



ALL-AMERICAN ALUMNI BAND



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

Letter from the President

As we close out 2020 and look to the future, I want to thank all of you who participated in this year's AAAB events and communications.

The virtual Labor Day reunion was truly amazing and it certainly couldn't have been pulled off without the Mc8's hard work! Thanks again to featured performers Wycliffe Gordon, Deborah Yates and Larry Munoz and our guests April Brumfield, Karen Golin, Pat Healey Sproul, Chuck Ebeling, Bob Curnow, Wesley Whatley, Lindsey Sarjeant, Dr. Julian White and to all who played for the *Centennial March* video!

I'm excited and hopeful this newsletter will help expand our reach to the more than 2500 alumni. Watch for additional details on the newsletter, as we are planning regular publications with exciting content about our alumni and the future plans of the AAAB. I look forward to getting together again soon, making music and sharing our love and passion for the arts!

Until then, here's a little tune I arranged several years ago for your holiday enjoyment: [Let It Snow \(In the Jungle\) - YouTube](#)

Happy Holidays to All!!!!

Kim Scharnberg '77 Iowa Trombone

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Greetings from Karen Golin

Happy Holidays to everyone!

I know the first 10 bands (1967—1976) will probably remember me and my family. But I don't know if you have any idea how much the band meant to me. I can't watch a Macy's Parade without shedding tears of fond memories being in it with you. The first year my brother Barry and I rode a float with the band The Happenings. That year was the worst weather I remember. They had painted the float with water color paint the day before and it was a cold rain during the parade. Barry and I were covered in paint by the end of the 3 mile parade! From then on with the exception of 1 year, I carried the left side of the banner. Memories swirl from watching you all rehearse, checking you into meals and busses, going to Radio City Music Hall and then going to dinner at friends who's wife was French for traditional beef bourguignon!

Then starting the second year, we started going to the Tournament of Roses Parade. They didn't repeat bands but Dad convinced them that technically there were no repeats of musicians, that it was a new band every year.

The band was one of the accomplishments that my dad was most proud of in his career. He knew how much I missed the band and he regretted that it ended. It was such a wonderful support of the arts and musicians. At his memorial service, the CEO of McDonalds said he was doing two things in Dad's honor. When he didn't say the band was coming back, I went up to him afterwards and told him if he really wanted to honor my dad that he would bring the band back. YES, I said it!

It warms my heart to know that many of you are still in touch and I plan on doing my part to help find others -- I start my break Thursday and will use every source I know to locate more members. I am in touch with Paul LaValle's daughter and hope she's interested too.

Meanwhile, play on everyone!

Karen Golin

(Karen is the daughter of Al Golin, of Golin Communications whose PR firm created and implemented the activities of the McDonald's All-American High School Band.)

Here's a wee holiday wish from Pat Healey

What a year it has been — filled with unprecedented challenges and the need to adapt to life in the new normal. But a highlight of this most unusual year has been reconnecting with so many All-American Band alumni. The energy, enthusiasm and good will of those who have come together to again perform is an inspiration, and a bright spot for which to focus the future. When I watched this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade so many memories came flooding back, triggered I'm sure by our Zoom call in September. What a joy to rediscover such a remarkable group of people.

My warmest wishes for a beautiful holiday and a new year that brings joy, good health, new adventures and love. I hope '21 will bring us all together again.

Warm Regards,

Pat Healey



Greetings from Bob Curnow

I wish for a happy and healthy holiday season for all of us.

This year has brought many blessings to me, in spite of what has and is happening. Many of those blessing were already there, ready to be discovered. But some of them are brand new and shiny.

I hope that all of us have found new blessings, old and new. That's what my wish is for everyone.

