

Sowing Seeds

George Little, 2019-21 TBA Treasurer

What a year! On March 11, I was sitting on a charter bus on the way back from our band trip to Orlando when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. All of the sudden, school was cancelled, and you could not find toilet paper anywhere. Here we are nine months later, thousands of cases down the road, and trying our best to stay safe and have band. If you are anything like me, you oscillate between, “What the heck am I doing?”, “Things weren’t so bad today!”, and “I give up!” Let me share something that recently has helped to give me perspective.

Like many of your facilities, the Lufkin HS band hall is attached to a loading dock. The concrete pavement portion of the loading dock slants downward from the parking lot, and then rises back up to the dock wall, creating a low point. This low point floods when we have a hard rain; dirt and debris wash down and settle at the bottom. When our band staff started back to work in July to prepare

for summer band, we noticed that there was a small watermelon vine growing. What!? A watermelon vine growing in the little bit of dirt in our loading dock!?

We lovingly named the watermelon vine “Fifi” and moved on with our routine not expecting much. However, as the weeks progressed, the vine continued to grow. Our band students would water Fifi with the leftovers from their water jugs on the way in from marching rehearsal and started to become quite protective. Believe it or not, after a few weeks there was fruit! A few small melons withered quickly in the Texas sun, but others started to thrive and get larger. Classes would take quick field trips to visit the loading dock watermelon patch, I started getting texts from administrators about our watermelon garden, and the legend of Fifi grew. On October 22, we picked the largest watermelon and ate it. While it wasn’t the best watermelon I’ve ever had, it was definitely edible! There are still about 6 or 7 watermelons on the vine!

Having been in church since I was knee high to a grasshopper, I’ve long been familiar with the principal that whatever a person sows they will also reap. But who sowed the watermelon seeds, and when were they sown? As the legend of Fifi grew, several entities claimed to have spat the seeds that started this whole saga. We will never know for sure who inadvertently planted Fifi, or when they planted

her, but we do know that the seeds bore fruit.

I sometimes wish that I could be more like some of my super positive colleagues who always find the good in every situation. (At least that’s how they seem on Facebook.) Truth be told, I struggle with that. Like many of you, I have seen a decline in band membership this year. It is a struggle to know how to console those who have lost loved ones, jobs, and resources to this terrible disease. It is a struggle to teach or perform at levels of years past. It is a struggle to find times and ways to do even the simplest things such as teaching an all-region lesson. It is a struggle at times to feel like my efforts are not in vain.

Our efforts are not in vain. We may not see the fruit for quite some time and some kids will still “wither” out of band, but the seeds of encouragement, hard work, perseverance, fostering a love of music, and being there for the kids that have chosen to continue in band will bear fruit. How do I know our efforts are not in vain? Dr. Tim told me so!

I remind my students regularly that even our very worst days of rehearsal beat the heck out of sitting at the house for five months! Perspective really is like a contact lens.... it’s all in the eye of the beholder. I hope that you have a safe, healthy, happy, and restful holiday season and that we all come out on the other side of this pandemic better off for sticking through it and for not giving up.

