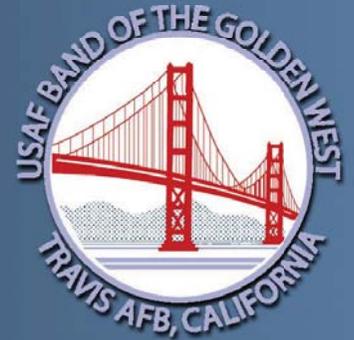




# BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

Vol. 1, No. 6

November-December 2007

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The Ceremonial Marching Band performs the National Anthem at McAfee Coliseum just before kickoff of the Oakland Raiders Game on November 4th. (photo courtesy of the Oakland Raiders)



Commander's Corner  
Major R. Michael Mench

For this issue, I have asked Master Sergeant Tony Seres, our band's First Sergeant, to write the Commander's Corner article. First Sergeants in the US Air Force hold the unique position as chief advisors to the commander concerning the enlisted force. Tony is an integral part of our band's staff and is uniquely qualified for the First Sergeant position.



Master Sergeant Tony Seres  
First Sergeant

The past 60 years of Air Force history has shown that Airmen will take on the challenge and uncertainty of change and turn it into something great. This warrior spirit is what has brought our Air Force to where it is today and will take us into the future. This spirit is also alive and well in the Air Force Band of the Golden West. No doubt our career field has seen its share of change over the last 20, 10 and even 2 years. However, the dedication to excellence in all aspects of the band's mission by an incomparable group of musicians is what makes our move forward seamless.

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I look ahead to the coming year with great excitement because I know the quality of people we have in our squadron. I know we'll make great music and use that tool to tell the Air Force story everywhere we go. And, I know our families and friends will continue to provide us the support we need to succeed at meeting each change that comes our way. It is a pleasure to serve the Band of the Golden West in the capacity of First Sergeant not only for the music they make, but for the people they all are.

## Band Presents Holiday Concerts

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Airman First Class Rachel Trimble

The month of December is always a busy time for the USAF Band of the Golden West. After months of traveling throughout the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Nevada, it is traditional that all members of the USAF Band of the Golden West join at the end of the year to put together an unforgettable holiday concert to be performed in the local area. This year was no exception. Concerts were presented at the Vacaville Performing Arts Center, followed by performances at Chabot College in Hayward, Hutchins Street Square in Lodi and the Fairfield Center for Creative Arts. These audiences include military and civilian members from the Travis Air Force Base community. Concert attendees also include loyal followers who never miss the annual show, eager newcomers who have heard spectacular reviews of the band, and supportive band family members.



Staff Sergeants Christy Bailes and Igor Poklad and Technical Sergeant Frank Millicia perform with the Clarinet Quartet at the Party  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

The band's holiday concert is a tradition, but this year's event, entitled "Holiday Fantasies," was by no means a traditional concert! Major R. Michael Mench, the commander and conductor of the USAF Band of the Golden West, threw a sensational holiday party for the band and audience members... in his own home! Well, maybe not in his REAL home. The stage was decorated to portray a festive Victorian home with brilliant colors, a dazzling Christmas tree, a dessert table and a few disguised instruments all set up before an ornately painted backdrop. Lynda Rose, local radio personality from KUIC, joined the band as narrator.

Here is a glance at some of the highlights of the memorable evening:

The stage was empty, except for Major Mench and Lynda Rose, who started the show by welcoming the audience to the elegant party and warning them of possible party crashers from a gathering down the street.

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A knock is heard at the door, and in walks a hungry Airman First Class Dustin Trimble looking for food. Major Mench tells him it's a "play-for-pay" event, so Dustin uses his guitar skills to "feed his famine." Next, a festive group of vocalists enter, armed with stacks of presents and a platter of scrumptious cookies, to get the party started by singing **We Need a Little Christmas**, accompanied by guitar. The clarinet quartet joins the party and performs an exciting Holiday fanfare by Händel, followed by members of the Golden West Winds woodwind quintet who offer a movement from Tchaikovsky's **Nutcracker**. By now there is quite a gathering on stage as everyone mingles, enjoys a sweet treat or two, and adds ornaments to the tree.

The soireé is off to a great start, but Lynda Rose is unable to stop the party crashers who sneak in through the kitchen while she is preparing the turkey. Major Mench reluctantly welcomes them to the party, provided they bring some musical holiday cheer with them. They do not disappoint! Along with a rhythm section, Staff Sergeant Kevin Bolen on clarinet and trombonist Master Sergeant Tom Eckert, they stir up the crowd with an invigorating performance of **Trepak** from the **Nutcracker**. The Travis Brass quintet is the next group to barge into the party playing the holiday favorite **Blue Christmas** featuring Senior Airman Ryan Williams as "Elvis" on trombone.



