred, or are steadily approaching that are absolutely worth noticing.

Femtastic, a Gender Equality group advised by Jane George, focuses on the discussion and education of any and all topics related to feminism. This affiliation is completely organized and managed by a number of dedicated and determined students who hold bi monthly discussion meetings about critical issues, and create charitable events that benefit not only the community, but global organizations as well. Their most recent event held was their 4th Annual Girl Up Campaign Benefit on Saturday, January 25th. This particular



affair worked to collect donations for the United Nations campaign that aims to help adolescent girls in all developing nations around the world in any way possible. The members of Femtastic filled the beautiful night at the Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts with music, guest speaker Chibo Shinagawa, desserts, local works of art, and, of course, a crowd. Their next upcoming event is the CLPP (Civil Liberties and Public Policy) conference held from Friday, April 11th to Sunday, April 13th at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. This symposium revolves around the movement for reproductive rights and just social reformation. A select few members of Femtastic will travel to the conference and participate with many other student activist groups

from the nation in the various events planned.

The Trumansburg Robot Raiders, advised by Roy Westwater, is the robotics team of Charles O. Dickerson High School. Their goal is to build an outstanding robot that will compete in the FIRST competition with other teams from other schools. FIRST is an organization built to encourage the growth in number of technological and scientific leaders at an early age. Recently, the members of the robotics club were still building their robots, a task in which they had only six weeks to complete. The end of this six week build season was February 18th. The theme of 2014's FRC (FIRST Robotics Competition) is Aerial Assist. The teams must build their robots according to the guidelines set by the foundation, and to the requirements of that year's theme. The FRC Regional Competition will take place from March 27th to March 29th in the Gordon Field House at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where the robot will be put to the test against other teams from the Finger Lakes region.



Model United Nations, advised by Ryan Radley, is an organization where students role play as diplomats in order to simulate the actual United Nations. Different schools from all over the nation are a part of this network, Charles O. Dickerson High School included. The objective of this club is to research and analyze their appointed country enough to debate and discuss their findings and proposals with members of Model UN from other schools at conferences. The Cornell Model United Nations Conference (CMUNC) for 2014 will be held from Thursday, April 10th to Sunday, April 13th, and is known for its meticulous deliberations and professional approach. This is the event Trumansburg's Model UN prepares for all year, and it is

where all of their hard work pays off.

Envirothon, advised by Sue Stein, is an environmental awareness club that studies all aspects of the environment in fun, interactive ways. The entire year is spent preparing for the New York State Envirothon competition on May 21st and 22nd. They must first beat all of the other teams in the county competition before they are able to advance on to the state competition. The county competition begins shortly before the state competition. They will be tested on aquatic ecology, forestry, soils & land use, wildlife, and this year's current issue, which is sustainable local agriculture/locally grown. They must also give an oral presentation. Envirothon also travels to local environmental sites, like the Cornell Orchards in the spring.

SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club, advised by Dawn Kucerak, is a student-run group whose mission is to positively influence their peers' choices. SADD Club organizes many events over the year to assist their goal, and the most recent one was the Shoot 4 the Hoop Food Drive. This laudable action occurred on Boys Senior Night on February 7th at 5:30 pm and Girls Senior Night on February 11th at 5:30 pm. In order to gain admittance to the event, adults had to donate two non-perishable food items and children had to donate one. SADD Club will also host a number of additional events throughout the rest of the school year, like a campaign to discourage texting and driving, stand up day against bullying, prom ribbons, a used phone collection, social norms campaign to raise awareness of drug use, and participation in the Ithaca Festival in May. The students that are members of this club are devoted to their cause, as is shown in the number of events they coordinate.



*“these associations have intriguing events that have just occurred, or are steadily approaching that are absolutely worth noticing.”*

Brawl for the Ball

By Baylee Spackman



The infamous Brawl for the Ball- a yearly dodgeball tournament held between Lansing and Trumansburg, took place in Lansing on March 21st. The two schools started the tradition in 2011, when the stu-

dent councils joined together to organize a yearly dodgeball tournament, held each year, with the two schools alternating as hosts. In past years, both teams have won. This year Trumansburg was victorious in the tournament. The outfits and tactics were as outra-

geous as ever and it was great fun for all who participated. Look for details next year. To participate, you must form a team of six, with one team member of the opposite gender, and sign up outside of the learning center. Contact Mr. DeRaiche for any further information.



