

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

Learning from Everyone



David Willson

The Prez Says

We all know that we do not get into teaching for the short hours, peaceful environment, and more than liberal pay! The single greatest remuneration that we get is watching and enjoying the growth of our students. We consider ourselves one of the most positive influential people in our students' lives. All of us have a great opportunity to be that as we generally keep them longer than any other teachers that they have. During our time honoring those that mentor us I think that we should stop and think about the students that also teach us.

In my 32 years of teaching, as I reflect, I realize now that every single student taught me something. The perfect, the talented, the bad, and those that are like me, the not too gifted! Without exception, if you allow them; every situation with each individual in your program can teach you something. Here is my example: years ago, on the fourth day of band camp in hot Mississippi as I was dismissing the band I made a

brief comment about needing to get the field mowed. After preparing for the booster meeting later that afternoon I drove to the corner school intersection and saw a small young man with a push mower on the field. I turned left, crawled through a storm ditch, and went up the young man and said, "Mr. White, what in the world are you doing here?" He said, "Well, you said that you needed the field mowed." I then said, "Ritchie that meant that I would get the tractor tomorrow and mow the field in just a few minutes. Now you go home before your parents kill me!"

I went home, showered and put on a tie for my booster meeting. When I came back to the same intersection, there were seven people mowing the field. That young man, just by taking the initiative, sparked others to do the same! During the four years he was in my program Ritchie was the first one to mark his music, pass off his requirements, turn in his fundraising money, and offer to do any odd job. Not one time did I see him point his finger, make fun of others, or give a speech! His positive leadership was strictly by example. Let me tell you this young man made a difference!

From Ritchie White I learned that regardless of your age, playing ability or any other attributes you can be a leader by example. It does not matter if you are two or ninety-two your energy and positive vibes can spread to others more than any kind of speech or correction could ever do. As I write this, Ritchie is in his early forties, is a very successful businessman, and has middle school aged children. He has been a very positive influence on me and I have told this story many, many times and get emotional at each telling.

As we enter this new school year I hope that you will look at every student that you interact with as a way for you to learn. If they have bad tone quality search for a way for them to produce a better sound. If they are a behavior problem, ask them what it would take to get them on the right track, without a thought and with sincerity. There is an opportunity to mentor in every situation. Each one of these interactions will give back tenfold to what we put forth. Learn from each student regardless of circumstance!

I hope you all have a great school year.

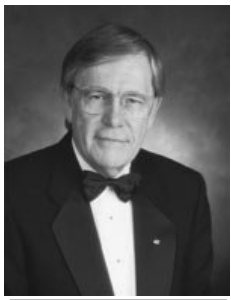
FROM MENTORSHIP TO LIFETIME FRIENDSHIP

My name: Lewis Jones
Mentor's Name: Jeff Bradford
Tallahassee, Florida



I interned with Jeff 46 years ago at Raa Junior High, and he has been a continuous source of encouragement to me ever since. Jeff has more former interns as band directors than any other person in Florida.

The picture was taken at a recent celebration - two old guys still enjoying each other! (Jeff is on the left.)



Richard Crain

Mentoring

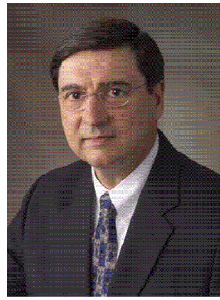
By Richard C. Crain
International
Executive Secretary

If you are an experienced director, be a mentor. If you are an inexperienced director, find a mentor.

When I graduated from Trinity University, I was hired to be

the band director and choir director at Mercedes High School in Mercedes, Texas. I felt unprepared to step into the shoes of a popular director who died in an accident. With much prayer and trepidation, I tackled the task. After our first two UIL concert contests, I was even more concerned and spoke

Continued on Page 3 (Richard Crain)



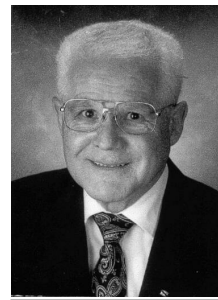
Frank R. Howe

Mentoring After Dark

By Frank R. Howe
Senior Director of
Fine Arts
Polk County (FL)

I have had the good fortune of spending my career in a community of music educators who have made it a point to be supportive and to offer assistance to each other. Many of you have had similar experiences. In fact, many of us want someone to provide input. Often, the problem is that active teachers simply can't take the time to visit another classroom during the school day.

