

The Set of the Sail

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

The following stanza is taken from a poem, 'Tis the Set of the Sail, written by Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

One ship sails East,
And another West,
By the self-same winds that blow,
'Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales,
That tells the way we go.

"'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales that tells the way we go." What a poignant bit of wisdom. It certainly reminds us WE DO HAVE A CHOICE based on how we decide to SET OUR SAILS.

It is easy to get caught in the undertow of "ill-fated winds" as we have been faced with the unknown pathway created by the pandemic.

- How can I teach band without having the students in front of me?
- What curricular options do I have if the students aren't in a band setting?
- Can I continue to build our band culture/family if the ensemble members aren't in the band hall?
- Is there a way to maintain the enthusiasm and the interest without the motivational value of the anticipated performances?
- How do I get to the students who are the potential recruits for beginning band?
- Band parents? What's the best way to keep them connected to the program?
- Why should anyone be in the band if there is no band as we know it?

No doubt everyone dealt with some version of these suggested inquiries...

and yet, there were many who took advantage of the following well-worn (but oh-so-true) mantra: ***There's a challenge in every opportunity: there's an opportunity in every challenge.***

There isn't anyone in our profession who can't give credence to the above quote.

Most certainly, we have experienced the extremes of this familiar saying over the last two years: Challenges, challenges...and more challenges. What's the pathway to mining the opportunities? Where do we begin to sort this out in such a way it will benefit the students, the programs, the schools, the communities?!

Questions, questions...and more questions.

In spite of everything, the 2021-2022 school year launched and bands across the state have come to the marching band stage offering-up remarkable performances. The directors, students, parents are ecstatic about their REBIRTH and RETURN to "banding together".

The shared commentaries reflect a newfound joy and appreciation:

- "The attitude of the band is the best I can ever remember. Everyone is so glad to be back at it!"

- "My students continue to express a special gratitude beyond anything I've experienced in my entire career."
- "Our entire community has come forward to demonstrate their excitement with an outpouring of support for the band."

• "The student body has always been appreciative, but now they are the best band fans imaginable!"

• "Covid-19 has awakened all of us to how fortunate we are to have our band as a flagship of our community."

Yes, there have been ill-effects everyone has experienced. In many cases, the number of participants per bands has decreased; the

groups are a bit smaller. Most high school programs are looking at two classes of band members (freshmen and sophomores) who are new to the program (as it now stands). The beginning band programs may not be as robust in their numbers of new recruits as a result of the many restrictions of the Covid mandates. The positive momentum of the annual rehearsal schedules, performances, trips, etc. is in need of refueling for the future. Let's not be naive about the journey we have taken over the last two years, HOWEVER to witness the

Let's not be naive about the journey we have taken over the last two years, HOWEVER to witness the REBIRTH of the band programs stands as a bold testimony to the positive leadership provided by band directors. While we are all the benefactors of this remarkable level of PERSISTENCE ("GRIT!"), the real winners are the students.

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After being involved in nine weekends of marching band shows, it is obvious directors, students, PARENTS and administrators are moving forward at top speed. Honestly, I thought it would take extended time to return to the standards-of-excellence demonstrated by our band community, HOWEVER each week I witnessed remarkable field shows, talked to excited students, listened to directors offer their positive thoughts about the future...and, most importantly, felt the INCREDIBLE SUPPORT of band fans in the stands. It is apparent many have “SET THEIR SAILS TO EMBRACE THE GALES THAT TELLS THE WAY THEY GO.”

Never doubt the successes generated by band directors!
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!
STRIKE UP THE BAND!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser began his teaching career at Northern Michigan University. He then moved to the University of Missouri, and from there to New Mexico State University. During that time, Tim developed highly acclaimed groups in both instrumental and vocal music. Following his tenure in the college band directing world, he spent three years with McCormick's Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, Tim created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for teacher in-service workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. After thirty-plus years of clinic presentations, some three million students have experienced one of his popular sessions. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. He is a nationally recognized voice touting the importance of arts education for every child.