



April 2009

The President's Message

Greg Robinson – LASMTA President

Welcome back to the second semester of the 2008/2009 school year. As usual time is on the move and we are caught in the tide. January through May of each year is usually our most active period. This year is not an exception. On January 10th and 11th in partnership with L.A.U. S.D. Arts Education Branch we supported the Thelonious MONK Institute of Jazz at Hamilton High School. The activity was well attended and was a positive two days of Jazz education and fun. The Piano Festival on March 7th will be our second activity of the 2009 school year. This will also be held at Hamilton High School and will be hosted by Lea Oliver. Next, on our calendar is Solo and Ensemble Festival on April 25th also to be held at Hamilton High School. This usually is our most highly attended activity of the year. Every year the response from Parents, Teachers, and Students to this festival has been outstanding. Our goal this year is to have at least one student from every middle and high school to participate. Please, look ahead and plan to attend.

On May the 2nd Panorama High School will host our Annual Scholarship Auditions. This will be our first activity of this type in the valley and we thank Steve Burch and David Yakenson for their time and support. May is also the month of our year end Gala or closing event. The proposal dates are May 26th or 27th. The exact location and date will be communicated soon to all members.

Last of all, as you know this is an election year. I will not be returning as your president. It has been an exciting and positive time for me. I have learned much and grown in many ways. Thank you for your support. Its time for new leadership and new ideas to take us on into the future.



LASMTA Officers

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|--|
| President | Greg Robinson | greg.robinson@lasmta.org |
| Vice President | Mark Johnsen | mark.johnsen@lasmta.org |
| Secretary | Julie West | julie.west@lasmta.org |
| Treasurer | Fran Anderson | fran.anderson@lasmta.org |

New Teacher Mentoring

Mark Johnsen- LASMTA Vice President

There are many differences between Music teachers and most of our other colleagues at our schools. One big difference is that there are usually several others who teach the other disciplines, who can serve as mentors to new teachers or teachers in different situations. Most of us are either the only music teacher at their school, or the only one doing the type of music that we teach. In either case, it is hard to get help in a timely way when questions and problems come up. LASMTA has many experienced teacher who are happy to be "just a phone call or email away". There are other teachers (most are new, but some are experienced but in new situations), who have been matched up with one or more teachers who regularly offer help and resources. If you are in either of these situations, please email our Vice President - Mark Johnsen at mjohnsen@lausd.net to get connected.



LAUSD's Honors Music Festivals

This year's Middle School Honors Music Festival will take place on Sunday, May 3 at 6:00pm at the Nokia Theatre in downtown Los Angeles. Tickets are free and available at the door. This is a wonderful time to support our music programs and celebrate the success of our students.

For more information, contact Julie Corallo at julie.corallo@lausd.net. Conductors will be John Roscigno from CSUN, Heather Gold from Manhattan Beach Middle School, and Vince Womack from Foshay LC.

The Elementary Honors Music Festival will take place on Sunday, April 26 at 4:00pm at CSULA's Luckman Theatre. Tickets are free but limited. Contact Steve Venz at steve.venz@lausd.net.

Upcoming Events

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| Tuesday March 31 | Nominations close for LASMTA officers email planetgreg56@verizon.net to nominate |
| Wednesday April 1 | Ballots mailed to members |
| Tuesday April 14 | Meeting at Hamilton H.S. |
| Saturday April 25 | Solo & Ensemble Festival (Entry Forms-Due April 1) |
| Saturday May 2 | Scholarship Auditions at Panorama H.S. |
| End of May | Year-end Activity at the Grammy Foundation |



*The following is an excerpt from the
2008-2009 LAUSD Music Educators Handbook*

DISCIPLINE/ CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Be prepared

Have your lesson plan and needed materials (new music...) ready when class begins to set the tone and not give students a chance to stray. Each rehearsal should be educational and enjoyable. A well paced lesson gives little opportunity for students to misbehave. Have clear goals and let the class know – agenda on the board. Keep announcements short – also put important dates and deadlines on the board. Keep to the agenda if possible and make transitions smooth. Have students efficiently assist in classroom tasks such as passing out music, collecting papers...

Set clear expectations and rules

Take time at the beginning of the year to set clear expectations of behavior. Have high standards and expectations for your students. Either decide on your rules before or have the students help set the rules and then post them.

Example:

Class Rules

1. When the tardy bell rings, be in your seat ready to play with instrument, music & pencil.
2. Be respectful of the teacher and fellow classmates.
3. Raise your hand and wait to be called upon.
4. Care for and play only your instrument.
5. Do not bring food, drinks or gum in the classroom.
6. Wait for the teacher, not the bell, to dismiss the class.

Be consistent and fair

Once the rules are established, be consistent and fair in class. Do not demean a student, remain calm. Learn your school's policy of consequences and align your classroom rules. Some consequences for misbehavior in rehearsal can be: note sent home, phone call home, lunch detention, send student to a "buddy teacher". Try to get a misbehaving student back on track but if that isn't possible, remove the student. One student should not rule the class.

Be proactive

Keep your eyes open and get off the podium to see what it's like in different parts of the ensemble. Don't spend too much time with a section without giving the rest of the class something to do (finger your part, write in the measure numbers...) A "look" can sometimes stop a behavior without stopping a lesson. Compliment good behavior and achievement. If you are positive with a smile (even if you don't feel like it) and encouraging comments it can spread to the class.

* *Contribution: Julie West; Palms MS*



Thank you to all who have contributed to this month's newsletter. If you would like to make a submission to future newsletters, please forward them to Michael Farkas at Bigmikers@gmail.com.

Julie West honored with the CMEA "Don Schmeer/Byron Hoyt" Band Educator Award

At this year's statewide CMEA conference, Ms. Julie West, thirty year LAUSD teaching veteran and our own LASMTA secretary, received the "Don Schmeer/Byron Hoyt" Band Educator Award.

As a mentor and master teacher, Ms. West has been responsible for preparing dozens of teachers-to-be for stepping into their own classroom (including me). During the past thirty years, she has also instilled the love of music in the soul of thousands of junior high and middle school children.

She decided at an early age to follow her passion. "I decided to be a music teacher when I was in junior high but I was sure I didn't want to teach that age -too squirrely", she commented during a recent discussion I had with her. But when she student taught at Mark Twain Junior High school under the guidance of Sue Edwards, she knew she was in the right place.

In the ensuing years, Ms. West has constantly reinvented herself and has brought some wonderful programs and activities to her students. One of the most exciting of these that I've experienced is the Friday noon recitals. During the week prior to the recital, kids sign up to play solos and in small ensembles at lunch in the room while their friends eat lunch. The recital is usually mixed with beginners and advanced players. Selections may include anything from *Mary Had a Little Lamb* to a Bach cello suite. This gives the youngsters the opportunity to perform in a non-threatening environment and prepares them for other solo situations.

So what keeps her going? Knowing that every day, she will see over three hundred kids that will challenge her to be the best teacher that she can. This inspires her to constantly seek new and innovative ways to reach them and bring out their best.

Her advice to new teachers is to never stop learning. Take advantage of professional organizations and network with other, more experienced teachers. She still attends every workshop and conference that she is able to. Don't be afraid to seek out the knowledge of others. And in the classroom, keep the kids playing. When students are playing, "they don't have time to talk or get into trouble." She also stresses the importance of coming to class well prepared and with high standards for yourself and the students.

In addition to her position of secretary in the LASMTA, she is a member of ASTA, SCSBOA, and MENC. She has been the SCSBOA Honor Band Manager and presented at both CMEA and SCSBOA workshops.