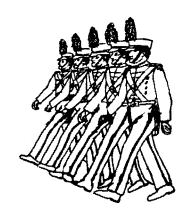
# National Association of Hilitary Marching Bands

N.A.M.M.B.



# Quality Marching Questions & Answers

Clinic Presented at

Texas Bandmasters Association Convention
July 27-30, 1997



May 8, 1997

Dear Fellow Music Educators,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to this clinic at the 1997 Texas Bandmasters Convention. We hope that this material might be of use to you in the education of your marching band. This booklet and clinic are in response to the many questions that directors are faced with each year in the preparation and execution of the military style of marching band.

We offer a special thank you to each of our panel members for the time and effort extended in responding to the questionnaire and for their participation in this clinic. A special thank you is extended to John "Pete" Kunkel, who will serve as moderator, and to Waymon Bullock, Executive Secretary of the Association, for their efforts in coordinating and preparing this clinic.

In 1979, the National Association of Military Marching Bands was formed to promote and preserve the military precision style of performance among marching bands of America and to encourage the superior performance of traditional march music from band literature.

We extend to you a special invitation to become a part of this outstanding organization. The 1997 annual meeting is held at Sam Rayburn Country Club on August 16. Please feel free to fill out a membership form and join us for the dinner and business meeting.

Thank you for your interest in the National Association of Military Marching Bands and please feel free to call on us.

Sincerely,

Jim Jones President I would like to thank the Board of Texas Bandmasters Association for giving N.A.M.B. the opportunity and the time in the convention schedule to present this clinic.

I also would like to thank Tatum Music Company of Longview, Texas and the officers of N.A.M.B. for co-sponsoring the clinic and for the handout that each of you received.

The questions that are to be discussed in the clinic and printed in the handout are ideas, suggestions and questions submitted by Neil Grant, Tatum Music Company; Waymon Bullock, Executive Secretary of N.A.M.M.B. and past president of Texas Bandmasters Association and myself, Pete Kunkel. We hope that the information in the handout and the discussion of these questions and answers will be beneficial to you.

A very special thanks to the panel members who are willing to take their time to share their ideas and their teaching techniques with us. Their record at UIL-N.A.M.M.B. and Invitational Contests is tremendously impressive and certainly qualifies them to serve on a panel discussing "Successful and Quality Marching Techniques".

Let me introduce the panel to you:

<u>James Coffman</u> - New Boston High School, New Boston, Texas
He has Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Education Degrees from East Texas
State University. James has been teaching at New Boston High School for 13 years. He
has been band director for 8 of those years and high school principal for 5. New
Boston's band under Mr. Coffman has received a first division at N.A.M.M.B. for four
years.

New Boston's Band won Best in Class in Class AAA at N.A.M.M.B. in 1993 and 1996. The band won The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band Award for Best Drill Design at N.A.M.M.B. in Class A-AAA in 1993 and 1994. In 1996, the band won The Joe Tom Haney Award for best performance of Traditional March Music at N.A.M.M.B. in Class A-AAA. New Boston's Band was selected as The Class AAA's Texas Music Education Association Texas State Honors Band.

<u>Doice Grant</u> - Tatum Music Company, formerly band director at Center High School. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. He taught at Center for eight years. He was President of N.A.M.M.B. 1991 through 1993.

The Center Band received a first division at N.A.M.M.B. Contest for three years. They won Best in Class in Class AAA at N.A.M.M.B. in 1990 and 1991. The Center Band won the Joe Tom Haney Award for best performance of Traditional March Music at N.A.M.M.B. in Class A-AAA in 1992.

<u>Jim Jones</u> - Cleveland High School, Cleveland Texas. He received his Bachelors and Masters Degrees from Stephen F. Austin State University. Jim has taught at Cleveland High School since 1984. He is currently the President of N.A.M.M.B. For the past six years The Royal Braves Band has received a first division rating from every judge at the N.A.M.M.B. Contest. The Cleveland Band was selected Outstanding Military Marching Band at N.A.M.M.B. for four years. In 1992, the band won the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band Award for Best Drill Design at N.A.M.M.B. in Class 4A-5A.

Bobby Richardson - Sabine High School, Liberty City, Texas. He is a former band director at Longview High School and Lufkin High School. He has a Bachelors of Music Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. From 1993 through 1995, Bobby was president of N.A.M.M.B. The Lufkin band received first division ratings at N.A.M.M.B. in 1994 and 1995. The Longview band received first division ratings at N.A.M.M.B. from 1988 through 1993. Longview won the Fightin' Texas Aggie Award for Best Drill Design in Class 4A-5A from 1988 through 1992. The Longview band won Best in Class in 5A at N.A.M.M.B. in 1991 and 1992. The band won the Joe Tom Haney Award for best Performance of Traditional March Music at N.A.M.M.B. in Class 4A-5A in 1993.

<u>Val Rose</u> - Nederland High School, Nederland, Texas. He has a Bachelors of Music and Masters of Arts Degrees from Stephen F. Austin State University. He is director of Nederland High School Band for eleven years. Val served as first president of N.A.M.M.B. in 1987 and served as president through 1989. The Nederland High School Band has received a first division at N.A.M.M.B. Contest for five years. The band won Best in Class at N.A.M.M.B. in Class 4A in 1988, 1995 and 1996.

<u>Scott Williams</u> - New Diana High School, New Diana, Texas. Scott has an Associate of Applied Arts Degree from Kilgore College and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. He was former band director at Pittsburg High School, Tatum High School and now completing his third year at New Diana. Pittsburg's band received a first division at N.A.M.M.B. New Diana High School has received first division at N.A.M.M.B. for three years. New Diana won Best in Class in Class AA at N.A.M.M.B. in 1994, 1995 and 1996.

I hope you enjoy the clinic and find the handout a valuable resource that will aid you in your teaching.

Thank you for your attendance.

John "Pete" Kunkel

Past President of T.B.A (1982-1983)

Texas Bandmaster of the Year (1994)

#### **Marching**

#### 1. What part of the foot do you cross the yardline with?

Williams: Middle or Arch.

**Coffman:** The back edge of the heel to the back edge of the line.

Rose: Heel.

**Jones:** The middle of the foot. **Grant:** The arch (middle). **Richardson:** Arch of the foot.

#### 2. What is stride?

Williams: 30 inch step, your lower body-from the waist down-smooth roll your feet heel to toe.

<u>Coffman:</u> Technically, stride is the distance/length of each step. When marching with a strict military stride, the distance would obviously be 30" to obtain six equal steps every five yards.

**Rose:** The length, style of marching steps.

**Jones:** The distance a marcher takes with each step. This needs to be uniform length for alignment.

**Grant:** A formalized gait or long glide-step used in military marching bands. It is a 30" step where you roll heel to toe to keep your upper body from bouncing (keep your head from bobbing).

**Richardson:** Uniform length of step, combined with hitting ground in tempo with like foot movement.

#### 3. How do you teach stride?

Williams: March a lot.

Coffman: Stride is obviously very important in order to maintain exact alignment on every step, not just as you "hit" the yard line. Therefore, stride is a daily fundamental exercise. We begin teaching stride in a gym or on the street where 60" intervals are marked in order to give more reference points in the beginning phases of stride development. As the student begin to establish a feel for the proper length of step we obviously move to the field where reference points are lengthened to the normal five yard intervals. Throughout the process, stress is placed on the length of each step and the need for there to be six "equal" steps between each yard line. At various times, we may have students march with eyes closed to check stride, beginning with shorter distances and advancing to 18 to 24 steps.

**Rose:** I want a smooth rhythmic flow demonstrating control and dignity.

**Jones:** By marching from one yard line to the next with eyes closed and by using painted pivot points. We also march the length of the field using evenly spaced, 30 inch steps with the middle of the right foot hitting the line.

**Grant:** Stripe off the sidewalk in 30" spacings to help develop the correct length of step. Also, teach students to roll from heel to toe for a smooth glide step. Use upperclassmen to demonstrate in addition to demonstrating yourself.

**Richardson:** Put marks down on the field and pavement at 30" intervals and use repetition until the band has good stride.

#### 4. How do you teach the student to march in rhythm?

Williams: Keep it simple, march a lot. Feel pulse by singing the drill.

Coffman: We begin in the younger grades with a process of simply marking time while orally counting cadence--left, left, left, right, left. We then proceed to marching forward while counting cadence with a percussion tap. Next, we add marching forward while playing simple scales on the beat of the cadence--left, left, right, left. From here, we proceed to various rhythms using scales and finally to marches.

Rose: Listen to the music! Think of playing bass drum with the feet.

**Jones:** By marching with clicks, cadence or music everywhere we march. For students having difficulty, I hand them recordings of march music to practice keeping time at home. I also assign an older student to work with them one on one. Time and repetition contribute greatly to mastering marching in rhythm. **Grant:** The "number of marching miles" you put on the band helps develop the pulse as well as a good percussion section using a cadence or subdividing the beat. You can also hook a metronome to an amplifier to broadcast the beat. Most importantly -march, march, march, march, march...

