

Music Boosters Meeting
3/18/09
Speaker: Megan Rhodes, Music Festival Coordinator

Trip Update: Brett Taylor

Almost all payments are in and almost all logistics for the trip have been organized. At this time, the group numbers 125 students and 48 chaperones, including Asst. Principal Chuck Ehrman and Music Dir. Brett Taylor (first flight) and Music Dirs. Stanley Spottswood and Rich Slocum (second flight). Attending: Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, Wind Ensemble, Women's Choir, and Honors Chorus. **The trip dates are Friday, April 24-Monday, April 27 (inclusive).**

Travel Arrangements: Brett Taylor and Megan Rhodes

Two Days Before – Wednesday, April 22

GC is hiring a 24-ft. truck with driver to ferry all equipment to Florida. **Any instrument too large to be carried on-board the airplane as cabin luggage must be brought to the school on Wednesday** so that it can be packed onto this truck. To avoid extra fees and possible loss or damage, **no musical instrument is to be placed in AirTran's checked luggage by a student or a chaperone.** If a student's instrument is too large for his or her carry-on luggage or to substitute as the student's carry-on luggage, the student should expect to place it on this truck. Again, **all instruments going on the truck must be left at GC by the end of the school day, Wednesday, April 22,** so that they may be inventoried and safely loaded onto the truck.

All instruments will be checked in, searched, tagged with a special Music Festival ID tag, and wrapped up for transport at this time. The instruments will be fully insured under the trip travel plan. **Make sure your instrument has a personal ID on it identifying the student's name, home address, home phone number, and the name of the school.**

This truck also will carry all concert dress and music folders. **Students should make sure all pieces of their concert dress have been left in their concert dress bag after the concert on April 7.** (including tuxedo shirts and shoes.) The truck will arrive at GC at 8:30AM Thursday and meet the three buses at the Port Canaveral in Florida on Friday.

The luggage will be unloaded from the truck by porters at Port Canaveral. **Each student and chaperone is asked to bring \$2 in cash, which will be collected on the buses and used to tip these porters.**

n.b. We will need some parents and students to volunteer to help organize instruments on Wednesday afternoon (April 22) and load instruments onto

the truck at 8:30AM Thursday morning (April 23). Watch your e-mail for more details.

One Day Before – Thursday, April 23

Truck arrives at 8:30AM and departs once loaded.

All student and chaperone baggage that will be checked on either flight must be brought to the school by the end of the school day. The luggage will be searched by authorized GC staff for contraband such as alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs or other illegal substances (see GC policies handbook) and items on the Homeland Security prohibited substances list (see the prohibited items list at <http://www.tsa.gov/>), then tagged for the Music Festival. **Only one piece of checked luggage is permitted per passenger** to avoid extra fees and the attendant check-in hassles this will cause the group. Checked luggage must not exceed 50 lbs. in weight or be larger than 61 inches (length + width + height).

Do not lock luggage, not even with one of the new TSA-approved locks. The locks will have to be broken to access the contents of your bag at GC and/or the airport. All travelers must **tag each piece of luggage with your name, home address, telephone number and the school's name. Special luggage tags for our group will be available at the concert on April 7 as well as when students drop off their luggage. All smaller instruments that will be carried on-board also should be left at school at this time** so that they're not forgotten Friday. For more details on AirTran's carry-on and checked luggage policies, see http://www.airtran.com/policies_checked.aspx#summary.

Departure Day – Friday, April 24

- **Meet at GC by 4:30 a.m.**

All students and chaperones will leave together from GC for BWI on three charter buses Friday, April 24. **Everyone must be at the school by no later than 4:30 a.m. (note the hour!).** Late arrivals will imperil everyone's ability to catch their flights. **Plan on arriving early. The buses will be leaving at 5 a.m. Chaperones can leave their car in the faculty parking spaces facing the dining hall.**

This travel day will be a long one. The group will not stop for breakfast or lunch while en route. You are encouraged to eat a hearty breakfast before leaving home (or bring some with you) and to **pack a sandwich or snack foods (no beverages though) in your carry-on luggage.** Lunch will be provided once the group reaches the ship between 1 p.m.-2 p.m. The group on the second flight will have some extra time at BWI in the morning if you want to purchase food. The group on the second flight will have some extra time waiting in the Orlando airport if you want to purchase food.

