



1991-2021



# ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS

In our 30th year of service to small school bands in Texas

2117 Morse Street Houston, Texas 77019 713-874-1151 atssb@att.net

## ATSSB NEWSLETTER

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### President's Column

by Eric Gray



The holiday season is upon us! We have been very fortunate to have parents, kids, grandkids, friends, family and neighbors coming and going this past week. Now back to school and the mad dash to Christmas break. In addition to the usual concerts, auditions, Christmas parades and solo/ensemble preparations, we have the

added bonus of preparing for area and state marching contests as well as playoff football games. For our Monday night marching practice this next week, I believe the temperature is forecast to be in the upper 30's...ought to be fun!

As we continue to deal with the Covid-19 issue, we are constantly in the "monitor and adjust" domain of the T-TESS. I hope you and your students are staying safe but I also hope we are all doing the very best we can in a very difficult situation. It would be easy to just shut everything down and wait for this thing to go away, but

(Continued on Page 2)

at what cost? We lost almost a half year of instruction last spring and have been searching for ways to make up for lost time. I have spoken with directors that are not pushing their kids in the all-region process due to the fact that the region clinic has been cancelled so what is the point? I have heard the same about preparing for solo & ensemble contests. We must realize that our ensembles are a reflection of who we are and what we believe. Let me encourage you to keep striving for the highest for your students and your program regardless of the opportunity to actually perform what was prepared. The learning and growth that takes place in preparation for these events cannot be replaced and should not be ignored. Our students deserve our very best efforts on their behalf!

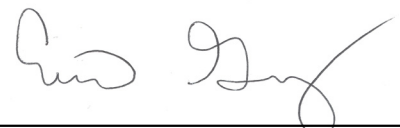
That being said, the ATSSB Executive Committee has voted to let the individual regions make decisions regarding their all-region clinic & concert experiences, based on the situation of each region. We believe we have qualified and competent leaders throughout the state that will make intelligent decisions, based on the wishes of the regions they represent. In addition, the ATSSB Executive Committee has decided to move forward with an All-State Clinic & Concert experience for the students that advance past the Area round. This will be held June 9-12 in Melissa, Texas. Plans are being made for hotel rooms, clinicians, organizers and a 30 year ATSSB celebration. Rest assured we are constantly monitoring the situation and would never put our membership or students in jeopardy so continue to look for updates and announcements regarding this event. Again, this event might not happen but we are going to do everything in our power to plan to make it happen if the opportunity presents itself.

We are in the process of entering our all-region kids online through the MusicFirst program. This has been an interesting and monumental endeavor and we want to say a huge "Thanks" to TMEA for organizing this and walking us all through the process.

Looking forward to the new year, let me once again say a word of thanks to the: Executive Committee for countless Zoom meetings and hours of discussion; to the membership for your input and concerns; to Kenneth for doing so much behind the scenes on behalf of the students and members of ATSSB; my friends and family that take up so many of my responsibilities so that I can serve you.

Let me leave you this Christmas season with a verse I continue to gravitate toward in these uncertain and frustrating times:

"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things." Philippians 4:8



## President-Elect Column

by Matt Knight

Wow! Where did the fall go? It has been a crazy fall for sure!

I hope you have had a great marching season. If you were able to attend UIL, that is outstanding. Hats off to the UIL Region Secretary's and the contest chairmen that worked hard to make contest possible. For the schools that attended Area Marching Contest, I hope it was a great experience. Good luck to those that are advancing to the UIL State Marching Contest! If you did not go to contest, that is great too. You have had time to work on fun music and work fundamentals with no contest pressure. I know the main focus for all of us was to get our kids back to some kind of normal. What is normal? It changes every day (every minute)!!!



I hope you have been able to adjust to "Covid Band." I know these are strange times with kids moving in and out of class, constant cleaning, virtual learning and many other things I am leaving out. Remember we are doing this for the kids!!

As I watch the news and read things on social media, I am reminded daily how lucky we are to teach in Texas, where that arts are important. I know we are all concerned with our students and classes but we need to remember to stop and thank those around us for all they are doing. Send a quick email to your Principal/Superintendent and thank him/her for all they are doing for the school. Stop by the school office and leave card for the secretaries. Drive by the bus barn, leave donuts/snacks to thank the drivers for their time. The most important of all of these, for most of us, is our custodians. Take them a cup of coffee or a coke. They will be very thankful. I challenge you over the next 3 weeks, to do something for each one of the groups I named. You never know when a small act of kindness will make a huge difference in their day.

As we go back to school, we enter in one of the most important times of teaching in our school year. Dr. Charles Traylor and Harold Bufe told me on many occasions the best way to build a band program is through All Region and Solo and Ensemble. I hope you will get involved in Solo and Ensemble. This is a great time to work with your kids on different music. I am always amazed how much the kids grow through this process. Weather they are your 1st chair kid or just a section player, it always amazes how much they grow. I also encourage you to get your kids involved in the All Region Process. I know it is different this year, but the music first software seems to be user friendly. If you have any questions about auditions, please reach out to your region coordinator.

