

**Texas Bandmasters Association**

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# From the Board

## Bruce Beach, 2010-11 TBA Secretary

What does it take to put a great convention together? How many people are involved in the success of the TBA Clinic/Convention? The Staff and Board of Directors for TBA work very hard trying to provide clinics, concerts, exhibits and other programs that will assist the band directors of the State of Texas.

The very first TBA was called The Texas Bandmasters Association

New Music and Marching Band Convention /Clinic. It was held in September 1948!! According to personal notes from James A. Jacobsen, Director of Bands Emeritus at TCU, the convention was held in a temporary building which was the rehearsal facility for the Alamo Heights High School band. As he recalled, there were only two exhibits that first year. Sol Frank Uniforms displayed a band uniform, and Southern Music Co. displayed a few instruments and some band music scores.

How the convention has grown! The 2010 Convention/Clinic had over 500 exhibitors, over 50 clinics, and 4 concerts. Numerous clinic sessions offered information about marching bands, concert bands, jazz bands, color guard, conducting, classroom management and booster clubs.

Let's begin to dissect the process for putting such a monumental convention together. The TBA Board of Directors meets

several times during the year to discuss clinic topics and possible presenters. Each member is asked to bring to the table ideas or people they feel will be beneficial to the convention. Many times it is a director with a successful program that needs to be spotlighted or has a unique approach to a common band director problem. We ask directors to share their processes for success.



After several clinic ideas have been presented, the Board attempts to schedule topics that cover as many areas as possible and all the various grade levels.

Not to be left out of the clinic process are the Business Members and exhibitors. Not only do they provide financial support to the event, but many times they sponsor specific clinic presentations—it may be a new book, instrument or speaker. These exhibitors and Business Members have kept this convention successfully rolling for over 60 years.

After the clinic list has been narrowed down and balanced out, the task of assigning times and rooms falls on the President and the office staff. Long time TBA staff member Alfred Esquivel knows the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center like the back of his hand and his experience is invaluable at determining room assignments for the clinics based on a forecasted audience draw. Alfred is also in charge of working with the clinicians'

## From the Board - Bruce Beach

contracts and their specific needs to make him/her feel comfortable about the clinic environment. Alfred strives to take as much of the logistical pressure off the clinician so they can concentrate on a giving a superb presentation.

Exhibitors truly make the convention float. Where do they come from? Who contacts them? Several have been part of the convention for many years. These include music dealers, instrument and uniform companies, fundraising companies, etc. These companies return every year at our invitation. Others are brought in through the recruiting efforts of Robin Tovar, another TBA staff member. Robin is the magician that handles this huge task. She spends a better part of her work day on the phone and answering emails from companies that show an interest in the convention. She travels to the Mid-West Convention in Chicago in December and the Texas Music Educators Association Convention in February and walks the convention floor recruiting exhibitors to join us in San Antonio in July. Through these efforts, our exhibitors list has grown. It is a difficult task of coordinating the exhibiting groups and companies so that their time at the convention is useful, productive and essentially

profitable. Because of her hard work and expertise, Robin was asked last summer by the Texas Choral Directors Association and the Texas Orchestra Directors Association to fill in at the last minute for their exhibits coordinator.

Justin Young is the TBA resident computer genius. He is in charge of all things computer related: the web site, the online pre-registration, walk up registration, and so much more! Many of you were not aware that there was a computer glitch the first day of the 2010 Convention/Clinic. The reason you did not know is because Justin was on hand, came up with a momentary solution and had the problem fixed by lunch. Convention registration went on as if nothing had happened. Justin stays on top of everything and keeps TBA in great shape.

Michael Brashear, the Executive Director for TBA, and 2003 TBA President, oversees this whole process. He works with the Board and the staff to make sure everything is in line. Mike thinks through every detail of the TBA organization, pointing out concerns to the Board that need attention, while running an efficient TBA office.

Mike has maintained a wonderful relationship with the convention center personnel and hotel/motel organizations in San

Antonio. This ensures that the directors who come to the TBA Convention/Clinic are provided the best housing for the best cost, locking in future convention dates through the year 2016. That is quite an accomplishment—especially in these economic times when everyone is scrambling for the best deal. The Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center suits the needs of TBA so well and we appreciate their willingness and cooperation.

I hope this small look into the workings of the convention have been of interest to you. I know as a brand new band director, just finishing my first year of teaching in 1985, the TBA Convention/Clinic was simply awe-inspiring! Like a lot of us as new teachers back then, we were simply told, “You are going to TBA.” In fact, it was Dan Black and Rick Lambrecht who told me that. Both are former TBA presidents: Rick in 1985 and Dan in 1992. Talk about pressure!

Going to the TBA Convention/Clinic that first year was one of the best decisions of my teaching career and one I have never regretted. I continued to attend every year; only missing one convention since 1985.

So make your plans to attend now. See you in July!