

# A Spotlight On . . . Community Bands

Michael Brashear, TBA Executive Director

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Greetings from TBA! I hope your spring semester is going well. I know you are focused on UIL contests, festivals, spring trips, end of year concerts, and planning for next year. Best wishes for outstanding performances from all your groups. What an exciting time of the year to see the fruits of your labor and hear the progress your students have made. Be sure to focus on the positive and thank your students for their hard work and congratulate them on their successes. It is so important for them to see the “pay-off” and celebrate their successes. All of their hard work has been worth it!! And don’t forget to pat yourself and your staff on the back for a job well done. Success breeds success!!

The TBA Convention/Clinic will be Thursday-Sunday, July 23-26. Register and obtain your housing now. This convention is not to be missed! More than 60 clinics, great concerts, and traditional spouse and family activities are planned. Many clinics will utilize demonstration groups and several designed especially for the MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR will be offered. Check out the list of clinics and activities on starting on page 27.

One of the highlights of this summer’s convention will be our showcase of community bands. I am very excited that President Bruce

Beach and the Board of Directors want to feature and recognize this part of our band world at the convention. We all agree that playing a musical instrument and performing in a band is something that can last a lifetime. The last few years have seen an explosion in the number and quality of community bands throughout Texas and the nation. Therefore, the goal of being able to perform in a band during a person’s lifetime is a reality for many musicians. ***In fact, as music educators we could say that the logical culmination of our hard work with young students can be seen as mature adults continue to play in community bands.***

TBA has always paid tribute to community bands and we have traditionally opened our convention with a performance by an outstanding community band. The difference this year is that we have invited FIVE outstanding community bands to perform. These groups include:

- Carrollton Wind Symphony - Jim McDaniel, conductor
- El Paso Wind Symphony - Ron Hufstader, conductor
- Lone Star Symphonic Band - Bob Bryant, conductor
- Naperville Municipal Band - Ron Keller, René Rosas, conductors
- The Woodlands Concert Band - Paul Worosello, conductor

You can see that we will be able to hear outstanding groups from across the state as well as one from out of state. I encourage you to make time to hear these groups perform in the Lila Cockrell Theatre.

Allow me to introduce you to the Naperville Municipal Band from Naperville, Illinois. I had the privilege and honor of guest conducting this group last November after they accepted our invitation to join us this summer. Established in 1859, they are one of the longest, if not THE longest, continuous performing community bands in the country. In 1991, the band received the prestigious Sudler Silver Scroll Award presented by the John Philip Sousa Foundation in recognition of excellence in community bands. At that time, the band was only the fifth such band so recognized.

Their conductor, Ron Keller, has been involved with the band since 1951 when he appeared as a soloist. Ron became director in 1966 and has devoted his life to

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developing the band into one of the premiere adult organizations in the country. His lifetime devotion to this group is something he shares with many other band members. One of their trumpet players is over 90 years old and is still with the band!

In our age where relocating from city to city is the norm for most folks with their careers, it was very refreshing for me to find this charming community where so many have spent their entire lives playing in this band. Even as Naperville has grown from a small community of 4200 people in 1940, to over 145,000 in 2013, it still maintains the feel of a small town exhibiting a strong pride in their community. In a way,

it is a sister-city of San Antonio, having its own river walk and sharing the small town charm in a larger city.

To show their support for this band, the city of Naperville passed a tax which is dedicated to supporting the band! They constructed a multi-million dollar band building with state of the art rehearsal facilities, storage rooms, band library, uniforms, and offices. The building is constructed so that a large “garage door” which is the wall at the front of the rehearsal room can be opened presenting the band to their audience seated in the outdoor park. This venue is used for weekly summer concerts and it is not unusual to have two to three thousand folks attending these events.

Talk about a true community band! This organization is a vital part of the community, performing concerts year round and even marching in community parades. I encourage you to attend their concert this summer and learn more about this outstanding group. They will be led by conductor Ron Keller, assistant conductor René Rosas, and guest conductor TBA Featured Clinician James Keene and will feature the outstanding trombone soloist Harry Watters! I know that we want to show our guests from Illinois a true Texas welcome! Visit their website for more information <http://www.napervilleband.org/>.