I are very excited that we are moving forward with our plan to host the ATSSB All State Band in Melissa on June 9-12. This should be a great way to end our school year. We are also making plans for our 30th Anniversary Banquet to be hosted during our time in Melissa as well. Kenneth has sent out some information and we will have more as we get closer to our event. Special thanks to Jerry Whorton for being willing to host this event and all the ground work he has done to get this off the ground. I am serving as the chair of the ALL-State Band Steering Committee. If you would be interested in serving on this committee or one of the sub committees that will branch off

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(President-Elect's Column, continued from Page 3):

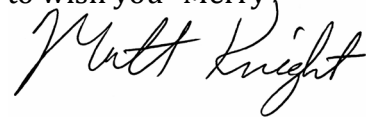
of this committee, please let me know. My email is Mknight@abernathyisd.com or my cell number is 806-778-6258 if you have any questions.

A special thanks to Eric Gray, Kenneth Griffin, and the others on the executive board for their tremendous leadership during the last year. It has truly been an interesting time. We so blessed to have people of such high character willing to give of their time to support our organization and all of the small school band students in Texas.

The next 3 weeks will fly by! I can't believe we are so close to the end of the semester. You can do it! We can see the finish line at the end of the tunnel. (I promise it is not a train)

As we enter the holiday season, my prayer is good health and prosperity for you, your family, and your students. Thanks to all of the small school band directors in Texas for all you do for "our kids" each day. It takes special teachers to teach in our small schools. You are each very special.

On behalf my wife Anna Jo, my son Keelan and I, let us be one of the first to wish you "Merry, Christmas" and a Happy New Year!



### Immediate Past-President's Column

by Mike Bartley



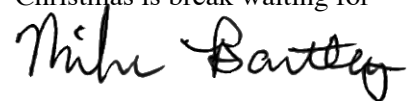
It is hard to believe that 2020 is about over after everything it has brought us. I don't think anyone would have ever imagined a year like this several months ago. We can only hope 2021 will be better!

It is hard to know where everyone is with your programs right now. Some are still marching while others are working on a Christmas concert, or have gone back to remote learning. I wish the best to everyone and their students as this is definitely a trying time. We all have seen students coming in and out everyday which has made teaching a challenge. Luckily, I have some great kids who keep pushing through even though you can know they are worried, upset, and confused about the situation. I know mine would rather be where they are as opposed to being locked away again!

I hope everyone has been able to find a time to do their All-Region Clinic this spring. I know it is different everywhere, but I think the kids enjoy the clinic and deserve a chance to have an experience with a great clinician and their peers. Also, don't forget about Solo and Ensemble as that will be coming soon. We have started passing out music so the students have plenty of time to be prepared.

I think it is exciting that we are also going to be able to have an All-State experience for the students as well. I know everyone has seen that this will take place at Melissa HS on June 9-12, 2021. I would like to thank Jerry Whorton and Angie Liss for all of the groundwork they have done to make this happen. I am also looking forward to the 30th anniversary of ATSSB. It has been an awesome experience, and it is hard to believe that time has gone by so quickly. I know that our organization will continue on and only get stronger!

Lastly, I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving break and had a chance to get some rest and spend time with family. The next few weeks will be busy, so I wish you luck in getting through! Christmas is break waiting for us! Again, take that opportunity to relax, rewind, and enjoy.





## Executive Secretary's Column by Kenneth L. Griffin

I hope the virtual audition process went well for all of you at the region level and that your students who advanced to Area are preparing for an even better audition file for Area January 9. When you upload your audition file to Area, make sure you have paid the \$25 Area fee (most regions collect that and send one check).

As you may know by now, ATSSB is planning on holding the All-State Clinic-Concert in Melissa June 9-12-2021. Composer Brian Balmages is under contract for the Symphonic Band (and is completing a composition for the band commissioned by ATSSB). Don Lefevre (West Texas A&M University) is under contract for the Concert Band and Dr. Mo Trout (Purdue University) has agreed to be the clinician for the All-State Jazz Ensemble.



There are no forms needed for Area. Students selected to State will receive an email regarding housing in the McKinney Sheraton Hotel and the McKinney Marriott Spring Hill Suites, the Medical Release (needing signatures and a Notary Public) and a Code of Conduct (needing signatures) that they must bring to registration on Wednesday of the clinic June 9, 2021. Be sure you make hotel reservations for your students that make the All-State Band (including the students selected to the 2021 ATSSB All-State Jazz Ensemble), and that you make housing plans for their Designated Chaperones using the housing request that will be sent to all participating directors and students selected to All-State. Designate Chaperones must stay at the same hotel as the student they are chaperoning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gina Muela for her service to ATSSB the last two years as Class 1C Representative to the ATSSB State Board of Directors and to Angie Liss for her service to ATSSB the last two years as Class 3A Representative. Eric Gray will continue to serve as President until the end of the All-State Clinic-Concert June 12, when Matt Knight will assume the office of President. A State office is a time-consuming but necessary role to keep our Association strong and current for our small schools. These outgoing officers also contributed as members of the Executive Committee as it met to accommodate the needs of students and their directors in the interim between State Board of Director meetings.

