

Biennial Conference Report

One of the many privileges of serving as President-Elect is the opportunity to attend on behalf of the Association several conferences on Music Education. As I write these opening lines I am between sessions of the 2012 Biennial Music Educators National Conference here in St. Louis. The conference was held at the St. Louis Union Station Marriott. Although Union Station has lost a bit of its destination appeal the Marriot has served as a terrific conference site. The Biennial Conference will return to St. Louis March 27 – 29, 2014, once again at the Union Station Marriot. I have completely enjoyed the sessions that I have attended and have gained an incredible amount of insight on topics that are extremely relevant to issues that affect all of us. I found the sessions on teacher evaluation most helpful as we begin to address this concern in Missouri. President Kevin Lines and I attended sessions on Mentoring that we hope to incorporate and I have gained additional insight into how 21st Century Skills can be implemented into our curriculums.

The keynote speaker at the First General Session of the 2012 Biennial Music Educators National Conference on Thursday, March 29 was Rachel Goslins, executive director of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). Ms. Golsins reported that the committee believes that arts education is key to helping to give all students a high-quality education. However, she said the committee sees arts education as a "wrench" to help repair what is wrong, not as a "flower." Goslins discussed the 2011 PCAH report, *Reinvesting in the Arts: Winning America's Future through Creative Schools*. She said the 18-month study looked at arts education at Title 1 schools in terms of teaching leadership, creativity, and critical thinking. A PDF of this report can be found at www.pcah.gov. I am looking forward to reading this complete report. This is encouraging news!

I would like to thank the NafME-C Chapter at UMSL for their assistance with many of the logistical aspects of the conference. Two highlights of the conference were performances by the Clayton High School Brass Sextet and the Jazz Combo consisting of students from Lindbergh High School and Maplewood Richmond Heights High School.

The Clayton High School Brass Sextet, directed by Jennifer Shenberger, Brass Specialist at Clayton, opened the first General Session on Thursday morning. The members of the sextet are: Benji Goldsmith, *Trumpet*; Apoorva Sharma, *Trumpet*; Marc Ritter, *Horn*; Jason Riss, *Trombone*; Peter Grayson, *Euphonium*; Jonathan Waldman, *Tuba*. Their performance was so very musical and a real tribute to the outstanding music education that is taking place in the Clayton School District.

On Thursday evening a Jazz Combo whose personnel all share membership in the Missouri All-State Jazz Ensemble performed for the President's Reception. The combo is made up of the following students from Lindbergh High School, David Wyss Director: Will Gerdel, *Bass*; Matt Leininger, *Tenor Sax*; Ryan Torpea, *Trumpet*; Andrew Bushway, *Drums*. Zach Arias, *Guitar* hails from Maplewood Richmond Heights High School, Jason Harris, Director. They played for about 40 minutes presenting a varied repertoire of standards and original compositions. A Yamaha representative was in attendance to demonstrate their long distance learning technology called "Remote Live." This technology is delivered through a Yamaha Disklavier piano by

means of Skype feed from New York. I thought the Yamaha representative was going to sign all of the members of the combo on the spot. He watched and listened as they warmed up and was asking a lot of questions. Everyone was impressed by their performance. Again this is a testament to the wonderful education taking place at Lindbergh and Maplewood Richmond Heights High Schools. Bravo to all these students and their teachers.

Missouri was well presented at the conference with presentations by Wendy Sims, University of Missouri, Columbia; Chris Baumgartner, University of Missouri, Columbia; Kenneth Jeffs University of Missouri, Columbia; and Joseph Parisi, University of Missouri, Kansas City. The President-Elect of NAFME, Dr. Glenn Nierman, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, is a Missouri native. Dr. Nierman is from Wright City, Missouri and attended Warren County R-II High School. Dr. Nierman will begin his term as President in 2014. It is my intent to invite him to our 2015 In-Service Workshop as the keynote speaker.

I attended the monthly meeting of the NAFME-C Chapter at Southeast Missouri State University on February, 23. Dr. Robert Conger is the Chapter sponsor, Daniel Wright is Chapter President and Aaron Fox is Vice President. The chapter membership has twenty dedicated young future Music Educators. I spoke with them about the importance of advocacy for our profession and shared with them the different teaching positions that I have been honored to have over the years. They asked some very thoughtful questions, we ate pizza and talked about the future of Music Education. On the drive home I was completely fired up and excited to think about how these young people are the next generation of Music Educators. I hope my grandchildren will be fortunate enough to have them as their Music teacher.

Speaking of advocacy I encourage all of you to sign up for *NAfME Advocacy Groundswell!* The purpose of the *NAfME Advocacy Groundswell* is to cultivate an online community of NAFME members from across the country interested in participating in advocacy initiatives, engaging in discussions about advocacy and regularly digesting advocacy news. By signing up for Groundswell you will receive advocacy information via a variety of digestible communication tools, including blog, Facebook, Twitter, RSS and blast e-mail. *Groundswell* provides timely, fluid, and dynamic advocacy intelligence focused on relevant news and research reporting, state advocacy stories, digital media accessibility, resource integration, professional development, and interactive advocacy opportunities for NAFME members. I am finding it difficult to stay on top of all of the latest legislative news and events concerning Music Education and Education in general. Although there is limited time to sit at the computer and read all of these reports I find it easy to scan and stay better informed.

A growing concern for all of us is the issue of teacher evaluation. If you find your district considering a new approach to this issue and you need help understanding the implications and need advice as to offering criteria for evaluation please contact Dr. Daniel Hellman, Missouri State University and our Missouri State Chair for SMTE. Dr. Hellman is extremely knowledgeable in this matter and has helped author the NAFME position statement on the issue.

It looks like HB1388, Teacher Tenure, has been referred to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. No action has been taken. It may be time to write your representative if

they are a member of this committee. If you do not know who your representative is visit www.house.mo.gov, enter your zip code and you will find your representative.

As summer approaches plans continue to be made for the 75th MMEA In-Service Workshop. President Kevin Lines has set in motion many initiatives that will make this conference a memorable experience for all. I think I speak on behalf of the entire MMEA Leadership team, we appreciate your comments and input into offerings and ideas for meaningful and educational clinics/sessions that will enhance your teaching. Please contact any of us by visiting the MMEA web site: www.mmea.net and then use the link associated with the appropriate Vice President. If you would like to discuss a clinic session please feel free to call me at: 314.516.2263. I have established a specific e-mail account for MMEA, brandesg.mmea@gmail.com and I encourage you to contact me with ideas and comment how MMEA can best serve you and Music Education.

In closing I would like to encourage everyone to make application to perform at the 75th MMEA conference. The MMEA board voted in August of 2011 to allow a one year waiver and allow open auditions in celebration of our 75th Anniversary. So regardless of the last time you were selected to perform at MMEA you are eligible to make application for 2013. Watch the MMEA web site for the performance application. Please give me a call at any time if you have questions or if I can be of service to you and your program. Best wishes for the remainder of the school year and a productive summer.