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Honor Group

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President’s Message

by Connie Oba

It is that time of year again, Is winter finally gone? I actually used my windshield wiper fluid for the first time since last Fall, a definite sign that Spring is here. Another sign that Spring has arrived is the music teacher’s calendar looking like a toddler got in to the markers and scribbled all over it. Have you ever tried to schedule a meeting or a get together with another music teacher in April or May? It’s near impossible. I think our saving grace, however, is knowing that it will all be over soon.

The Northwest Conference was a huge success. I spent most of my time in the elementary sessions with headliners Jim Solomon and John Feirabend, both outstanding presenters. Even though these sessions were held in some of the largest ballrooms, we all quickly learned that if you didn’t get there early, you had to stand in the back or sit on the floor. I also attended the choral reading session, which, I know you all will agree, is not only educational but is just pure fun! How often do you get to sing with 100 other music teachers? Then, there was the portion of the conference that I feel is most valuable: networking with other music educators. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing many of our AMEA members as well as meeting teachers from all over the Northwest. And lastly, the crowning events of the entire conference were the concerts. I don’t know about anyone else, but I always feel a sense of pride when I see our students up there shining among the mass of other musicians. I am proud of the work my colleagues do to get their students to this point in their lives. We know these experiences will have an impact on their lives and will stay with them forever. A big shout out to all our members who encouraged, spent time with, and went the extra mile to get your students into the All Northwest honor groups.

Speaking of conferences, our AMEA State Conference is less than a year away! It will be held February 2-3, 2018, at UAF. Plans are already taking shape. One of the most exciting parts of having this honor to plan YOUR conference is choosing our presenters. We have confirmed our guest speaker, Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, chair of the National Association for Music Education Honor Society (Tri-M), will be in Fairbanks the first day of the conference. Tevya Robinson has been diligently putting together a lineup of possible band presenters. I have been in contact with an elementary headliner who has agreed to come and we are in the process of confirming her sponsorship. Earlier this year, your region reps asked you for feedback about what sessions you wanted at the conference. Many of you expressed a desire to have a choral person who could address the elementary as well as the secondary level. I found a person from the Seattle area who is the choral conducting instructor for the Kodaly Certificate Program. We have UAF professor, Ryan Fitzpatrick working on our strings presenters. I hope to reveal all the names of these presenters very soon.

Our conference will also have room for local presenters so be on the lookout this summer for a call for proposals. Another opportunity I want to broadcast is that we are looking for performing groups, elementary through college level, to perform throughout the conference days and some evenings. I will send out more information on this in my end of year newsletter.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me, or your region rep if you have any ideas about how we can reach out to teachers (members AND non-members) and make this conference YOUR premier professional development event next year.

Best wishes for a successful race to the end of the school year,

Connie Oba
Preparing Your Mind for Rehearsal

In the January eNews letter from NAfME there was an article by Tom Sabatino about “Beginning with Silence”. In it, Sabatino describes how he modified his choir classes to start with 30–60 seconds of silence. He found that his class productivity increased so I decided to experiment with moments of silence in my band class. The first time I presented the idea to my band they were skeptical. They did not believe that they could be quiet for 30 seconds, and they were right. About ten seconds in, a student that was starving for attention started laughing. We started over, this time a different student lost it 20 seconds in. The response from the other students however, was encouraging. They chided the disruptive student for disturbing the calm. The subsequent silent times were indeed silent now that the disruptive students knew that their noises would not receive positive attention from their peers. Over the next few days, after tuning our instruments we would have our “30 seconds of silence”. I found that spending time in silence helped reduce negative behaviors in class. A student that was consistently anxious was markedly calmer and performed better in class. I also found the atmosphere of the class to be more relaxed and disruptive outbursts were reduced. While the “30 seconds of silence” was effective, I felt that it could be improved upon. I wanted to use the time to have the band focus on a goal. I increased the time to one minute (sometimes two) and renamed it “focus time”. After tuning I inform the class of our rehearsal goals. I ask them to think about and review in their mind the trouble spots. It may seem counterintuitive to “do nothing” during class, but taking the time to focus and prepare mentally leads to more productive and effective rehearsals. Additionally, the students themselves find it beneficial and will ask for the “focus time” to be longer if the day has been particularly stressful. If you have classes that are squirrelly or burnt-out I would recommend instituting a “focus time” with your band or choir. I think you will be pleased with the results it yields.

