

From the Board

Bruce Beach, 2011-12 TBA Treasurer

At the time of this writing, the high school directors have wrapped up marching season. Some of you may have been lucky enough to participate in playoff games. In any case, let me congratulate all high school band directors on another successful season. Good luck as you prepare your students for the upcoming All-Region / All-State auditions. I also wish the middle school directors the same as they begin the All-Region process. Some of you may already be smack dab in the middle of the process and have already had auditions and are getting ready for the Region Clinic and Concert. Again, good luck to you and your students.

As we shift gears from marching contests or All-Region Band events and begin preparing for Holiday/Winter concerts, I trust we can take a break from the contest emphasis. Not that the emphasis is a bad thing. We all know why Texas bands perform so well—because of our hard work and high standards at the contest level. I think it is important that we also train our students to work for the simple enjoyment of performing and for the enjoyment of others.

Last year, I received a phone call from the director of events for a local retirement home. She was interested in my band performing for the residents at the home. So we worked out a date that was good for both of us. This was in the fall, so it

ended up being the entire marching band. When the band arrived, she had several of the residents lined up along the sidewalk outside the building. She also had the doors opened to the reading room and the visitor's center. There were quite a few residents sitting in those areas. (Now remember, this is a retirement center; so these people are in their seventies, eighties, even nineties). We lined the band up in the usual concert arc set up. I explained to the residents a little about our halftime show, some of the stand tunes we were playing, and off we went. As soon as the band began to play, the residents were clapping along, tapping their toes and having a great time. In turn, our students fed off of their enthusiasm. They played with great energy and played without concern about a panel of judges, a football audience or anything else. They were having a great time entertaining a group of people who were so thrilled and appreciative. It was a very moving experience for this band director. I witnessed my students really having fun performing for the residents. I had to chuckle to myself because not only had we performed our halftime show, we performed some of our stand tunes. AC DC's *Back in Black*

at a retirement center?? You know what? They didn't care! The audience was just happy to hear some music and see those kids perform!

After the kids played, they greeted the adults, introducing themselves and talking with them for a few minutes. They learned about their pasts and their own children. The kids found out that some had been in a band when they were younger. One



of the residents said he had played baritone horn in high school. My kids had a blast talking with the residents. I truly think it was the one of the highlights of our season. It really made the day for these senior citizens. It made such an impact on the kids, that when I told them we were going again, they were very excited. We scheduled a performance again this year for a day we did not have a game and no one complained! Pretty rare indeed.

Let me challenge all of you to take advantage of opportunities like these. I am sure many of you already do. Both you and your students will have a great time and the folks on the receiving end will be so appreciative. Your students will remember these moments as much or more than what they earned at a contest. Have a wonderful holiday season and good luck in the Spring.