



U.S. AIR FORCE

# BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

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Major Mench leads the Concert Band at Civic Center Park in Palm Desert, CA  
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)



Commander's Corner  
Major R. Michael Mench

**Are We There Yet? My Hair Had a Party Last Night, and Back When I Could Fly there was an Alien In My Nose!!** No, I haven't lost it completely... well, maybe, but these are titles of songs we will perform with our guest artists **Trout Fishing in America (TFIA)**. April is the Month of the Military Child and we are celebrating the unique sacrifices our children make being part of a military family. I'm very excited to finally work with TFIA, their blend of humor, musicality and child-like outlook on the world has been a favorite of audiences for nearly three decades.

These past few months have been absolutely incredible for the men and women of the band. First, the Air Force has a new Chief Master Sergeant, William A. Castleman III. He is greatly deserving of the promotion, and now he has no first name or last... simply, with all respect, "Chief."

Congratulations are also in order for MSgt Aaron Johnson, TSgt Jon Ruff and A1C Rachel Trimble who's outstanding contributions onstage and offstage rose above the rest to become the band's annual award winners in their grade range. Additionally, A1C Trimble was also selected as deserving of a new rank Below The Zone!! She was selected as one of 11 in a pool of over 100 eligible Airmen on Travis AFB. We are truly thankful to have such gifted individuals in our unit.

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Please share in my welcome of our three newest members, MSgt Lezlee Masson, SSgt Jeremy Martin and SrA Nathan Bersee. Good luck also to TSgt Steve Schaugency who moved on to our sister band in Europe and to SrA Ryan Williams who will soon be called 'sir' as he was picked up for an Officer position with the Air Force Chaplaincy.

I could go on and on but I'm running out of space and I'll save that stuff for next time. Thanks again for everyone's continued support for all we do.

## Concert Band Presents Tour to Los Angeles Area

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Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

The USAF band of the Golden West Concert Band, under the baton of Major R. Michael Mench, just returned from a 10 day tour to cities in Southern California. This series of concerts demonstrated the high level of Air Force professionalism to over 6,000 civilians.

In addition to concerts, the Band of the Golden West's Ceremonial/Marching Band was the lead unit in the **President's Day Grand Parade**, part of Indio's Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival. First held in 1921, the Festival celebrates the harvest of dates in the Coachella Valley.



The Concert Band performs on the stage at Civic Center Park in Palm Desert, CA  
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)

The Concert Band was joined for several concerts by an audio-video crew from Vandenberg Air Force Base, who were on hand to make video recordings of the band for an upcoming sponsor media packet.

Citizens of Santa Maria missed the concert band in July 2007, due to the band's truck fire and had been anxious to hear the band ever since. They were not disappointed. The capacity audience's thunderous applause ringing inside the Santa Maria Fairpark following the **Armed Services Salute** garnered an encore of Sousa's **Stars and Stripes Forever**, with the audience clapping along in rhythm.

Some concertgoers in Torrance were turned away due to the James Armstrong Theater filled to capacity, but the lucky audience inside was treated to Lucien Cailliet and R. Mark Roger's arrangement of Emmanuel Chabrier's **España**, replete with Spanish rhythms and intricate harmonies, which were mastered by members of the Band of the Golden West. Also on the program was vocalist Airman First Class Pam Kelley's singing a medley of Judy Garland Favorites, which closed with a shimmering arrangement of **Over the Rainbow** from **The Wizard of Oz**.

