

# From the Board

**Jeff King, 2013-14 TBA Treasurer**

As I sit in my home office trying to choose my topic for my annual contribution to the *Bandmasters Review*, I keep coming back to a couple of thoughts that I would like to share with you. So here we go.

By the time of this publication, high school directors have finished polishing and presenting their 2013 marching band shows. As I watched band after band execute difficult drill, while playing quality literature, all wrapped



under an incredible artistic umbrella, I was reminded how many great band programs and directors we have in Texas. The bar seems to be set higher and higher every year in Texas music education. Our music education majors, graduating from Texas universities and colleges are more prepared than ever to enter our profession. The quality of beginner and middle school teaching in Texas is at an all-time high in terms of quality pedagogy, rehearsal techniques and overall knowledge of the instruments. This being said, can we improve and do we need to improve? Yes! Most people that read professional periodicals such as the *Bandmasters Review* or the *Southwestern Musician* attend TMEA, TBA and Midwest conventions, are truly interested in becoming stronger more effective professional educators. I know that I share this mindset with many of you.

The truth is, we can always improve as band directors and become more understanding and sympathetic people in general. Face it; we wear many hats throughout our teaching day. Many of

which seem to have nothing to do with actually teaching music. Whether we are giving advice to a student who does not have a great home life and cannot afford a decent playing instrument or private lessons, or the student who seems to

have everything given to him but still has many personal issues to deal with, our daily jobs as band directors are complicated at best. We love to teach kids and this is why most of us do what we do every day. However, we do need to step back at times to refuel our physical and mental tanks.

Many band directors across our state experience similar struggles and concerns on a daily basis. This is where TBA and TMEA can really help. Networking and talking with other directors across the state can be well worth the cost of a convention. If you have taught for any number of years, you know and realize that you will have good days and some not so good days. Things seem to have a way of working out for the best.

My wife and closest colleagues know that I have a little game that I play periodically. Some days I give myself a

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## Mission Statement

The purpose of the Texas Bandmasters Association, Inc. is to:

Continually assist its membership in achieving the highest standards of instrumental music education.



Promote the place and value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual, and social lives.



Foster goodwill, fellowship and a collegial, fraternal spirit among its members.



Provide its membership with an annual Convention/Clinic which introduces new music, tried and proven teaching methods and materials as well as instruments and equipment.



Provide Educational Publications of instructional methods and materials for TBA members and aid them with their personal development and leadership.



Provide information for the university music student preparing to become a band director.

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grade as a band director. One day I might be a B+ teacher and another day a C-. Did my kids learn today and if so, did they enjoy learning or was I a less than friendly person? Did I guide them to the right answer or did I just give them the answer?

Allow me to share an experience I had the other day. I was sight-reading some short melodies with the Duncanville Wind Ensemble. We had been talking about major and minor tonalities and how to tell if a piece is in major or minor BEFORE playing. After I gave them a few hints and suggestions, they proceeded to correctly answer whether a piece was in major or minor before we read the music. (Yes, they had to answer by a show of hands with their eyes closed). I went home that day thinking that I was at least a B+ teacher.

No matter what grade of a teacher you were today, know that we will not always be an "A+" teacher and that we always have room to grow as people and as professional educators. I would encourage younger band directors to soak up as much as you can from older, more experienced directors. I have been very fortunate to have learned from some of the best in our profession. Like an Academy Award acceptance speech, it

would be silly for me to think that I could name them all without leaving so many out. I hope you know who you are! When I find myself saying something to my band students that was fairly clever or insightful, I often wonder from whom I got that idea.

Over the second half of my 30-year band director career, I have had the opportunity and pleasure to travel around the United States, Canada, Australia and China—presenting clinics and working with various programs and band directors. I am always proud to tell them that I am a band director who teaches in Texas. We are very fortunate to have such strong leaders in our profession and professional organizations such as UIL, TMEA and TBA to help us maintain our excellence and to help us set the bar higher each year.

As we celebrate this holiday season, I know that we all have a lot to be thankful for. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your TBA Treasurer. I hope to see you at our 2014 TBA Convention/Clinic. President Richard Herrera and the TBA Board are putting together an exceptional convention where we can all learn to be an A+ band director.