Senior Airmen Ed Oschner and Ryan Williams (as Elvis) perform **Blue Christmas**  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)



Major Mench invites members of the audience to the Band's Holiday Party  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

By now, the vocalists are REALLY anxious to get the party going; Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison surprises the crowd with a soulful rendition of **Please Come Home for Christmas** backed by our popular music ensemble, Mobility. Then, TSgt Paula Goetz gets the audience clapping and everyone on stage dancing and twisting as she sings **Run, Run Rudolph**. Major Mench even shows off some dance moves!

The house soon becomes quiet as a saxophone quartet awes the crowd with a beautiful rendition of the Mel Torme classic **The Christmas Song**, just before the 12-piece Pacific Coast Brass Band stuns the audience with a powerful performance of **Carol of the Bells**. *continued on next page*

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By this time, all band members are on stage. All of a sudden, Santa Claus makes a surprise entrance, and the brass band bursts into a Motown version of **Jingle Bells!** The audience is stunned! Trombonist Master Sergeant Tom Eckert, Saxophonist Master Sergeant Tony Seres, trumpeter Technical Sergeant Jon Ruff and guitarist Airman First Class Dustin Trimble each perform solos, and everyone onstage joins in with tambourines, bells and maracas. Thanks to Fairfield's own Jelly Belly factory, Santa delivered tasty sweet treats for everyone in the audience.



KUIC radio personality Lynda Rose, narrator for the Holiday Concerts, fresh from the Holiday "kitchen"  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

Following a brief intermission, Major Mench led the band through a noteworthy, uplifting and breathtaking presentation of several holiday favorites. Some highlights included Master Sergeant Bob Thurston's unique arrangement of the **Dreidel Dance** and Airman First Class Pam Kelley's grandiose vocal performance of **Cantique de Noel**, also known as **O Holy Night**. Major Mench's moving introduction to the final piece included a salute to the United States of America, all military members and a hopeful wish for peace on earth. For the final selection, all members of the band gathered on stage to present Chief Master Sergeant Larry MacTaggart's stunning arrangement of **Let There Be Peace on Earth** to the audience. These concerts received rave reviews from all who saw and heard them.

Mrs. Emily Low, the band's honorary commander, wrote of the Fairfield concert, "My husband and I enjoyed every moment!" Don Chalmers, who attended the concert in Hayward, wrote that our Holiday Fantasies show was "by far the best band concert I have ever seen performed by ANY military band."

The day after our Holiday concerts, members of the Band of the Golden West separated into five smaller caroling groups organized to spread holiday cheer to airmen and civilians at Air Force bases and communities across our five state touring area.



Major Mench leads the band in **Let There Be Peace on Earth**  
at the Fairfield Center for the Performing Arts  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Leo Smith)

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The clarinet quartet, under the leadership of Technical Sergeant Frank Milicia, ventured north to McChord Air Force Base in Tacoma, WA and Portland Air National Guard Base, OR. Four vocalists, along with guitarist Airman First Class Dustin Trimble, traveled to freshly snow-covered Spokane, WA home of Fairchild Air Force Base and Idaho's Mountain Home Air Force Base to warm the hearts of hundreds of airman and civilian workers.



Members of the Saxophone Quartet perform at Travis' First Term Airmen Center  
(USAF photo by Airman First Class Kristen Rohrer)



The Band's Vocal Ensemble, with guitarist Airman First Class Dustin Trimble, perform carols for Airmen at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, WA  
(USAF photo by Senior Airman Eunique Stevens)

Led by Master Sergeant Jim Boubonis, the saxophone quartet performed at Travis Air Force Base, as well as Beale Air Force Base, California. The Travis Brass Quintet performed at Edwards Air Force Base in California, as well as Nellis and Creech Air Force Bases near Las Vegas, Nevada. A second brass quintet was organized and performed at March Air Reserve Base and Los Angeles Air Force Base and Vandenberg Air Force Base in southern California. Within five days, the caroling groups of the Band of the Golden West performed for well over 5,000 airman and civilians.