Remember, **you will be allowed only one carry-on bag** (and a purse for girls) on the flight and this will *include* any small instrument you may want to carry on board! You

will be allowed only one piece of checked luggage. Both pieces must have an ID tag containing their owner's **name, home address, telephone number and the school's name.**

Student luggage must include one "formal" outfit for the final night of the cruise. Boys should pack at least one pair of dress pants, jacket, tie, and appropriate shoes, or a tuxedo for this event. Girls should bring a semi-formal (cocktail dress) or formal dress and appropriate shoes. (Alternatively, the students may wear their concert dress and concert dress shoes.)

Everyone should pack shorts, t-shirts, a bathing suit, sunglasses, beach shoes and at least 15-25 SPF suntan lotion (and a hat for the fair-skinned) for the day trips on shore. Dress on the cruise ship also is informal *except* shorts and jeans are not permitted in the dining room in the evening. Boys should pack khakis, polo shirts or an oxford without a tie to wear at mealtimes in the dining room. Girls should pack dress pants, a casual dress, or a skirt and blouse to wear at mealtimes in the dining room.

For the first day of the cruise, everyone is encouraged to include in his or her small carry-on **your travel documents, snacks, a change of clothes, bathing suit, suntan lotion and overnight toiletries** (no more than 3.4 oz. of liquids/pastes) as it can take some time for checked luggage to be delivered to your stateroom.

Beach towels are provided by the ship. Towels are *not* available on CocoCay. You will need to bring one with you from the ship. However, if you forget to bring it back, it will cost you – not GC -- \$20.

Before arriving on the ship, everyone is encouraged to **apply a seasick patch** to minimize adjustments to the ship once aboard, especially if you know you are prone to seasickness. The patches may be purchased at CVS and do not have the drowsiness side effect of seasickness pills. They are expensive to purchase on board the ship!

Students may carry their own OTC medicines, but we will be collecting ALL prescription medication for students and an authorized parent will carry and dispense them during the trip.

There is an infirmary on board. All medical services are fee-based, payable in advance in cash or by credit card and submitted to your health insurance provider AFTER the cruise.

- **At the Airport**

Once at the airport, the group will be split up for the two AirTran flights. The students already know which flights they're on; no changes are permitted at this time. Flight manifests, an itinerary as well as emergency contact information for the ship will be provided at the parent meeting on April 7 at 6:30PM before the concert. For details, see <http://goodcounselmusic.org/musictrip2009.html> for details.

The flights:

Flt. #1 leaves BWI at 7 a.m., arriving Orlando 9:13 a.m.

Flt. #2 leaves BWI at 8:42 a.m., arriving Orland 10:54 a.m.

n.b. The group will be traveling **together** to the airport, no exceptions. Chaperones and students **must** arrive at the school by 4:30 a.m., so that the buses can leave on time for a less stressful check-in by the first flight.

All students and chaperones must have photo IDs for this trip as explained in earlier e-mails from the Music Department. Students should carry a state issued ID or drivers license if the have one. If not, a GC student ID will suffice. Students are not required to have a passport to travel on the cruise **but it is strongly advised that they bring one**. Copies of this document should already have been provided to Brett Taylor. **Make sure you have your passport and driver's license/photo ID on your person when you arrive at school on Friday.** You are also advised to take these precautions:

1. Make one copy each of your driver's license and your passport, and place it in your carry-on luggage. Mr. Taylor will have the copies that you provided on the trip the entire time.
2. E-mail a PDF of your passport and license to yourself at an e-mail address accessible on the Internet from anywhere in the event of an emergency. (If you don't have webmail, you can create a free Yahoo or G-mail account for this purpose.)