Continued on Page 4 (Frank Howe)



Jack White

Helpful Hints

By Jack W. White
Director of Band Emeritus
Northeast Louisiana
University
Monroe, LA

Check each instrument carefully, especially the woodwinds.

Check playing condition and cleanliness. This should be done 2-3 weeks before festival and every two months in the year.

Regularly, check the condition of all reeds, including reed placement. The proper placement of the single reed can affect the ease of playing, response, and intonation. Old reeds make it impossible to produce a pretty sound.

Continued on Page 5 (Jack White)

Mentor and Friend

By John Mixon

Once in a while, if we are fortunate, we cross paths with a person whom we come to realize has made a profound impact on our personal or professional lives. Such is the case for me and the person I call my mentor and friend, David Willson.

I first met David when I was in ninth grade. Mr. Willson was our student teacher. I can remember that our Director introduced the student teachers that would be working with us and that they would begin by teaching private lessons to the high school students. I was fortunate to be assigned to Mr. Willson and I was not prepared for what was to come. As many of you know, David has quite a personality, and as a young, quiet and reserved freshman, I was in awe, though inspired and eager to do anything that he asked of me. Looking back at this experience after 27 years of teaching, I have a better understanding of the positive impact we can have on a young musician.

After David left to pursue his career, we stayed in touch. As I went through my undergraduate years I called on David for special projects that required a directors insight. He always took the time to send a note with suggestions – always handwritten – usually in pencil, with the penmanship of someone with a sense of urgency. As I began my career he was the person that I contacted with just about every career move.

One year after, I assumed the role as High School Director in Oxford, MS, David accepted the position of Director of Bands at the University of Mississippi, also in Oxford. David was at the HS Band Hall at least 15 times through the school year, listening and observing rehearsals, helping with lesson plans and providing guidance for the various situations that present themselves in a high school setting. I came to count on his advice, and my music selection always had to have his stamp of approval. I never felt comfortable in making the final decision as to what we would perform for concert festival each year, unless Mr. Willson had been by to hear our band.



John Mixon



David Willson

In the passing years, our conversations have been about the trials and rewards of our profession, but David also finds time to help me with car, house and life issues. It seems a strange coincidence that after all the changing of jobs in various cities, we have found ourselves living in the same town - still close friends - and enjoying the wonderful opportunities that life can bring.

A special opportunity included having my daughter in the University of Mississippi Band as Drum Major as well as playing oboe in the University of Mississippi Wind Ensemble. I got such a kick out of David's reactions to what she would say at any moment, usually in front of the band. It says a lot when your kids think of their university director as family.

I was so proud of David when he was elected to the Executive Board of Phi Beta Mu International and now serves as our International President. Yet another proud moment for President Willson was his being selected as the Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher, presented to the Outstanding Faculty Member for the University of Mississippi. I am proud to witness each of these events. I can now congratulate him just as he has always acknowledged my accolades with a thoughtful and timely letter of congratulations.

David has always been diligent in his efforts to "give back" to the profession. To this day, David continues to teach, share and inspire in his efforts to help me find my way. He is the very best a mentor can be. He educates, does not dictate, and allows others to develop their own perspective. What I have learned from David Willson goes beyond music education – it is about selfless generosity. Hopefully we will all learn to share the best of us with each of us.

It is my hope, that as President Willson has asked each of us to continue the idea of mentorship within our ranks, we can continue to encourage those who are in need and further develop the potential impact of our profession.

Thanks David for your time, patience, knowledge and inspiration.

Rehearsal Builds Character! (Thank God!)

Lois Wiggins

Board Member, Phi Beta Mu International

The middle of my first year as a band director in the small town of Greenville, KY found me preparing the Greenville Blackhawk Band for our city's annual Christmas Parade. I called a special practice to prepare for this festive occasion. We spent hours so that we would look fabulous the morning of the parade. The time had come to prepare to turn corners. After a windy verbal dissertation and illustration



Lois Wiggins

of how to turn corners without fanning out, we tried out our technique. The band started around a corner of the parking lot and of course disaster struck. There was a great deal of preaching and gnashing of teeth on my part - how could they not understand a simple marching technique. "Again," I shouted over and over.... We must have spent an hour with little improvement. I called for a

break to regroup (and calm down). At that time the band president (awesome trombonist) approached me very quietly and said "Ms. Wiggins.... there are no turns in the parade." Embarrassed is an understatement. As it turns out the parade was so short I had time to march with the MS band and jog back to the starting point to prepare the high school band for step off! To this day former students - who, I am thrilled to say, are successful directors in Kentucky, give me a hard time about teaching turns for a parade that had none! Oh the lessons we learn by trial and error!

