

David Willson, President
willson@olemiss.edu

Sheryl Bowhay, Vice President
sbowhay@shaw.ca



INTERNATIONAL BANDMASTERS FRATERNITY

Richard Crain, Executive Secretary
rcrain@houston.rr.com

A.N. "Buzzy" Green, Editor
agreen@irvingisd.net

High Success

Best wishes for a great summer filled with fun, relaxation, and much love.

For 2008, President David Willson has asked us to consider the importance of band programs in unlikely locations. This issue features two stories of such situations. May you enjoy them and find the inspiration that I have found in gathering/writing them.

One report details the work of a veteran teacher who took an assignment at a large Texas high school. To some, that is a dream come true. Having worked in that part of the state before, Jeff Doughten knew that it would be a tough situation. But he ap-

proached it just like other programs he directed. The story is worth reading.

The article about Berryville, Arkansas was submitted by Past President Eldon Janzen. It is an inspiring tale about Jim Swiggart, Daniel Hodge, Julius Stevens, and a great community.

In the next issue, we will visit one of the least affluent counties in the entire country. Like these two, it is "one for the books." There are few places that just could not have a successful band program. Your story is welcome. Submit ASAP to [Buzzy Green](#). BZ

The Berryville High School Band

Daniel Hodge and Julius Stevens, Directors
Submitted by Eldon Janzen

Great bands can come from small beginnings. With dedicated, hardworking directors and students, a die-hard booster group, and a very supportive administration, the Berryville High School Band has become an inspiring success story.

In 2000, the Berryville High School Band from a small community in the Arkansas Ozarks was losing ground and members. With only 17 members, the small band was struggling to keep a program ...that is until help came along. Jim Swiggart, a retired band director

from Oklahoma was asked to fill in as interim band director the second semester of the school year. He lived in nearby Holiday Island as he worked as the General Manager of *Opera in the Ozarks*. He "came out of retirement" and his heart

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The Palo Duro High School Band

Jeff Doughten and Shandy Shumaker, Directors

Palo Duro High School in Amarillo, Texas has

a long history of band performance and has had some fine — even famous — band directors. But the tangible success of the 53 year old band program was illusive.

When the school opened in the middle of the last century, it served students from Amarillo Air Base. Many of the students were from the families of U.S. Air Force officers, so the socio-economic level was relatively high. In 2008, the Air Base has been closed for decades, and the neighborhood it serves has fallen into the disrepair and neglect that often accompanies such a drastic change in the community dynamics. In fact, Palo Duro High School serves the least affluent parts of Amarillo, and all of the traits that accompany

such schools are present at Palo Duro. Many of the students come from one parent homes, and in many families, life is a struggle just to make a living, even though many of the students work to help support the family.

Since Jeff Doughten became the Band Director in August of 2000, the Palo Duro High School Band has set unique standards in Palo Duro history. The band takes a major trip annually, for which the students raise the funds. After missing the Sweepstakes Trophy by one judge's rating in 2000-01, the band has earned seven straight UIL Sweepstakes awards. In the first 45 years of its existence, the Palo Duro Band earned only one Sweepstakes Award.

Mr. Doughten's winning strategy is calcu-

lated to demonstrate that his students can achieve the same levels of success as their cross-town friends, including an education beyond high school. As a result of the band's success and his constant challenge to set and attain personal goals, there are many Palo Duro exes who are music educators or current music majors.

The Palo Duro Band's formula for success is not that different from what one would expect at affluent high schools. Under the guidance of a talented band staff, the tradition of success and the structure of the band's activities prove that hard work and devotion to the task make anything possible.

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went out to the struggling band program and its students. He was asked to stay a second year to help get the program back on its feet. During that year, the Berryville Band began its amazing story.