For students who don't have a passport: **Bring a state-issued photo ID (preferred) or GC Student ID and an original OR certified copy of your birth certificate with raised seal.** Please be aware, however, that should an emergency arise, anyone without a passport would NOT be able to fly home from the Bahamas.

Hospital certificates or birth and baptismal certificates **are not considered acceptable documentation**, nor are voter registration cards or Social Security cards considered adequate proofs of citizenship.

Students 16 years and older and all chaperones must have a state-issued photo ID to pass through airport security.

All travelers will need their passports (or state-issued ID or GC student ID and birth certificates) and a SetSail Pass **to pass through the pier. Chaperones will be assigned to collect student travel documents when you arrive at GC on Friday morning so nothing gets lost in transit. The Set Sail passes and travel docs will be distributed once we arrive at the pier to board the ship.**

Once in Florida, the group will travel by three motor coaches to Port Canaveral. Destination: Royal Caribbean's Monarch of the Seas.

o **Financial Matters**

Upon arrival at the Port, all travelers will be asked to contribute \$2 to the porters' tips. They will be issued a \$50 bill, which they are to use to purchase their **SeaPass Card** once on the ship. This card is used for ANY on ship purchases as cash is NOT accepted. All travelers must carry this with them at all times. You must have this pass to leave and return to the ship as well as their photo id.

Only iced tea, lemonade, water, milk, coffee, and juices are served free of charge on board. Students pay purchase a soda package on their card if they wish. Cash can be added to the SeaPass during the cruise, as needed. When the soda passes are purchased, a sticker will be affixed to the SeaPass, allowing the user unlimited sodas onboard.

American dollars can be used to re-load the SeaPass *and* for purchases in Nassau and CocoCay. Recommendation: Bring at least \$50 more in cash for the Nassau stop (some of that money will be needed to pay for lunch and dinner in this city). Credit cards cannot be used at the Straw Mart, the open market in Nassau.

All meals and any other food ordered while on-board is included in the cruise fee, including room service. **However, any food/beverages/snacks/water that may be found in the cabin refrigerators will cost extra** and have to be paid in full before the group left the ship. The Music Festival hopes to have those goodies removed from the students' rooms before our arrival.

Any chaperones or students who have food allergies or other dietary considerations that must be taken into consideration by Royal Caribbean need to contact Brett Taylor **now** to arrange any accommodations necessary.

The snorkling excursion and the barbecue at CocoCay are including in the cruise fee, but any other purchases (i.e. instant cameras, souvenirs) on this Royal Caribbean-run island will require cash.

There are ATMs on board. The fees are quite high. Students are discouraged from carrying credit cards from their parents.

Chaperones and students are asked to **bring small bills that can be used for tipping** the following:

- * Porters who unload the truck (\$2 from everyone, to be collected on the buses)
- * Any other porters you use, \$1 per bag carried
- * Any room services ordered

Tips to these people are **included** in the cruise costs:

- * Cabin stewards (maids)
- * Head waiter at meals
- * Asst. waiters at meals
- * Maitre de

On the return trip, students will be carrying their own luggage to/from the buses.

All travelers will be issued a \$20 per diem to pay for their lunch/dinner in Coco Beach on Monday. We will be spending the later morning/early afternoon there before heading to the airport in Orlando.

Travel insurance to cover cruise and airfare costs in the event the trip is disrupted by a medical emergency/death or weather is available at about \$60 per adult and \$40 per student. GC is not purchasing this insurance for the group. The Music Festival does not believe there is any need to buy this insurance at this time. However, if you want to purchase insurance, call:

1. Access America – 1-800-284-8300
2. Travel Safe – 1-888-885-7233

○ **Phones**

Cell phones generally will not work on board the ship. You need to check with your carrier regarding their ability to be used with international roaming on board or on shore. Verizon, for example, will require you to sign a year's contract for this roaming service. Alternatively, if you really feel the need to have a cell phone of some type, you might lease or purchase an international Go-phone for the trip. Check with your carrier, Best Buy, the Internet, or at the airport regarding these services.