Please make an effort not only to thank our Licensees for their support, but also to use their services. These companies have paid a fee and are under contract to use the ATSSB logo and marks on their products. They pay a portion of their receipts to the ATSSB All-State Band Scholarship Fund. Please consider using them before any other companies offering the same or similar products. See the list elsewhere in this Newsletter. Also, be sure to ask anyone selling items at ATSSB activities (region concerts, etc.) if they are official ATSSB Licensees. This brings up a point regarding recorded examples of ATSSB audition music. The only officially approved recordings are those by Licensees. We realize some college and university faculty members make recordings, but you need to be careful they do not use their own editions or interpretations utilizing individual editorial changes that might confuse the student when auditioning. Check to be sure the recordings are provided by official ATSSB Licensees before purchasing them. Not only will you be maintaining consistent recording and performing standards, you will also be supporting our Scholarship Fund since Licensees pay a royalty on all sales to the Fund.

(Continued on Page 6)

(Executive Secretary's Column, continued from Page 5):

After students have been selected for the ATSSB All-State Band, they will receive communication regarding the clinic-concert June 9-12, 2021, asking for a commitment regarding attendance at this activity. Hotel reservation must be made by February 1, 2021, so quick decisions must be made for months in advance. Everyone understands that, should the governor of Texas or the local county judge restrict assemblies to 50 or less due to the pandemic, the clinic will be cancelled and all deposits returned with no penalty.

A reminder about piccolo and E $\flat$  clarinet: If your flute player makes the All-State Band at the Area auditions January 10 and would like to play piccolo, have them bring their piccolo to Melissa. After regular chair auditions are completed for flute, we will hold separate auditions for piccolo in each band from among those students interested in it that were selected for their respective bands. If your clarinet player makes the All-State Band at the Area auditions January 10 and would like to play E $\flat$  clarinet, have them bring their E $\flat$  clarinet to Melissa. After regular chair auditions are completed for clarinet, we will hold separate auditions for E $\flat$  clarinet in each band from among those students interested in it that were selected for clarinet in their respective bands. A notice concerning this policy will be placed in the flute and clarinet links they will receive at Area this year if they are selected for the All-State Band. Piccolos and soprano clarinet players will audition on the actual piccolo or soprano clarinet parts and chair placement in their respective bands will have nothing to do with who is selected to play piccolo or E $\flat$  clarinet.

Much more information will be available online and in the March Newsletter - and even in the June Newsletter - as we approach the All-State Clinic.

We plan to hold our ATSSB Business Session virtually via ZOOM in February (day and time TBA). Elections for President-Elect, Class 1C and Class 3A Representatives to the State Board of Directors will be held via email in the first week of January, and if no one received the majority of votes in that ballot, a runoff will be held between the top two vote-recipients in the first week of February via email, with the winners announced at the General Session (and online after that). A short biographical sketch and picture of each candidate for state office who has submitted documentation can be found in this Newsletter. If any are missing, check back because biographies and/or pictures will be added if and when the candidates have submitted the information to this office.

When you get a chance, be sure to thank our Region and Area Coordinators for their efforts in securing virtual audition panels, etc. Everyone associated with the audition process owes a great deal of gratitude to TMEA Deputy Director Frank Coachman for his untiring efforts on behalf of all Texas musicians. We also appreciate Andrew Denman, TMEA Information Technologist, for his efforts to keep the audition tabulation software in top form. There was an inordinate amount of effort and planning involved in the online audition process this year, and all of the praise goes to Frank, Andrew and MusicFirst for their efforts to keep the process operating smoothly.

Be sure to visit with your Region Coordinators about issues you wish addressed at the State Board meeting coming up. Make your opinions about issues confronting ATSSB known to your representatives to the State Board so they can be discussed with a consensus from the membership.

Thanks to all of you for your continued diligence and hard work on behalf of the students in our small school programs during these stressful and unprecedented times. Keep up the great work.



## Class 3A Representative Column

by Angie Cavender Liss

Greetings from Covid Quarantine!

What a crazy year this has been! Here in Howe, we thought we had dodged the wrath of Covid in our program but it reared its ugly head the last week of the regular football season and wreaked havoc at our school. Consequently, after a week plus of school shutdown with no rehearsals or “pre-UIL” contest, I watched via FaceTime as our band took the field at UIL, for many of them, their very first contest ever. In this season of Thanksgiving, I am grateful for many things including the technology that allowed me to watch my band perform but mostly grateful for a staff and student leadership team that rose to the challenge, rallied the troops and pulled off a successful performance in spite of the many Covid obstacles that faced us.



As I spent time browsing social media during my Covid quarantine, I saw the same type of situations happening in many other schools across the state. Sadly, some schools were unable to perform, but others were able to adjust and put something on the field. I know of several schools who went to ballgames and contests with “substitute” directors. We had directors from neighboring schools offer their help during our time of need and even had some show up to our rehearsal just to offer their eyes and ears because they knew we were shorthanded. It makes me so proud to be a part of a band community that supports each other’s programs. Since the start of the pandemic, we’ve seen the phrase, “We’re all in this together,” over and over but I’ve seen that ideology play out in our band world and it is truly heartwarming. It is that same teamwork and resilience that will help make our ATSSB All-State Clinic/Concert in Melissa to become a reality. I’m excited to begin preparations for what will surely be an incredible—and socially distanced---experience for our students.