I miss you all,

Bob Curnow

Director of the McDonald's All-American High School Jazz Band 1981-1989

Teaching During COVID-19



There are dates in the lives of everyone that are indelible. February 24, 2020 will always and forever be a date that will remain in my mind. A Monday in February is not supposed to be the final teaching day in a high school music classroom. The announcement came via group text message around 8 pm, from my boss, the principal of the US Army's "Humphreys High School" situated on the large US Army Garrison near Seoul, South Korea. Having taught music on US military installations overseas since 1992, we are prepared through training, for many contingencies but this, unprecedented (a word that would become overused during the rest of 2020 because, well, it really is at least to this living generation) situation came about with little warning, planning, or forethought.

Sure, I had been following the news of the Novel (new) virus that was wreaking havoc in China. But c'mon how bad could it really be for the rest of us ? Oh if we could just turn back the clock with the knowledge we now possess, and demand our leaders throughout the world take heed. . . . but I digress

For me and the rest of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) teachers at Camp Humphreys (there are 2 large elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school of around 700) we would spend the rest of that week waiting, wondering, and speculating on how long we would be "out of school." By the end of the week we were instructed to report one day to sign out and pick up individually assigned laptops to begin "Remote Learning/Teaching" though there were many terms for it at first containing words like "virtual" and "from-home." Turns out, we would only report back to school for 4 days in June, and only to accept materials from each class of high school students to remain "quarantined" in separate rooms and areas of the school to ensure no trace of possible virus would be transmitted to others.

For me and many of my "veteran" colleagues the concept of delivering all our instruction via a laptop to students scattered among the community (and eventually worldwide) was unacceptable and caused some to decide the time to retire had arrived. My "magic date" was only months away, so I decided to "hang in there" and do my best, and wait it out until I could sign that paperwork allowing me the lifelong pension I had worked 29 years for . . . and so it began.

Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

I had spent the vast majority of my career as a Band Director, as well as conducting orchestras and choirs, teaching elementary school general music, theory, appreciation, as well as a bit of classroom guitar and piano. This particular year, I was teaching 2 sections of class piano, 2 sections of Beginning Guitar, (neither of these is my forte) and directing the Jazz Band. My colleague had the rest of the high school music department's teaching responsibilities. The first couple weeks were a mix of chaos, apathy, denial, big plans, frustration, anticipation, and challenge. Some kids never showed up for our assigned class times on Google Meet using Google Classroom. Some were eager and excited. (not many) And most just went along with what would start to be referred to as "the new normal." I shared all emotions from one end of the spectrum to the other, I'm pretty sure, though I made every attempt to appear excited, understanding, empathetic, and encouraging to all my students while realizing I was working almost twice as many hours as previously expected teaching at school in the newly termed "Brick and Mortar" setting.

As days turned to weeks, months, quarters, and semesters we would get conflicting guidance, instruction, mandates, schedules, and decisions from our school, district, and agency administrations. We were on the frontier of the Wild West of virtual instruction since the virus, reported to have emanated from China, was recognized on Korea's soil long before it became a reality for European and American communities. Our district, literally, was setting policies and coining phrases that would ripple throughout the Western world's media and educational discourse.

So from February until June, I managed, facilitated, encouraged, and assessed my five classes a day in group instruction as well as individual "lessons" learning new skills, improving abilities, and trying to keep music class FUN. My hope and plan was that one day we/they would be meeting in ensembles, performing for audiences, and sharing the music that only one who HAS SHARED THE MUSIC can understand. Considering how we all were thrown into this environment, I proudly state that I believe my students and I were successful. I credit the students themselves as well as their families and our community in general for embracing the challenge. What I didn't expect was how transformative this experience would be for me, and my own personal philosophy on the music teacher's importance in this society under these circumstances. My whole life and career being largely based on ensemble performance and group achievement through the music artform, I had neglected, apparently, the INDIVIDUAL importance of music in each person's life and psyche. Through assignments initially designed to take the place of actual music making, I was getting to know students individually, reading and hearing their thoughts and feelings and hopes and worries, their anxiety, their fear. I was making better, closer, more meaningful individual relationships with my students through a laptop screen balanced between a piano, a drum set, some guitars, concert band instruments and music stands in my basement than I had previously from the podium of the music room at

Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

school.