David Willson Honored as Outstanding Teacher

Praised as a mentor, role model and father figure, Band Director David Willson has been honored as the university's top teacher for the year. Willson, professor of music, was presented the 2007 Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award Thursday evening at the university's 64th Honors Day Convocation. The ceremony also included recognition for 43 students who were awarded Marcus Elvis Taylor Memorial Medals, the university's highest academic award. Announcing the teaching award, Chancellor Robert Khayat said, "This year's recipient of the Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award has a passion for teaching and a love for his students. He



David Willson

is one of the most successful music educators this university has ever known."

Khayat said that faculty, staff, students and alumni look forward to the announcement because the award "recognizes excellence in the classroom and sensitivity to students needs." "Each year the selection committee receives a

flood of letters of support for the nominees," he said. "In one letter, a student said 'good teachers change people, but great ones change the world.' I could not say it better." Willson said that receiving the award is both flattering and humbling. "Seeing students achieve their goals motivates me," he said. "I'm humbled and grateful that I have had an opportunity to teach such wonderful students. They've taught me much more than I've taught

them." In one Hood Award nomination letter for Willson, a student commented, "He (Willson) is a mentor, role model, father figure and one of the most successful music educators I have ever known."

Willson, who joined the Ole Miss faculty in 1991, said, "I refuse to let students fail. Our first mission as teachers is to serve students, our second mission is to serve students and our third mission is to serve students - period." The Outstanding Teacher Award has been a tradition at Ole Miss since 1966. In 1988, Mr. and Mrs. Warren A. Hood Sr. of Jackson made a gift to endow the award, and it was named the Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award in Mrs. Hood's honor. In 2000, the Hoods made another gift to support the award so that it will continue in perpetuity.

Richard Crain continued from Page 2

with **Marion Busby**, the director at Weslaco, Texas. He replied by asking me how many times I had invited him to critique or to work with my band. That was the turning point. Though I had a great teacher in **Irving Dreibrodt** at Trinity University, I needed to grow by seeking advice from successful band directors.

Over the next two years, the band improved greatly and made a first division at UIL. Through the years, I was fortunate to direct bands at Lamar JHS in Temple, which ranked third in the state of Texas in the TMEA honor band competition; Belton HS, which ranked in the top ten in Texas each year for 14 years, was invited to the Rose Bowl Parade, and won honors at contests in Texas, Louisiana, and Colorado. I also taught at Spring HS, which was invited to Midwest Clinic in Chicago; and Westfield HS, which won honors at concert contests in Texas and Virginia. During those years, I was blessed to work with numerous assistant directors who contributed greatly to each program.

Through 26 years as a director, I never thought I had "learned it all." I continued to take advantage of the wisdom of successful band directors in Texas. My mentors included **Marian Busby**, **Durward Howard**, **Richard Floyd**, and **Eddie Green**. As the Director of Music for Spring ISD, I worked with a younger directors, from whom I learned a lot. Those directors include **Tom Bennett**, **Charlotte Royall**, **Sharon Kalisek**, **Glo-**

ria Ramirez, **David Brandon**, and **Bill Watson**. There are others who played a less frequent but important role in my career.

When I became a member of Alpha Chapter in 1965, I remember **Dr. Milburn Carey** speaking at meetings about the international fraternity. It was overwhelming to listen to this wonderful man who loved Phi Beta Mu tell us about the meetings at Midwest and about events in the fraternity's early years. In 1976, William "Buddy" Postlethwaite and President Carey asked if I would be the Executive Secretary. After I recovered from shock and prayed about it, I agreed to accept. In 1977, I became International Executive Secretary. Through the next two decades, Dr. Carey was a mentor and friend who helped me tremendously. We depended on Dr. Carey for guidance and inspiration even after he retired. He provided insight into the history of Phi Beta Mu and its influence on music education.