2017 ALL-NATIONAL HONOR ENSEMBLES
November 26-29, 2017 Walt Disney World, Florida

Deadline to Apply: May 12, 2017, midnight pacific time

2016 All-National Honor Ensembles Conductors:
Concert Band: T. André Feggin, Assistant Professor of Music, Coastal Carolina University
Symphony Orchestra: Dr. Margery Deutsch, Professor Emeritus University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Mixed Choir: Dr. Z. Randall Stroope, Professor of Music and Director of Choral/Vocal Studies at Oklahoma State University.
Jazz Ensemble: Todd Stoll, Vice-President of Education for Jazz at Lincoln Center

Application Instructions:
Click here to start an application.
Click here for your Audition Repertoire. All music is found in the public domain.
Have questions? Read our 2017 ANHE FAQ or contact: honorensembles@nafme.org
from the @NAfME Facebook and Twitter pages!
We are now well into the new year. How is it going for you so far? There is a lot happening in the world. Many things are changing and it’s uncertain where we are heading. At least that is how I feel. And to make myself more miserable and anxious I’ve become somewhat of a news junkie. I feel that I am becoming very much like a character that I greatly admire from the musical, “Man of La Mancha”. Of course there was no TV to watch or NPR or BBC to listen to when this story took place, but there were books, and my hero did a lot of reading.

“Being retired, he has much time for books. He studies them from morn till night and often through the night and morn again, and all he reads oppresses him; fills him with indignation at man’s murderous ways toward man. He ponders the problem of how to make better a world where evil brings profit and virtue none at all; where fraud and deceit are mingled with truth and sincerity. He broods and broods and broods and broods and finally his brains dry up. He lays down the melancholy burden of sanity and conceives the strangest project ever imagined…. to become a knight-errant, and sally forth into the world in search of adventures; to mount a crusade; to raise up the weak and those in need. No longer will he be plain Alonso Quijana, but a dauntless knight known as Don Quixote de La Mancha!”

Ah, how I wish I could do as Don Quixote and sally forth to right the wrongs in the word and help those in need. Just this week the students in one of my choirs and I were talking a bit about world events and I had an epiphany of sort. As I looked at the faces of my singers I realized that I even though it is good for me to be aware of world events and it is good for me to care, I don’t have a lot of control or even influence on what may or may not happen and that I should probably, before my brains dry up, deal with my news addiction. Even more important I realized that where I did have influence and perhaps even a big influence was right there in my own classroom.

So, I told the students to be of good cheer and that we would focus on creating an experience for ourselves right here in choir that would enrich our lives as individuals, solidify us as an ensemble, and bring joy and perhaps comfort to those for whom we would sing. I felt so much better after that and I think they did too. It reminds me of a great poem, “The Work of Christmas”, by Howard Thurman, American author, philosopher, and theologian.

“When the song of the angels is stilled, 
When the star in the sky is gone, 
When the kings and princes are home, 
When the shepherds are back with their flock, 
The work of Christmas begins: 
To find the lost, 
To heal the broken, 
To feed the hungry, 
To release the prisoner, 
To rebuild the nations, 
To bring peace among people, 
To make music in the heart.”

Music in and from the heart; that is the answer for me and for my students.

This past February 16-19, 2017 we had the opportunity to attend the NAfME NW Division Conference. There were a lot of great sessions to choose from and great concerts to enjoy and great opportunities for our students who were selected to participate in the NW Honor Ensembles. But surely the greatest opportunity of all is for us as Music Educators was to spend time with each other; rekindling our friendships and rejuvenating our souls so that we can continue to help the young people who trust us to teach them. Teaching is a privilege and a calling and the greatest responsibility is for us all, students and teachers, to learn to “make music in (from) the heart”.

I hope you found sessions, performances, and moments spent with friends at the conference that spoke to you. If you have comments or suggestions regarding the schedule for teachers or for students at the conference, please communicate that to me via email. We know that by working together was can always make improvements. I wish you much success the remainder of this school year in making Heartfelt Music!
Mukluk Melodies: Region Reports

Region 2
Amanda Gray, Elementary
There is a lot of great work happening in Delta Junction! The elementary school had a great time celebrating Music In Our School’s month in March and have begun working on activities to perform at the assembly on the last day of school. The middle school band and choir are preparing for their spring concert and are looking forward to a great end to the school year! The secondary students are preparing for the Aurora Music Festival which will be held in Valdez this year. Because of the Easter festival the event will be held a week later than usual. Part of the festival is a qualifier for the ASAA Solo and Ensemble Festival in May. Valdez High School is hosting the Aurora Music Festival which will be held April 20-22, 2017.