May you all continue to successfully navigate these uncharted waters and don’t be afraid to reach out for help when you need it! We are all in this together!!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angie Liss".

The ATSSB Newsletter is the official publication of the Association of Texas Small School Bands. Articles of interest to small school band directors will be published. Letters to the Editor from members will be published if signed, although writers may remain anonymous by request. Send all inquiries to ATSSB, 2117 Morse Street, Houston, Texas 77019; fax them to 713-874-1151, or email them to the Executive Secretary at [atssb@att.net](mailto:atssb@att.net) with appropriate attachments. Advertising is accepted for the Newsletter. See the Advertising Policy on our website:

<https://www.atssb.org/files/execsec/AdPolicy.pdf>

## State Jazz Coordinator Column

by Brian Donnell

Happy Holidays to everyone! The All-State Jazz Band has been seated. Congratulations to those students who earned a chair in the band. And hearty congratulations to the directors who navigated this new audition process in addition to preparing their students. With the help of Mr. Frank Coachman and Mr. Andrew Denman, we were able to shift from our traditional audition methods to virtual uploading and judging.



The clinician for this year's all-state clinic and concert in Melissa June 9-12 is Dr. Mo Trout from Purdue University. He has been the director of the Purdue jazz program since 1997. Among many other honors, he was named the recipient of the Indianapolis Jazz Foundation Educator of the Year Award in 2015. Our students are in for a wonderful experience!

Be sure to check out the jazz web page for the list of students and other information at:

[www.atssb.org/jazz](http://www.atssb.org/jazz)

Thinking ahead - - next year's jazz set will be available from Buddy Mattei in February or March.

Have an idea or suggestion about how we can improve the all-state jazz process that helps our students? Feel free to shoot me an email. I'd love to chat.

I hope you and your family have a terrific holiday season!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Donnell". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brian Donnell  
[bdonnell@atssb.org](mailto:bdonnell@atssb.org)



## Webmaster's Column

by Marc Nichelson

What a semester it has been! I know we are looking at our processes and finding new ways to get things done and, in the process, learning some new and effective ways to continue to serve our students and help them grow as people and musicians.



Website Projects Currently in the works:

1. The job board facelift is done!
2. We are beginning to build out our footprint on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). To celebrate 30 years, we would like to feature stories of awesome success stories that have come from our Small School Band Programs. These could be non-music related success stories from students who have gone on to do GREAT things as adults, or music educators that have moved through the small school ranks and became a respected educator in our state. You can submit contact information of people you feel like fit this description at <https://www.atssb.org/atssb-featured-person-submission/>
3. I'd also like to know if some of you would be willing to help submit materials we can publish to our social media that would help small school band directors. These could be teaching resources, videos you've made giving a clinic on certain items, etc... This would be specific to Small Schools and something our audience would find beneficial to use in their programs. If interested please contact me at [mnichelson@atssb.org](mailto:mnichelson@atssb.org).
4. If you know of any business that would be interested in beginning an advertising relationship with us please have them contact me at:  
[mnichelson@atssb.org](mailto:mnichelson@atssb.org)

As many of us enter a December full of band contests, ATSSB auditions, concerts, and so much more remember to take the time and appreciate all of the wonderful opportunities we have as teachers each and every day. I find myself looking at so many simple things that I find so much appreciation in after the long break this Spring/Summer. Thank you all for what you do for students and keep it up! You are making a difference in students' lives every day.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Nichelson". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

# ELECTION

President-Elect, Class 1C and Class 3A Representatives to the State Board of Directors will be elected by email the first week of January. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, the top two vote-recipeints will be in a run-off to be held the first week of February (watch the website for details). Nominees who submitted a biography and/or picture by the time of publication follow below. Only current Retired and Active Members actively involved in 1C middle schools (including the high directors involved) may vote on 1C Representative. Only current Retired and Active Members actively involved in Class 3A high schools may vote on 3A Representative. All current Retired and Active Members may vote on President-Elect.

## President-Elect

### Rodney Bennett

is the director at Olney High School in Region 7. He is in his thirty-ninth year of teaching and thirteenth year as Director of Bands for Olney ISD. He previously held the same position at Palacios ISD for three years and was Director of Bands for twenty-three years at Munday ISD.



Bennett holds Bachelor of Music and Music Education degrees from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls and a Master of Music degree from Eastern New Mexico University.

Mr. Bennett currently serves as TMEA Region VII Band Chairman and served in this position for Region II from 1994-2005 and 2008-2014. He has also served in various capacities as Region and Area Honor Band host and Region, Area, and State Honor Band Judge. Bennett has also served as TMEA Region XIII Region Band Organizer and Region II North Zone A-AA-AAA District Band Chairman. He was also a TMEA clinician at the 1994 and 2000 conventions.