From 30 years of high school band directing experience, Swiggart knew the program needed a miracle. It needed a young dedicated director, major community support and a strong booster/parent organization. He came up with a plan to fulfill these needs. He approached a few band parents and told them he would stay a third year if they could put together a parent organization that could gain administrative and community support. He said if they could raise enough money to send the band to a national competition, he would recruit, educate, and motivate the students to compete at the 2003 Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day. This challenge was met with enthusiasm by the parents, students, school board, and administration. Swiggart said that if the trip was a success, the school would be flooded with qualified applicants to pick up his baton and go forward with the program. And a success, it was! The community of Berryville and neighboring communities pro-

vided support through large and small gifts...fundraising of over \$50,000 to fund the trip and buy needed instruments and supplies. A total of 120 travelers went to Dallas to compete and perform at the nationally televised Cotton Bowl half-time show and return with several honors.

After returning, Swiggart requested the position for a new director be considered. Just as he predicted, many, many qualified applicants desired to come to Berryville. The 6th through 12th grade band program had it is challenges ahead, and Swiggart knew that the new director would have to be an extremely aggressive person to carry out the vision in spite of scheduling, facility and staffing obstacles.

With extreme competition for the director spot, Daniel Hodge, the current director, was unanimously selected to fill Swiggart's position. Mr. Hodge received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education at the University of Central Oklahoma and a Master's Degree in Instrumental Conducting from Oklahoma City University. Swiggart was hired to assist Hodge the first year to keep the momentum going. Hodge came with exceptional qualifications, references, talent, and ambition. He said in

his interview that having Swiggart as an assistant was the best circumstance he could imagine for his first job as head band director. It was an opportunity that a new director could only dream of. Hodge's zeal and Swiggart's experience was the perfect combination for the Berryville program. Hodge, an accomplished woodwind player and instructor, and Swiggart, a master brass player built a strong foundation that stands firm today. After that year of team teaching, the administration decided to add a permanent full-time assistant director. Mr. Hodge knew immediately who he wanted and aggressively pursued the services of his long time friend, Julius Stevens. Stevens was just finishing up his Master's Degree at Indiana University. The two directors have taken the program beyond what most directors even dream. Their devotion to the individual instruction of their students produces more and more all-region and all-state musicians each year. In 2008, an astonishing 8 All-State musicians came from Berryville's 65 member band. This total reflects the countless hours Hodge and Stevens spend giving private and group instruction after school. They also devote much time after hours

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to rehearsing and performing with the popular Berryville High School Jazz Band.

Late hours are the status quo at Berryville High School after several years of successful marching and concert competitions. Three consecutive years, Berryville High School Band has earned Arkansas Band and Orchestra Association Sweepstakes trophies. They have also been named Grand Champion six times in the last three years at several highly competitive marching contests while competing against bands three times their size. Their concert band (the emphasized ensemble of the program) regularly performs Grade IV and V lit-

erature from the State List. The crowning achievement of the Berryville High School Band was their recent 2008 trip to Chicago, IL to compete in the Heritage Music Festival. The band was awarded first place in Concert Band and Jazz Band receiving the highest point total in both categories regardless of class size.

The booster organization, led by Donesa Mann, continues with unwavering support financially and organizationally. Anything the directors ask for - from chaperoning, food, uniform assistance, etc., the parents do their best to provide. They also serve as a backbone for socialization within the band. Parties, banquets, and dances are held to reward stu-

dents for their hard work and success. The school administration and board provides fantastic support through a healthy band budget and facilities. An even higher level of performance will be possible with a state-of-the-art band building under construction. It will house three rehearsal spaces which will allow the directors to isolate instruction to middle school and junior high students throughout the day. There are also plans to add a third director to facilitate the ever growing numbers within the program. Mr. Hodge considers the program "blessed by God" to come to this point. Something very special is happening in Berryville, Arkansas, and things look like they will only get better.

Many times, we don't distinguish

The Key to Conductor Stage Etiquette — Confidence

between being a teacher and being a performer. Usually, we err by considering ourselves performers more often than is helpful. But there is one situation in which a band director should be a performer first and foremost. That situation is in the concert performance itself.

