



Bulletin

Welcome to the BDMB Bulletin. Saluting America's Band Directors will convey important news and updates periodically to members of The Band Directors Marching Band via this newsletter. We strongly recommend that you download and retain each issue, either digitally or hard copy printout.

If you have any questions about the information presented here, feel free to email us at:
questions@banddirectorsalute.org

The Band Directors Marching Band returns to the Rose Parade® in 2026



On October 27, 2024, Saluting America's Band Directors announced that The Band Directors Marching Band has been invited to perform in the 2026 Rose Parade® in Pasadena, California. The announcement took place on a Zoom call and featured a video by Tournament of Roses® President Mark Leavens, who made the official invitation. The announcement was then posted on our website. As in the past, The Band Directors Marching Band will accompany a float in the parade designed to honor the profession. In fact, our Rose Parade® entry is technically considered a "float with outwalkers" so that we do not take the place of a high school or college

marching band.

Saluting America's Band Directors (SABD) is a project of The Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation. SABD sponsors The Band Directors Marching Band, which includes band directors from across the U.S. and Mexico. The band, along with its float, made its first appearance in the 2022 Rose Parade®. That was the first time that a float/band combination had performed in the parade as a single entry.

In 2023, The Band Directors Marching Band performed again before an international TV audience in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade® in New York City.

Welcome marchers!



Welcome back and a huge welcome to our newest members! Thank you for joining us on our return trip to Pasadena! Once again we plan on placing YOU in the spotlight as we highlight Music educators and all the amazing things you provide to your students, schools, communities, and the world! This year's theme fits our group so well....The magic in teamwork! Can't wait to work all our magic with you! We will continue to work hard to craft a one-of-a-kind event. Please make sure you read your emails and newsletters!

Karen Sewell,
Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation President



Welcome to the Rose Parade and Saluting America's Band Directors! New Year's Day 2026 kicks off America's 250th birthday and YOU will be in the spotlight that day. I'm looking forward to working with each of you on this historic event.

Craig Orr, Program Director



Welcome to The Band Director's Marching Band! It is an honor of my career to lead this amazing group of music educators once again, this time in the 2026 Rose Parade. This band will be our largest to date, featuring over 500 musician-educators! I cannot wait for the first sound we make at our opening rehearsal on December 28th!

Our performance this year in the Rose Parade® will be an especially poignant one in the wake of the Los Angeles wildfires, as it was in 2022 in the wake of the COVID pandemic. Our time together, coupled with our performances, will demonstrate the power music has to raise up the human spirit from literal ashes.

We will be sending music for you to start to memorize in May, giving you ample time to prepare. I would recommend we all start getting our chops back and getting our steps in, as this parade was not necessarily designed for people our age! Six miles...we will do it!

For those of you for whom it is your first time, WELCOME to the FAMILY, and for all of you old friends, WELCOME BACK! Only 310 days and counting until the 2026 Rose Parade!

Jon Waters,
Director of The Band Director's Marching Band

A brief history of Saluting America's Band Directors



Michael D. Sewell

[Saluting America's Band Directors \(SABD\)](#) is a project of the Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation, created in 2017 to carry on the legacy of the late Mike Sewell, longtime band director in the Pickerington, Ohio school system. Mike led his band in FOUR Rose Parades from 1993-2010 and the combined Pickerington Bands marched in his memory in the 2019 Rose Parade.

The project was launched as a way to recognize and salute the extraordinary dedication and accomplishments of band directors everywhere—public and private schools at all levels, colleges and universities, the military and community bands. An all-volunteer advisory team of professionals in management, marketing, music education, fundraising and information technology plans and executes SABD events.

SABD created The Band Directors Marching Band (BDMB), which has marched in the 2022 Rose Parade with 270 members and, most recently, in the 2023 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with 400 members. The band consists of band directors and music educators from across North America.



An additional component of SABD is our Service Through Music initiative, which encourages our band members to plan and execute service projects within their own communities, as well as take part in national projects undertaken by the BDMB.



The Magic in Teamwork



On February 4, 2025, President Mark Leavens announced the theme for the 2026 Tournament of Roses: "The Magic in Teamwork."