Mr. Bennett currently serves on the TMAA Marching Band Adjudication Sheet Revision Committee and is also a current member of the Olney ISD District Improvement Committee. He has served on several UIL committees, including the UIL State Marching Band Contest Revision Committee as the Class A Representative and the UIL Sight-reading

Committee. He has served on the TMEA Honor Band Revision Committee and now serves as the Region VII Band Division representative to the UIL Music Advisory Committee. While at Munday, Mr. Bennett served as a member of the Munday High School Campus Improvement Team and on the Munday ISD District Improvement Committee.

Mr. Bennett is a member of Phi Beta Mu (Alpha Chapter) and served as a Member At-Large on the International Board from 2009-2017. He has also served on the International Bandmaster of the Year and Texas Young Bandmaster of the Year Selection Committees, and chaired the Outstanding Contributor and Constitutional Revision Committees. Bennett was a clinician as part of a panel presentation on successful small school band programs at the Midwest Clinic in 2000 and 2004, both sponsored by Phi Beta Mu. He also performs annually at the Texas Bandmasters Association Convention as part of the Phi Beta Mu Reading Band.

Bennett is a member of the Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB) and served as Class A Representative on the State Board of Directors (1994-1996, 2001-2002). Bennett has also been nominated several times for President-elect of ATSSB and continues to serve as a judge for Region, Area, and All-State tryouts.

He a member of the Texas Music Adjudicators Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, American School Band Directors Association, and the National Band Association. Since 1999, Mr. Bennett has

(Continued on Page 11)

(Nominees, continued from Page 10):

served as Director of Doc's Oil Bowl Band (Shriners All-Star football game), and is the only remaining charter member of the group (founded in 1974). Bennett is a life member of Kappa Kappa Psi and holds a Faculty Life membership in the Tri-M Music Honor Society. He is also a member of the Fellowship of Christian Musicians, previously serving as an advisor to the Munday High School Chapter and current sponsor of the Olney High School group.

Mr. Bennett and wife Marilyn were honored in February, 2019 by being named the first recipients of the Midwestern State University Music Department "Music Educators of the Year". Mr. Bennett was recently selected as one of "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" by School Band and Orchestra magazine and featured in the December, 2018 issue. He was elected to the John Philip Sousa Foundation Legion of Honor in 2013 and was also the recipient of the UIL Sponsor of Excellence Award in the same year. Bennett was named to the Who's Who in American Education (1996-1997, 2002-2003), Who's Who Among America's Teachers (1992, 1998, 2002, 2005), TMEA Class A Honor Band Director (1994, 2000), and was named Co-Citizen of the Year in 1993 by the Munday Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture. He was honored in 1994 and 2000 by the National Band Association with a Citation of Excellence. Mr. Bennett was a 1996 recipient of a Texas Music Educators Association Scholarship for Graduate Study.

Under his direction, Munday High School Bands received nineteen consecutive first divisions in marching, fifteen Sweepstakes Awards, 1994 and 2000 TMEA Class A Honor Bands, finalists in the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series from 1997-2005 (first place awards in 1999 and 2000). The Purple Cloud Marching Band was a UIL State Marching Band participant nine times since 1987 and was selected as a finalist seven times from 1987-1999. State finalist bands in these years ranged from sixth place to two second-place

finishes. The Purple Cloud Band performed at the Centennial Parade to commemorate the centennial of the Capitol Building in Austin in 1988 as well as the re-dedication of the Capitol Building in 1995. Under his direction, the Munday High School Band served as a Texas representative to Washington, D.C. in 2004 as part of the ceremonies of the dedication of the World War II Veterans' Memorial during Memorial Day festivities. The Olney High School Band performed at the WWII Memorial in May, 2018 as part of the Memorial Day commemoration.

During his tenure at Palacios, the Fighting Sharks Band received the first UIL Sweepstakes Award in ten years. The PHS Band advanced to the Area E UIL Marching Contest, another first in a decade.

While in Olney, the band has received multiple Sweepstakes Awards and advanced to the Area Marching Contest in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018. The Olney HS Band qualified for the 2013 UIL State Marching Band Contest and was a 1A finalist. This marked the first time in 25 years that the Olney Band qualified for the UIL State Marching Band Contest. In 2015 the Olney HS Band was alternate to UIL State Marching Contest and participant in the 2017 SMBC. The band was also named a finalist in the 2015 TMEA Honor Band competition. The Pride of Olney has achieved nine Sweepstakes Awards, of which there have been eight consecutive honors (2012-2019).

Rodney is married to wife Marilyn (also a band director) for 40 years. Bennett has one son, Ronnie (lead minister – One Life Community Church) in Wichita Falls, Texas. Ronnie and wife Ashley have three children - Emma, Jude, and Ezra. Bennett is also a former member of the United States Marine Corps, member of the American Legion, and an avid railroad enthusiast.

"It is a great honor to be nominated for President Elect of ATSSB. I have been an active member of ATSSB since the founding

(Continued on Page 12)

(Nominees, continued from Page 11):

in 1991. I believe that I possess a unique set of skills for an excellent working relationship with the ATSSB and TMEA State Boards for the advancement of our association.”