**Richardson:** Practice hitting the ground with and without lines using drum taps with and without music.

#### 5. Do students keep horns up during countermarches?

Williams: Flutes down when going through the band. Trombones down four counts only. All others up.

<u>Coffman:</u> All instruments except flutes and trombones keep horns up during countermarches.

Rose: Yes, when room to do so.

**Jones:** Yes, when the band is in company fronts this can hurt the balance of the group, as well as uniformity in horns up. Students can successfully play during countermarches.

**Grant:** Those who do: clarinets, saxes, trumpets, baritones, tubas, percussion. Those who don't: flutes, french horns, trombones (aim instruments at the ground but keep playing).

**Richardson:** Yes, with the exception of flute which slides their instrument across face.

#### 6. What type(s) countermarch do you teach? Explain length of step, etc.?

Williams: 4 steps-whole, half, half, whole step back. One step over the yard line, left foot (right turn) countermarch. Spin on 1 & 3.

<u>Coffman</u>: We use a four count countermarch executed with the left foot 1, 3, or 5 steps over the yard line. The four movements include: pivot (right flank), close (create deadstep), pivot (right flank, and step (full 30" stride out of maneuver). All steps are a regular 30" stride.

Rose: Standard military. Two 15" steps. No squat!

**Jones:** We execute the countermarch one step past the yard line. We take one full 30 inch step past the yard line, then a 15 inch step to the right, another 15 inch step, then a 30 inch step back to the yard line.

**Grant:** All types: to the left, to the right, 2 half-steps and/or two whole steps. **Richardson:** I use both left and right countermarches with continuous movement 1/2 steps. I also always try to countermarch away from stands.

#### 7. What do you teach to assure that pivot points do not drift?

**Williams:** 1) March files down yard line, step two countermarching and foot stays on yard line, 2) Set up colored dots on pivot points during practice.

<u>Coffman</u>: We teach students to pull the foot doing the pivot over and somewhat across the line of march of the other foot. It is also stressed to march directly to the pivot and turn squarely at the pivot.

**Jones:** I place seniors at pivot areas as we march out to the practice field and paint dots on the paved marching field. We also constantly remind the students to be aware of the pivot points.

**Grant:** Use a marker (like a baton) to mark the pivot point for files and ranks who tend to drift. Also teach bands that there is a tendency to move the pivot point and that they must concentrate on keeping the pivot point from moving out. The band will learn by repetition and constant instruction.

**Richardson:** Head and eyes up-toes go to the center of the body-full stride into and out of turn-on follow me turns toes should hit exactly the same point-individual repetition until this is accomplished.

#### 8. What type of "to the rears" do you use and how do you teach it?

Williams: One count spin at time foot hits the ground. Not stop-turn. Place foot few inches over (left and right) of pivot point on toe and spin at point toe hits the ground.

**Coffman:** We use "to the rears" that turn to the left and to the right. We teach to slightly cut the stride of the step of the "to the rear", pivot on the balls of both feet and take a full 30" stride out of the "to the rear".

**Rose:** Turn on ball of both feet, let trailing foot lift slightly to move over and keep file alignment centered.

**Jones:** We use a "quick turn" to the rear. It is taught by placing one foot in front of the other, then turning on the ball of the foot. There is a slight pause followed by a great amount of force in the turn. A great amount of practice is done so that it is on count and is done at the same tempo and speed. We use the word 'pop" to convey the idea of a snappy turn.

Grant: Take a 30" step and pivot on the ball of the foot. After the 180-degree turn, step off with a 32" step to make up for the inches lost in pivot. Teach the students to execute with tremendous speed on the pivot and then wait for the next beat to step off. The weight must be evenly distributed to keep balance during the turn. Teach students to keep the body erect; do not squat. I taught "to-the-rears" to the left and to the right.

**Richardson:** I use left and right to the rears. Leave toes on the ground during turn, and take a full stride into and out of the turn. Again, individual repetition until this is accomplished.

#### 9. Explain your use of the flank and how you teach it.

Williams: Change of direction to the left or right. Can be used as full band maneuver but not recommended. Also by ranks or files. Take full step into turn-pivot immediately as foot hits ground-full step out of turn. Watch for leaning-don't give away direction of turn by leaning.

<u>Coffman</u>: We use flanks, both left and right, to create a 90-degree change of direction of march or to enter obliques which requires a 45-degree change of direction. We ask students to pull the foot during the pivot over and somewhat across the line of march and to turn the corner squarely with the entire body. A full 30" stride is stressed into and out of the pivot (change of direction). It should seem as if the individual is continuing to march straight ahead until the change of direction occurs.

**Jones:** We use the flank to do a quick change of direction. It is taught by counts and going from point A to point B as quickly as possible within the count and tempo. We use the same general idea as the left or right to the rear but only a 90-degree turn instead of 180-degrees.

Grant: Teach all types of flanks (left foot, right foot, wrap leg) and use whichever best fits a specific place in your drill. Teach students to pivot on the ball of the foot while not moving the pivot point, execute quickly, and then wait for the pulse before putting the foot on the ground. The body must remain erect with the correct posture.

**Richardson:** I only use flanks on the right foot when I want to go left and I use wrap legs when I want to go right. I try to never use flanks on the left foot to the right. I practice flanks with the group and follow me until pivot points are uniform.

#### 10. How do you teach step-offs?

Williams: Blast offs! We explode out for kick offs. Left foot full 30 inches, don't bend right knee this will cause head to dip. Your weight should be on right foot. Used coke can be placed directly in front of students left foot and kick can. Toe skims the ground. Forward march whistle blows we kick off & 1 kicking off on & placing foot down on 1.

<u>Coffman:</u> We teach the student to keep the posture straight and tall, kick the left foot forward pointed straight ahead about 4- 6" parallel to the ground, and push forward with the ball of the right foot to begin the forward motion. Posture is stressed throughout the teaching of the step-off. Students are cautioned to keep the upper part of the body smooth and fluid (don't bounce) while the left foot/leg creates the sharpness or "pop". Stress is also placed in executing the kick with precision and exact timing.

**Rose:** Keeping knee straight and foot parallel to the ground, kick left foot forward on 4th count after start of signal. Push off with right foot and hit ground with left foot on 5th count.

**Jones:** We use the "zip" kick off. This is when the foot zips out across the grass in front of the marcher. It makes a zip sound when done correctly. The toe is pointed out and down during the kick off and the kick off is done with a count. Students must keep their foot close to the ground when they zip their foot out and then complete the maneuver by stretching their step to complete the 30 inches (zip-step).

**Grant:** I used a kick-step (shoot the left foot out and wait for the next pulse to put the foot on the ground). The toe should be pointed and the body should not crouch. I demonstrated and had my best marchers demonstrate.

**Richardson:** We practice kicking out on "and" and hitting the ground on "one". We work these two beats until everyone is in rhythm and has like foot placement. I like the toe extended toward the ground and no more than 3 or 4 inches off the ground when kicking out. The body does not lean forward or rare back.

#### 11. How do you teach halts?

<u>Williams</u>: Drag Halt (Right foot on yard line drag left foot). Fullstep into halt (R.F.) hitting yard line, left foot-hold in place for split second then pop up to right foot. Watch for bending knees and making body drop. Also control of body is very important.

<u>Coffman</u>: We use a "freeze halt". Students are taught to stop the forward motion with the right foot in front and the left behind. The one count freeze is followed by a sharp "close" by popping the left foot beside the right foot. Posture is stressed throughout the teaching of the halt. Students are cautioned to keep the upper part of the body smooth and fluid (don't bounce) while the left foot/leg creates the sharpness or "pop".

**Rose:** Stay in tempo. Keep 30" stride. Plant left foot firmly enough to stir up dust. Do not move.

Jones: Halts are taught with count. The right foot hits the yard line, the left foot freezes for 1/2 count then is snapped into place. Be sure and watch foot placement. The left foot sometimes is not perpendicular to the ground.

Grant: I did a drag halt (plant the right foot and drag the left foot behind. Then click the heels together while leaving the toes pointed at a 45-degree angle.)

1) Demonstrate and have students demonstrate; 2) Practice, practice, practice.

Richardson: Again, I isolate the last two counts and practice planting the right foot on the first count and closing the left foot on the second count. It is important not to chop the stride on the plant step of the halt or to rush to the plant step.

#### 12. What is carriage-body-instrument?

**Williams:** Carriage is upper body position. Instrument should come to the head so that hat-shoulders-chest-stomach are in line. All instruments (angle, position) should be uniform.