According to the Pasadena Tournament of Roses website, "The theme celebrates the sense of accomplishment in knowing that by working together, we can collectively achieve outcomes so much richer than we can ever experience as individuals. The 2026 theme poster honors the organizations, agencies and

community partners that make America's New Year Celebration possible. Embroidered team patches from public safety partners, service organizations, and other parade participants reflect the teamwork demonstrated in working toward a common goal, to overcome challenges and produce amazing results. The poster embodies 'The Magic in Teamwork'—not just in grand achievements, but in everyday moments of support, encouragement and shared success."



Tournament of Roses President Mark Leavens

California fires affect Tournament of Roses community

The wildfires on the West Coast have brought catastrophic devastation to the state of California. The fires have greatly impacted members of The Tournament of Roses Volunteers and the Tournament House Staff. As of the latest update, 27 Tournament Volunteers have totally lost everything in the various fires. Two of the Tournament of Roses House Permanent Staff have lost everything in the Eaton fire. We just learned that 2019 Tournament of Roses President Gerald Freeny and his wife Trina also lost EVERYTHING in the Eaton fire - including everything from his 2019 trips, float and band visits and game day presentations.

The question of how to help has

come up to us in many emails and texts. Any donation amount to any group/organization to aid in the recovery efforts from the fires will be greatly appreciated. We would like to share a DIRECT LINK to a fund created by The Tournament of Roses that will go to assisting Tournament Staff and volunteer families directly affected by the local fires and also help in their efforts to support recovery in the Pasadena area: <https://tora.site-ym.com/donations/donate.asp?id=24556>

We understand that money and asking for donations can be a delicate subject. How and if you choose to donate is up to you. We simply wanted to share a way to directly

assist people we consider Band and Music Family members.

We have also been made aware that there is a tremendous need for monetary donations to assist with recovered animals from the Eaton fire area. That link to the Pasadena Humane Society fund is: <https://give.pasadenahumane.org>

We share from 2026 President Mark Leavens: "In the following weeks, months, and years it will take to rebuild the life altering losses the Pasadena community has endured, we know that together we can get it done!"

Thanks for being a part of our musical family. Together we truly can make a difference.

Service Through Music

The spirit of service is inspired by the legacy of the late Michael D. Sewell, who dedicated his life to school and community music programs in Pickerington and the Central Ohio area for more than 38 years. Mike always said, "The most important gift you can give someone is your time."

The national SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC program highlights contributions bands make to their communities while also giving musicians a way to share in the values and ideals of Saluting America's Band Directors. SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC is a unique program created especially for members of The Band Directors Marching Band and their students.

As in the past, The Band Directors Marching Band will perform an inspiring SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC project while in California for the 2026 parade. In addition, members will be

encouraged to perform local SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC projects with their students in their home communities. Watch for more information as the year progresses.



In 2023, The Band Directors Marching Band honored first responders by performing a wreath-laying ceremony at the 9-11 Memorial in New York City.

Package information

Your total per-person trip cost breaks down as follows:

1. \$250 Registration Fee--A non-refundable \$250 registration fee (plus applicable service charges) payable to SABD is due no later than **February 17, 2025**. This fee is only required for BAND MEMBERS and is not required for FAMILY and FRIENDS. This initial fee will be used for ordering band uniforms and administrative costs, such as licensing, and is not credited to your travel account at Grueninger Music Tours (see #6).
2. Transportation to Los Angeles-- This is entirely on your own. LAX airport to hotel transfer shuttles On December 28th and return on January 2.
3. Meals--Most meals are included in the package. However, there will be several "on your own" meals.
4. Uniforms--Uniforms will be provided as a part of the package. However, you must provide your

- own white dress shirt, black socks, and all-black shoes.
5. Instruments--You must provide your instrument with the following exceptions: our corporate partner, Conn-Selmer, will provide mellophones, marching baritones, sousaphones, and marching percussion.
 6. GMT Package--Indianapolis-based Grueninger Music Tours (GMT), the Official Travel Partner of SABD, is once again our designated partner to provide you with the finest possible travel experience going to the 2026 Rose Parade. The following table gives the per-person GMT package prices for various numbers of room occupants. As a way to help reduce your costs in California, please note that you can save substantially on the per-person prices by rooming with one or

more band members or Family and Friends. Also, all packages include five nights in a full-service hotel in the greater Los Angeles area, many meals included, rental of rehearsal space, bus transportation to all events, and several sightseeing excursions. Upon receipt of your \$250 deposit, you will receive an email in February from GMT with a payment schedule.