**Angie Liss** is the band director at Howe High School in Region 24. She is a graduate of Howe High School where she was a band member (flute) under the direction of Elmer Schenk. She attended Baylor University on a piano scholarship for two



years before transferring to Texas Woman’s University where she graduated with honors with a degree in Music Therapy. She worked for 6 years as a music therapist in the Arlington and Allen Independent School Districts. During those years Mrs. Liss was very active as an accompanist for several DFW metroplex band and choir programs. She continues to serve as an accompanist, not only for her church, but also for many area band and choir students. This is her 27th year in the Howe ISD, starting there as an assistant band director under Elmer Schenk in the fall of 1994 before being named the head band director in the spring of 2005. During its 40+ year existence, Howe High School bands have been highly successful including 35 sweepstakes awards, 22 appearances at the state marching contest and numerous finalists and wins in the TMEA Honor Band and Outstanding Performance Series.

She and her husband, Andreas, live in Howe where they spend extra time working around the farm and at their church. They have four children and their spouses/significant others and one precious grandson, Jones, born this past July.

“After serving as the 3A Representative for the past 6 years, my desire to serve as your President-Elect is to continue to be involved in the ever-changing complexion of the small school band. The small school setting brings challenges far different from those of larger schools and navigating the pandemic and mitigation guidelines and all it brought with it have only heightened those differences. My experience on the executive board and as Region 24/25 coordinator as well as my 27 years as a Howe director provides a solid foundation for future decisions as we continually strive to be an organization that commands the utmost respect across the state, regardless of the size of our schools. My heart truly has a passion for students and I will always work to do all that I can to help foster their opportunities in music and support you as you work for your students as well. Thank you for your consideration on this year’s ballot.”



**Jon Schriver** is the band director at Cameron Yoe High School in Region 8. He is entering his ninth year of teaching and first year as Director of Bands in Cameron ISD. Prior to teaching in Cameron, Mr. Schriver served as Director of Bands in Valley Mills ISD. In that time the Valley Mills High School Band received seven consecutive UIL Sweepstakes Awards, was named a TMEA Honor Band State Finalist in 2015 and 2019, ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series State Finalist in 2014 and 2019, and a two-time UIL State Marching Contest Finalist. In 2017 the Eagle Band placed 2nd in the UIL State Marching Contest and in 2018 the band was



(Continued on Page 13)



(Nominees, continued from Page 12):

named UIL State Marching Band Champions for Class 2A.

Mr. Schriver received his degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce where he graduated with honors. Mr. Schriver's professional affiliations include TMEA, TMAA, TBA, and he currently serves at Vice-Coordinator for ATSSB Region 8. Mr. Schriver resides in Robinson with his wife, Courtney.



### **Class 1C Representative**



**Jessica Carter** is the band director at Hallettsville Junior High School in Region 18. She received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Texas Woman's University in Denton, where she was a member of the Wind Symphony,

Clarinet Choir and was selected Honors Concert performer. She will complete the Master of Music Education degree at Texas Woman's University in 2021. Upon graduation, Jessica began teaching at Hallettsville where she has been the head director at Hallettsville Junior High School. As the director of the Yearling band program, Jessica teaches fifth through eighth grade students. During her five years with the district, the Yearling Symphonic band has earned consecutive Sweepstakes Awards at UIL Concert and Sight-Reading evaluation in 2019-20 and has placed at the state level in the Outstanding Performance Series. She has also had several students audition for and receive positions in the Region 18/26 ATSSB Middle School Region Bands. At Hallettsville JH, she has served on the District Advisory Council,

Campus Advisory Council, sixth grade PLC team leader, and as a new teacher mentor.

Jessica is a member of TMEA, ATSSB, TBA, Sigma Alpha Iota, Tau Beta Sigma, Phi Sigma, and Alpha Sigma Lambda. She was the consortium Co-Chair with Dr. Carter Biggers for the commissioned work, Evermore... (Always and Eternally), composed by William Owens in memory of our colleague, friend and former Hallettsville High School director, Colin Chichurka. Jessica conducted the world premier of the piece performed by the Hallettsville High School band, alumni, and friends on December 15, 2019. She also will serve as the Region 18/26 Middle School Symphonic Band Coordinator in January 2021.

Her family is her greatest support and is precious in her eyes. Jessica has been married to Michael for thirteen years and they share five beautiful boxers, their fur-children. Her pride and joy, her son Steffin Medina, also followed a musical path in trombone performance receiving his Bachelors degree in performance from the University of Central Arkansas and his Masters degree in performance from the University of Minnesota. He is currently serving as the band director at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville.

"I feel the role of the middle school band director is to build a solid musical foundation and to prepare students for high school band, as the success of the high school band depends on the upcoming classes. I also feel band is family and this has been a concept which has flourished throughout our program. We are a Title I program and I am well versed in the adversities these programs endure. I work in an area where the band directors consistently support each other and lift our programs up. I would like to bring that culture to our state board as the Class 1C Representative."



