

NMMEJ Article—SE District (by president Brian Uerling)

“Help! I Need Somebody! Help!”

Greetings from the SE District. We have had several position changes occur in the Choral Music section. Alan Dropps is our new Director of Music Programs, replacing Wayne Anderson, who is off to enjoy retirement. I am moving from Clovis High School Choirs / Theory back to Ranchvale Elementary. Marsha Brandon is moving from the Freshman Campus to the High School, and Ricardo Monreal has been hired for the Freshman Campus. Lori Atkinson is replacing Virginia Morrison at Marshall Junior High School. Charlayne Heselton is the new general music teacher at Lockwood elementary. In Lovington, Adam Bryant is the new head band director, with Josh Shankles as his assistant. Manuel Sanchez is the new assistant band director in Hobbs. There are undoubtedly more position changes outside of Clovis that have transpired that I will not know about until our Fall meeting, which isn't till August (and I am writing this in July, praying that the 100 degree heat wave will leave, and that the rains will come!).

Now to the title of my article. In April, I developed some heart health problems that required immediate and rather drawn-out attention. I needed help—my students were preparing for District Large Group Festival, as well as a competition in Denver. As soon as they found out, colleagues (about twenty calls or e-mails!) were asking what they could do. Alan Dropps and Wayne Anderson, in spite of heavy administrative responsibilities, jumped right in. Alan and Wayne both took rehearsals, and Wayne directed my students at both of the adjudicated performances. (My assistant, Peggy Brady, at LEAST doubled her workload as well.) And you know what? All five choirs took “sweepstakes” awards at both events. Which confirmed one thing—we are indeed “not indispensable.”

The truth is that we are all designed specifically to BE dispensable. We are headed toward that dispensation from the moment we are born. The only thing we have a choice in (other than the eventual trip being “north” or “south”) is what we're going to do with the time in-between. My recommendation is to find someone that needs help, and help them. Is there a rookie in your district? Is there a colleague in your school that seems stressed about coming events? Is there an elementary teacher that has to put on programs for hundreds of kids with no help from anyone? Is one of your friends an NMMEA vice president? We are all used to helping our students, as that is what our jobs are designed to do. We should be in the business of producing independent musicians, thus constantly demonstrating our eventual dispensability. But helping our colleagues is STILL helping kids, as evidenced by the efforts of Alan and Wayne.

Here's wishing you good health, successful teaching, and help when you need it most—
-Brian