



## MENTOR'S DESK

### Mentoring at its Finest—The All-State Teachers' Workshop

by Jane Linde Capistran

As veteran teachers, it is always rewarding to attend clinics, workshops, reading clinics and concerts. But hearing the perspective from a college student's attendance is *really* rewarding! Thus was the case when my soon-to-be senior student attended the August MNSOTA Workshop held at St. Benedict's College.

Her first response to me was "I learned *so* much, and took tons of notes." KUDOS to all the presenters, as "Becky" greatly admired the experience and wisdom that they shared in the sessions. I sat down with her about a week after the workshop and wanted to gather her "mentorship" experiences.

Jane Linde Capistran: What was your reason to attend?

Becky P: I was curious about teachers' workshop, and thought it would be a good way to get to know teachers in the state. And you recommended all of us to go!

JLC: Were you comfortable going to something new like this?

BP: At first I was a bit nervous, but I discovered I knew some of the teachers—one of my former teachers, a teacher that I did clinicals with, and a college alumni were all there!

JLC: What were some of the highlights in the sessions you attended?

BP: Every session had a new idea to try or else ideas that we have already discussed. The reading sessions were fun, and informative when the participants gave their opinions about the pieces. They were like the reading sessions we have had here at school.

JLC: *The Good, Bad and Ugly* by Dr. David Arnott used the entire All-State string section.

BP: Yes, and I even pointed out one of the "bad" forms he used! He was always saying, "I think you should" instead of just telling them to do something.

JLC: What about the *Beginning Guitar* by Kevin Carlson?

BP: I really thought this was helpful, in case your district may have this curriculum and expected you as an orchestra teacher to be familiar with guitars.

JLC: *Bass for the Non-Bassist* by Nancy Bjork—since you have played bass, what was helpful for you?

BP: It was great to be introduced to thumb position!

JLC: Tom Rosenberg spoke about *Chamber Music*...

BP: He emphasized how chamber music can be such a great help with listening skills. I also liked his advice to make all students understand that each individual part was contributing at an equal level and each student/part was special and important.

JLC: Tell me about the Bob Phillips sessions...

BP: "We got free books!"

JLC: (I smiled and laughed, for this was a new experience for a college student!)

BP: The *Sound Innovations* was really a great new method to explore. We had used it in my clinicals—it has videos, recordings and lots of teaching aids. He discussed the importance of recruiting and said one reason retention can lapse is that students may not be successful in their reading skills, so that's important to remember. Tone in the orchestra requires the three concepts we have discussed in lessons—bow path, weight and placement (and speed).

JLC: You also got to *Meet the All-State Conductor Anthony Elliott*.

BP: Yes, he was great! Since they were in their final rehearsals, he didn't have to stop much—they played longer sections at a time. He also gave them a great visual image at the start of one work.

JLC: What is your overall assessment of the workshop?

BP: "I hope I can remember all the things I learned!" But it gave me ideas about specific areas of string teaching. Also, remember that if you are teaching in the middle or high school level of a school district, make sure your elementary students become familiar with you, as they are your future orchestra.

I am sure there will be more detailed coverage of the workshop in this journal, but through the eyes and heart of a future string teacher, this was mentoring in its finest. MNSOTA Workshop—thanks for providing this opportunity!

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