Region 3 North
Christina Hardman, Elementary
The elementary music teachers of the Mat-Su Valley are always busy and keeping busy as always! We are gearing up for our annual Honors Festival on April 25th including band, choir, and orchestra. We are putting together all the rehearsals, encouraging practice at home, and coordinating behind the scenes to give our kids this unique and exciting experience. The Houston area schools - Big Lake Elementary, Meadow Lakes Elementary, Houston Middle School, and Houston High School - came together for their third annual combined band concert on February 28th. The concert was very well attended and students were excited to perform their combined piece as well as show off their progress since last concert. There were lots of events that get us excited as teachers and we love seeing the kids excited too! We hope you have a great spring!

Toby Lambert, Secondary
Greetings from the Mat-Su Valley,
Region III is quickly closing up the school year. Of course this means a lot of different events have occurred and teachers are very busy. To start, on March 4, Colony Middle School hosted the annual Elementary and Middle School Solo and Ensemble contest. We had about 77 entries for the event from over 41 different schools. Many of the students who performed were entering this event as first time participants. Lots of students came away with new knowledge and new ideas to improve their performance.

Over the spring break, Palmer High School music department went on tour to New Orleans, Branson and several other cities in the south central part of the United States. The group included the Palmer High School band, choir, jazz band and jazz choir ensembles which performed in various locations. Other travel notes, the Colony Middle School Steel Drum ensemble and Colony Calypso ensemble members spent mid-February in Trinidad and Tobago studying steel drums. With a concert performance at the International School of Port of Spain, visiting panyards, the University of West Indies steel drum engineering department and Panorama Semi-Finals, the group got to learn, meet and hear a lot of steel drum music and performers.

March 30-31 was the district Secondary Borough Music Festival featuring our High School Honor Band and Honor Choir, Middle School Honor Band and Honor Choir and the Secondary Honor Orchestra. There were about 400 students participating in the event. Colony Middle School and Colony High School hosted the event. Our directors were Ashley Petito (MS Honor Choir-MatSu teacher), Samantha Youman (MS Honor Band-MatSu teacher), Simon Nissen (HS Honor Choir-Kenai Teacher), Dr. Donald Peterson (HS Honor Band-Professor from BYU), and Ryan Fitzpatrick (Honour Orchestra-Professor from UAF).

April 7-8 is the upcoming Palmer Jazz Festival. Groups from all over Alaska will be converging on Palmer High School for this two day event. Stan Harris is the host and he is still (at the time of the article) completing the schedule of events and performers. Most of the secondary schools in the Valley along with schools from around Alaska will be learning about and performing jazz for guest clinicians.

April 10-11 is the last main district event for music this year. The Region III Solo/Ensemble contest for High School will be hosted at Wasilla High School this year. Sara Guhl and Ashley Wedge are presently finishing the schedule for students to compete for a chance to move on to the Alaska State Solo/Ensemble Contest in May in Anchorage.

Other than that, we would like to wish all of you and great end of the school year. Thank you.

Region 3 South
Jonathan Dillon, Elementary
Greetings! I have a few brief notes from the elementary teachers on the Kenai Peninsula and in Kodiak:

First, hundreds of students from across the region danced, sang, and played recorders with the Kenai Peninsula Orchestra in January as part of the Carnegie “Link-Up” concert program.

Second, many of the Kenai Peninsula music teachers had the opportunity to share with one another at our Music Teacher Collaboration in March.

Third, students from throughout the Central Peninsula will be participating in a three-day popular music and dance workshop with the Young Americans show choir at Mountain View Elementary later this month.

Fourth, I am aware of two retirements taking place this spring in our region: Jeanne Duhan, who teaches at K-Beach Elementary, and Rosemary Bird, who teaches at Kenai Middle. Congratulations on incredible careers supporting the children in our communities—we will miss you both!

Region 4
Rebecca Nelson, Secondary
Region IV is busy as usual this spring! We have had a great year so far and are happy to have welcomed several new teachers to the secondary music world in Region IV. Janeen Wilkins is teaching orchestra at East, and we have three new choir teachers: Gabrielle Wibenmeyer at West and Romig MS, Andrea Black at Dimond, and Laura Blackwood at Bartlett. We are excited about these excellent new additions.
Region Reports cont.

