

# “Have” to or “Get” to?

## Choosing the Right Perspective

George Little, TBA President



“Ugh, why do you have to go to work so much?” This question was posed to me by my eight-year-old daughter on more than one occasion over the summer.

As any of you that have ever spent much time with an eight-year-old knows, giving them an acceptable answer can be challenging. I responded with all the standard lines. “We need to have money to eat, and I have to go to work to get paid.” “I need to get everything ready for the band kids to come back.” “Because it’s my job.” “So, mommy doesn’t get tired of my bad jokes!” I wish now that I replied with, “I don’t have to go to work, I get to go to work!”

I had never heard of TBA before, but knew I was going to the convention as soon as I got my job because that’s just what the Henderson staff did. Once I got to San Antonio, I ate some great food on the River Walk, attended some clinics and concerts, bought a new conducting baton that I just knew was going to be a game changer, and went to my first ever washer chunkin’! The Bandmaster of the Year in 2002 was TBA Past President Waymon Bullock, who consequently is the man that the band hall is named after that I now go to work in every day at Lufkin High School. I will never forget the charm, wisdom, and wit that flowed so effortlessly in Mr. Bullock’s speech. I am certain that everyone else who listened to Waymon that day will always remember that harmonica! I was hooked on TBA!

The thing is, I almost didn’t go to my first TBA luncheon where Mr. Bullock gave that speech. An older director (probably Mr. Ferguson) just happened to ask if I was going to the luncheon

“  
**I don’t have to go to work,  
I get to go to work!**  
”

The truth is that sometimes we all feel like we have to go to work. I tend to find myself in that type of head space when I’m tired of dealing with things like logistics, administrative tasks, or the long hours of summer band practice. However, when I step back and observe students enjoying each other’s company, working hard towards common goals, or rolling their eyes at my dad jokes, I start to feel more like I get to go to work.

I still have vivid memories of my first TBA convention 22 years ago. I had just gotten my first job at Henderson Middle School and was fortunate to be working on the same band staff as the 2002 TBA President, Ronnie Ferguson.

to which I replied that I didn’t think I was. I remember being told that I needed to go and that I would enjoy myself, which was so true. Plus, I got a free meal! My best memories from that first TBA were made only because I was told to go and make them. What are we telling young directors today about the importance of the memories they will make at TBA? Missing out on the TBA convention is missing out on what keeps us at the top of our craft. Inspiring performances, engaging clinics, and the friendly faces that we see are crucial to what we do. Those impromptu hugs and mini reunions on the exhibit floor are just the last-minute boost we need to be the best we can be for our students!

It is my great privilege to be able to serve the membership of TBA as President over the next year! My congratulations go to Danny Allen and his wife Ruth Allen for their tireless efforts as TBA President in making the 2023 TBA convention and spouses’ activities a roaring

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success. This summer’s world class lineup of clinics and emotionally inspiring performances left an indelible mark on all who were there. I would also like to thank Roland and Jackie Sandoval for their friendship and steadfast service to TBA as they rotate off the TBA board. I know that all of you will join me in giving a big TBA welcome to Ronnie Rios and his wife Thelma as our newest Sergeant-at-Arms.

We are already hard at work preparing an amazing lineup for the 77th annual TBA convention which will take place July 25- 27, 2024. I am thrilled that Colonel Jason Fettig, Director of The President’s Own Marine Band, and soon to be Director of Bands at the University of Michigan, will be joining us as our featured clinician! Be on the lookout for more information about our 2024 convention lineup in the coming months.

I want to remind you that we always need help with clinic ideas. Please submit clinic proposals using the link found on the TBA website home page.

**I hope you are having a fantastic start to your 2023-2024 school year!**

**TBA**  
Board of Directors  
**2023-24**