

December 28, 2009

Day One.

At 9:30 this morning, everyone was at school and you could feel the atmosphere of excitement. All were filled with anticipation for the upcoming trip. We ran through the half time show in the gym a couple of times, and practiced the transition from half time formation to parade review. That was followed by lunch from Subway and then loading the bus which went off smoothly. After a 3 hour ride to Indianapolis, we unloaded at the airport. Our travel company arranged a group check in, which was very nice. Dinner was at the airport. Kids chose from TGI Fridays, a Steak Burger place, and some other small restaurants in the airport. It was the first flight for many of our students. They were excited, a little nervous, but had a great flight experience. We got checked in the hotel and got to sleep around 2-3 our time.

Day two.

Mrs. Agler and I went to a working band directors breakfast to get the logistics to march in the parade and band fest. We got to see the folks from Pickerington, see Jeff and ANGEL Throop who visited OSSB over the summer. OSSBMB was recognized as the first blind band in the 121 year history of the Rose Parade.

From breakfast Carol and I, escorted by Carole Greenwold, (probably misspelled) went to Diamond Bar High School for the last part of rehearsal. By this time of day, it is 70 degrees outside and just a knockout gorgeous day. The students ran the half time show several times and the parade review. While there, Abc came out and interviewed some of us, and showed us on the 5 O'clock news, and my interview will be on with Diane Sawyer at some point. If you google ABC Los Angeles, you should get the local channel web site. I think it is channel 7, not sure.

After rehearsal we made our way to Disney Land. The security check was very thorough. They looked under the bus with a mirror, had a bomb sniffing dog checking out all of the instruments. Well, we finally got in and had lunch as a group. We were a little behind schedule, so had to rush to change into uniforms, get instruments and get onstage. The land played awesome. Also choir members performed 2 pieces, Sir Duke Sing with One Voice. The audience was moved. Next we met with Alex Iles for a 2 hour jazz workshop. Mr. Iles was a fabulous clinician, teaching the rudiments of improvisation, using simple songs like Mary had a Little Lamb. Then we did part of When you Wish upon a Star followed by Chamelion. We did a group photo after that. We got a little time to get dinner and then back to the hotel. We got to hear the fireworks before we left. It was a very exciting second day.

December 30, 2009

Band Fest was incredibly awesome! We left the hotel at 7:30 for Pasadena College. We rehearsed Beautiful Ohio with the Pickerington and the OU band. We went through the music a couple of times and worked out how we would come on and off the field during the finale performance. It does rain in California we found out. Everyone got soaked through today. With only a 20% chance of rain, why should we bring the raincoats? It won't rain. We did seek shelter in a parking garage until 10:50 when we walked back down to the stadium. During that time we were in the garage, we interviewed with media TV mostly, and a couple of newspapers. We interviewed with the Pasadena Star, the Ed news, channel 4, marching.com

and others. We were the first Ohio band to perform. The crowd was very loud, clapping, screaming, stomping on the bleachers. Some of the students were complaining about the weather before our show, but when we walked in that stadium, and heard and saw that energy, everyone lit up with the energy. If available, I wanted to conduct from the podium, the ladder which is 7 or 8 feet off the ground. So after we were announced, I climbed up and we did the halftime show. Man, the kids really played well, and the crowd responded in kind with a standing O at the end.

The Pickerington band was next, followed by OU and finishing off with OSU. I wish I could tell you more about their shows, but I was talking with more media people and our unit manager for the Rose parade. When Osu was finishing up, we got into position to go on the field with the other 3 bands. The sound of all the bands playing Beautiful Ohio was enormous. Our friends and family were there to support us, and have been great to our crazy schedule. From bandfest we walked some in the rain, to get In and Out burgers some chips and an apple for lunch, which we ate in the parking garage. We loaded the instruments, and got on the bus to head to the Rose Bowl. We had some hurry up and wait at the stadium, but finally we got off and got ourselves organized for the band photo shoot. The photographer did a great job with us, and the prospective, I have been told, makes us appear to be a larger band based on the way we were spaced. After the group photo, we posed for individual photos with the Rose Bowl banner as the backdrop.

Next on the agenda was the float barn. All the float decorations are made by organic plant material. We did collect some souvenirs, like some cotton that is used for the lion on the float with a jungle theme. They were making pictures of famous people's faces out of seeds. Each seed was glued on one at a time. Talk about having patience. We returned to the hotel to change out of uniform for the dinner dance. We traveled to the convention center to meet bands from Missouri, Washington and Nebraska. Jeramiah had six girls dancing with him at some point. I got out on the floor a couple of times to show the kids how it was done, haha. After his dance, after an exhilarating day, we returned to the hotel to go to bed and sleep the sleep of the exhausted. But it is a good kind of tired.

