

# From the Board

**Brian Merrill, 2010-11 TBA Past President**

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Thank you Texas Bandmasters Association members and business partners for a great 2010 Convention/Clinic. It never ceases to amaze me how many wonderful people in our profession will give so generously and freely of their time, talent, knowledge, and resources to assist their colleagues in becoming better teachers and in having stronger bands. I appreciate everyone who gave a clinic, conducted, performed, organized, spoke at, exhibited, helped sponsor and attended the convention this past July. I want to thank all of my colleagues on the Board of Directors for their great work. Special thanks to Mike and Priscilla Brashear, Robin Tovar, Alfred Esquivel and Justin Young. They each are outstanding in their jobs and TBA is very fortunate to have them aboard.

One theme I heard repeatedly throughout the convention was the importance of our relationships. The associations we have with the people we work for, the people we work with, and especially with the students who are entrusted to us, become our most valued and treasured possessions. We all constantly learn from each other and our students benefit from it. The practice of band directors willing to share, teach and help one another is what TBA is all about. This tradition goes back for decades. Plan to attend in 2011 and be a part of this great legacy.

TBA is in great hands with Don Haynes as president. In the years we

have spent on the Board together, I have come to know Don as a very thoughtful and caring person. He is deeply connected with directors from all over the state and has a real interest in what TBA can do for you. I believe Don and Cloteal will be not only capable, but inspirational leaders of TBA.

In closing, I'm going to take this opportunity to share my "short version" of what I think is important in our profession. I don't offer it as a comprehensive list, but just a starting point in remembering why we do what it is that we do.

**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. 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.

On behalf of my wife Nancy and myself, thanks again for the opportunity to have served TBA. It has been an honor and an experience we will always cherish. I wish all of you the very best for this school year and hope to see you in San Antonio in 2011.