Several schools are traveling including Dimond, South, East, and Chugiak/ER to festivals around the country. We are working hard to prepare for the Region IV large group festivals the week of April 17th. Middle school choir also has large group festival that week and this year for the first time, middle school band and orchestra will have large group festival as well. We are excited to welcome our clinician and adjudicator, Dr. Derrick Fox from the University of Omaha. Some 30+ students from our region were invited to All-Northwest and several staff went as well. What a wonderful opportunity and experience it was. One student came back saying, “I learned more than I thought I would.” Region IV is focusing on SEL and as music directors that is right up our alley. Fostering teamwork and both group and individual success and development is what we do every day. Now to get ready for State Solo/Ensemble!

Region 7 North
Ryan Fitzpatrick, UAF

This spring, the UAF NAfME students have been very active in the community. Students have been visiting classrooms throughout the school district to interact with students and meet with the teachers to ask questions and learn more about each school. At many, if not all of these schools, NAfME students performed for different classes. They have also led general music lessons, observed school rehearsals, coached ensembles in the annual UAF String Fling event, and assisted in different programs for Music in Our Schools concerts and honor ensembles. While none of the NAfME students attended the All-Northwest conference this year, it is my goal to bring these students to future similar events.

UAF NAfME also recently sponsored a Yoga for Musicians session (led by violist and yoga specialist Maureen Heflinger), focusing on yoga specifically designed for the needs of musicians. Students provided treats for a bake sale, from which some funds were raised to help support the yoga session. In the coming weeks, UAF NAfME will also be leading an instrument ‘petting zoo’ in our concert hall as well as a spring concert for the UAF’s Bunnell House early childhood education lab school. NAfME students who are in Fairbanks this summer have also been invited to participate in the UAF Summer Music Academy, which involves music classes for middle and high school students.

Board Members
and Region Representatives

President: Connie Oba
President-Elect: Dean Shannon
Past President: Crista Cady
State Executive: Ginny Reese

Journal Editor: Paula Berg
Treasurer: Vacant
Webmaster: Vacant

ABDA: Tevya Robbins
ACDA: Carolyn Soderlund
AkSTA: Bryan Hall
ASAA: Cam Bohman

Region 1
Elementary: Ron Horner
Secondary: Vacant

Region 2
Elementary: Amanda Gray
Secondary: Dean Shannon

Region 3, North
Elementary: Christina Hardman
Secondary: Toby Lambert

Region 3, South
Elementary: Jonathan Dillon
Secondary: Kyle Schneider

Region 4
Elementary: Robin Hopper
Secondary: Caitlin Hopper

Region 5
Elementary: Jason Muccino
Secondary: Sarah Martinson

Region 6
Elementary: Melanie Linton
Secondary: Lucas Clooten

Region 7, North - UAF
CNAfME President: Inga Dye
Colegiate Advisor: Ryan Fitzpatrick

Region 7, South - UAA
CNAfME President: Patricia Sullivan
Colegiate Advisor: Karen Strid-Chadwick
Research & Teacher Ed.: Christopher Sweeney
NAfME All-Northwest Honor Group

There were over 4600 applications, which speaks so highly of the work being done in our classrooms.

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<th>Student</th>
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Treble Choir

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Mixed Choir

Wibenmeyer, Gabrielle Kuhns, Summer
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Mixed Choir

Wibenmeyer, Gabrielle McCready, Jordan
West High School
Treble Choir

Wibenmeyer, Gabrielle Robinson, Ryleigh
West High School
Mixed Choir

Wibenmeyer, Gabrielle Teaford, Lucy
West High School
Band

Yeo, Jacqueline Morris, Jenna
Service High School
Band
How do you make an ensemble experience of a lifetime better?

Add Magic!

The 2017 All-National Honor Ensembles will take place at Walt Disney World. November 26-29, 2017

- Recommend your students in grades 9, 10, or 11 during the 2016-2017 school year to apply
- The All-National Honor Ensembles represent the top performing high school musicians in each state across the country
- So much more than a musical ensemble, it is a comprehensive, musical, and educational experience
- Students will learn under the baton of leading conductors who are sure to inspire
- This year’s event will feature one of the nation’s only college music showcases

Apply today: nafme.org/ANHE
Application deadline: May 12, 2017

Check out the AMEA Facebook page