

From the Board

Brian Merrill, 2007-08 Vice President

Decisions, decisions, decisions. As band directors, we are constantly faced with choices that influence every aspect of our programs. Regardless of the significance of the decision to be made, they all require our attention and time, and drain our energy. We must deal with the agendas of parents, students, colleagues, and administrators and consider the future consequences of our choices. How we go about making these decisions defines each of our personal philosophies of music education. For myself, I find these three principles to be helpful in shaping my decisions and giving me a consistent approach to my teaching.

First, be a role model of a reasonable, sane, caring human being. No matter how many reasonable, sane, caring human beings your students have in their lives, they can always use another one. It is, of course, entirely possible that you might be the only positive role model for some of your students. We have long lasting associations with our students covering all of their adolescence. They value our

opinions, seek our approval and look to us for leadership. At the end of the day, we are teaching children through music.

Second, convince your students to practice. The objectives that we value in a music education are best achieved through practicing. Music appreciation on a purely intellectual level seldom has the depth of understanding gained as a performer. The step by step process from



"Hot Cross Buns" to the Holst Suites is indispensable. Also, the extra-musical benefits of being a member of the band... discipline, teamwork, goal setting, confidence...are best realized when students practice.

Third, lead your students to an aesthetic experience. You are most likely teaching today because of a performance you experienced on stage, in rehearsal, or as an audience member that changed the way you thought about the world. Have the vision to imagine how to do the same for your students. I think this begins with a strong foundation of musical knowledge and musical skills. Lip slur number one leads to a better

trombone player, which leads to great literature, which leads to a truly aesthetic experience.

I hope everyone has a great spring semester. TBA is conducting two Professional Development Clinics on January 26 that can help 2008 get off to a great start: "Sight-reading: Time to get organized and have a plan" with Tom Shine and Melodianne Mallow at Cypress Woods High School and "Mid-Term Tune Up" with Lynne Jackson, Jeff King and David Brandon at Southern Methodist University. If you haven't been to a Professional Development Clinic yet, do yourself a huge favor and get one of these on your calendar. These clinics are designed to cover one topic in great depth in an informal atmosphere. You really have the time to get to know the clinicians, take part in discussions and get your questions answered.

TBA exists to assist its members in best serving their students. Please feel free to call on the Board of Directors with your comments and suggestions. The more input we receive, the better we can provide you with what you want and need.