<u>Coffman</u>: Carriage is the posture utilized to create a look of pride and dignity. All moving marching fundamentals are executed from the position of "attention"; therefore, requiring the individual to utilize excellent posture/carriage in order to

maintain the look of pride. At the "still" position of attention, the student should have feet together, stomach in, shoulders back and chin up. Instruments are treated as extensions of the body; therefore, they are extremely important in regard to carriage. Like instruments should be exact and uniform in regard to carriage positions in order to give an overall uniform look of the marching unit. We ask flutes, trumpets, marching french horns, trombones, trumpets, etc. to keep the instrument parallel to the ground. The long slender parts of the sax and bassclarinet bodies should be perpendicular to the ground. Neck straps should be adjusted to allow the proper instrument carriage and allow the chin to remain up. The teaching of carriage begins with the position of attention without instruments and progresses through carrying the instrument to cadence and finally marching and playing with excellent carriage fundamentals.

Rose: Uniformity.

**Jones:** Carriage for the body or instrument is the uniform way each person carries themselves and holds their instrument.

**Grant:** Body: an upright, prideful position of the marcher's body. Each instrument's carriage is different and each instrument has a different playing position compared to the marching position.

Instrument Flute/Piccolo Clarinet Sax/Bass Clar. Trumpet	Playing parallel to ground 45 degree angle to body parallel to body parallel to ground	Marching (not playing) held against right arm held against right arm neck over right shoulder also parallel to ground with mouthpiece tucked next to elbow and horn resting against hip
French Horn	parallel to ground with right hand	held under right arm with bell facing back
Trombone	holding bell parallel to ground	also parallel to ground while resting on right
Baritone	facing forward with	hip with slide forward horn vertical on right
Sousaphone -	bottom bow touching lower stomach bell aimed perfectly forward as instrument is designed to fit the	shoulder with bell forward same as playing
Percussion	body normal playing position with sticks or mallets	sticks held similar to baton or flute against right arm

Richardson: Body: Perfect posture-stand tall-chin up-shoulders back-stomach in.

Instrument: Perfect playing position, while maintaining perfect posture. Instruments level where possible ex. flute, trumpet, trombone, etc. Like instruments use exact same carriage.

#### 13. How do you teach it?

<u>Williams</u>: We like the saying taught at SFA drum major camp: FEET together, STOMACH in, CHEST out, SHOULDERS back, CHIN up, EYES with pride!!! Practice stride and carriage separately with younger marchers, and constant attention or daily attention needs to be paid to this. It's fundamental! Coffman: See #12

**Rose:** Stand at attention like a marine. Maintain that posture and bearing while marching.

Jones: Body carriage is taught at the beginning of the year by making each student stand against a wall. Placing the head, shoulders, rear end and heels against it. When this is done the body is straight (that is if the wall is straight!) Have them to step one pace out and maintain that same carriage. Then take them to the practice field and put them in company fronts and march them. Seniors also teach this in summer freshmen rehearsals. Constant reminders help reinforce the concept of good body carriage. Each section is shown the correct way to carry their instrument with reminders throughout the season to maintain proper instrument carriage.

**Grant:** Start in August with a week of marching fundamentals practice. I used older students and also assistant band directors to monitor and teach. Each day of band practice I correct poor carriage and used my best marchers as examples and small group leaders. (Learned from Mr. Kunkel)

Richardson: I demonstrate what I want and then demand and accept nothing less.

#### 14. How important is execution in your teaching?

Williams: Ultimately, it's everything. I teach uniformity on all aspects of marching. Use upper classmen to help in teaching fundamentals. We have snap competition in summer band camp, this is fun for the students. We compete on everything by sections (trumpets, trombones. etc.) in Summer band camp.

Coffman: Obviously, execution of all fundamentals is the key to creating a uniform marching unit. All fundamentals must be executed with intensity, pop, and drive in order to create a performance that possesses intensity and drive. Execution must occur uniformly in order to create a "precision" marching unit.

Jones: Execution is the difference between a average band and an outstanding band. To raise the level of the band so they might compete against a band of a larger size, the smaller group must be more polished to be noticed. Execution of every step as well as every note separates the good from the better.

**Grant:** Again, I played in Mr. Kunkel's band where execution was so important. I learned that it gives the band an exciting and uniform look to execute exactly the same. Execution was extremely important.

**Richardson:** Extremely important.

#### 15. Explain the execution you teach as it relates to the pulse.

Williams: Well they all have to hit the beat at the same time, marching is a lot of drill work or repetition. Great marching comes from great playing. Many times the pulse is good until they start playing. Know your music. Again, practice with just percussion playing and students singing their parts.

<u>Coffman:</u> Execution of fundamental should be exactly in time to create a uniform execution of maneuvers. We execute on the beat and stress precision in execution.

**Jones:** Everything the marching band does must be on a certain count. The band is rehearsed with counts. Students say the counts out loud, then it is placed with the music and certain notes are circled on the printed music to show each student where their turn, countermarch, etc. is executed. Before any contest each student hands in a written paper explaining their part in the drill and every count. This is done to make sure they know their count, and to hand to any alternate that might march in their position.

Grant: I had the student pivot as fast as possible immediately on the pivot point and then "freeze" until the next pulse. For example, a countermarch is "turn-freeze; turn-freeze". Students need to be careful to keep their bodies perfectly straight. Don't let them squat. (In my opinion, the squat is not good carriage.)

Richardson: I break all turns into down beats, with the foot hitting the ground on the down beat and the execution is always completed before the up beat while maintaining a steady pulse.

#### 16. What is military bearing and how important is it?

Williams: Military bearing I believe is a combination of all the above. It's your entire body position. All aspects are important-don't skip steps.

<u>Coffman:</u> The atmosphere that is displayed by the ensemble is extremely important. A serious looking group emitting pride, intensity, and dignity really enhances to overall performance.

**Rose:** The style for me is the dignified style of the American military. Very important.

**Jones:** Each movement and each procedure that the marching band executes must be uniform. Using military bearing, each procedure is addressed and may be carried out without additional questions. You hand each student the answers and have them carry them out in a quick military fashion and thus, you may cover more information.

**Grant:** It is the mental attitude of a fine military marching band. It combines proper carriage, mental concentration, effort, eyes straight ahead, and a serious countenance. It signifies initially the quality of the organization. It is the audience's and judge's first impression. It is very important.

**Richardson:** I feel that military bearing is the attitude and demeanor the band projects to the audience or on lookers. I feel it is extremely important as it is the truest image of the band. It must reflects pride, determination, and confidence.

#### How important is attitude-commitment-determination-effort? 17.

Williams: Students must want to do something to succeed at it. To be a champion you need all of these. These factors will make you a winner or will keep you from reaching your goals. My favorite quote from Mr. Jimmy Yancey (my Jr. High Director) "Give me two months-My band will believe they can march through brick-they Might Not be able to, but they will Believe They Can. Notice the words might not.

Coffman: All of these components are essential to create a successful ensemble. The difficulty of drill, music, etc. creates the need for long term growth of skills; therefore, the persistence of students in regard to a good attitude, deep commitment, strong determination, and maximum effort allows the ensemble to grow steadily to a high level of performance.

Rose: Attitude is about 90% of success in anything.

Jones: These are four characteristics of an outstanding band. Attitude-Without the right attitude a good band can never be great. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Your band must have the correct attitude in order to perform the highest standards and to win consistently. You, the director, instill the attitude in your band. Commitment-A band is only as strong as its weakest link. Each student must be committed to do the best job they can possibly do at every rehearsal. This is demonstrated by the director and the more experienced students. The younger students endeavor to do the same as their peers. Make sure the leaders are leading in the correct manner. Determination-Set goals at the beginning of the year and put them in the rehearsal hall where they can see them daily. Remind them of their commitments and challenge them daily so that they can always see their goals. Effort-Each director has questioned how much effort their band gives them at a given rehearsal. Remind the students that this is not your rehearsal it is theirs and they may choose how much is accomplished at each rehearsal. The end result is a quality performance and the ratings at a contest. A sign in our band hall says 110% concentration and effort. Band rehearsal are compared to going to church. If you want to go, then something will be gained from the service. However, if you are made to go, not very much will be gained. Grant: In a military band, these qualities are everything. Commitment-Each teacher's and student's mind-set should be for excellence. Determination-Each teacher and student should not be deterred from reaching that level of excellence. (No matter what obstacles arise) Effort-The student and teacher must be committed and determined to give tremendous effort every day.

Richardson: Most important aspect of a military or any other band for that matter.

How do you achieve uniformity in fundamentals-carriage-spacing-alignment? 18. Williams: We strive fundamentals!!! This is where most of us including myself go wrong. We want to teach a drill or a hard maneuver in marching. By working fundamentals every rehearsal you will get past sticking points. Coffman: All of these skills are essential to promote a precision marching unit; therefore, they are part of daily fundamental drill. Attention should be given to

all of these components each day through warm-up procedure, teaching of fundamentals, or whatever method the director deems appropriate for his/her ensemble. We find it necessary to devote part of the rehearsal to constantly reviewing/stressing these fundamentals.