“It took a pandemic” . . I have restated several times since, to achieve<insert positive attribute here>

Along came the end of August and numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in Korea had remained just dangerous enough for the country’s government and our military leaders to determine just days before the first day of the new school year that we would begin the year in “Remote Learning.” Of course, like everywhere, there are varying opinions on the severity of the virus, the need to follow now-well-known mitigating measures and whether “normal” activities should be curtailed or cancelled and, “Which is worse, the problem or the cure?” Nevertheless, we would do our part to simultaneously aid in the cause to slow/stop the spread of the silent virus and attempt to fulfill our responsibility as educators in our community’s schools.

The first 6 weeks of the new school year began with Remote Learning, and my schedule had shifted just a bit to include Beginning Band, three piano classes and one guitar class. Turns out I only had 5 returning students that I already knew from the previous year. Having shared the experience of Remote Learning for almost half of the previous year, everybody was better at it now. Not ideal, but from students to parents, administrators to teachers, there had been lessons-learned and expectations were adjusted. The opportunity to reach students craving an aesthetic experience, while infusing my life-long passion for music and sharing music and making music and appreciating everything that goes into the performance of music . . . while challenging through the medium of a laptop computer, is something that I realized was a special opportunity and one that I accepted with enthusiasm instead of trepidation. Forming individual interpersonal relationships with my new high school students during this year has been a rewarding and emotional experience. “We’re all in this together” is a phrase which can be associated with several endeavors but none, I believe, any more relevant than the worldwide pandemic we are in the midst of now.

From October 5 until December 18 my classes and the school district I work for have been meeting in school, Brick-and-Mortar, with many measures being taken from hand sanitizing stations at every door, increased physical distancing of students in each classroom, mandatory mask wearing, and plexiglass portable barriers being carried from class to class by the students. While some may consider the measures overkill, our community has managed to remain relatively COVID-19-free, and no cluster outbreak has occurred. The concerning increase of positive COVID-19 diagnoses country wide though, from single digits months ago to hovering just above a thousand a day lately, has resulted in much stricter social measures being imposed the past three weeks in Korea which will inevitably impact on the decision whether or not to resume Remote Learning when we return to school January 4. As of the writing of this article, 659 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 in this country of 52 million since the outbreak, compared to 315 thousand in the United States.

Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

For me personally, living in South Korea and teaching music on the US Army Post here at this time in our history has been a blessing. I have learned much about humanity, the world, my place in it, and our impact on each other while following worldwide news during the duration of year 2020. My family and friends are spread throughout the globe and following events through various media on how people have been acting and thinking during this year has made me appreciate my vocation, my relationships and my life to a greater extent. While optimistically being a “glass half full” kind of person my whole life, I am now more than ever optimistic about how the challenges and achievements of this past year will have positive impacts on my students long term. I look forward to embracing the upcoming challenges and obstacles while celebrating the future as the world adjusts to a post-pandemic normalcy.

Written by Scott Rumery, 1980 McDonald’s All American High School Band trombonist from Maine who went on to attend Northwestern University, graduating with a BME in 1985 after being selected as an All-American College Marching Band member in 1984. He performed for 4 years as a bandsman in the US Air Force Bands and continued as a military reservist, retiring in 2015 while simultaneously teaching music from 1989 to the present. He holds a Master of Music Degree in Conducting from the University of Missouri (1992) and is ABD (All But Dissertation) from the University of Northern Colorado studying Music Theory and Composition with an emphasis in Jazz Pedagogy.

Happy Holidays to all the All-American Alumni.
May the joy of music fill this special time.

See you in 2021 when we can celebrate together.

Deborah Yates

Colorado

1978/79

Flute / Piccolo

Guest Artist



Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

Getting Creative To Keep Our Students Playing.....

