



ALL-AMERICAN ALUMNI BAND



To inspire and instill a love of music by celebrating our musical gifts.

Greetings from the Mc8

The Mc 8 hopes that this newsletter finds you and yours well. We have continued to work diligently on our post-pandemic plans, because some day we will gather to play music again and we will be ready! We are planning for future gatherings by looking at new venue options as well as smaller group reunions in different regions of the country. We have also continued our contact with the Macy's Parade officials.

We are also focusing on opportunities where we can promote our vision and mission statement through different types of musical activities. Hoping to combine these activities with future events and to maximize the talent in our group. There is something for everyone, even if you no longer play.

Diversity and inclusion has also been a focus in our future endeavors planning. We cannot change the demographics of our alumni, but we can do our best to reach out to all people through our music selections and engagement with different populations to promote music for all. We will have some very exciting news to roll out to you regarding this in the coming weeks so stay tuned!

Throughout the pandemic we have seen all levels of musicians bringing music to the internet and to their communities as a way of spreading light, hope and healing. In this newsletter, we will be focusing on the healing power of music. These alumni are incorporating music in their professional or personal lives to promote the healing of others.

We are hoping to gather very soon to play music together. Until then, be well.

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The Mc8

WORKING WITH SHINE MSD TO HEAL USING THE ARTS

By: Kim Scharnberg 1977 Iowa Trombone and AAAB President

I've been working with the students, families and teachers from Parkland, FL since shortly after the tragedy on Valentine's Day, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School which left 17 dead and 17 injured. Van Dean, the producer of a fundraising concert called *From Broadway With Love*, asked if I would be the supervising orchestrator and help put the show together with my colleagues in the theatre world. He also asked if I'd collaborate with two of the students on the anthem they wrote called *Shine* to expand it and add choir vocals so that it could close the show with everyone joining in. I wish I could say I'm new to this but I was first asked to help by the same producer after the tragedy in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT – about 45 minutes from my home- and then again after the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando in 2016.

My work for the Parkland concert led to more events where they were asked to sing *Shine* including for the Ford's Theatre annual gala for the leaders of our country, the US Open Arthur Ashe Kids' Day, and with the Boston Pops at the Broward Center in Ft. Lauderdale. The blog post on my website – KimScharnberg.com – has much more info, photos and videos more about these concerts and events.

From ShineMSD.org:



Photo by Ian Ebettson

“It is during our darkest moments that we shine the light. Following the tragic mass shooting that took place at Stoneman Douglas High School, the world came to know the students of this high school were a bit different. Some jumped to action in the political arena. Others turned their efforts toward the arts. Many from both sides had significant roots in the drama department at Stoneman Douglas High School.

Two of those drama students, Sawyer Garrity and Andrea Peña, channeled their pain and anger into writing an original song called *Shine* days after the tragedy. What started as a personal healing journey quickly grew into an anthem met with an overwhelming response from Parkland and those who saw them perform at the CNN town hall on February 21, 2018. Sawyer, Andrea, their families and friends realized the power of healing through

artistic expression, and the positive impact the arts has in inspiring hope and unity in the aftermath of tragedy.

With that in mind, Shine MSD was born to raise relief funds for victims and their families and provide mental health programs centered around the arts at Stoneman Douglas High School and Parkland. We anticipate the healing and mental health needs in our community to be a continuous, ongoing effort with the potential to expand the scope of our work to other individuals and communities in need around the world.”

When the pandemic shut the world down Shine MSD wanted to continue their programs and offer new options that were less therapy oriented but still relevant to their mission. They asked if I'd be interested in teaching a songwriting and music production class and at first I declined but then reconsidered provided I could include my son, Will, to work with me. He's based in LA, is a wonderful, modern music producer and is closer to the student's age so it seemed like a good idea. In June 2020 we started our first workshop ([Shine Summer 2020 Songwriting Workshop - YouTube](#)) and we'll start our fifth workshop in April! We also have had a board certified music therapist joining us for each of the 8-10 weekly sessions. These classes are offered free of charge and the students write songs and lyrics, sometimes for the very first time, and often collaborate with others. Professional sounding demos are produced by Will using their vocals and piano or guitar sent in the form of voice memos or GarageBand files. The last step is a video editor creating lyric videos- here are four examples:

["Bring me you" by Juliana Matamoros, Abril Linares Mendoza, and Michael Matthews - YouTube](#)

["Please let me go" by Gabby Jamila - YouTube](#)

["Devil You Know" by Emma Folmer - YouTube](#)

["Fake" by Micky - YouTube](#)

We're having fun and able to explore how music let's us express our feelings. To see the joy and peer support every step of the way is the best!