(Continued on Page 14)



(Nominees, continued from Page 13):

**Jett Lowrance** is the band director at Eastland Middle School in Region 7. He served as Merkel Middle School band director from 2010-2014 and has served Eastland Middle School from 2014 until the present. He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University



He received a Bachelor's degree in Music. His middle school bands have placed in State in the Outstanding Performance Series, winning first in the march category in 2016 and first in concert in 2018.

The Eastland MS Band placed sixth in the 2018-19 state finals for Class 1C Honor Band. Mr. Lowrance is married to his best friend, Ashley, and they have one son, Kael, who just began his first year in band on euphonium. He is a member of ATSSB, TBA and TMEA.

"I am humbled to be nominated for this position. Every division has its own unique set of challenges, strengths, and quirks. I've spent my last 11 years working with students, directors, administrators, coaches, teachers, and parents in the 1C division, and have experienced seasons of feast and famine. I still have much to learn and experience, but I would be honored to serve as the ATSSB Class 1C Representative."



**Gina Muela** is the band director at Littlefield Middle School in Region 16.

She is in her 19th year at Littlefield ISD and 18th year as the head of the JH Band program. She has worked in small schools for the majority of her teaching career starting with Van Horn MS,



and Schleicher County ISD (Eldorado MS and HS). Her only large school experience was at Hank HS (Ysleta ISD) in El Paso where she was assistant and also taught beginning band at Glen Cove and Tierra de Sol Elementary Schools. Her four years as MS director at Eldorado offered her the opportunity to work with her former band director from Clint HS, Mike Marsh, and is still honored to have him as a mentor, friend and sounding board. Stepping up as the HS director after Mr. Marsh's departure was an opportunity to expand her teaching experience. Under her leadership, the Mighty Eagle Band continued the successes started by Mr. Marsh. They were consistent UIL Sweepstakes winners, appeared at the Texas State Marching contest twice and were the Bronze medalist in 1999.

Gina returned to teaching middle school band by accepting a job at Littlefield JH in 2003 where she has had the opportunity to lead the JH band program and still mentor HS students - the best of both possible worlds. In her years at Littlefield, the Maroon Honors Band has been UIL Sweepstakes winners for the past thirteen years and has been selected as Best in Class at the Greater Southwest Music Festival in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019. They were also OPS winners in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2016, placing first in the March and Concert category in 2013.

Gina currently serves as the Region 16 3A/4A MS All-Region Band Coordinator and has been an All-Region Band clinician in Regions 1, 6, and 8. She is a member of ATSSB, Phi Beta Mu, TBA and TMEA. She is a graduate of Clint HS and was a member of the TMEA All-State Band for 4 years on Clarinet. She continued her music education at Baylor University where she studied with Dr. Richard Shanley and Michael Haithcock.

"Preparing and guiding our young musicians from the time they first step into our band halls until the move up to high school band is our most important job. In these

(Continued on Page 15)

(Nominees, continued from Page 14):

uncertain times, as in normal times, the band hall is often their safe place, their comfort zone. We need to not only encourage them to continue with their music education, but to also be safe and look for the light at the end of the tunnel.”



**Class 3A Representative**



**Bonnie Anderson** is the band director at Littlefield High School in Region 16. She is a graduate of Big Spring High School and earned her BMEd from Abilene Christian University and her MMEd from Angelo State University.

She is beginning her 42nd year of teaching. Miss Anderson began her teaching career in Seagraves Texas in 1978 as an assistant to Bill Woods. She was the high school choir director and assisted Mr. Woods with the junior high band. Her 2nd year she began directing the junior high band.

Miss Anderson’s second job was assistant band director and assistant choir director at Big Spring High School for 3 years. She then taught the next 8 years teaching grades 5-12 in Hamlin. Her fourth and final job is Littlefield ISD as Director of Bands from 1992 to the present.

Bonnie is a member of ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, Phi Beta Mu, and TMAA.

When she began teaching, she taught high school choir in Seagraves, taking the choir to UIL Concert/Sightreading Contest. Her choirs earned 1st divisions in concert each of the 3 years she taught in Seagraves. Miss Anderson’s Hamlin bands earned numerous

Sweepstakes awards under her tenure. As the director of bands for Littlefield ISD, under her tutorship, the high school band has earned many UIL Sweepstakes Awards, 15 of the past 16 years were consecutive Sweepstakes Awards. The Littlefield High School Marchin’ Cats earned 4 consecutive trips to the UIL State Marching Band Contest in San Antonio 2009-2015.

The Littlefield High School Band earned several trips to state for TMEA Honor Band Competition and was lucky enough to compete in the OPS state competition in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

She was named the 1992-93 Outstanding Educator by the Hamlin Chamber of Commerce, Woman of the Year by the Littlefield Chamber of Commerce in 2005, and received the UIL Sponsor of Excellence Award in 2018.

“I have loved teaching these past 42 years. I love my kids and want them to love music. I believe it doesn’t matter where you come from, if you want to achieve a goal, set your eyes on it, and let’s work on it together. It is my job to teach my kids how to be respectful to each other. I believe they learn by watching adults, me and the other directors. If I give and treat them with respect, they will do the same. I believe in the spirit of competition, not just to win but to learn how to lose. My band kids are the best kids in school, they know that I will fight for them if they need me. I had an amazing band director, Bill Bradley. I could never be like him, but I sure try to be.