My private lessons and our school district have been 100% remote since March 13th. Private lessons on FaceTime do work for percussion better than most other instruments, intonation not being as critical. In September I started in-person, socially distanced masked quartets using my garage and driveway. One hour sessions with an airing out break between each group. I am up to 3 sessions on Sunday afternoons, but am on hold as of mid-November with the state of Michigan ramping up our lockdown. I hope to restart right after Christmas. I am adding a large propane heater to the space and my students parents are as excited about the 'Driveway Drums' as the students are. Whatever it takes to have in-person music!

Yours Percussively,
Pete Goodman '74
Michigan

Check out the whole set-up here!

[Pete's Whole Percussion Set-up](#)



Season's Greetings from Larry Munoz

Larry was a Guest Artist for our Labor Day Reunion.

1985

Nevada

Alto Sax



TEACHING DURING COVID-19– cont.

My name is Donna O'Bryant and I am a proud alumna of the The McDonald's All American HS Band. In 1980 I was one of two clarinetists from the state of New Mexico. I went to college in Texas and became a Texas Band Director. I have taught band since 1986 and honestly, this year is like no other. I choose to remain positive, but it takes a lot of steady resolve and some change in perspective to teach this year.

In Texas, the University Interscholastic League or (UIL), is in charge of all athletic and fine arts competitions. It is required to go to UIL: each fall and spring for high school and each spring for middle/junior high schools. The standards and adjudication are very stringent, and the sight-reading part of the competition is very difficult; therefore, we begin preparing as beginners for middle school UIL Sight Reading. I teach my face off daily, creating strong rhythmic and music readers. With the 7th/8th grade top group we do snippets of sight reading each day, so that is second nature by the real date. It is very strategically planned, and I go to great lengths to make sure that comprehension is second nature and confidence is high. We get 8 minutes in the sight-reading room to explain the piece. The piece is written for each class of school. In Texas you are classed by population. Single C is smallest and CCC (triple C) is the highest population. The CCC piece is major difficult. You get 8 minutes to explain the piece and the first 5 minutes the conductor is not allowed to count anything or sing any rhythmic patterns etc. After the 5 minutes then the conductor can count rhythmically for the students.

I work in a CCC junior high school in the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex and have about 50 students in the Advanced band. On paper, we have 16 of those 50 face to face; but I only see 8-10 students daily. Some



Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

days they are not the same 8-10 as the day before. Most students in the top group opted for “online” learning, so they log into band class via zoom. We rehearse each day and lead through our “in person” students; but it has been difficult with so few. We have weekly assignments that they play for me in CHARMS (a software program that allows recording and submitting assignments). The older students do well, but for the beginners it has been a challenge. Out of 80 beginners we have around 30 face to face students.

Imagine learning Clarinet “online” ...or French Horn...or Oboe...or really any instrument, when you have never played before. We have never met many of them and are only able to show via the zoom. One of our early tasks was to create videos for “extra resource” for the home learners. It is also difficult for the 8th graders, as they were last year’s beginners and did not get to finish the year. There were/are big holes, so to speak. Holes in their learning and knowledge, theory, understanding of their instrument and rhytmical and note reading. SO we have worked slow and created fun assignments that can be passed off for stature, points, extra privilege and exemptions from some end of semester or year assignments for the older students and tracking progress with the beginners.

Sectionals are always where we make big headway with the advanced band students. However, we are not allowed to have them before and after school. Usually, I see each section either before or after school for a small group focus on fundamentals, tone, note and rhythm reading. This is where you bond with them. I used to bring Donuts sometimes in the morning for sectionals or one of our sponsors would donate breakfast burritos and no one would miss. Sometimes for the afternoon ones we would have a pizza or snacks and a soda after. Now.... nothing. Beginning band students sometimes show up and say, “I’m now face to face.” Honestly, they are so lost that most end up going back to online.

The academic teachers are stressed, and it is a real issue to engage students. With band, I just notice the work ethic and progress is much slower than normal. I can’t imagine what they are feeling. We have decided that our main focus this year is going to be on more individual and smaller group work in the advanced group (solo/ensemble). They will all prepare a solo and play on zoom for a judge. We will have a similar one for our beginners.