Healing Music for the Musician.....It Is a Family Thing

By Kim Townsend 1982 New Mexico Piccolo


By now, you've been a musician for a long time, right? Perhaps you started playing in junior high band? Or, maybe it's just *always* been a part of you. Can you even remember a time when you were **not** a musician? For some, music and memories feel as essential to their well-being as having a heart... or liver.

Now, imagine for just a moment that one day while you were taking an afternoon nap, a wicked thief snuck in, saw you snoozing, stealthily used a combination lock to chain your arms firmly to your sides, and (when you awoke) they promptly forgot the combination and you were s-t-u-c-k. In other words, consider abruptly losing the ability to use your arms/hands. *Forever*. All of a sudden, you'd be dependent on others to give you a drink, scratch an itch, feed you, tie your shoes, change the channel, wipe your nose (or your bottom)... and so much more. They'd have to do virtually *everything* for you. However, they would never, **ever** be able to play your instrument 'for' you, as that ability would now be gone. Oh, sure, you could think about it... maybe even sing/hum along to all those familiar songs you used to perform, but to physically move your arms and hands to *actually play* your instrument would become an instant impossibility.

I don't know about you, but just the mere thought of it makes me heartsick... and the very mention of never playing one (or all) of my eleventeen-plus instruments again creates an anxiousness in my soul. I can't fathom the magnitude – or impact – of such a tremendous and unexpected loss. However, that's exactly what happened to my brother.

My only sibling, Clint (or, as I affectionately call him: Pig), was diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis – a.k.a. 'Lou Gehrig's Disease') right about fifteen years ago. In case you're not familiar with this heinously evil, nightmarish neuro-muscular dis-





ease, let me summarize. In short, it's as if a 'bridge' is out on the road between your brain and your muscles. Despite tremendous effort, you lose the ability to move your muscles at will. So, you can *think* about moving your arm to reach for your trumpet, but that's about all you can do. Your brain is sending the message to raise your arm and hand, but the message isn't actually reaching its destination. As a result, your muscles just sit there... waiting for the stimulus to move that will never come again.

Then, as if that wasn't bad enough (and, by golly, shouldn't it be?), add to it that this disease is also terminal. The 'average' life expectancy is 2-5 years post-diagnosis, because (eventually) even the muscles of the diaphragm are affected and they, too, will simply stop working at some point. There are many folks who pass much, *much* too quickly (as in mere weeks or months after diagnosis), while others (like my brother or Stephen Hawking) who somehow manage to live for a decade - or more. We are thankful to God that my brother is still here, still talking, still eating (ironically, like a Pig – ha), and still enjoying life... albeit with a new 'normal'. Mind you, he's now had a tracheostomy and is on a ventilator full-time, but despite all the obvious hardships, he absolutely makes the most of his horrific medical situation to live a life *well lived*. Each and every day he literally wakes up with a smile on his face. True story.

Clint has always, *always* had an abundance of energy. Just ask our Mom. She says he was doing gymnastics inside her long before he made his public debut and, once unleashed on the world, he n-e-v-e-r slowed down... and has been (what I call) a 'spaz' his entire life. He's always been moving, jumping, climbing, running, adventuring and so much more! The most annoying thing (to me) was that he was always beating on something: the backs of chairs, tables, boxes, pots, pans, countertops, etc. Once he reached junior highish age, he finally channeled all that energy by joining the band – where he chose to play (you guessed it): coronet. Apparently that didn't keep him active enough, so he decided to change instruments and opted to play (say it with me now): baritone. But, as luck would have it, that endured but only a year or two, and at long last he moved on to something that better suited him: Choir. Ha!