**Rose:** Lots of rehearsing. Repetition. Use good marchers as models. Use field markings (yard lines, hash) as guides for spacing and alignment. Sometimes use 60" stick.

Jones: Practice, practice, practice-monitor and adjust then-practice, practice, practice. I also video each rehearsal and half-time. I study the tapes and show them to students. Then show them how to make corrections. Spacing and alignment is done on the practice field by using the spacing stick (two boards-60 inches in length that are connected together to show what a two pace interval really looks like). A rope has also been used in company fronts with painted points showing a two pace interval.

**Grant:** a) Have a mental picture of what the fundamentals should look like; b) Teach fundamentals every summer and re-teach every school day; c) Use your best marchers as examples of what everyone should look like (or demonstrate yourself if no good examples are available.); d) Show videos of drills and point out uniformity or lack of; e) Teach students their tendencies and how to compensate for them. (Example: If a student tends to have too large a space to his right, have him adjust each day.)

**Richardson:** Stopping and taking the time to see that every individual has mastered these. "REPETITION WITH FEED BACK"

#### **MUSIC**

1. How do you select your march music to show the strength of your band and or avoid any weaknesses?

Williams: Absolutely, know your marches if you don't know, ask someone. I listen to a lot of march music, also ask the great directors. Neil Grant, Pete Kunkel, Waymon Bullock, Bobby Goff and your friends will help also. That's what great about military directors, we love to share an idea or a march.

Coffman: First of all, we try to select good quality music/marches. A well written march will be well worth the effort required to bring it to a high level of performance. Obviously, the ability of the group must be considered. We look for brass range, endurance potential, opportunities to show off various tone qualities and technical abilities, general timbre (chordal quality vs. linear technical quality).

**Rose:** Very carefully.

Jones: Study your instrumentation and know your players. If you're going to have a strong low brass section, select something that might show them off. If you have a super trumpet section, select something that shows them off. Cater to your strengths and avoid your weaknesses. Knowing what march shows off what section is done in several ways. 1) Play as many marches as possible on your dead

time (a time when you're not preparing for a competition); 2) Talk to more experienced directors, they might know a good march that will fit your band, and they can help you with the problem areas; 3) Watch films and videos of marching contests.

**Grant:** You must first evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your band. It doesn't hurt to have a person you respect hear your band. You sometimes over or underestimate the talent in the band. Ask a respected and experienced director about good marches and use your own experience with different marches to match your band's strengths with a particular march's strengths.

**Richardson:** I try to pick music that will show off my stronger sections while at the same time strengthening my weaker sections. If you pick music that avoids your weaker sections then they don't have a chance to improve.

#### 2. What method do you use to teach a new march?

Williams: Slow 4/4 time at the first. Sectionals in summer camp.

<u>Coffman:</u> We begin in sectionals working notes, rhythms, style, etc. and progress to rehearsal with the full ensemble.

**Rose:** The same as any other music. Learn the notes, then make music of them. **Jones:** Break the march down. Work on the introduction. If needed work in four/eight bar phrases. Work the melody line first, then counter melody, bass line and frill line. Then, go on to the next strain and break it down. When working memorization, have the band play in eight bar phrases three times. First have them look at their music, then have them to look up and play the eight bar phrase. Have them look back down at their music, then turn their stands around and play the eight bar phrase. Work on the next eight bar phrase in the same manner and then add them together for a 16 bar phrase. The students will not enjoy this and they will learn the music on their own. \*NOTE: Keep the metronome going throughout this rehearsal-they must learn this music with a meter.

**Grant:** Start relatively slow (still in cut time) and teach the notes and exact rhythms by using a metronome. I taught style from the very beginning because it is too difficult to fix at the last minute. Always teach students the concept of ensemble sound, even when sight reading.

**Richardson:** I begin teaching rhythm, style, articulation, pitch, balance, blend, etc...right at the beginning. I don't see the need to read straight through a march from beginning to end without stopping. We learn the march by working the details.

#### 3. What do you consider a good ensemble sound?

Williams: Pyramid with low brass being the bottom or fullest sound. I like a low sound even though I'm a trumpet player.

<u>Coffman:</u> We prefer a "dark" quality to the overall timbre of the ensemble. We believe in balancing the ensemble from the lower voices up through the soprano voices. The ensemble must obviously be able to play with a good pitch center and tune both unison and chordal passages.

Rose: The USMC Band

**Jones:** A good ensemble sound is one where you can hear each line of the march. The clarity of the music is important. The band is balanced tuned and the voices are blended to make one ensemble sound. Make sure the notes line up. Poor percision is a killer.

**Grant:** Balance to low voices in the band, but you must still hear the upper voices. Different bands of mine have had slightly different ensemble sounds depending on the strengths of the various sections.

**Richardson:** I used the pyramid concept of lows to highs as a basis, and then make sure all parts that need to be heard are brought out. Always keeping in mind you have to balance to the low voices.

#### 4. How do you develop a good ensemble sound?

Williams: Listen, practice listening. Sometimes we play entire drill piano, the mezzo piano, mezzo forte, etc.

<u>Coffman:</u> Development of a good ensemble sound begins in the younger grades through the development of good individual sounds. As the students progress, directors stress the blend, balance, and tuning of the various groups which hopefully instills a good concept of ensemble sound in the ears of the students. Development of good ensemble sound is a constant progression which requires consistent reminders of the elements of a good sound; furthermore, these reminders are greatly enhanced through good feedback of the directors as good, medium, or band sounds occur. Through the correction of poor ensemble sounds, students learn to hear how good sounds should be played.

**Rose:** By working for the same musical basics year-round.

Jones: Always balance to the weaker sounds. Bring the weaker sounds out as much as possible, then balance to them. Make sure the notes begin and stop at the correct time. Tell students where to begin and stop each note, especially notes of duration. Balance, blend, and plan.

**Grant:** a) The director must have his or her own concept of ensemble sound or you can never teach it. Go to live performances and listen to good recordings to develop your concept. b) Tell the band each day if the sound is right or wrong. Make them responsible for listening. c) record the band and evaluate on a regular basis.

**Richardson:** I do a lot of stopping and balancing isolated chordal sounds. We then try to get these sounds in tempo.

#### 5. What are the components of good march style playing?

Williams: Drive the half notes. Also, certain rhythm patterns have to be watched, dotted quarter eight. Basically, I drive all notes lightening eight's. Coffman: A good march style usually requires good use of a wide range of dynamics, articulations, and style marks (staccato, accented, legato, etc.). In general, the march should be played with spirit and intensity utilizing a good fast air stream and musicality. Quite often the style is "marked" with the proper amount of space and good clean articulation to provide clarity on the field. Rose: Solid tempo, precise rhythms, characteristic note lengths, accents, etc.

**Jones:** Plan to space the notes; however, over-spacing can hurt your performance. It has to be a length so that each note can achieve a chord sound and never so short that sonority is not accomplished. A balanced sound must be achieved with a good blend with no instrument louder than the others. Everything must be precise and the notes must be well planned and executed.

**Grant:** a) Weight of the notes (emphasis or no emphasis). b) Space. c) Tempo. d) Rhythmic exactness and traditional exaggeration of particular rhythms for example.

**Richardson:** Articulation, rhythmical accuracy, balance, blend, intonation, and tempo.

#### 6. How do you teach 3/1 ration rhythms and 2/1 ratio rhythms?

**Williams:** We use Eastman School of Counting Ta, Tê, Lê, Lê etc. Again we are talking pulse triple or duple. This starts with beginners.

<u>Coffman:</u> We begin in the early years of development with great stress placed on subdivision of the beat at which time both 2/1 (duple feel) and 3/1 (triple feel) rhythms are covered. Metronomes are used to help establish pulse; however, the internal pulse of the individual student should take over to establish proper division of the beat on a consistent basis. Division of the beat to create even rhythm patterns is a constant and continuous sequence of skill development. <u>Rose:</u> Mostly by rote, imitation.

**Jones:** Make the 3/1 rhythms have a bounce feel. Draw diagrams in comparison and use a metronome that has both rhythms in its capabilities. Play with the metronome going and make students line up the notes. Hear and work with students individually and have more experienced students work with them. **Grant:** a) Work daily with the metronome. b) Teach students to "hold back" on 3/1 and 2/1 rhythms. c) hear the rhythms in your own mind before you try to teach them.

**Richardson:** 3/1 I like to use the syllables Day Te Day.

Ex. J. or Day Te Day

2/1 I like to use the syllable Tu & T Ex.

J Tu T T

# 7. How do you articulate or teach articulation of consecutive value notes? a. four eight or sixteenth notes

Williams: Depends on the style legato-staccato. Da or La.