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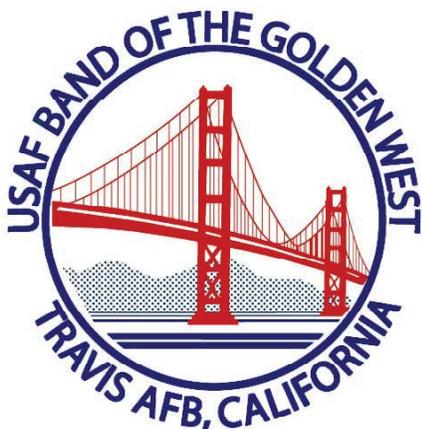
Sunday afternoon found the band performing outside in the pleasant setting of Civic Center Park in Palm Desert. Audience members sitting on blankets and lawn chairs listened to Senior Master Sergeant (retired) Arthur Wiggins's transcription of Andre Kostelanetz's treatment of Edwin Bagley's march, **National Emblem**, and a medley of **God Bless the USA** and **America, the Beautiful** sung by vocalist Airman First Class Rachel Trimble. Major Mench invited the audience to "slip the surly bonds of earth" and ride with him through Richard Saucedo's rousing composition, **Into the Clouds!** which celebrates the freedom and energy of flight.



Technical Sergeants Igor Pokald and Frank Milicia perform **II Convegno** at the California Band Director's Association Convention in Fresno, CA  
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)

A return engagement to the College of the Canyon's Performing Arts Center in Santa Clarita featured clarinet soloists Technical Sergeants Frank Milica and Igor Poklad, performing John Parrette's arrangement of Amilcare Ponchielli's clarinet duet, **II Convegno**. The lush, operatic opening alternated with technical flourishes demonstrating the virtuostic abilities of Frank and Igor. Also on this tour, band flutists Staff Sergeants Wendy Hermes and Heather Hollowecky were featured performing Cimarosa's lovely **Concertante for Two Flutes** adapted by Paul Brink. The pleasant sounds of two master flutists in lyric harmony engaged audiences resulting in much deserved applause at Tulare (CA) Community Auditorium.

The tour concluded with a guest performance for the California Band Directors Association Convention in Fresno. The band was presented with a special plaque for its performance, which included Philip Sparke's exciting **Celebration** and Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin's arrangement of **Laurie's Song** from the Aaron Copland opera, **The Tender Land**, featuring vocalist Airman First Class Rachel Trimble.



### **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)

## Scout Band Visits Travis for Clinic

Nick DeCicco, 60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

The Band of the Golden West is no stranger to making house calls, but inviting guests into its musical lair is a note of a different sort.

In fact, it hasn't happened in recent memory, according to Tech. Sgt. Steve Schaughency, a horn player in the band who handles community outreach.

It was shared parts collaboration and observation Jan. 25 when the Boy Scouts of America's Peninsula Scout Band, a co-ed group comprised of high school students from throughout the Bay Area, visited Travis.

For a group so accustomed to leaving the base and playing other venues, band conductor Maj. Richard Mench jokingly referred to the event as "community in-reach."

"It's a fantasy to combine our groups," said Michael Toschak, co-director of the scout band. "The Scouts haven't come to the base before. This is a new experience for them."



Concert Band Members rehearse with Scout Band  
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)



Scout Band Members performed alongside members  
of the Concert Band  
(USAF Photo by Nick DeCicco)

The experiment started slowly as the teenage scouts - affiliated with the Pacific Skyline Council No. 224 pack - observed from chairs across the room before filling in empty seats scattered among the band members.

After a short break, the two bands practiced together, running through "Amazing Grace," "Esprit de Corps" and John Philip Sousa's "The Liberty Bell."

While the military-styled scout band plays some of these pieces on occasion, the Band of the Golden West members were sightreading,

performing the pieces as they read them on the page.

Mr. Toschak said, for the scouts, visiting Travis is part of the group's purpose, to explore music as a career or a lifelong hobby. About half of the scout band's 20 to 25 players were in attendance.

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"It was good to play with musicians that have been playing many years," said Mauricio Vazquez, a trombonist with the scout band.

Another player in the scout band said he was impressed by the talent of the Golden West band members.

"They add things that are not there, what's not in the music," said Andrew Fenn, a saxophonist, referring to the way a note is played or the style in which it's performed.

Sergeant Schaughency said the scout group's visit was in the works since August 2007, but the dates didn't align for both bands until recently.

## **Band Manager Promoted to Chief Master Sergeant**

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Chief Master Sergeant recites the Chief's Pledge at his Promotion Ceremony  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

In a special ceremony held at Travis Air Force Base on January 31st, Senior Master Sergeant Bill Castleman, Band Manager of the Band of the Golden West, was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant, the enlisted force's highest rank.