Okay, okay. By now, it's obvious that my brother eventually landed right where he should have been all along. He became a drummer! Sure, initially he was required to bide his time reading music, counting rests, occasionally bashing cymbals together, and marching with a snare around his neck like all drummers do. However, his *real* passion – the thing that made him come alive – was to play the 'trap set'. It was there that all his pent-up energy could be expended, his creativity flourished, and (it turns out) he was a natural octopus – as in, his arms seemed to be everywhere at the same time! I mean, he was *good*! Side note: I have synesthesia (which literally means 'crossing of the senses'); and am blessed to be able to 'see' sound. To my brain, ALL sound has color, shape, texture to it: voices, car doors, dogs barking, and (of course) music. Strange, but true. While Clint doesn't have synesthesia, he can, however, listen to a complicated piece of music, discern each and every subtle nuance of the percussion part(s), and then replicate every beat/sound... sans sheet music! From the get-go, his raw, God-given talent was unbelievable and jaw

-dropping; and to hear him flawlessly play along with a song from a CD player was both shocking and thrilling... and I'm not talking about something cheesy and simple, like "Muskrat Love" or "The Hokey-Pokey". No, no no. Clint was drawn to rock music (of course... he's a *drummer*, after all), and the more complicated the percussion part, the more determined he was to learn it – note by challenging note. Any song he set his sights, er... his *ears* to, he not only could figure it out, but absolutely aced it in the process; and his play-backs were spot-on, no matter how hard the tune. One of his grandest accomplishments was 'decoding' the song "YYZ" by his all-time favorite band, RUSH. Neil Peart (who recently passed away) was Clint's drum idol, and deservedly so. If you've never heard it before, do a Google search for 'neil peart drum solo yyz'. Then, hold onto your socks... or they'll be knocked off your feet! My brother could play right along with that video (or CD) and never miss a note. Period. I'm telling you he was a *fantastic* drummer! He was just born with this innate talent and we were thrilled when he put God's gifts to good use (not to mention that he burned up some of that energy and stopped drumming on the furniture... or us)!

All of that is to say: When Clint was diagnosed with ALS, his muscles hit the brakes... but his brain is still in full 'GO!' mode. That's why (I think) this gruesome disease is so unbelievably cruel; a person's mind remains completely functional, intelligent and intact, while fully/painfully aware that the muscles in their body are no longer communicating or cooperating. So, even though my brother can't move his arms and hands independently, he continues to *think like a drummer*. As I said before, can you just *imagine*... ?!!

Our Mom and I share in caring for my brother full-time. As such, and as a fellow musician and sister, it has pained me to see my spaz-o brother *so still* for so long. It's the antithesis of the Tazmanian Devil-like brother I've always known! So, over the years, I've tried doing some little things throughout our day-to-day living in an effort to help him maintain his love for – and enjoyment – of music. Mind you, I'm not an 'official' music therapist (though I play one on TV – ha)... but figured that if it was me lying in that bed or sitting in that power chair, I'd want someone to do these things *for me*. *Do unto others...* right?!



As earlier stated, my brother played several instruments (as do I) and, as a result, we share a fairly eclectic taste in music. When doing his morning breathing treatments, I'll typically turn on the TV to one of the Sirius XM radio channels. On any given day, we may listen to the classical music channel, tunes from the 30s or 40s, classic rock, gospel, show tunes, Spanish/latino/Mexican music, the Sinatra channel... pretty much anything but hip-hop or rap (sorry, y'all... can't do it. It *really* messes with my synesthesia). Oftentimes, when a particularly meaningful song comes on (especially one he used to play, loved to sing, or reminds us of when we were younger), I'll crank up the volume – **loud!** He grins from ear-to-ear and moves his head from side-to-side along with it. Sometimes, it will jar a million emotions, memo-

ries, and wonderful feelings in him... to the point that they just well up inside him and he bursts into tears. Happy ones, but tears, nonetheless. I'll go to the foot of the bed and press my hands onto the bottoms of his feet and ask him to push against them as though he's doing the kick-bass or high-hat pedal. He does pretty darn well, considering the position he's in (laying on a mattress)! When certain heavy percussion-driven songs come on - or one that features a famous 'riff' or solo - I can't help but to pat the tempo on his chest, playing the eighth-notes on his belly, using his arms for the high-hat, tapping his legs for the accents, etc. For example:

- * the famous drum solo section of John Mellencamp's "Jack and Diane"
- * "Long Time" by Boston
- * "Don't Stop Me Now" by Queen
- * Tommy Dorsey's "Hawaiian War Chant"
- * RUSH's "Spirit of Radio"
- * Journey's "Don't Stop Believing"
- * "Let There Be Drums" by Sandy Nelson
- * Van Halen's "Dream"

... and SO many more! When "We Will Rock You" (by Queen) comes on, I'll pick up his forearms while simultaneously supporting his hands, and then move him in time as if HE was drumming to that well-known rhythm: bom-bom BOM... bom-bom BOM Who can resist?!