If chosen as your 3A representative, I will work diligently to keep you informed and try to make decisions as if you were by my side. Thank you for taking the time to read my biography and thank you for supporting my effort.”



(Continued on Page 16)



**Cody Knott** is the band director at Caldwell High School in Region 18. He received his Bachelor of Music from Tarleton State University and his Master of Music in Trombone Performance from the University of South Dakota. He served as Assistant

Director at Decatur High School from 2012-2018 and has been at Caldwell since 2018 as Director of Bands and Fine Arts Director. He was Teacher of the Week at Decatur High School in 2012, Rookie Teacher of the Year in 2013 at Decatur High school, Caldwell ISD Bright Star Teacher in 2018-19, and received his Certificate of Ministry in 2020. He and his wife of nine years, Mandy, have one child, Cadence Rey. Cadence was born 14 weeks early, spending 87 days in NICU, but is now a happy and healthy baby.

He is a member of the Association of Texas Small School Bands, Teas Music Educators Association, Texas Music Administrators Conference, Association of Texas Professional Educators, and the National Association for Music Education.

“I believe in the value of our music education in band programs. Students walk into our band halls every day for many different reasons. My philosophy is building and maintaining relationships with students through music. Music is the common bond that binds us together. Band is ever changing with the current climate for adaptation, development and teaching is what every educator needs to work to do for our students. Every music educator wants the best for their students and that is what

we need to all strive to achieve. Small school bands have unique challenges and we must do our best for our students to compromise and advocate for our students. As your Class 3A Representative, I will advocate for you and your students and pledge to do my best for all involved.”



**Charles Gardner** is the band director at Whitesboro High School in Region 24 and has served that role for the district since 2017. Mr. Gardner oversees all aspects of the band program including indoor percussion

and color guard. Mr. Gardner has spent his entire teaching career as a director for ATSSB Bands. Prior to teaching at Whitesboro, he served as the assistant band director/middle school director for Tolar ISD from 2011-2016. During his career, Mr. Gardner has had the opportunity to teach ensembles and students receiving consistent sweepstakes awards, UIL State Solo & Ensemble, ATSSB Region, Area and State band placement, indoor percussion, and advanced to the UIL State Marching Band Contest Finals three times earning bronze in 2017 and silver in 2019.

Mr. Gardner holds a Bachelors degree in Music Education from the University of North Texas. While at UNT, he performed in numerous groups, including the Classical Percussion Ensemble, Steel Band, Green Brigade Marching Band, and the 2011 UNT Indoor Drumline. In addition, he studied with world-renowned percussion educators Mark Ford, Christopher Deane, Ed Smith,

(Continued on Page 17)



(Nominees, continued from Page 16):

and Paul Rennick. In the summer of 2009, Mr. Gardner performed as a member of the Boston Crusaders Drum & Bugle Corps. His professional associations include the Association of Texas Small School Bands, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Associations, Percussion Arts Society, and Innovative Percussion. He resides in Aubrey with his wife, Stephanie, his son Caleb and their dog Tucker.



**Dane Richardson** is the band director at Holliday High School in Region 7. He is a graduate of Angelo State University with a Bachelor's in Music in 2005 and from Texas State University with a Master's in Music Education in 2008. He served in Menard 2005-20008,

Breckenridge 2008-2020, and is currently in Holliday. He was named Breckenridge High School Teacher of the Year in 2011, received the Breckenridge Masonic Lodge Teacher Award in 2017, and was the Breckenridge American Reader's Choice Teacher of the Year Award in 2020. He is a member of ATSSB, TMEA, and TMAA.

Mr. Richardson is married to Lynn and they have two children: Aubrey (6) and Charlie (1).



**Dr. Jennifer Voges** is the band director at Yoakum High School in Region

12. She is in her twenty-third year of teaching and tenth year as a band director in Yoakum. Prior to coming to Yoakum, she was a band director in the Fort Bend and Alvin Independent School Districts. She has also held teaching positions at Texas Tech University, Eastern New Mexico University, and Northern Arizona University. She holds the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from Texas Tech University, the Master of Music Degree from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ, and the Bachelor of Music (Education) degree from Texas Tech University.

As the Assistant director in Yoakum her JH band earned their first Sweepstakes in the history of the school and was a state OPS finalist two out of three years. As head director, the Yoakum HS band has been consistent Sweepstakes winners and have won Outstanding in class at multiple festivals and competitions.

Jennifer is a member of ATSSB, TMEA, TMAA, Mu Phi Epsilon, Kappa Kappa Psi (honorary), and Tau Beta Sigma (honorary). She currently holds the office of Region Coordinator for ATSSB Region 12 and previously served as the Assistant Coordinator.



She now lives in Shiner, TX with her husband Travis, dogs Lady Godiva, Sky, and Jager, and cat Lucy.

"Though I began my career in large schools, I have fallen in love with small town life and serving the needs of ATSSB students. The challenges we face are vastly different than those of our large school colleagues, and I am committed to helping small school directors and students be the best they can be."

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