I also tried to mentor younger or less experienced directors. Since my retirement from fulltime education, I have been invited to work as clinician, adjudicator, and consultant in Texas and other states. I have conducted the Houston Police Department Band and later the North Harris County College/Community Band. I am now conducting the church orchestra for Spring Baptist Church, which is musically and spiritually rewarding. We are fortunate to be in a profession that lets us continue contributing to lives and communities for many years.

A Team of Mentors

By Timothy Gunter
Director of Athletic Bands
University of Arkansas

Isn't it amazing what the advancing years do to one's perspective?

More and more, I choose to believe that age is a blessing more than a curse, and that is for many reasons. The older I get, the more clearly I see many things, although some of my colleagues might disagree. Time flies by more quickly every year, but the appreciation for the details of life are magnified by the experiences I am privileged to live every day.

I grew up in Hope, a small town in southwest Arkansas. My high school years were from 1970 to 1974. The modern conveniences of today did not exist - internet, cell



Tim Gunter



Eldon Janzen



Robert Bright

phones, computers, etc. We thought the electric typewriter was the best invention ever. Long distance phone calls were still placed by dialing '0' and talking to an operator. And the gas prices of the early 1970's..... Some of you wouldn't believe it if I told you. Those days are great memories, but the reason they are important is to establish relativity to this article.

I knew from the ninth grade that I wanted to be a band director when I "grew up." I am sure I did not know what that meant, but my high

school director, Gary Wells, set an example that lit my fire. His tireless desire to succeed combined with his gifts to teach and care for his students inspired me every day. He was there when we needed him, no matter what. He taught us after school, before school, at night, and on the weekends, if necessary. He was stern, yet you knew he knew what he was talking about because he produced results. He had the perfect combination of toughness and caring that everyone seeks as a teacher and student. I did not realize then what a special man this was, but I certainly do now. I have been blessed with God-given talent, but the inspiration, nurturing, and care of Gary Wells is a large part

Continued on Page 6 (Tim Gunter)

Frank Howe—continued from Page 2

As I think back over the years, I recall individuals who have been lifetime mentors. They put in a full day and then came to an evening rehearsal to conduct or observe. In some cases they took a day off to help a fellow music educator. Most of us remember that special person who made the difference.

Mentoring, being supportive, or sharing a professional conversation are important parts of who we are. Yet, we shouldn't assume that everyone has this network of support. Most of us know that we are among the most specialized and isolated teachers in our schools. This should heighten our sense of need for collaboration with colleagues in our field. I have always assumed that I can improve what I do with your help. Even if I am doing fine - with your assistance I can do better. The first step is taking the initiative. In many cases a person is willing to assist or lend an impartial ear but feels that he/she might be viewed as pushy. Regardless of the situation, we should be compelled to act. That should include looking for opportunities to mentor as well as staying sharp by seeking input from our colleagues.

A number of years ago, the band directors of Polk County, Florida took action by starting a program called **Band after Dark**. The intent of the program is to encourage experienced and first year teachers to share their teaching techniques. Once each week, the directors attend a typical band rehearsal after hours. No concerts, just a typical class rehearsal. The rehearsals last for an hour, followed by dinner provided by the host band. Then we discuss the rehearsal we observed.

My job was to facilitate the discussion and encourage others to speak freely. The important ingredient is that teachers cannot feel they are being threatened by

their colleagues but are a part of an effort to improve all of the bands in Polk County. Our teachers are able to earn in-service credit for participating. More important than in-service points, teachers are talking about what they do and how they can do their jobs more effectively.

School districts cannot usually send teachers to schools during the school day to observe effective teachers. Typically, districts send a teacher that is in need of remediation to see another teacher teach in a great situation that is totally unrealistic for the teacher in need of learning. We have found the Band after Dark model to be beneficial because it provides a greater opportunity for discussion and improved teaching. In fact, our chorus teachers have started a similar program.

Time is at a premium these days. Our teachers have found that it is important to share what we do and to take time to help each other. Mentoring one on one is great. It is difficult and often not possible. I would encourage you to consider the Band after Dark model. It is enlightening for new and experienced teachers, especially if you sense a need to improve your profession.