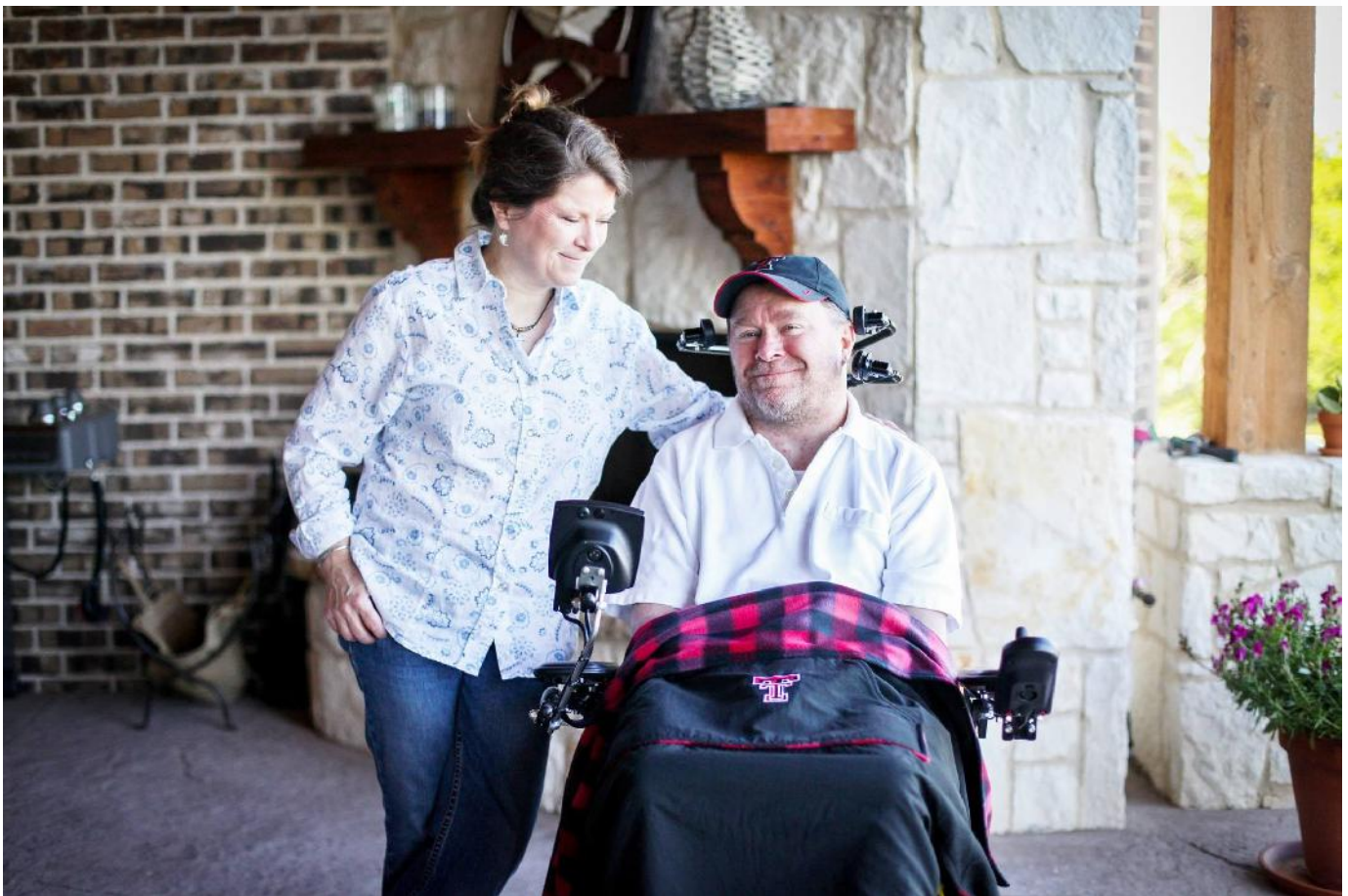
Other times, when I have him up in the air via our Hoyer lift, I'll 'play' drums on his hiney with little pat-a-pats in tempo to whatever we're listening to! Poor Pig. He's sitting there swaddled in a sling, five feet in the air, wearing only his panties and a smile... while I'm swinging him in rhythm to the tunes, or moving his legs in time with the kick-bass drum, or having him do "air choreography" while lifting his feet and legs to make him 'dance'! He must enjoy it, because he hasn't kicked me (yet)!