**Coffman:** Light and bounced.

**Rose:** At mm 120. Lighten up, use a "Da" syllable, and blow through the pattern, sometimes even crescendo to following note.

**Jones:** Anytime you have the same pitch note in a consecutive fashion, put a crescendo beneath them. Different pitch notes, we break down and practice to the next down beat. Example: 1e&a - 2, 2e&a - 3, etc. Then any slurring is added after the initial teaching of the correct notes is done.

**Grant:** Tongue lightly with no emphasis and crescendo. Bounce the eighths if you are in 2/4 or 4/4 time.

**Richardson:** I use T or Tu at slower tempos -D or Du at faster tempos.

b. six eight or sixteenth notes

**Williams:** Again Da or La. **Coffman:** Light and Bounced.

**Rose:** At mm 120. Lighten up, use a "Da" syllable, and blow through the pattern, sometimes even crescendo to following note.

**Jones:** Work to the next beat. However, if this is not possible, work to the up beat, then to the down beat, and combine them after proficiency is shown. Then go on to the next run. After the music is under the fingers adding any slurring. **Grant:** If these rhythms are in cut time, tongue smoothly, crescendo, and do not emphasize.

**Richardson:** Same as above.

c. four half notes

Williams: Ta or Da.

**Coffman:** Marked with some weight.

**Rose:** Depends on where located in the march, phrase, etc.

**Jones:** If the march is in cut time put space between each note so that it might stand on its own. Make sure the note is about 3/4 beat in length so that the chord sound might be achieved.

**Grant:** In a typical cut time march I would weigh each note and put a slight space between each note.

Richardson: I use the syllables Tõõ, Tõõ, Tõõ, Tõõ.

#### 8. What importance or stress do you place on articulation?

**Williams:** A lot articulation is a maturing process with a high school band comprised of 8-12 graders. Air stream is also important (one stream).

<u>Coffman:</u> A great deal of stress is placed on proper articulation. The uniformity of articulation is essential in order to achieve clarity.

**Rose:** Articulation is the style or manner of starting and stopping a tone. It is very important element of style.

**Jones:** We try to play the articulation the composer has written, any deviation of the written music is changing the composers intent. However, sometimes you must change it in order for your band to play the message. Try to adhere to the written score most of the time with only a small amount of deviation.

**Grant:** It is very important. It makes the band have clarity of sound and style. **Richardson:** I feel it is the most important aspect of styling a march.

#### 9. What is your concept of phrasing and phrase endings?

<u>Williams:</u> Beginning and ending the same is very important. They must be worked on and planned out. This is so simple it seems and yet so difficult to achieve. Getting their eyes out of the music helps. Watch or listen for using tongue at the end of notes.

<u>Coffman:</u> The literature should be performed musically. Therefore, good air support is required to play through the entire phrase. Phrases should be shaped utilizing varied dynamic levels to produce a musical effect.

**Jones:** Each phrase is a musical sentence and must complete the musical thought. Many bands do not play to the end of the thought. They die away before the thought is completed. The last of the musical thought is just as important as the beginning and many times even more. Phrasing and phrase endings have pulled many bands to a Division II level.

**Grant:** Musical phrasing is like a verbal phrase. It is where you take a breath. With marches, bands generally don't hold out the last note of the phrases long enough, so you get exposed notes. For example, bands usually short-change a whole note tied to a quarter note.

**Richardson:** I phrase the march at 4, 8, 12, 16 measures what ever is demanded by the melodic lines. Always being sure that sustained notes hold until moving lines finish. See example: Listens for moving line and releases together.

#### 10. How do you achieve clarity?

**Williams:** Intonation and balance works. Also lining up the notes rally gets out the muddiness. That one aspect could take a whole seminar.

<u>Coffman:</u> Uniformity of articulation, style, air support, etc. provides the foundation for clarity.

**Rose:** Precise technical performance and accurate balance.

Jones: Clarity is achieved by working with the weaker part, bring them out, and having the rest of the band balance to them. This way every part can be heard.

Grant: a) Articulate cleanly b) Balance: you don't have clarity if the moving line is covered up. Bring out the moving line. c) Intonation: A band does not have clarity if it is out of tune. It will sound fuzzy, not clear.

**Richardson:** Articulation and rhythmical accuracy in <u>all</u> parts.

#### 11. How do you achieve good intonation?

**Williams:** Listen a lot. Clarinets are like your string section. Physically tune the horns, woodwinds more than brass. Also, tune percussion top to bottom heads. **Coffman:** Good intonation is largely a product of good tone production; therefore, good intonation begins in the early years through the development of good tone production. In addition, students are taught to alter the "bad" notes on the individual instruments as needed. These adjustments and fundamentals provide a basis for better intonation. In addition, we stress good tone, intonation, etc. through the warm-up drills each day.

**Rose:** Teach students to match pitch, listen to one another and constantly insist on good results.

<u>Jones:</u> Good intonation is not done in a few rehearsals, it is done in every rehearsal. Warm the band up then check tuning. Keep a constant check on notes of duration and have the students match pitch. Have each student sit down with

the tuner and play with a partner. Chromatically, writing the pitch tendency of each note as they play it.

**Grant:** a) The director is again responsible. If he or she does not hear the good and bad intonation the band will not play in tune. You must teach it every day. b) Use tuners that make sound and teach students to match. Teach students the tendencies of their instruments.

**Richardson:** I take time to tune with the tuner as I do in concert season, and then I do a lot of isolating and listening to intonation at trouble spots. I try to do a lot of this in sectionals.

12. What importance, explain your concept of blend, balance, tone and color? <u>Williams:</u> Balance and blend-outside I open up a lot more. Blend and Balance are affected by position of band and instruments. Tone, I like a dark sounding band. Again music over drill design.

<u>Coffman:</u> We prefer a "dark" quality to the overall timbre of the ensemble. We believe in balancing the ensemble from the lower voices up through the soprano voices. We also prefer a strong tenor voice to carry the great counter lines in many marches.

**Jones:** Blend and balance are mile markers in the development of the total ensemble sound. If the band is not balanced the main musical theme can become covered up and the total message the composer intended can be thrown out the window. The blending of sound adds to the characteristic sounds intended. Both concepts add to the overall performance of the musical group. Listen to the band and if there are any instruments that are louder than others, balance up or down. The tone color of the band is dependent on the music you play. Some marches require a dark sound while others a brighter sound. Any music that features the low brass needs to sound like a dark color. The brighter sounds need a bright tone color.

**Grant:** Blend, balance and tone color are extremely important to a band. A band is a single instrument like an organ. It cannot have a single key that sticks out (poor balance) or a key that has a poor tonal color or one that does not match in tonal concept. A poor tone or poor intonation will not blend. The band must sound like one instrument, and the conductor is the player who is in charge of blend/balance and tone color. (Learned from Waymon Bullock)

**Richardson:** I always strive for the fullest, darkest sound we can achieve by constantly balancing to the lows.

13. How do you teach Brass to play with a big controlled sound outside?

Williams: We open up with lots of air at first and then balance down towards the end or about 3 weeks before contest. This seems to work for me. Everyone has their individual tastes and I appreciate a more concert sound -it's just not me.

Coffman: We stress air support from the beginning of the summer. In the early stages, some sounds may not be as controlled as we would like; however, these may be pulled back to a more controlled sound after the students have developed the proper air support.

**Rose:** I strive for the same sound inside or outside.

Jones: At the beginning of the year have the brass to overblow. You can always back them down, however, it is hard to get them to fill up. Use the terms "fast air" throughout your rehearsals. Be sure to address "Direction of Horns" during the drill. When they face the judges have them to back down, for those few counts, then come back up after they have exited the "Valley of the Shadow of Death".

**Grant:** The players must play each day with a big sound, but the director must keep it in control. Teach the students not to play louder or softer than their best sound.

**Richardson:** I like to start the brass playing as full as possible and then pull them back to their best quality sound after I have established what the fullest sound they can control is. This take several week to establish.

#### 14. Note spacing-How much is enough -- too much?

<u>Williams:</u> When it gets choppy or the tongue gets to heavy, I like notes to really drive so I have to watch the students stopping the sound with their tongues.

**Coffman:** The end result should be musical whether on the marching field or on the concert stage. Therefore, note spacing on the field to the point of gaining clarity is needed; however, a "choppy" feeling developed when notes or overspaced is often very unmusical and detracts from the performance.

**Rose:** Hard to describe in writing but very important.

**Jones:** Make the note long enough to hear a chord sound and short enough to stand on its own.

**Grant:** My personal opinion is as follows:

In alla breve time

≥ bounced & played very short with no emphasis.

d≤ weighted & release or space the note on the upbeat of its last count.

Too much space causes a band to lack resonance and make musical phrases sound choppy, but no spacing makes a band sound sloppy. The band will be void of style.