However well we conduct a concert, many directors accept and acknowledge applause very poorly. The reason seems to be that they consider themselves neither performer nor audience member. The situation deserves a careful analysis.

The facts:

- The band cannot perform as well without a competent conductor, so the conductor is one of the musicians.
- The band members cannot communicate to the audience.
- So the conductor is also the link between the band members and the audience.

The Attitude: After an energetic entrance, the conductor's bow should be near or on the podium. This is not self-serving. It is a polite gesture of thanks on behalf of everyone on stage.

How: The conductor enters,

faces the audience, puts heels together,

pauses, bends at the hips to look at the floor.

Technique: The bow should be practiced until it feels natural. The more at ease the conductor can be, the more at ease the audience and the band will be.

The Big No-No: Finally, the conductor should not applaud his own performance. Following each selection, the conductor should bow as described above to graciously accept applause on behalf of the band.

We should remember that the players deserve a conductor who represents them professionally.

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Although the school's standardized test scores are low, band students at Palo Duro and at the feeder middle schools are expected to achieve in both music and academic endeavors, so careful monitoring of grades is a normal practice. The Band holds Saturday morning study sessions every Saturday that a director can open the PD Band Hall. There is tutoring available from the Band Directors, and some students come to the Saturday sessions to tutor other students. Others come just to be in a safe and welcoming place. In this and other ways, the band behaves as a family, and the students take care of each other.

Mr. Doughten asserts that there are no accommodations made for his students' family situations or their socio-economic standing. He would likely see that as bigotry. Jeff teaches them that they are normal kids who strive for the same standards as students at any other school. As a result, they meet high standards better than many middle class students that Jeff has taught over the years. When asked how he does it, Mr. Doughten says that "director expectations are everything."



Jeff Doughten, Director
Palo Duro High School Band

In the Palo Duro High School Band, everything starts 5 minutes earlier than the announced time. The advertised time for daily band rehearsal is 7:30 AM, so the downbeat happens promptly at 7:25, and every student is expected to be in place. In the fall, there is a 6:30 to 9:00 PM rehearsal every Tuesday. For the rest of the year, every band member attends one section rehearsal each week. Both evening rehearsals and sectionals also begin five minutes early, and there are no absence or tardy excuses accepted. Students who miss a sectional for whatever reason are required to make up the time in a 6:35 AM make-up rehearsal. Mr. Doughten admits that students miss rehearsal from time to time, but that is rare.

When he first implemented this regimen, there were many parent complaints. Jeff met with each parent or couple so he could listen to each

concern. One of the parents reminded the new guy that they did not work so hard in previous years, and they had a pretty good band. Mr. Doughten agreed that the band was pretty good the previous year. He quelled the emotion in the issue by simply saying, "Well, I'm sure the gentleman who was here last year is a lot better band director than I am. I just require more time to get it done right."

After that first year's successful marching season, the pride of the group began to emerge and the complaints receded.

Mr. Doughten continues to be very achievement oriented as an individual, and he conveys that to his band as well. But he does not let anyone think that band is a life or death matter. He wants them to understand that it is not the end of the world if the band doesn't make Sweepstakes or even if they make a III. Those things happen. But he does remind his students that neither of those results is acceptable, and if it should happen, the band has a joint responsibility to fix it.

In Hawaii, the Palo Duro Band

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played on board the USS Missouri which is docked at Pearl Harbor. The "Mighty Mo" was the site of Japan's 1945 surrender to end the Pacific Campaign of World War II. Doughten uses such opportunities to help the students realize the wonderful advantages we have as Americans.

To finance the trip, each student was required to pay \$1,929, and many of the students raise that entire amount through three band sponsored fund raisers. Very few are able to pay for the trip without the benefit of fund raisers. Students sometimes meet their own goals and then begin raising money for another student.

Four years ago, the band went to Hawaii for the first

time. Students then believed that it was a trip that the Palo Duro Band would never repeat. Mr. Doughten agreed that they could not repeat such a trip every year, but he assured them that the band could do that again in four years. True to his word, the Hawaii trip of 2008 is now a wealth of memories, and another group of Palo Duro Band students have learned that there is magic and energy in setting goals.