Whether we're running errands in the van, or I'm giving him his semi-quarterly shower (ha), we always listen to music of some sort. If I have to make a quick stop at a store, he usually wants to stay in the van and listen to 'his' music (a.k.a. stuff I'm not especially fond of... like, RUSH, Dream Theatre, etc.). I turn up the volume to the level HE wants, and run into the store for a couple of minutes. I've never asked, but am relatively sure that he enjoys those precious few moments of privacy and loud rock 'n roll. I mean, he IS still a guy and a drummer, after all. In the roll-in shower, I'll set up the CD player or my phone where it won't get wet, then crank up the volume so we can hear it over the water. Last night, we listened to the "Nacho Libre" soundtrack; last week it was Boston, and the week before it was the Beatles' "LOVE" CD. As those familiar tunes come on, sometimes he laughs, sometimes he cries, and sometimes he lip-syncs along with the words... or makes goofy faces as though really getting into the groove - ha! As you might imagine, there are some songs that he just can't handle listening to very frequently. Those special tunes that touch his heart, move him to torrents of tears and evoke deep emotional response are only heard sparingly. They're just too much for him... A good example of this would be Mannheim Steamroller's "Nepenthe" or "Remember" by Harry Nilsson. (Warning: Get a tissue.)

In a way, these simple means of keeping my brother's love for music alive may not seem like much of a big deal to an educated, clinical music therapist. But, given that he's *still* a musician (and drummer, at that) who just so happens to be unable to move his body, I can't help but believe that these little day-to-day musical encounters help to keep my courageous brother's spirits up, his mind, memories and body stimulated, and - if nothing else - they give him great happiness. Anything we can do to make his situa-

tion more bearable, fun, and will bring him joy and comfort... I'm in; and I know he'd do the same for me, if the situation were reversed. Though I wish he didn't have ALS, nonetheless it's an honor and privilege to care for him – and I wouldn't have it any other way (aside from being restored to good health, of course). After all, like the song says,

“He ain't heavy.... he's my brother.”



The Roads We Take to Healing by Donna Bowers Bennett 1980 Delaware Clarinet/Alto Sax

Over the last year, I have worked with my siblings to clear out our childhood home for sale. While going through some of my mother's things I found all the letters I had written her in college. Most of the letters were goofy college kid's stuff, but there was one where I tried to justify to my mother not being a Music Major. The reasons why are another story, but in that moment I made a decision. I wasn't doing it, period. My mother tried to talk me in to being a Music Therapist, nope not happening. Through the years she continued to push music as I went through different careers finally becoming a Clinical Social Worker now working in private practice.



I didn't play music for several years, but did find my way back through my local community band. One of my jobs was Clinical Director of an agency serving children with mental illness. I was tasked with overseeing nine different programs. During this time, I determined I had too much stress in my life and needed something different to think about other than work. I decided to learn how to play the harp. Mom, ever vigilant in her mission, sent me an article about a harp player playing therapeutic music in a NICU for preemie babies. My response was, "Seriously, this is a thing? And you can get paid to do it?" Career change jumped into my mind. I enrolled in the [Music for Healing and Transition Program](#) and became a Certified Music Practitioner. During the beginning of my internship, I was able to play my harp for twin preemies in the NICU at Mercy Hospital in Baltimore. Watching the stabilization of their heart rates on the monitors in response to the music I was playing, and watching them calmly snuggle down into their beds was extremely rewarding. The power of the music was amazing.

As a Certified Music Practitioner, I play prescriptive music for people who are ill or dying. The music played is designed to support the patient's physical condition, to stabilize heart rates, reduce pain, support memory or ease their transition into death. I have played for dementia patients, for cancer patients in an infusion center and for some who were actively dying. Being present at the moment of a person's death providing music to reduce anxiety, facilitate breathing and provide comfort is a true honor.



