

In 1984 Randy Coleman graduated from Austintown Fitch High School and as a trumpet player was a leader in the school's legendary bands. Fast forward thirty years and he was a parent of two students in the Austintown Band Programs. Fitch Band, like most other area school bands, has various events to raise money for uniforms, instruments and to defray expenses relating to the bands performing outside of the area. Randy wanted to help, but didn't see himself cooking French fries at the football game.

Last January the Austintown Band Parents Club, Inc., a non-profit corporation established in the 1970's to support the band programs came up with the perfect event to showcase not only their Jazz Bands, but to permit Coleman to contribute his time and energy. The band parents created "Jazz & Dessert," a night of music and the best bargain for desserts ever. In addition to the Austintown Middle School Jazz Band and the High School's "Jazz 1," Coleman contacted his fellow band alumni and along with current Austintown Intermediate School Principal Marc Pupino, the Austintown Fitch Alumni Jazz Band was created.

Coleman reached out to fellow 1984 graduate Rob Bowman to play drums, legendary local pianist Jack Ciarniello, a 1977 Fitch grad, to play keyboard, Jonathan Willis, an alumnus of the Glenn Miller Band and also a 1983 graduate and former band director at Malone University and the University of Mount Union to play trombone and local dentist and 1972 Fitch graduate Dr. Larry Gessner to play bass guitar, among others and convinced them to come back to their roots.

On the last Saturday of January in 2016 the Austintown Middle School Cafetorium was packed. Over twenty bakers had a selection of 40 different desserts and from 6pm to 9pm Jazz flowed from the stage as over 400 people tapped their toes and relished the choices of desserts. Much in part to Coleman's efforts a new event was created and it was as successful as hoped. As a result, "Jazz & Dessert II" is set for Saturday January 28, 2017 at Austintown Middle School, located at 800 S. Raccoon Road. Admission is \$5 per person and each person receives a ticket for 10 dessert samples. There will also be a Chinese Auction of the Baked Goods.

This year, for the second year the event is growing. Austintown Middle School, under the direction of Jeremy McClaine now has two Jazz Bands, the Red and the Blue. Fitch Band, under the direction of Wes O'Connor, will be represented by not only "Jazz 1" but "Jazz 2," and the Alumni are returning under the direction of Marc Pupino. In addition to "Jazz & Dessert" the alumni played at the Fitch Spring Jazz Concert last year, played for Relay for Life and at a benefit for the Canfield Community Band at Mastropietro Winery in the Fall.

With the Music set, the Austintown Band Parents are looking for more bakers. Local novices, home bakers and area professional will compete for trophies as the area's best. Additional awards are given for the displays set up by the bakers and judged by Youngstown's Bacho's Cakes and Crafts and Austintown's Sugar Showcase. Last year's bakers ranged from blackberry cupcakes baked by Band Member Becca Makar to a Mandarin orange cake baked by a 90 year former band parent Marjorie Gessner to entries from Canfield Bakery Kim's Confections to treats by Austintown Fitch Principal Chris Berni and his wife Debbie. For bakers looking to compete in one of the largest public competitions in the area, entry forms can be found on the band's website at www.afband.org or by calling Chairman

Brad Gessner at 330-398-0681 or emailing austintownbandparent@gmail.com. Entry forms can also be found on the band's facebook page, under "Austintown Band Parents, Inc."