By federal law, the rank of Chief Master Sergeant is reserved for the top 1% of the United States Air Force enlisted personnel; this promotion represents the culmination of hard work and dedication to the Air Force and to the band career field.

Castleman, a native of Oakland, California, enlisted as a clarinetist in the Air Force Band in 1983 and has been assigned to bands in New Jersey, Illinois and the Republic of the Philippines. Chief Castleman holds degrees from the University of the Pacific and Boston University.

Attending the ceremony with Chief Castleman was his mother, Margaret Castleman. Chief

Castleman was his mother, Margaret Castleman. Chief Castleman holds degrees from the University of the Pacific and Boston University.



(l-r) Major Mench, Chief Castleman and Margaret Castleman  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

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## Band of the Golden West Announces Annual Award Winners

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The Band of the Golden West recently announced its annual award winners for 2007. These outstanding musician Airmen represent the finest of the Band of the Golden West and demonstrate the professionalism evident throughout the United States Air Force. In addition to the Band of the Golden West's annual awards, Airman Trimble and Sergeant Johnson were awarded Air Mobility Command-Public Affairs Bandsmen of the Year awards.



Master Sergeant Aaron Johnson  
(file photo)



Technical Sergeant Jon Ruff  
(file photo)



Airman First Class Rachel Trimble  
(file photo)

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We continue our series of articles that introduce the ensembles that make up the Band of the Golden West with the Commanders Jazz Ensemble.

### Meet the Commanders Jazz Ensemble

Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

The Commanders jazz ensemble is the 18-piece big band of the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West. Under the direction of Master Sergeant Tom Eckert, this ensemble is considered to be one of the finest of its kind on the West Coast. The band performs a wide variety of musical styles, ranging from the big band sounds of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey to modern charts by the Brian Setzer Orchestra and Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band. Members of the Commanders jazz ensemble are highly educated, with many holding bachelors or masters degrees in music, and are often featured as soloists in the band's extensive repertoire. The band typically tours with a featured vocalist to add additional depth to the listener's concert experience; vocal charts might include chart toppers of Nat King Cole and Tex Beneke to current songs by Norah Jones and Stevie Wonder.



The Commanders jazz ensemble at Marina del Rey, near Los Angeles, CA  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

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A historic ensemble, the Commanders was established in 1959 as a component of the North American Air Defense (NORAD) Command Band and then subsequently merged with the Air Force Band of the Golden Gate in 1979 at Travis Air Force Base, California. The group has extensively toured the western United States, has appeared on numerous radio and television shows, and has performed at the famed Carnegie Hall in New York City. In addition to performing for millions of listeners live, the Commanders jazz ensemble has been heard by countless others over the airwaves via their abundant array of recordings. Marvin Stamm, Steve Smith, Bob Hope, Walt Levinsky, and numerous other guest artists have collaborated with the band over the years.



The Commanders onstage at the Brewery Arts Center in Carson City, Nevada  
(file photo)

The band is very versatile; its members can perform shows and musical tributes for military events, as well as music for military ceremonies. The Commanders also has the capability to perform as a small jazz combo.

To request the Commanders jazz ensemble for your event, please contact our Director of Operations, Master Sergeant Aaron Johnson, at 707-424-3327 or by e-mail at: [aaron.johnson-02@travis.af.mil](mailto:aaron.johnson-02@travis.af.mil).

## **Band Members Present Chamber Recital in Vallejo**

Members of the Band of the Golden West presented a Chamber Music Recital at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum on February 2nd. This concert highlighted the talent and virtuosity of our Airmen musicians in an intimate chamber music setting.

Various combinations of woodwind, brass and percussion instruments presented works from composers ranging from Johann Sebastian Bach to Philip Glass.

Clarinetist Technical Sergeant Igor Poklad organized the concert.