I have brought this training into my private practice as well. My office is home to two sets of keyboards, 1-4 harps depending on the day, a tongue drum, rice shakers, a drum that makes ocean sounds, rain sticks and a thunder tube. I frequently bring instruments from home, so the selections can change from day to day. Kids are able to play any of these and we use them to tell stories and explore emotions. "What does sad sound like?" Sometimes clients ask me to play for them as part of their session. Often I suggest different types of music they can play to on their CD players, iTunes etc... to support their clinical goals. My favorite experiment is observing the effect of Gregorian Chant on people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It is amazing to watch you can

see the immediate release of pent up energy and their ability to focus increase.

Since kids know that I play music, they will bring their instruments to sessions for me to help them learn their music for school. We sit side by side working on their weekly tune, which is also an awesome way to do clinical work. Using music as a method of enhancing self-esteem, learning, and socialization has dramatically improved the clinical outcomes for the children. A little one on one time with their instrument also helps them do better in band thus raising their self-esteem and reducing their frustration. Sometimes we play duets, which can be a wonderful opportunity for these kids who often struggle with interpersonal relationships. They learn to listen and work cooperatively to play the tune. A skill that hopefully translates to other areas of their lives.

I was really hooked with using music in therapy and wanted to expand on its benefits. As a result, I completed a Post Graduate Certificate in the Application of the Expressive Arts through Salve Regina University in Rhode Island. Now we add music to other modalities, such as art, movement and writing as a means of addressing mental health and facilitating strategies to manage symptoms. All these modalities can be very effective tools when words are just inadequate.



I threw all my college letters away, except one; the one where I was justifying my not being a Music Major to my mother. I brought it home and read it several times over and tucked it away. But I spent time contemplating, looking back on the roads I took to get to where I am today. Back then, I was being obstinate and stubborn I readily admit. (I have since told my mother she was right and I was wrong, just for the record.) But maybe I needed to make that decision to be on the road I am today, using music for healing. We have all seen over the past year especially that music is powerful and can heal on so many levels. Let's help it continue to grow and I am honored to be a part of it.

On the following page is a piece I wrote a couple years ago that I feel demonstrates the power of using music clinically and the legacy that we as musicians have to pass on to the future generations of musicians. I would add that we must not just reach out to the obvious ones who can sit politely though band class, but also reach out to those who may struggle; because I have seen true genius in these children and they may be the ones to benefit most of all.

My Father's Trumpet

I have a young boy diagnosed with severe ADHD that I've seen in therapy for quite a while. He wants to play an instrument next year in school. He asked last week. "Miss. Donna, do you have a trumpet?" My reply, "Well yes I do." (I pretty much have the whole band.) "Miss Donna, would you bring it in next time." "Yes, I can do that." He then asked if I have a saxophone, because he wasn't quite sure what he wanted to play. Well, yes, I have one of those too. So today, both went to my office.

He politely asked to try the saxophone first, and patiently waited as I put it together. He asked great questions and followed directions about hand placement and focused on how to get his mouth right. Unfortunately, he struggled getting a note out of it. He asked, "May I try the trumpet now?" And we repeated the same thoughtful process. He blew in the horn and sound came out. "Miss Donna, I'm not very good at this," he said. And we had a talk about how everyone starts at the beginning making just the sound he did. That every person who had played that trumpet sounded just like him at the beginning. We talked about being kind to ourselves when we have big expectations and that we should not expect perfection when we are trying something new. He asked if my trumpet was old, because it looked scratched up and kind of rusty in places where the lacquer has worn away. "Yes, it's pretty old," I said.

I thought of my father, who got the trumpet used and taught himself to play after he broke his leg falling off his bike while on his paper route. He went on to play that trumpet, solemnly performing taps at funerals for WW II soldiers. He also played at the county victory celebration when the war was over. He went on to play in THE Ohio State Marching Band.

My brother played that trumpet through middle school and most of high school, till he got a fancy new one.