## Travis Brass Quintet Tours Central Oregon

Airman First Class Jamie Lantz

The Travis Brass recently finished an extremely successful tour of central Oregon. The group, under the leadership of Master Sergeant Brian Wood, Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, gave five performances in six days to enthusiastic crowds. The tour had two primary missions: providing musical support for Veteran's Day events and reaching out to communities throughout Oregon. On Veteran's Day, the group had the distinct privilege of performing for ceremonial events at the Veteran's Affairs (VA) Hospital in White City, Oregon. The ceremony honored Veterans of past wars, and the quintet performed marches, folk songs and the Armed Forces Salute, a medley of service songs. The Armed Forces Salute is vital to honoring those who have served and continue to serve our country, and Veterans in the audience stood with pride as their respective song was played by the Travis Brass.

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For this tour, the Travis Brass performed a wide variety of music. Quintet members Master Sergeant Brian Wood and Airman Lantz contributed arrangements to the Brass Quintet program on this tour. Sergeant Wood's arrangement of **I Left My Heart in San Francisco** was a favorite for audiences. In addition, audiences were treated to patriotic marches, Claude Debussy's **Golliwog's Cakewalk**, an arrangement of Bart Howard's **Fly Me to the Moon** and James Barnes' **Classical Suite**. The group also performed **Carmen Fantasia**, a medley from Bizet's opera, and **A Tribute to MGM**, a collection of popular songs from MGM movies.



Members of the Travis Brass onstage in Bend, Oregon  
(courtesy photo)

Two of the Travis Brass' extremely talented members were highlighted by performing solos with the group. Senior Airman Edwin Ochsner performed an exciting rendition of the traditional French horn solo, **Le Basque**, while Senior Airman Jill Corbett, tuba, was featured on **Flight of the Tuba Bee**. Both Ed and Jill performed marvelously, showing the appreciative audiences that the United States Air Force is full of incredibly talented individuals.



Senior Airman Ryan Williams and the Travis Brass answer a student's question in a clinic/masterclass at Bend High School  
(courtesy photo)

The Travis Brass performed an evening concert in Eagle Point, Oregon at the town's City Hall. Despite the rainy weather, the quintet performed for a large audience. The quintet also performed in La Pine, Oregon at the American Legion post for a full house of Veterans. To honor them, the group played songs from the big band era including **Stardust** and **Little Brown Jug**, later made famous by Army Air Forces Bandleader Glenn Miller. The music clearly brought back memories of the big band era as the audience sat and listened intently with smiles on their faces.

The final day of the tour, the quintet was in Bend, Oregon. Members of the quintet led a morning master class for students at Bend High School.

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After performing several pieces, the quintet answered questions posed by the students. The evening concert, held at Bend High School auditorium, was attended by over 500 people. The concert began with the fast paced Dixieland favorite, **That's a Plenty**. The grand finale, Rossini's well-known **William Tell Overture**, provided the quintet a well-deserved standing ovation.

The quintet personally thanked those in every community who support the quintet and the Armed Forces. By bringing music and a personal element of the Air Force to the towns of central Oregon, the Travis Brass quintet was able to strengthen support of the armed services, making the group's November tour an overwhelming success.



With Leon Sherman, Mayor of Eagle Point, Oregon.  
(l-r): Brian Wood, Ryan Williams, Mayor Sherman, Jamie Lantz, Jill Corbett and Ed Ochsner  
(courtesy photo)

## Ceremonial/Marching Band Debuts New Uniforms

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The Band performs in the new Ceremonial Uniform at the Oakland Raiders Game on November 4th.  
(photo courtesy of the Oakland Raiders)

The Band of the Golden West's performance at the Oakland Raider's game on November 4th was the first use by our band of the new band ceremonial uniform. Approved for use in 2003, the uniform offers a crisp, distinctive look for Air Force Bands with its sharp tunic and silver trim.

The uniform has been worn by the US Air Force Band in Washington, DC since approval by the Air Force Uniform Board. Look for the uniform to be worn by the Band of the Golden West at future events.

## Mobility Adds Horns For Los Angeles Area Concerts

Technical Sergeant Paula Goetz

Yes, the Air Force has rock bands! We tell our "customers", general public audiences as well as military, this conversation-provoking fact every chance we get. We got the chance again this past November, when Mobility, one of several ensembles of the 45-member AF Band of the Golden West, embarked on a 10-day civic outreach tour in Southern California.