Staff Sergeants Matt Thomas, marimba, and Nathan Drabek, saxophone  
(photo by Shelley Schubert)

## Arrivals

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**Master Sergeant Lezlee Masson**, bassoon, joins us from Hanscom Air Force Base, just outside of Boston, Massachusetts where she was a member of the Air Force Band of Liberty. Originally from Aurora, Illinois, Lezlee holds a Music Education degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She joined the Air Force in 1994 and has been stationed at bands in Illinois, Germany and Massachusetts. Lezlee serves as Non-Commissioned in Charge of the Golden West Winds, and works in the operations section of the band. She is an avid sports fan, and is a certified referee for field hockey at the high school level.



Master Sergeant Lezlee Masson  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)



Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

Returning to the band following a two year break is arranger **Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin**. Jeremy departed the band in 2005 to attend the University of Alabama; while there, he received a Master of Music in Wind Conducting. Jeremy's compositions and arrangements have become a mainstay in the Band's repertoire; his arrangement of **Laurie's Song** from Aaron Copland's opera **The Tender Land** was recently performed by the Concert Band, and his original composition **That Others May Live** was featured on the Concert Band CD, **War and Remembrance**. Jeremy and his wife Christy, are looking forward to rejoining the Travis community.

**Senior Airman Nathan Bersee**, bass, joins us from the Air Force Band of the Pacific, stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Nathan is originally from Waterville, Ohio and graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Music degree. He joined the Air Force and was assigned to the Air Force Heritage of America Band at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia in 2002. In addition to his musical duties, Nathan enjoys snowboarding, mountain biking and spending time with his wife, band flutist Staff Sergeant Heather Holowecky.



Senior Airman Nathan Bersee  
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)

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## Departures

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Technical Sergeant Steve Schaughency  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Leo Smith)

**Technical Sergeant Steve Schaughency**, French Horn, departs for the United States Air Forces in Europe band, located at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. While at Travis, Steve performed with the Concert Band, the Golden West Winds and served as Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Pacific Coast Brass Band brass ensemble. In addition to his musical duties, Steve arranged numerous compositions for the band and served as Vehicle Control Officer. Steve and his wife, Franziska, enjoyed exploring the Napa Valley and hiking in Yosemite National Park.

Trombonist **Senior Airman Ryan Williams** is departing the band to pursue a commission as an Air Force Chaplain. While at Travis, Ryan performed with the Concert Band, the Commanders Jazz Ensemble, Travis Brass quintet and recorded with Mobility. He also served as operations representative for the Travis Brass. He had been very active in the Travis community, serving as a volunteer for numerous events, including "Operation Candy Drop," which collected candy to donate to Iraqi children.



Senior Airman Ryan Williams  
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

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## Young People's Concerts Scheduled for Vacaville and Travis Air Force Base



The Band of the Golden West will present a free family-oriented concert with the guest artist group **Trout Fishing in America** for concerts at Vacaville's Performing Arts Theatre at 3:00 PM on April 20th and at the Travis AFB Base Theater at 7:00 PM on April 21st.

Grammy-nominated **Trout Fishing in America** has entertained audiences of all ages throughout North America and this concert will be a special experience for all who attend.

Vacaville Ticket Information: 707-449-6217  
Travis AFB Ticket Information: 707-424-2486

## Pacific Coast Brass Band Announces Tour to Washington and Idaho



**Pacific Coast Brass Band**, the newest ensemble in the Band of the Golden West, is an 11-piece brass ensemble with vocalist and percussion which presents music in a variety of styles and is sure to be a crowd pleaser.

April 4	University of Washington Brechemin Auditorium	Seattle, WA	7:30 pm
April 5	Seattle Center	Seattle, WA	4:00 pm
April 6	University of Idaho Lionel Hampton School of Music	Moscow, ID	7:30 pm
April 7	Eastern Washington University	Cheny, WA	7:30 pm
April 8	Central Washington University School of Music	Ellensburg, WA	7:00 pm

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

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## Coda

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

USAF Band of the Golden West	707-424-2263	
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Scheduling/Band Requests	707-424-3327	aaron.johnson-02@travis.af.mil
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