Number of occupants* in room:	4	3	2	1
FIVE-night BAND MEMBER	\$2,899	\$2,999	\$3,549	\$4,429
FIVE-night FRIENDS and FAMILY MEMBER	\$2,259	\$2,359	\$2,899	\$3,799
CHILDREN, ages 3-9		\$1,199	\$1,199	\$1,199

*The term "occupant" is defined as a BAND MEMBER or FRIENDS and FAMILY MEMBER guest age 10 and older (not including children age 3-9).

Additional information:

The “trip fees” are not just your hotel costs. It encompasses float costs (without which we wouldn’t be in the parade)...our Rose Parade entry is considered a “float with outwalkers” so that we do not take the place of a high school or college marching band. The costs also include hotel, buses, most meals, the majority of your uniform and group-wear, practice field(s), mandated liability insurance for the organization related to this trip, music arrangements (and other related fees), and many other trip-related costs.

If you choose to be a part of the group, you are expected to stay in the hotel throughout the event. There are no partial stay options or off-site options. As a band member,

you will be with us from 12/28 – 1/2. If you opt to have your Friends & Family stay elsewhere, they will not be included in any of our scheduled meals, events, activities, etc. This is the only way that we can make this trip work.

You should plan to arrive at the hotel Sunday, December 28th by or before 3:00 pm. Our hotel has not yet been announced. Dinner that night will be provided for all Band Members and Friends & Family prior to an evening rehearsal at the hotel. You then will be provided five breakfasts, four lunches, and two additional dinners.

Our performances will include a local Service Through Music event, BandFest, Float Judging, and the Parade (those who have chosen not

to march in the parade will be given a grandstand ticket to watch the parade). We are working diligently to add a Rose Bowl performance opportunity and an optional FloatFest performance. Extra events may include a day trip to the Pacific Ocean, time in Hollywood, special float decorating opportunity, and taking our group picture at the Rose Bowl. Because of our potential performance at the Rose Bowl, our check-out will be Thursday, January 2 (whether you opt to perform later that day at the FloatFest or not). Our goal is to send a more detailed itinerary in November and a final Trip Book with all needed information in December. Please remember that everything other than the arrival and departure dates is subject to change.



Stay in touch

Please make sure that we have your accurate email address. This will be our primary means of communication. Watch for these Bulletins which will be sent out periodically. As always, you can reach us at:

questions@banddirectorsalute.org

Another great way of staying connected is by joining the Saluting America's Band Directors GroupMe group. Here is what we need you to do:

- If you already are a member of the SABD GroupMe group, you

don't need to do anything!

- If you already use GroupMe (but belong to other groups not including the SABD group), please join the group by [following this link](#).
- If you don't use GroupMe at all, please download the GroupMe app on your device, run the app, and follow instructions for signing up for a GroupMe account. Once a member of GroupMe, simply click on the above link to join our group.
- If you are looking for a roommate

to reduce the trip costs, GroupMe is a great way of finding roommates for the trip.

- Remember you can MUTE Group Me at any time. When posting to the group, please be respectful that we have members across five time zones. Keep in mind that your post may arrive at an inconvenient time for those in other time zones.
- Group Me is a great way to stay connected and share information among marchers, but is NOT the information source for the trip.

Check your spam or junk folders

Please keep in mind that we periodically send important information to the band via email as our primary means of communication with you. We have seen that a number of marchers have not opened their emails from us, which may be because some email applications have sent our emails to a spam or junk folder on your computer or web mail. **Please check**

those folders regularly and make sure that email from us gets properly placed in your inbox. In order to prevent this from happening, you can create a contact in your address book with all of our email addresses:

- applications@banddirectorsalute.org
- music@banddirectorsalute.org
- questions@banddirectorsalute.org
- service@banddirectorsalute.org
- uniform@banddirectorsalute.org

In addition, for Gmail accounts, please check your Promotions and Social folders for our emails.

If you use a school email address for SABD, you may want to contact us and change it to your personal email. Some school systems have blocked our emails in the past.



banddirectorsalute.org

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