*“In past years, both teams have won, so its hard to say who might win this year”*





## TCSDF FOUNDATION

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General Questions  
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#### Citations

*News from the BOE- Budget*  
 "What Is the Gap Elimination Adju." *What Is the Gap Elimination Adju.* N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Jan. 2014.

*The TCSDF Foundation is dedicated to the enhancement of education for all students in the Trumansburg schools, from pre-K to 12th grade. It does this by providing grants to teachers and programs within the school and community, with the benefits of the funds going directly to the students and their education. The TCSDF foundation has two grant cycles, one in the fall and one in the spring of every year. The fall cycle begins in November and the spring cycle begins in May. The money for the grants is raised by the TCSDF Foundation and is then used to foster the growth of our students, create opportunities for educational development in our community, and encourage excellence in our students.*

Reported By Michael Swartwood, Student Representative of TCSDF Foundation

### Music and Art in the High School

By Cole Vermillera



The music and art programs at Trumansburg High School are thriving. The reason these programs are so successful is because the students are dedicated to becoming better musicians and artists. In spite of the recent budget cuts, the school still offers a wide variety of music and art classes.

Some of the music classes offered are Band, Jazz band, Chorus, Mixed Ensemble, AP Music Theory, and Guitar. Music teachers, Ms. Lewis and Mr. Wade are excellent at what they do, and as a music student myself, I have had the opportunity to perform in concerts, travel to competitions, and even learn a whole new instrument.



There are also several art

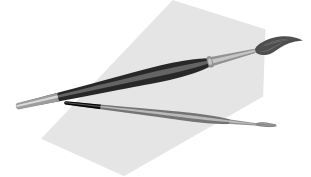
classes that provide a safe and judgment-free environment for students to express themselves. Some art classes offered include Studio Art, Advanced Studio Art, and Ceramics.

In addition to the regular art and music classes offered throughout the year, there are some extra-curricular opportunities available for students who are interested in pursuing art and music.

For example, in March, the TCSDF Foundation sponsors a yearly Youth Art Month, as well as a combined concert of the Trumansburg Concert Band and the Ithaca Concert Band. The Adopt-A-Band Concert is a program where the Ithaca Concert Band plays side by

side with a high school or middle school band. According to Steven Magacs, a member of the not for profit Ithaca Concert Band, the primary object of the program is to "enhance the instrumental music education of students." He believes that participating in a joint student/adult band helps show students that their musical education does not have to end after graduation.

I myself participated in the adopt a band concert and I found it to be a great experience. All the musicians were so talented and willing to help students. Mrs. Lewis found it to be a great success and hopes for future students to be able to have this kind exposure to music.



### Youth Art Month!

By Maria Pomacusi

March, the month of art promotion for the young, has come and Trumansburg Central School is not going to miss it! For 53 years now, thousands of schools in United States have been involved in this annual event that seeks the value of art and art education among the young. This spring, students from the three schools will participate in the support activities and workshops that are part of the Youth Art Month (YAM), thanks to grant funds made available by TCSDF Foundation. "The objective is to promote the arts in the schools" indicated Mrs.

Pennock, High School Art Teacher, who also mentioned that this is the third year in which our schools take part in this celebration. The activities that make up this upcoming March Madness involve learning about different famous artists and the creation of art works using a variety of materials. The events incorporated will allow students to use paperclay, weave fiber, make paper, and even create large scale paper mache gargoyles! Furthermore, the TCSDF Foundation will provide students the opportunity to meet local artists.



In addition, volunteers from the TCSDF Foundation will be working with our Art Teachers to hold an art auction fundraiser at the final art show for YAM on March 27, and will take place at the High School Cafeteria. More information on the auction will be available soon. The TCSDF Foundation intends to use funds raised from the auction to continue support for YAM and its other important programs in the future. More information regarding the TCSDF Foundation and its programs is available at [www.tcsdfoundation.org](http://www.tcsdfoundation.org).



### A Letter From Mr. Koeng

I am so proud to contribute to our new student generated newsletter. As the principal of Charles O. Dickerson High School, I am so often reminded at how fortunate we are to have a community of students that are so willing to utilize their own talents to make our school a better place. I would like to extend a special thanks to the TCSDF Foundation for their support of this important endeavor, as well as Jane George, our exceptional English teacher who has mentored the students as they put this together. Finally, thank you to our community for your continued support of our all of the students of Trumansburg.

Sincerely,

Jon Koeng, High School Principal

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