Frank R. Howes' varied professional background includes positions as band director, principal of the Harrison School of the Arts in Lakeland, Florida director of magnet, choice and charter schools and currently Senior Director of Fine Arts for Polk County Schools. Mr. Howes' professional affiliations include MENC, FMEA, FBA, FMSA and Phi Beta Mu. He has received recognition from the John Philip Sousa Foundation, earning the Sudler Cup; the National Band Association for the Citation of Excellence award; and Phi Beta Mu as Outstanding Band Director.

Jack White continued from Page 2

Be sure the instruments are thoroughly warmed-up before tuning. The larger the instrument, the longer it will take for it to warm-up. Have the students finger the lowest written notes on their instruments, and blow slow warm air so the entirety of each instrument gets warm.

Have your band practice scales, arpeggios, and other intervals daily. Encourage the students to do likewise at home.

Hear each student play his part. Mark errors and have him play the music correctly at a later date. Assign a time and expect him to be ready. If he is not, continue to hear him up to 1-2 weeks before the festival. At that time, he must play the part to your satisfaction. If he still cannot, alter the part, or leave the part out for that particular player.

Rehearse difficult passages very slowly and correctly in full band, in like instrument families, and in sections. Nothing is too difficult if you practice slowly, correctly, and tirelessly! **“If you can’t play it at some tempo, you’ll never play it any tempo.”**

Choose your music wisely. Be realistic, but challenge the band. Let music preparation improve their musicianship. Be sure to play the arrangement that is best suited to your band (especially transcriptions).

Insist that the students hold their instruments correctly at all times. This makes it easier and more enjoyable to play an instrument. It also looks much better and affects a judge’s opinion.

Insist that the students sit up straight at all times. This improves breathing and the general attitude.

Obtain a reputable recording of the numbers you are performing, especially if you are preparing an orchestral transcription. It would help to get as many recordings as possible to compare styles, tempos, musical effect, etc. Playing such recordings for your band can save many words of explanation.

Invite people you respect to listen to your band. Ask them for comments. Do this early enough to make corrections. Don’t be afraid to ask for “help.”

Be on the lookout for misprints. Don’t assume that everything printed is correct. Check every angle of the problem and use every source in the search for what is “correct.” Encourage your students to ask questions if the part doesn’t sound right. In rehearsal, play parts that sound wrong “louder” so that the problem can be heard, analyzed, and corrected.

Number every measure for quick rehearsal reference. It will save time in rehearsal! Check the students’ numbering with your numbering. Both could have made a mistake. All numbering should be made with pencil so that corrections can be made easily.

Make sure students are always using the best fingerings for each passage. It would serve our bands well if students checked fingering charts at least

twice a year—especially the woodwinds. Check all trills. The rule is to trill up to the next note in the key unless otherwise specified.

Have students release in a uniform manner. It is easy to concentrate on only the beginning of each note. The duration and ending are equally important.

Students should be taught to bring out the moving parts whether melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic.

Encourage the students to be as natural as possible in playing their instruments. Bring the instrument to the body, not the body to the instrument.

Have the students bring their ability up to the level of the music and not the music down to their ability. Both the music and the student lose if we do not consider a faithful presentation of the music to be worth any extra time and effort required.

Try to sight-read in every rehearsal. When sight reading, have students play cues.

Develop a sight reading “procedure” and stick with it. Teach the students what to look for and what *not* to ask during the adjudicated sight reading event.

Make every note a tuning note.

Insist on the students’ best effort at all times.

There are no difficult keys or scales. There are only unfamiliar ones.

The director must know the music so well that he can look at the band more than he looks at the score. It is amazing what you can “see if you look.” It is also amazing what you can hear if you listen.

The director must not sing to himself while the band is playing. When the conductor does this, he will hear his band as he would like for it to be, and not as it actually sounds. Directors who do this can never understand why they get the rating they get. They never really hear their own band.

Taping a rehearsal about two weeks before festival can impress your students with the areas in need of improvement.

Play all of your music all the way through *without stopping* quite a few times before the festival. Many directors never play the program all the way through prior to performance. So the director can’t know if his band has the endurance for the program.

Have the students mark all corrections in the music. Do not allow them to assume they will remember. They won’t! (You might even forget yourself.)

Have the students understand that the *worst* intonation problem is wrong notes.