Jeff Doughten is a gifted musician and motivator of young people. When asked how he does that, he claims that he is unaware of specific techniques. He attributes his success to a gift that allows him to believe in kids and expect great things from them. In return, students perform at high levels that most think impossible.

Shandy Shumaker, Jeff's assistant director lets us inside the program to see further reasons for its extraordinary success.



**Shandy Shumaker
Assistant Director
Palo Duro High School Band**

My relationship with Mr. Doughten is special. I especially enjoy the role I play as the assistant director supporting Mr. Doughten in his hopes and dreams for the PD Band.

I first came into contact with Mr. Doughten when I was one of his beginning clarinet students in Andrews, Texas. Then and now he always makes band enjoyable for students with his witty per-

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An older band director had the habit of going into a certain bar once a month. He always ordered three beers. With the frosty mugs in front of him, he would drink from each one in turn until all three were empty. The old fellow had told the bartender that the monthly ritual was to honor his two brothers with whom he used to share a monthly beer come hell or high water. Both brothers had moved away. He missed their meetings so much that he began holding the monthly meeting without them to remind himself of the love and good times that they share.

Bottoms Up

One month, the gentleman ordered only two beers. He followed the consumption process that he had used with three, then he prepared to leave. The bartender had grown fond of the man and felt that he knew the brothers as well, so he expressed his regrets about the apparent loss of one brother.

The old fellow explained, "Naw, they are both fine. I spoke to them on the phone just before I came here. But I married a beautiful woman last week, and I had to promise the little lady that I would quit drinking. But both of my brothers still drink."

sonality.

Unfortunately, I was unable to be a student in his high school band program, but he always stayed in contact, opened doors for me, and encouraged me to be a band director, as he is always doing with the Palo Duro Band students.

Fortunately, I encountered Mr. Doughten again my senior year in college as his student teacher and private clarinet teacher, and now as his assistant.

I am always learning from him what it means to be a teacher in today's society. As teachers, we are called upon to play different roles in the classroom. Mr. Doughten understands when to be a band director and when to be a friend, mentor, or father. As band director, he pushes the students to demand excellence of themselves and their program. In

the other roles, he always reinforces just how special our students are to each other and to the directors. He also encourages them to be the best they can be — beyond the band room.

Education is important to Mr. Doughten and me. We both stress the importance of a college education and the students making something of themselves. We work long hours with the normal band director duties involving performances, fundraising, and planning for our annual trip. But I imagine that we put in more hours investing in the present and future lives of our students' and their educational success. It may be through Saturday tutoring sessions or handing out weekly reports so that our students know where they stand in their academic classes.

The success of the Palo Duro Band is because of the planning, hard work, and love for kids and music of this unique man. I am privileged to be able to work with him.

Like Shandy Shumaker, thousands of Doughten's students found success in his bands and transferred that into their role as adult citizens. Each of them is more likely to achieve great things than anyone would have thought possible when they entered high school and joined band.

Thankfully, Jeff Doughten saw them as winners who just needed someone to show them how.

Several years ago, a friend of mine took his band to a parade competition in Washington, D.C. In preparing, he noticed that there were no turns on the route. He also took note of the fact that the judging sheets gave 50% of the music score to "dynamic contrast." so he chose a march with a pianissimo trio, rehearsed marching straight down the street, and had everything perfectly timed to hit the trio just as the band reached the stand. On the big day, in the band assembly area, he learned of a change in the route. Of

Column Right!

course, the revision included a turn, though it was not

within sight of the reviewing stand. To the amusement (and private ridicule) of the other bands, my friend stood on a flat bed truck, called his band to attention, and announced on the bull horn, "Band, listen carefully. I'm going to tell you how to turn."

In spite of that, his band won the parade. The story about the band that learned a wheel turn from a lecture will be told as long as there are parades.

Contributed by Boyd McKeown