The rigor is what I miss and the sound of a band each day in the band hall. I miss feeling comfortable and safe at school. Many teachers have gotten sick and had to quarantine. Our football team has quarantined 4 times. This interrupts their learning and progress, but we have tried to “go with the flow”. The main problem is not having interaction with every student. I worry about high school enrollment from my junior high and also beginners re-enrolling because of the difficulty learning from a zoom.

I am lucky, our district offers private instructor’s, but students pay for lessons. We are not supposed to have extra events/sessions that will cause them to not work on other endeavors or to add to their stress. I know they are stressed. I know they are confused. I have tried to keep dialogs of “never stop trying” going. I keep telling them it is not forever, and we will get thru it. I know our programs will pay a high COVID-19 price, but am hoping that we can all get to a level of normal next year and make up some time. Honestly, one of the positives has been to slow down and concentrate on fundamentals and enjoy just a

Teaching During COVID-19—cont.

bit. We try and find good things to point out each day, while still being picky about the things we are normally picky about.

If you would like to send a video of encouragement to flute, clarinet, sax, oboe, trumpet trombone, baritone and tuba ... oops and oboe players, to tell about your experiences and to provide encouragement and advice to NEVER drop out please send it to dobryant@aisd.net. Pray for me, that I can continue to inspire and make a difference while even being a little nervous myself. The main things missing are the performances, trips, social events and most of the students....as well as all things that help make band....BAND. Please consider saying a prayer and sending a video message of encouragement or possibly a lesson on something you enjoy teaching or playing. I would LOVE to show them and tell them about each of you.

You stay safe and I cannot wait to see each of you at the reunion!

Blessings

Donna O'Bryant, BM, MM, MA

McD ALL-AMERICAN HS BAND '80-Clarinet New Mexico

From Dr. Julian White

For eleven years I was honored to serve as drill designer for the McDonalds All-American High School Band. Even though it was not general knowledge, I was chair of the committee charged with the responsibility of the auditioning students for the band. The process of selecting the band was a two-step process which included evaluating cassettes to determine the top musicians and placing two students from each state in the band. The challenge was conforming to the band's instrumentation.

It was always a pleasure meeting the band at the first rehearsal because the students demonstrated fine quality performance fundamentals. With four days of music and marching rehearsals, the bands were able to learn all aspects of the show with great attitudes. In addition to preparing for the performance, band members developed an impressive friendship bond which made the music and marching rehearsal a great deal of fun. The downside of working with the McDonalds High School Band was the ending. After the final performance, members of the band turned in their overlays, shakos, and company owned instruments. Then off to the airport they went to board flights for home. All of a sudden, my kids were gone.

I was so excited when Donna O'Bryant called and extended an invitation to Lindsey Sarjeant and myself to attend the virtual reunion. I often wondered what profession members of the band would pursue. It was gratifying to hear that many of the formers became public school and university band directors, composers, performers, and producers. Many others entered the medical field, law, engineering, military, and other professions. ([View Reunion Collage Project](#))

Seeing Al Golin's daughter Karen, Pat Healy, and Chuck Ebeling were especially thrilling. There were so many highlights that provided fond memories. Kim Scharnberg's [Centennial March](#) captured the spirit and excitement of the McDonalds All-American High School Band. The fast marching was quite comical. Thanks to Keith Marks and Kim Scharnberg for the video. The virtual concert was one of the first in the nation. I am sure that this reunion will attract other former members to participate in the 2021 reunion.

*Is there a moment quite as keen
Or memory as bright
As light and fire and music sweet
To warm the winter's night?*

*Wishing all of you and your families a
holiday season of good health and
blessings. We are looking forward to
gathering together to make music in
the year to come!*

The Mc8

Mission:

As alumni of the McDonald's All-American High School Band, we seek to passionately foster and nurture the art of instrumental music through partnership, education, and performance.

