

Cooperation: A Fundamental For Program Success

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

KUDOS are extended to TBA Executive Director Mike Brashear, and Past President Phillip Clements. They, along with the organization's Board of Directors, certainly went far "above and beyond the call of duty" to produce a most memorable celebration for all of us. It is a Herculean effort to create and administrate a huge assembly of like minds when the landscape is "normal,"...to duplicate it while negotiating the present global climate is A NEXT-TO-IMPOSSIBLE MASSIVE UNDERTAKING. "Mission accomplished!!"...and more...much, much more.

The 2021 Texas Bandmasters Association convention revealed many TRUTHS about our profession. Above all, it highlighted how important it is to be with our colleagues FACE-to-FACE. (There is no substitute.) There was also an unspoken emphasis on COOPERATION—you could sense it from the

opening session to the final good-byes. Having attended the conference for many years, the 2021 event was truly SPECIAL. Everything was wrapped in a spirit of enthusiasm, sharing, outreach, respect, kindness, etc. The "climate-of-collective support" was evident everywhere; it was driven by the realization of the immeasurable value of BANDING TOGETHER (both literally and metaphorically).

We are all familiar with the well-known phrase, "United we stand, divided we fall." It has been attributed to the ancient Greek storyteller Aesop. One can also find it in the scriptures. World leaders have adopted it as a reminder of the strength of THE PEOPLE when there is a sense of collaboration, union, coalition and alliance. All who attended this year's TBA convention are the benefactors of this important theme, one that has been proven to be true throughout all of history.

I can wax-on about the value and synergistic power of COOPERATION, however it is best explained in this enlightening perspective brought to the stage of understanding via our fine-feathered friends:

The Goose Story

When you see geese flying along in "V" formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

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When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone—and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are headed the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What messages do we give when we honk from behind? Finally—and this is important—when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

If we have as much common sense as a goose, we will stand by each other for the welfare of everyone.

Geese can migrate up to 3,000 miles from their launching point. The flock can travel 1,500 miles in a day, but only if they take advantage of the wisdom shared in the above story. As a result of embracing this instinctive behavior, the flock reaches their chosen destination.

The story sounds mighty familiar, doesn't it? With the tweak of a few nouns, it could apply to band camp, or the preparation for a concert, or a festival, or a trip, or the establishment of a supportive and successful parent-booster group...or, or, or...it is endless.

Might I suggest *The Goose Story* be shared with all those who are part of your band culture. If nothing else, it will stand out as a bold reminder of the unlimited potential available to all of us if we make COOPERATION a key filter in all decision-making.

...and now, it's time to:

“STRIKE UP THE BAND”
(HONK, HONK!)

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 inservice 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.