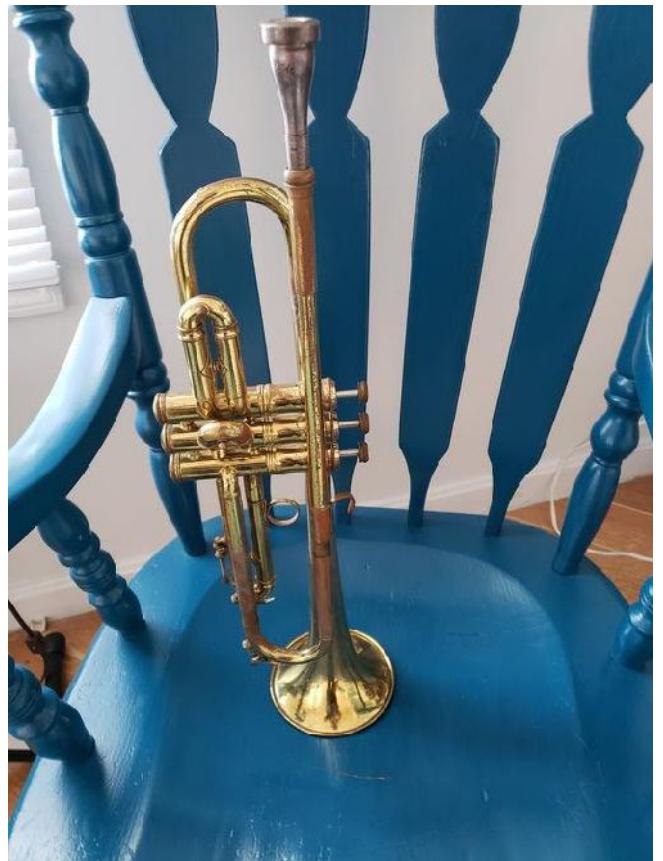
I played that trumpet in college taking trumpet lessons and then playing it in the marching band my senior year.

Another child diagnosed with ADHD, my son, learned to play on that trumpet. The trumpet was his second instrument. The school was hoping playing two instruments would help him overcome a far point copying learning disability.

The trumpet has played in countless concerts, at funerals and celebrations, at the inaugurations of Presidents, and on the 50 yard line of the Astrodome.

The trumpet has inspired 3 generations of one family. Today, it inspired someone new. Scratched, and with sticky valves, it sang again.

A little boy with dreams of playing music was able to focus, be patient, communicate, and use his social skills. This is the power of music.....and I imagine that first little boy from almost 80 years ago is smiling.



STRIKE UP THE BAND! By Charles Ebeling

Wedged beside several of the shivering 17-year old musicians I was chaperoning, and while peering down at Manhattan from November's windswept observation deck atop the World Trade Center, I heard someone behind me say "Check with Chuck." I instinctively reached down into the briefcase between my feet and pulled out the day's itinerary. "Who goes down the elevator first, the red, blue or white bus group?" Somehow, this wasn't feeling like the life of a high-powered public relations executive.



But it was. I'd learned the expression, "Whatever it takes," in Army Officer's Candidate School five years before. Now, buried in another of the endless details of one of the more logistically complex public relations initiatives in the world of corporate branding, I was thinking ahead to the next day's meeting with the NBC executives at another famous tower, Rockefeller Center. The cost of this logistical battleship – approaching a million dollars a year -- would substantially be offset by the value of the network airtime we could optimize in that meeting, for our band's televised march-by performance in this week's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

A handful of us from the account staff of Cooper and Golin Public Relations in Chicago, were here in New York City to manage the most complex PR project of our largest client, The program was called The McDonald's All-American High School Band. Students across America were nominated by their high school band directors, and through a Byzantine process, the best in each instrument category would be selected to appear in this classic Thanksgiving morning telecast. I had joined the firm just a few months before, and one of my first assignments was to supervise this whole thing, from planning to parade to the payoff – great publicity for McDonald's and their local restaurants across the country, and a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the Band members.

My only experience with parades had been in shaping up and leading an honor guard as a young lieutenant at a graduation ceremony at the Army War College, and my only experience with music had been in cueing the bugler when to play taps at military funerals at the Gettysburg National Cemetery. Now my mission was vastly less somber, I'd been promoted to a higher pay grade in the civilian workforce, and the audience had multiplied by millions.

But while everyone checked with me on what and when to do things, it also seemed to me that almost everyone was my boss.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Remembering Dennis AsKew ,Tuba player from the 1981 band. Dennis was the director of UNCG's School of Music., where he had worked since 1982. He was an accomplished performer having played in concerts around the world. He served on the Boards of the Greensboro NC Symphony Orchestra and the Eastern Music Festival. Our thoughts are with his family , friends and colleagues.

[UNCG School of Music director dies unexpectedly | Education | journalnow.com](https://www.journalnow.com/news/uncg-school-of-music-director-dies-unexpectedly)