**Richardson:** I try to get a detached march style without sounding choppy. A march is choppy to me if notes are so short that you lose melodic and rhythmic flow.

#### 15. How do you teach precision playing?

**Williams:** Pass off music three times. Sing marches with just drums. Lining the notes up is one of the most difficult things to accomplish. I'm still learning about this.

<u>Coffman:</u> We often work in a "music circle" while marking time. This formation allows us to hear all parts very well which develops an awareness of all parts and how they fit together. We then rehearse the music in appropriate formations required by the drill to allow students to hear all parts from the drill perspective.

**Rose:** Teach students to listen.

Jones: The teaching of precision is done by putting each note on the correct beat. Sub-division of the beat is used throughout the music. Each student needs to know where each note begins and where each note ends. This is done by using a metronome and using "Mr. Magic Stand" (a manhasset stand and a drum stick). Make sure all of the beats line up, and the note values are correct.

**Grant:** The band director must visualize and hear rhythmic precision before he can teach it. I personally used a metronome and always emphasized a good percussion section which acted as a metronome outside. I dissected the strains of a march into the rhythm, melody, counter-melody, and woodwind obbligato lines and taught the exact rhythms of each component. Then I combined them 1 at a time to make rhythmic lines align vertically. Always place emphasis on tubas and percussion as the foundations for good precision.

**Richardson:** Again, I do a lot of stopping and making individual lines and parts match up rhythmically.

#### 16. How do you utilize percussion in your band?

**Williams:** No percussion features (yet). They are the heartbeat, they should be felt not heard. Usually drums are too loud.

<u>Coffman:</u> Our goal is to provide something challenging for percussion each fall in order to continue to build musical skills of percussion players. Since most marches utilize the percussion as "timekeepers", we have attempted to provide other avenues of development for percussionists while maintaining our strong beliefs to the traditional military marching style. Often this has been accomplished through short interludes between marches involving various forms of percussion ensembles. This format has been utilized in addition to cadence opportunities.

Rose: As a part of the whole.

**Jones:** The percussion section is the heart beat of the band. They must keep a steady beat and then add to the overall musical stress, the band projects.

**Grant:** Bass drum should be "felt" not heard. It needs to sound more like the sousaphone. Snares should provide emphasis, rhythmic clarity and excitement, but should never cover the band sound. When they play a cadence, they should play as loud as possible while still sounding good.

**Richardson:** To help maintain the rhythmical integrity of the band, (i.e. hitting the ground), and for setting and maintaining tempo.

#### 17. Do you feature the percussion-if so, in what way?

Williams: No

Coffman: See #16.

**Rose:** Sometimes at ball games but not during halftime marching performance unless as called for in music.

**Jones:** I do not feature the percussion section because if I do that, in all fairness I would need to feature my alto sax section, bass clarinet section, etc.

**Grant:** I never did, but I am not opposed to a percussion feature if it does not interfere with the flow of the drill.

**Richardson:** Yes, I have in much the same way a corp band would but in a strictly rudimental, military style. Also, cadence can be used to either give the band a break or to achieve a particular effect in the drill.

#### 18. How do you budget your time in your teaching to:

#### a. films

**Williams:** Very seldom, sometimes look at film of Friday but I have so little time as it is sometimes I show this at tutorials.

<u>Coffman:</u> Weekly reviews of current performances. Normally, past films of excellent performance are used at the beginning of the season for orientation or a couple of weeks prior to competition to motivate everyone to put forth extra effort during the polish stages of performance.

Rose: I do some, but not a lot.

**Jones:** A film is used only as a tool. Showing films should mold the students attitude, desire and enhance their ability to achieve their goals. I spend part of the Monday class time to review the previous performance. Review of practices are done as time allows.

**Grant:** Generally showed Monday morning after the Friday performance. Showed students poor alignment, spacing, etc.

Richardson: 30 minutes a week.

#### b. music playoffs

<u>Williams:</u> Different sections after school three times first memorization. Then second time-no mistakes. Third time-final pass off entire drill with counts for rests (This takes about three weeks.)

<u>Coffman:</u> Pass offs are held weekly for pop tunes to be memorized for majorette features. March pass-offs are held early in the season for initial memory work and about mid-way through the season for detail work with articulation, phrasing, etc.

Rose: I do some, but not a lot.

**Jones:** I use the music passoff system. My students pass their music off two times. The first time they must show me that they know their music, this is done by memory. The second time they come in, march time to a metronome and play by memory. Note values, dynamics and articulation are checked at this time. **Grant:** Started hearing play-offs six weeks before the performance. I budgeted one selection per week. I intended to have playoffs done a week or two before contest to work balance and blend.

<u>Richardson:</u> Every individual plays off every piece I plan to use at contest. c. section rehearsals

Williams: During summer band and sometimes with assistant director.

<u>Coffman:</u> These rehearsals are invaluable. They are held weekly by all sections and provide the opportunity to instill proper articulation, style, technical development, etc.

Rose: I do some, but not a lot.

**Jones:** Four weeks prior to UIL contest each section has one 1 1/2 hour section rehearsal a week. This helps to achieve a unity of sound.

**Grant:** Poor sections had rehearsals all season, but generally, we had sectionals during summer rehearsal and then one per week starting four weeks before a performance.

**Richardson:** One hour per week minimum, and more if necessary.

#### **Drill Design**

### 1. When and how do you set up your brass, percussion, woodwinds and auxiliary in drill design?

Williams: Every drill requires consideration of placement of instrumentation. Different marches also require consideration of where instruments are. Know your marches, or ask someone who knows. Auxiliary units would be twirlers and percussions. I try to keep majorettes in front and percussions in the middle. Coffman: Proper placement of these groups are vital to the final performance of the ensemble. However, the question of when and how these are set is very complicated. It often depends on the music, movement, etc. of the ensemble. I often find that there must be compromise between drill design and instrument placement in order to provide proper "impact" points in the drill. Therefore, there are times when drill is designed to a particular impact point and instrumentation is traced back to starting positions. At other times, instrumentation is set and drill is designed with this as the controlling factor.

Rose: Where possible on big spreads, I try to keep percussion and brass centered with woodwinds on outside and twirlers and flags on fringes.

**Jones:** I always stack my band in such a way that the power of the band is in the middle and toward the near side. In company front positions I place the low brass in the middle at the back and a little toward the press box. The upper brass is in front with the upper woodwinds on both sides. The percussion is just past the brass section farthest from the judges so the band can hear them and they can play out a little. I don't have any auxiliary personnel. My majorettes play their instruments during contest season.

**Grant:** I set up in block first in most cases. Then I worked out of the block in reverse to develop the rest of the drill.

twirlers
trombones
baritones
trumpets
french horn
drums
saxes/ bass clarinets
B-flat clarinets
flutes

**Richardson:** I always try to build around my brass and percussion, and I try to avoid splitting them in the drill. Also, I try to stage the band for the most effective sound on what ever we are playing. Auxiliary always enhances the drill design or serves as guide points.

#### 2. How do you achieve compatability between music drill design?

<u>Williams:</u> Music must come first. I've scraped a drill this year because it hurts the playing on a march that took me a long time to figure out. Most of the judging comes from how you play while you march.

<u>Coffman:</u> Music is the controlling factor. The drill should be designed to fit the music. Again, there are certain impact moments in the music that definitely control drill design; therefore, the marching unit must be placed in the best possible position to provide maximum musical effect.

Rose: I design the drill to fit the music.

Jones: I stack the band before any drill design is done. I know how the band is going to sound in a given situation. Then I begin the drill design process. Using counts on everything, I match the design of the drill to where the students are on the field. Many times the students can be too spread out or in the wrong formation for a certain part in the music. I try to change the band picture when the musical picture changes. This is done, once again by checking and double checking counts.

Grant: Always choose music to fit the character of the drill. For example, fanfares are often used with company fronts to start and end the drill with the brass stacked in the middle to help with precision. Trios are more conducive to spread formations due to the lush, flowing melodies. Precision is better using trios in spread formations. Fortissimo strains of marches are best with the band in close order to maintain the massive sound. All turns are done at the beginnings or ends of phrases to help the drill make sense and to help students remember when and where to turn.

**Richardson:** By writing all drills to fit what ever music we are playing, or picking music that will fit a particular drill I want to do.

#### 3. Do you design your drill to the music?

<u>Williams:</u> Yes, I try to fit drill to music with two or three spots designed for effect. Example: Tuba feature on 'Under the Double Eagle'.

Coffman: See #2.

**Rose:** See #2.

Jones: Yes, each time the musical thought changes the drill changes.

**Grant:** Yes. See #2

**Richardson:** Yes-always.

#### 4. How do you utilize field markings in planning your drill?

Williams: Key people on the hash marks. I have used numbers at state but these vary with each field. Know how many steps to hash, etc.