Day Three.

Wake up at 6:15 AM. The members and assistants went to the Grammy Museum for a little more than an hour. Carol Lou Mazzoli, Cynthia Johnson, Mandy Agler, Martin and I went to a band directors brunch where all bands were recognized and introduced. We were given commemorative Remo drum heads for the school. Also we will be getting a beautiful plaque that is etched with music notes, the rose parade logo. I believe it is crystal and it is heavy. We met up with the kids at the float palace to perform for float judging and be recognized as the first event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Again, history was made. We were the first band allowed on the floor to perform for judging. We were given a proclamation welcoming us to LA by mayor Bogard. The band played Military Escort and Superstition. Each judging was five minutes, and everything was precisely timed. We played 4 minutes 30 seconds and stood at ramrod attention for 30 seconds. We turned right, went outside where the group received lapel pins and their individual certificates from the ADA commission. The LA Radio Reading Service was there as well. They bought the band tacos for lunch. The LA radio reading Service will be audio describing the parade. You can hear it on acbradio.org and on their web site. Next we had an adventure. We drove the buses to an elementary school. We thought we were getting off of the bus to go in and

change, but, owe got to pull the shades on the bus and change there. After changing, we ate tacos. Our bus driver does a good job of telling us what we are seeing as we drive to Santa Monica Beach. An additional treat for us is that we are at Santa Monica Beach as the Buckeye bash with Archie Griffin, E. Gordon Gee, the OSU marching band and the OSU cheerleaders. How awesome is that?! Billy Brandon got Steve and I to go on the Ferris wheel and got some good photos. We ate dinner at Bubba Gumps. That was a fun little place. It is all about the movie Forest Gump. "Run Forest!" The waitress did a little trivia game with us and some of the kids won some prizes.

We got back to the hotel around 8:15. We had a uniform disaster. We had some that were mixed up, and some that needed cleaned, and we had to clean shoes. We finished up around 1 in the morning. Before cleaning uniforms, we met in our equipment room and went over the parade logistics with the band and assistants. We had fruit and water to ring in 2010 at 9. Kids went to their rooms by 9:15. Wakeup call would be at 3:15 AM.

Day Four.

Wakeup at 3:15, report to the equipment room by 4. Put light instruments together to carry on the bus, eat light breakfast. Use the bathroom before we leave. It is finally here. No one can believe, a lot of anticipation. Still had some uniform issues to work out. Somehow Brias uniform got matched up with Chris Harrington's pants, and I don't know whose pants he had. We got that resolved. Out the door and on the bus at 4:40.. Some of the kids fell back to sleep for the ride up to I 10, the dropoff point. Wow, we're really doing this! Keep swallowing the lump in my throat. We were on the bus for a while, maybe an hour and a half. We get off and unloaded in the 7 minute time limit on the highway. It was definitely warmer this year, but a chill was still in the air. It was probably in the mid 40's. They had trash bags for the kids to wear to keep warm. We got moved up within another hour and a half into position. We warmed up and played Military Escort and Superstition. The crowd applauded, and there were a lot of people around before the parade started. We talked a little, talked with Jeff Throop and his wife Angel when they came by. A lot of handshakes and hugs and well wishes, thank yous. Carol and I told the kids to play strong, but more importantly, to have a great time. Make this the funnest day of their life. Our unit manager was Garry, and he took great care of us. He told us exactly what we needed to do before we needed to do it.

A roaring Sea of Humanity.

From start to end the crowd cheered, clapped, yelled, wished us well, happy Newyear. They kept us going right to the end. Our friends and family gave us a lot of support, probably yelling louder than anyone. We had a couple of hills that we had to climb, and close to the end, there was an overpass that was like an echo chamber. When we hit that, the kids started playing louder. We finished very strong.

After the parade we disbanded and ate In and Out Burger for lunch, and changed out of our uniforms on the bus. Then we went on to the Rose Bowl. What a game! We got great seats. Rude people who paid too much for their tickets were behind us. When we stood up, they complained. I suggested we use radios to hear the play by play, but that was a complete bust. The radio signal was 20 seconds behind the game, so that was useless. Didn't matter. Tomorrow it is off to universal Studios.

Day 5.

We slept in late getting up about 9. We ate some breakfast and was out the door by 11:30. At

Universal Studios most of us rode the Mummy, the Simpson's ride, Jurassic Park, Jurassic Falls, saw Back draft, the Terminator, Shrek 4 d and shopped for stuff. Found Rose bowl championship shirts for \$20.