Our usual format of two singers, guitarist, drummer, bass guitarist and sound technician was expanded with an additional sound technician, keyboardist, two trumpet players, saxophonist and a trombonist. "Wow!" is what we and our audiences said. Putting together this size rock band was an amazing

amazing feat in light of the fact all Air Force units, including bands, are in the process of reducing numbers of personnel to compensate for the needed recapitalization of the fleet. The result was a specially-formed group for a whirlwind tour of seven performances in some beautiful community venues.

Glendora, CA was our first stop. Scores of attendees braved the growing chill under a canopy of trees at Finkbiner Park for Mobility's early evening performance, made warmer by sizzling renditions of **Back in the USA, September** and a special arrangement of **I Can't Get No Satisfaction**. The addition of a stellar horn line made every song come to life, and of course, the hot dogs and hot chocolate provided onsite for concertgoers didn't hurt either.



Staff Sergeant Troy Griffin lays down the groove on the drumset  
(photo by Maelani Ellison)



Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison serenades the audience  
at Knots Berry Farm in Buena Park, CA  
(photo by Maelani Ellison)

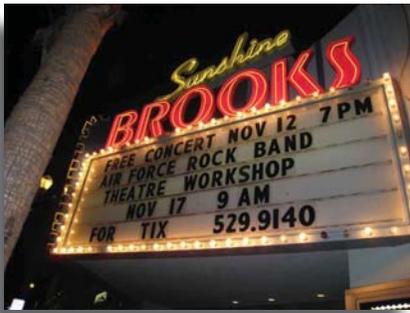
The next day we traveled to picturesque San Juan Capistrano to play on the outdoor stage at Historic Town Center Park, with its beautiful rose arbors and Alamo-style stucco backdrop. It seemed the entire town came out to hear our 2-hour set and was intrigued by the wide variety of styles, starting with Country and moving through Jazz, Pop, R & B, Disco, Rap, good ol' Rock and Roll and ending with Lee Greenwood's patriotic hit **God Bless the USA**, for which everyone stood in tribute.

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Our next evening's performance was at the historic Sunshine Brooks Theater in Oceanside. Transformed from an old 1930's movie house, it is the perfect place for an inspirational musical event. Attendees, including both local residents and seaside vacationers, ran the gamut from jazz enthusiasts, to retirees and young Marines from local Camp Pendleton. Favorites included **Drown in My Own Tears**, **Orange Colored Sky**, **Reelin' in the Years** and the Stevie Wonder classic, **I Wish**.

In Temecula, CA, the community had organized a rally to raise awareness of the recent catastrophic fires in nearby San Diego. More than 1,100 people flocked to Great Oak High School stadium to see a marching band exhibition featuring many area high school and college bands. Mobility was highlighted and received deafening applause after our band leader, Technical Sergeant Gary Rosenak, announced details of the extensive Air Force airlift participation in rescue efforts and humanitarian aid.



The marquee at the historic Sunshine Brooks Theater in Oceanside  
(photo by Maelani Ellison)

Anyone acquainted with Snoopy and the Peanuts gang knows where to find them...Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, CA! The mid-day crowds were pumped up by the Blues and Soul favorite **Born Under a Bad Sign** and the instrumental **Better Get Hit in Your Soul**, then soothed with **Do I Do** and a fitting finale of **America the Beautiful**. People 'danced in the street', cheered for encores and marveled that the military fostered "such a talented, high-class group".

Next, in Palm Springs, a street festival was the ticket and we were on center stage for the large, appreciative crowd. Colorful tent-tops were visible as far as the eye could see as vendors tried to pacify 3,500 attendees. We picked up new fans with each tune we played, which included **Love and Happiness**, **Saturday Night** and **Some Kind of Wonderful**. We thought this venue couldn't be topped, until we rolled into Anaheim's Downtown Disney, a shopping and restaurant mecca adjacent to Disneyland. Wall-to-wall people and kids wearing Mickey Mouse ears crowded the thoroughfares.



Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison (left) and Technical Sergeant Paula Goetz, vocalists with Mobilty, perform at Downtown Disney in Anaheim, CA  
(photo by Maelani Ellison)

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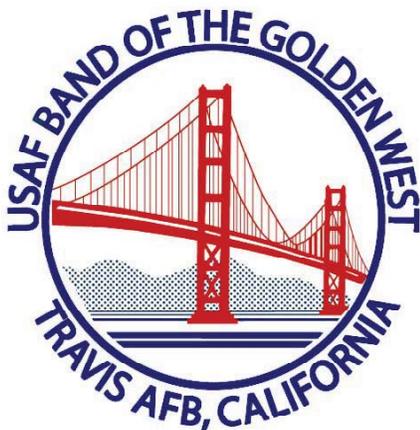
An Air Force camera crew from Vandenberg AFB was there to capture this special event on video and everyone gathered around when Mobility started to perform. We pulled out all the stops on this show, with the stars being our added instrumentalists, who took one incredible solo after another. We'd had to make do without a piano player in the past, but now had the fantastic Technical Sergeant Mike Williams on keyboards.