<u>Coffman:</u> We utilize as many field reference points as possible--yard lines, hash marks, referee (1 yard marks), yard line numbers, etc. These markers greatly enhance alignment if utilized.

**Rose:** I make the drill fit the field and use lines and hash marks where possible. **Jones:** During the teaching of the drill the students are taught certain guide marks that are to be used. They are given a certain count to hit the hash mark, a certain count to hit the one yard marks, yard line, etc.

**Grant:** I used every dot and stripe on the field. I would often measure and draw off the markings of the performance field and chart the drill around them to help the band with alignment. Hash marks are crucial. Ideally, the band should always know where the hash marks are.

**Richardson:** I utilize every marking available.

#### 5. List the components of a well designed drill?

**Williams:** It should not compromise the music, balance use of the field, two or three visual or musical effects, steady tempo. Stress the importance of uniformity in marching fundamentals. March style in both playing and marching. Every great band has it's own style. From the old Longview bands to the Lufkin bands, these are classic bands to watch if you can get to some films. Then fit these things into your style.

<u>Coffman:</u> The drill must flow musically with a good mixture of dynamics (strong impact points and nice melodic lines) to provide variety. The marching maneuvers should reflect the music (good tight forms with impact points, spread formations with softer melodic lines, etc.) In addition, drill design should be interesting in order to keep the attention of the audience/adjudicator.

Rose: A good drill shows your band to best advantage.

**Jones:** 1) It must be something that is challenging to the students; 2) It must be pleasing to the eye; 3) It must show the marching strengths of your band; 4) It must show the musical strengths of your band; 5) It must fit UIL rules.

**Grant:** a) Drill fits music; b) No dead time; c) interesting to the eye as well as the ear (no "off-the-wall" key changes); d) Must be well executed.

**Richardson:** The drill should flow without breaks unless they are merited. It should fit the music exactly, and maintain optimum chance for best sound. Also, I try to achieve visual interest by avoiding the same formation or pattern over and over.

#### 6. How do you incorporate continuity and flow in your drill design?

**Williams:** This is something that I'm learning-drill should not look pieced together. Music should also have flow, stay away from key changes (drastic) if using different top half and trio of two different marches.

<u>Coffman:</u> Dead spots in drill are very detracting to the overall performance. We try to utilize percussion for interludes between marches, provide silent counts for effect, mix trios (melodic content) with strong impact sounds, and keep moving as much as possible. We try to incorporate special segments into the "still" times which focus on music content through extremely hard technical lines, special

blends, etc. In general, a good mix of all these elements when incorporated in a flowing manner adds variety to the overall performance.

**Rose:** I do not like many stops and starts. I really do not like to interrupt the music to simplify marching, i.e. stopping music at phrase endings while doing to-the-rears. The flow of the music guides my planning.

**Jones:** Each time the band goes across the field it needs to show you a new musical picture. The band needs to change its design each time; the music should accentuate a new design. The drill flow is done by adding onto an existing design. Put it down then embellishment is done on the primary design.

**Grant:** a) Use military marches with same tempo; b) Use fanfares that fit the intent of the drill; c) Keep the drill moving musically and physically with very little or no dead time.

**Richardson:** By first fitting the music together so it will flow from beginning to end and then writing the drill to fit it.

### 7. What are your concerns about momentum in drill and how do you maintain it?

**Williams:** I try to have two or three places in drill for effect or momentum both musically and visually. Also, I try to have a powerful ending.

<u>Coffman:</u> As stated in #6, we are extremely concerned about drill momentum. The mixing of the many variables--drill complexity, music complexity, interlude material (cadence, melodic percussion, etc.)--all play a vital role in creating a drill which purposely creates "intense" moments and "pretty" melodic moments in order to maintain the interest of the audience.

**Rose:** See #6.

**Jones:** When I design my drill I try to get the judge/audience's attention at the beginning, then do a design that is intricate, but well planned, then add something of magnitude that is bigger than life that takes place in a minimum amount of time, then an attention getter at the end. The momentum needs to build to something at the end.

**Grant:** Dead spots (time with nothing going on) are the number one killer of momentum. Constant tempo and good march style must be maintained. These things combine to maintain momentum.

**<u>Richardson:</u>** Momentum is extremely important and I always try to design the drill so we can maintain it from beginning to end.

#### 8. How many different drills do you do in a marching season?

**Williams:** I start with simple 1st half that incorporates the basic fundamentals. Then add contest 2nd half, then put contest first half of field.

<u>Coffman:</u> Normally, we march every student the first two or three games in a very basic drill to allow everyone opportunity to show levels of competence. About the fourth game of the season we place the top half and the following week the bottom half of the contest drill on the field. From this point on, minor drill adjustments are made to polish the overall performance.

Rose: Usually 4-5.

**Jones:** Many times I do three; 1) A beginner drill, one that we can handle at the beginning of the year; 2) Contest drill; 3) Spirit drill-one that encourages the football team to victory and wins the fans over.

**Grant:** Generally, I do three completely different drills, but for the last three or four performances before contest we build the contest drill by adding one section of it at a time.

**Richardson:** I write my contest drill completely first, and then I try to design three or four drills that will build to it. I try not to do the exact same drill at home more than twice.

#### 9. How or where do you get your drill ideas?

**Williams:** Most of the time I hear a march and I see the drill or I get an idea and I will hear a march and I start visualizing something.

<u>Coffman:</u> Films/videos are a great source of drill ideas. Watching videos of bands of all styles serves as a basis for drill ideas. You often see nice maneuvers which you may adapt to your situation. Often you find your "original" idea has been done before; however, you may be able to use various maneuvers in a different manner which gives your drill a "different" look than other performances.

**Rose:** Other bands, directors, films. My own old films. Hours, years of study. **Jones:** Anywhere I can. From friend, films, videos, sitting down and drawing designs then figuring out how I can get into them.

Grant: a) The high school band I marched in (Longview under Mr. Kunkel);

- b) Verbal ideas from respected directors; c) Most important are films and videos;
- d) Live performances at contests (especially NAMMB).

**Richardson:** Films, marching contest, films, constant doodling on marching charts, films.

#### 10. How do you develop new-creative-different drill designs?

**Williams:** Films of old band or watching corp bands and thinking how can I put that into military format. Use your imagination, nothing is wrong on paper.

**Coffman:** See #9.

Rose: See #9.

<u>Jones:</u> I don't know very many people that have an original idea. Most of them are modifications of something already done. If I see something I like I try to embellish upon it. But too many times I use someone else's idea and fit it to my band.

**Grant:** I didn't. I combined old ideas that might look new, but they were all "stolen" from fine directors. The one time I thought I had a new idea. Mr. Alto Tatum informed me that it had been done in the 40s or 50s.

**Richardson:** I take commonly used drills and try to put a new twist on them, and as I am writing a new drill I try never to sweep the field in the same formation twice, which demands coming up with new ways of moving to formations. I also try to avoid just reversing a pattern to get the band back to a basic formation.

#### **GENERAL**

### 1. How do you sell your band and band program to the audience and community?

<u>Williams:</u> Push positive! From beginners up, try not to use negative words. We really get parents involved in Summer band. We keep parents and school officials informed with newsletter. We work on image from elementary on up. <u>Coffman:</u> During marching season we try to be innovative/creative in drill, play good quality music, and perform at a high standard. Our community expects excellence in performance; therefore, we constantly stress high standards in all facets of performance.

**Rose:** Many ways. Some are: good teaching, integrity, demand respect for program, consistently strive for excellence in performance.

**Jones:** Each time the band is successful, put it in the paper, on the radio and send the video to the local television station. Agree to be on any type of interview program, whether it be radio or cable. The use of the media is so very important to the overall program. The students work hard to achieve their goals and they need to be recognized for their efforts. During football season make a press release for the announcer and one for the radio and cable. This gives them information about the drill, music, its students and personnel. Give them information to say, that way its always positive.

**Grant:** a) Sell yourself; be an integral part of your community; b) Be professional and businesslike in all of your dealings with your community; c) Work hard with your marching band and give exciting and quality performances. (This is the best P.R. you have.); d) Get as much P.R. as you can in the newspaper and on the radio.

**Richardson:** By selling it to the kids first. Then by performing for the community every chance we get. Parades, concerts, special events and programs, etc... Everything does not revolve around contest, it is an important <u>part</u> of the overall program.

# What do you think are the positive aspects of a military marching band? Williams: What aren't-we run our marching program like the military, very structured. Students do well when there is structure. Military teaches self discipline, control, teamwork. Things I learned in high school band helped me through college and helps even today.

<u>Coffman:</u> A march teaches so many positive musical fundamentals as students are exposed to a variety of styles, articulations, technical passages, etc.; therefore, student musicianship is enhanced. The need for precision in marching execution and uniformity/exactness required of each student to produce requires a tremendous amount of effort and builds pride.

**Rose:** Teaches team concepts, self discipline, self respect, social skills, good physical exercise, coordination and more.

