

One Person Makes a Difference

A Tribute to Al and Jan Sturchio

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

All too often we hear, “But I’m only ONE person, and ONE person can’t make a difference.” Al and Jan Sturchio are living examples of refuting this frequently quoted notion, and – in fact – they have been exemplary role models of: ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

The TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION continues to stand at the forefront of all such organizations, and – in fact – other groups around the globe are eager to integrate the TBA blueprint-of-success as part of their own systemic structure. WHY? Simply put; IT WORKS, it benefits all programs, and it offers our school musicians an opportunity to experience musical excellence at the highest level.

So what makes TBA different? Is there some secret ingredient that has catapulted it to the top of the heap? One must look no further than the STURCHIO-FACTOR to understand what has been the driving force behind the incredible growth of TBA. The organization has been fueled by a caring-sharing leader (and his equally important partner) who is a possibility thinker. As a result of the “Sturchio-vision,” many thousands of directors, students,

exhibitors, and parent/boosters, enjoy a richer band tradition.

In a day and age where technology reframes much of our communication via email, text messaging, etc., Al and Jan Sturchio have been able to embrace the efficiency of cyberspace without losing the effectiveness of “the personal touch.” To that end TBA and STURCHIO are synonymous...and it is next-to-impossible to separate them. It is a true GIFT to be able to connect on a one-to-one basis with others, and NOBODY does it better than Al-and-Jan Sturchio.

“Managers do things right, leaders do right things.” TBA has been the recipient of both themes. The RIGHT THINGS were done THE RIGHT WAY because of a strategic recipe of: DIRECTING, COACHING, SUPPORTING, and DELEGATING...all wrapped in the masterful wisdom of Al to know “just when” to employ any and all of these important leadership techniques.

One of the key components of all great leaders/directors/administrators is the ability to find a successor who will provide a seamless transition when it comes

time to “pass the baton.” TBA’s new Executive Director, Michael Brashear, has already jumped into action, and this has taken place without the slightest hitch in the forward motion of the association...yet another accolade

extended to Al/Jan and the entire TBA Board of Directors.

While there has been an official retirement, we all know we can count

on the DYNAMIC STURCHIO DUO to still being closely tied to all the TBA endeavors. Could Al and Jan ever retire? More aptly put, they will simply RE-FIRE, and we will continue to tap their infinite knowledge as the future landscape of TBA unfolds.

Selfishly, I don’t want to come to San Antonio in July and NOT be in the presence of two of my heroes. TBA would not be what it is without those hallway moments with Al and Jan running with open arms, genuine smiles of enthusiasm, and their predictable hugs-of-welcome. Is there any question WHY TBA is “the favorite summer event” for all the Texas band directors, and many other visitors who have come to enjoy the hospitality of the Lone Star State?

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TBA has it all: Great clinics, wonderful concerts, grand exhibits, and the expected bonus extras, but so do many other such events, however ONLY TBA has THE STURCHIO'S: One thing we know, for certain, we need look no further than the remarkable tenure of Al and Jan to confirm: ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Their commitment and dedication is a priceless gift we all treasure, and it is second-to-none.

*“Thanks for the
Memories”
from
Al and Janice*

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a well-known name in the music education world as a teacher, clinician, author, composer, consultant, adjudicator, and above all, a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence. His own career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following three years in the music industry, he created Attitude Concepts for Today, an organization that manages workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the pathway-to-excellence. Tim presently holds the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer position at Ball State University. Tim is the Executive Director of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., and he serves as the national spokesperson for MENC's "Make a Difference with Music" program. His books The Art of Successful Teaching, The Joy of Inspired Teaching, Music Advocacy and Student Leadership, and Everyday Wisdom for Inspired Teaching are best sellers. He is co-author of Hal Leonard's popular band method Essential Elements - 2000.