The cost to use cell phone can be prohibitively high (at least \$1.99). International text messaging is especially costly (cost per character). To avoid potentially hundreds of dollars in fees, the Music festival advises everyone to **turn off their cell phones entirely before boarding the ship**. The moment that cell phone is turned on, any pending text messages will be delivered at the international rate, regardless of where and when they were sent. **Cell phone plans generally allow you to turn off texting temporarily and you are encouraged to do so** to avoid unpleasant surprises in your bills.

Use of the cabin phones is free for cabin-to-cabin or any other on-board calling, including locating members of our party elsewhere on the ship. Calls from cabin to shore will cost \$7.95/minute and that bill would have to be paid by the chaperone or student in full before the group can leave the ship. **You are asked to discourage the students from making calls to shore. GC will NOT be responsible for phone charges on the ship!** Cabin phones can not be shut off or their calling features blocked.

As an alternative to cell phones, the music directors are considering carrying school walkie-talkies for when everyone is on shore.

When off the ship in Nassau, students must travel in groups and we will ask chaperones to accompany groups around. There will always be a central place established where a GC adult can be found. Please emphasize to your student(s) that

they shouldn't leave their groups while they are in Nassau. This will help minimize the lost-teen problems at this stop that typically involve the need for cell phones.

There are no extra fees for the activities on board and Royal Caribbean offers a comprehensive teen program that includes activities ranging from rock climbing to game shows to dance lessons. For more information, go to <http://goodcounselmusic.org> and click on the various trip links.

Any students interested in the rock climbing activity must download and bring a waiver form signed by their parents/guardians or they will not be allowed to participate. This form can be found at www.goodcounselmusic.org. Be aware that they will allow a chaperone in our group to sign a waiver for students to participate, so if you do NOT want your child to participate in this, please email Mr. Taylor and he will keep a list of who is not allowed to participate.

o Cabins

Students have been assigned four to a cabin. The cabin assignments will be available at the parent meeting along with the emergency contact information in case you need to contact the ship. Chaperones generally are two per cabin except those who paid for singles. Cabins come equipped with hair dryers and laundry services are available. Do not bring irons or candles.

The boys are in cabins on the 3000 level, girls on the 4000- and 5000-level (third, fourth and fifth decks). Chaperones generally have been placed in cabins at the ends of hallways with the students and assigned to be responsible for at least one cabin. They will get these assignments upon departure.

Students will not be permitted in the Casino and there is also a "block" on their SeaPass for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

There is a 1 a.m. general curfew on board each night. We may implement earlier curfews based on our anticipated activities the following day. GC students **will be taped into their rooms** each night.

The performances are Saturday morning and videotaping is permitted. The awards ceremony is the last night on board.

The Music Festival is looking into arrangements for a Mass or other religious services for the group on Sunday or Saturday evening. More on that as it develops.

Last Day - Monday, April 27

The group will travel by motor back to Orlando, stopping in Cocoa Beach for a meal and sightseeing. All large equipment again will be ferried back to Maryland by truck.

Flt. 1 – Leaves Orlando 5:10 p.m., arrives BWI at 7:19 p.m.

Flt. 2 – Leaves Orlando 6:07 p.m., arrives BWI at 8:19 p.m.

Once all luggage has been reclaimed, the group will travel by school bus back to GC. Pick-up time will be around between 9 and 10 p.m., possibly later. Students will be encouraged to call parents from the bus to alert them of the group's expected arrival time at the school.

Questions? Contact Brett Taylor at taylor@olgchs.org.

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