**Jones:** A military marching band develops a espirit de corps. Things are done a certain way and its either right or wrong. The musical aspect out weighs

everything else. A military band will be able to handle more technical literature for concert season. The balance, blend and clarity is already taught.

Grant: a) Military discipline; b) Woodwinds have more technical and challenging parts; c) More musical participation; not as many auxiliary

performers; d) Helps the concert band.

**Richardson:** Music, discipline, pride, commitment, Espirit de Corps and I believe fundamentally it is the most educationally sound style to teach.

## 3. What positive carry over is there from marching season from a military marching band to concert season?

**Williams:** Our majorettes play their horns. Also, interpretation of a march. Music originally written for band. More woodwinds on their horns. Less auxiliary units. Less percussion.

<u>Coffman:</u> We use the marching band to "set up" the concert band. The technical and musical demands of march music really enhance music fundamentals throughout the fall season.

**Rose:** See #2.

**Jones:** The musical aspects out weigh everything else. A military band will be able to handle more technical literature for concert season. The balance, blend and clarity is already taught. The concept of march style is easy to transfer to a concert march.

**Grant:** The woodwind development along with more students playing instruments help for a smoother transition to concert season, and the discipline learned in marching season also carries over to the concert season.

**Richardson:** I think everything from work ethic, to musical preparation will or should carry over. In fact if what you are doing in the fall is not carried over to concert season I feel you should reevaluate your teaching methods and what you are teaching.

# 4. How do you develop a positive attitude for yourself and your students? Williams: I feel that motivation is the key. Make it fun for you and the band. I love what I do. We make band a serious military game. We have weekly competitions with another band.

<u>Coffman:</u> You and the students must like what you are doing and feel that it is important. We feel band offers students many learning opportunities and opportunities for success which builds skills and self esteem. We approach each year with the attitude we are going to perform at the highest level possible of each individual member; therefore, the ensemble may perform at the highest level possible. We stress pride in accomplishment in all endeavors. Students that feel a sense of accomplishment tend to work harder to attain even high expectations. <u>Rose:</u> For myself, when feeling sorry for myself, I remember Butch. For my students, I try to set an example.

**Jones:** I try to go into every rehearsal with the attitude that its a brand new adventure and what are we going to accomplish today? I keep my sights high and expect my students to do the same. Being successful is the best food for attitude.

When the students look at band as positive and something good the proper attitude always shows up.

**Grant:** Mentally prepare yourself each day before class to have a positive attitude. Success will help develop a positive attitude for the entire program, so strive every day for excellence.

**Richardson:** By demanding 100% effort from myself and my students. We owe it to the student to make them be the best they can be.

#### 5. What is your format of summer rehearsals?

**Williams:** Summer band camp at Beavers Bend or somewhere has been great. It gets the kids away from work, boyfriends, girlfriends unless they're in the band. It's a lot of work but it's fun. At camp we break up into sectionals. We work marching fundamentals, and we get a lot done. This is where we get the parents involved (cooking, etc.) You may say you're too small-this will make your program take off.

<u>Coffman:</u> We normally begin full band rehearsals on August 1. At this time students are involved in a 45 minute music sectional, a 45 minute marching sectional, and a 11/2 to 2 hour full band rehearsal of combined music and marching time. We normally ask freshmen students to report two days prior to full band for marching fundamentals (1 1/2 to 2 hours per day).

**Rose:** Start 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday on the first Monday in August. Vary time between full band, sections, new marchers, but mostly work on music during pre-school rehearsals.

Jones: First Week:

Full Band Mon.-Thur. 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Mon.-Fri., 1:00-3:00p.m. Freshmen

Marching

Mon.-Friday, 3:00-6:00 p.m. section rehearsals

Mon., Tue., & Thur. 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Full Band

Second Week:

Full Band, Mon.-Thur., 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Mon.-Fri, 3:00-6:00 p.m. section rehearsals-

chair tryouts

Mon., Tues. & Thur. 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Full Band

When we have one

Mon.-Thur., 9:00-11:30 a.m.

week.

Mon.-Friday, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Freshman Marching

Mon.-Friday, 3:00-6:00 section rehearsals &

tryouts

Mon., Tues. & Thur. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Full Band

Grant: The mornings of the first week were for freshmen and new members only for marching fundamentals (taught by band directors and upperclassmen) done by sections. Afternoons were full band playing-only rehearsals. For the rest of the summer, full-band playing and marching rehearsals were held once daily for two hours on Monday-Friday plus one sectional per week for each section.

**Richardson:** Auxiliaries work within the 10 hour UIL rule prior to August. Then from August 1 until school starts I get as much rehearsal time as I possibly can. The first week I usually work the following schedule 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m., marches; 10:30 a.m. Noon Jazz Tunes; afternoon, every section has a one hour sectional; then, I work marching fundamentals from 6:30 p.m. until dark.

#### 6. Do you utilize your upperclass students in teaching-marching fundamentalsection rehearsals, etc.?

**Williams:** Very much so-they love this!!! It does require constant monitoring but especially in summer camp we use this. It puts the success of the band back on their shoulders. If you have good kids in your program you will be surprised at how they can achieve.

<u>Coffman:</u> Upperclass students, band officers, section leaders are utilized to teach marching fundamentals. Section leaders also listen to initial music pass offs.

Rose: Yes.

**Jones:** Seniors work with freshmen during freshmen marching rehearsal. They also are assigned a little brother or sister that they work with throughout the year. **Grant:** Yes, including music playoffs. I also used band alumni to teach marching fundamentals in the summer.

**Richardson:** Yes.

# 7. How important to you in your teaching are second opinions/clinicians, contest critics?

**Williams:** Very important-another set of eyes and ears. Don't use too many 1 or 2 at the most.

Rose: Minor.

**Jones:** From 1-10 all the above are a 10. I am very blessed to have two associate directors that hear and see everything I don't. I always get a second or third opinion from a clinician. It would not be fair to the students to just have one set of ears hear them. All of us are human and what one person doesn't hear another one might. Contest critiques are more or less my report card, my evaluation by my peers.

**Grant:** Extremely important. Clinicians were used to help select and then polish music. Critiques were read to students and used to help improve the next performance.

**Richardson:** Very important, but I am very careful who I listen to and who I ask to clinic.

#### 8. Why did you choose to teach 6/5 traditional marching style?

**Williams:** It's what I know. Also, I felt a commitment to keep this artform alive. Also, I was taught by the best.

<u>Coffman:</u> Traditional marching style is what I grew up with in high school. Luckily, I had an outstanding teacher that developed pride in the group and used band performances and activities to develop individual skills, self esteem, etc.;

therefore, I developed a great sense of appreciation for traditional marching style. I hope to afford my students the same opportunities that were given to me.

Rose: I feel that it has the best educational values.

**Jones:** The benefits seems to give the students a better foundation for concert season and the traditions that exist in many military bands seem to enhance the educational process.

**Grant:** a) I marched in a great high school band (Longview High School under John Kunkel) which marched with that style; b) It promotes great pride and discipline as well as musicianship (especially in the woodwinds) more than with other styles.

**Richardson:** Because I believe that educationally it is the most sound method to teach, and I feel it gives the greatest benefits to the student.

#### 9. What do you see as the future of military marching bands?

<u>Williams:</u> I thought it might vanish but now I am determined to teach it and to pass the baton on to another generation. I see the future brighter. I have some great students who want to be military band directors. That's the ultimate compliment!

<u>Coffman:</u> Quality never goes out of style. Therefore, a quality band has a bright future regardless of marching style. Military marching bands offer many positive educational opportunities through literature, teaching of precision drill, pride in accomplishment, etc. We, as traditional military marching units, do need to be innovative in drill work, utilize percussion to build music fundamentals, and participate in the various competitions--NAMMB, UIL Region, UIL Area, and UIL State, in order to show the general public quality military marching bands. If we only display our groups in our individual communities and at military contests, we are not taking advantage of the opportunities to display the traditional style to others. We should keep this style in the public eye as much as possible.

**Rose:** My guess is that there will be no great increase in the number of military bands. Some will continue to perform in that style for many years to come, but the corps style will probably remain more popular in the future.

Jones: Who can predict the future? We can only hope that it grows and prospers for our students' sakes. Different styles have come and gone, however the military style will always be popular in the American publics eye. It's part of heritage and our tradition will keep the feet of the public well rooted in our traditions of excellence.

**Grant:** In general, audiences appreciate excellence. As long as we maintain our standards of excellence, I see a bright future. The style alone will not sustain itself; it must be performed to high standards.

**Richardson:** I believe if we do not continue to push the educational, musical, economic, and personal benefits of military bands, that we are in danger of them declining drastically or even dying out. We must demand more instruction in 6/5 military style at the college level, and look for every possible avenue to showcase military bands and what they do.