Mobility performs on the Historic Town Park stage in San Juan Capistrano, CA  
(photo by Maelani Ellison)

Our tremendous horn line included Master Sergeant Tom Eckert on trombone, Technical Sergeant Jon Ruff and Staff Sergeant Ed Schubert on trumpet, and Technical Sergeant Jim Butler on saxophone. Over 4,000 audience members were witness to one of our most magical shows ever. Just when we thought the night had surpassed everyone's expectations a grand fireworks display lit up the night sky as a perfect ending!

Yes, the Air Force has rock bands, and our tour had ended; however, we will remember its success for a long time to come.



## Current Openings:

The United States Air Force Band of the Golden West announces immediate openings for the following vacancy:

## PIANO/KEYBOARDS

Approximate starting salary \$36,000, 30 days annual paid vacation, full medical and dental benefits.

For consideration, send resume to: [auditions@travis.af.mil](mailto:auditions@travis.af.mil)

## Arrivals

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Technical Sergeant Preston Keating  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

**Technical Sergeant Preston Keating**, percussion, hails from Billings, Montana and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Northern Colorado. He joined the Air Force in 1996 and was assigned to the Heritage of America Band at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, and joins us after a tour with the Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Preston has performed with artists such as Slide Hampton and Steve Turre. Preston enjoys cycling, running and spending time with his family. Preston's daughter, Raegan, born on December 27th, 2007 is the newest arrival in the Keating home. Preston is looking forward to the warmer California weather.

## Departures

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Technical Sergeant Lindsey Bartlett  
(file photo)

**Technical Sergeant Lindsey Bartlett**, bassoon, departs the band after 12 years of active duty service. A native of Bristol, England, Lindsey holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Arizona State University. In addition to performing with the Concert Band and serving as Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the Golden West Winds woodwind quintet, Lindsey could often be found performing on cymbals with the Ceremonial/Marching Band. Some highlights of Lindsey's performances with the band include two Tournament of Roses Parades and President Reagan's Interment Ceremony. Lindsey also served as operations representative for the concert band. Lindsey will remain in the local area with her husband, band member Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan.

Departing to the Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, is bassist **Staff Sergeant Leo Smith**. Originally from York, Pennsylvania, Leo attended Lebanon Valley College before joining the Air Force in 1995. He has been assigned to bands in Virginia and Germany prior to his arrival at Travis Air Force Base. Leo has been quite busy at Travis, performing on electric and upright bass in the Concert Band, the Commanders jazz ensemble, and with Mobility, the band's popular music ensemble. In addition to his musical performances, Leo has worked extensively in the bands media section and he can often be found behind the camera taking photographs of the band.



Staff Sergeant Leo Smith  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

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## Departures

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Senior Airman Bob Barnett  
(file photo)

**Senior Airman Bob Barnett**, trumpet, leaves the band after four years. While here, Bob performed and recorded with the Concert Band, Mobility, Fuerza Musical and as lead trumpet in the Commanders jazz ensemble. Highlights of Bob's performances with the band include the Interment Ceremony for President Reagan. He also worked in the band's media section as publicity representative for the Concert Band and jazz ensemble. Bob and his wife, Erica, plan to relocate to the Dallas, Texas area and enter the music education field.

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## Concert Band Announces February Tour to Southern California

February 13	King City High School	King City, CA	7:30 pm
February 14	Santa Maria Fairpark	Santa Maria, CA	7:30 pm
February 15	Oceanview Pavilion	Port Hueneme, CA	7:30 pm
February 16	Armstrong Theater	Torrance, CA	7:30 pm
February 17	Civic Center Park	Palm Desert, CA	3:00 pm
February 18	Riverside County Fair (President's Day Grand Parade)	Indio, CA	10:00 am
February 19	College of the Canyons	Santa Clarita, CA	7:30 pm
February 20	Community Auditorium	Tulare, CA	7:30 pm
February 22	CBDA Convention	Fresno, CA	11:30 am



As always, please check the band's website, [www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil](http://www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil), for more specific times and locations, which are subject to change without notice.

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## Coda

### Contact the USAF Band of the Golden West:

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