Have the students sit correctly at all times and encourage them to “look as good as they sound.” Especially, have them place their feet uniformly on each side of the podium. On the conductor’s left, the right foot should be placed in front of the left, and on the right side of the podium, the left foot should be placed in front of the right.

Good luck and best wishes!

Tim Gunter (Continued from Page 4)

of the reason I am in this business 26 years later.

I began to think about college as a junior in high school, but the resources available to decide on a location were much different in those days without the modern conveniences of our era. Unless a student was an exceptional talent in some area, they either chose a college close to home, a college where their parents, attended, or did not attend at all. There are three reasons why I eventually chose to attend the University of Arkansas, and the first of them is not a recommended way to select a college. Here it is: I grew up a Razorback football fan with my Dad.

We would listen to the football games together as much as we could, no matter what we were doing. During my high school career, I had the opportunity to go to one game in Little Rock. That is when I saw the Razorback Band for the first time and my interest really peaked.

I knew nothing about the band program, the director, the university, the music education program - I was a HUGE Razorback fan and I enjoyed the band, so it made sense to me in 1974 at 18 years of age to make the UA my top choice, my only choice. There was great pressure from family and friends to attend a college closer to home for all of the obvious reasons. But my decision was made and only a rejection from the UA would stop me.

During my senior year of high school, I had the opportunity to meet the two men who would help set the course of my future. Eldon Janzen, the band director at the UA, and Robert Bright, the horn (and trumpet) professor at the UA, made a special trip to Hope to see me. That short meeting was one of the highlights of my

young life. As a result, my decision was set in concrete and I felt more assured that I was doing the right thing. As it turns out, I was so right.

Without having done any research or an investigation of the program or the men who ran it, the chances of me finding happiness was 50/50 at best. I was at the UA only because I loved the Razorback football team and was impressed with both the band performance I had seen and the visit from Mr. Janzen and Mr. Bright. What I found in my five years at the UA were two gentlemen who taught me so much about music, about the music education profession, and what hard work was all about. My private lessons with Mr. Bright were often spent dealing with life issues that everyone, particularly freshmen, have to deal with. These gentlemen showed me how to be successful in all phases of life, as much by their example as by their words. They were both ultra-successful men who found the time to mentor me and never seem to tire of me. Quality, first class, leadership, being punctual, how to discipline myself in so many areas, consistency, how to be there for people when they really need me, walking the talk, goal-setting, respect for music, respect for our profession, and respect for others - these are just some of the things these men tried to teach me daily.

The older I get, the more I appreciate what these three master teachers did for me. There will be never be enough words to thank them for what they have meant to my life and thousands of others.

For whatever success has come my way, I attribute the bulk of it to the influence of Gary Wells, Eldon Janzen, and Robert Bright.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

Midwest 2007: Please remember the important meetings at Midwest this December. This will be an especially joyous occasion. Jack White and Eldon Janzen will be honored with induction into the Phi Beta Mu International Hall of Fame. In their honor, many dignitaries will attend the Midwest Phi Beta Mu meetings. Please make every effort to be there so you can be part of the celebration and so that our collective presence shows respect to these two wonderful men. They have done more than we can know to pass this organization down to us.

This issue: One of our profession's most visible mentors is Richard Crain (I), Executive Secretary of Phi Beta Mu International. In this issue, we feature his article concerning many individuals who prepared him to be a band director and the other important roles that he has played for so many years. You will also read one of the most down-to-earth bits of advice I have ever seen. Past President Jack White mentors all of us by sharing his perspective from many years of experience. Those practical words of advice are still relevant and valid today. Then there is a terrific article by Frank Howe, Senior Director of Fine Arts for the Polk County Schools in Florida. Frank has a suggestion that I believe will be implemented by many who read his article entitled **Mentoring After Dark**.

Our mentoring emphasis continues with articles by John Mixon and Tim Gunter. (It is interesting how often the same names show up many times when we talk about mentoring.) And one of my favorite submissions is the picture and the brief note from Lewis Jones. That contribution is on the front page. It suggests the blessings that we can look forward to when we foster mentoring relationships

Please remember to pass this newsletter along to those who do not use email. If you get this in any manner but in your email box, that means that your email address is not accurate on the Phi Beta Mu International website. Your chapter president or your chapter secretary can help you learn how to correct that information.