

## Fall 2008

# ASTA Student Newsletter



AMERICAN STRING  
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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Greetings, young string teachers.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Benjamin Whitcomb, and I am the new chair of the Student Chapters Committee. I am the cello professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. If you are interested, you may read my bio in the student handbook, but suffice it to say that I have been very active in ASTA over the past decade. I look forward to working with you to help you get the most out of your ASTA membership during your student years. One of the things that we are hoping to do in the near future is to increase student membership. At only \$30, it's a real bargain, but you surely realize this already. We'd love to hear from you if you have suggestions about how to convey this message to your colleagues who aren't yet members. Actually, I would really like to have each chapter's Membership Chair contact me and let me know what ideas you've been implementing in order to try to increase membership.

I hope you feel free to contact me any time for any reason-whether you have a question, suggestion, or concern, or whether you just want to introduce yourself!

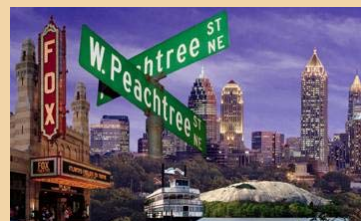
Sincerely,

Benjamin Whitcomb  
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### 2009 National Conference

I hope as many of you as possible attend the ASTA National Conference in Atlanta next March. I have thoroughly enjoyed all six conferences that I have attended. With so many great sessions, and with up to ten sessions going on at a time, the only problem has been choosing which *one* session to go to at any given time. Each year the lineup has been improving, and this year is no exception. I just finished going through the list of sessions and found that I had starred 38 sessions as "must sees!" In a way, it is a nice problem to have--it ensures that I always get my money's worth.

Now if I'm paying full price and totally getting my money's worth, what does the deal look like for a college student? Your registration is greatly reduced--under \$100 if you register by December 10. What's more, it's



further reduced to *free* if you volunteer to help at the conference. Volunteering is also a great way to meet lots of people. Several of my UW-Whitewater string students have volunteered at national ASTA conferences over the years and have made many wonderful connections in the process. Even if you don't volunteer, the connections that you will invariably make at the conference are very valuable as well. Granted, hotel, food, and especially air fare costs do add up, but compared to the amount that you will benefit from these four days, it is still an excellent investment. Try it and see! Another possible source of funding for this trip would be your university. Many universities have a grant program to support undergraduate projects and research.

Among the many sessions in which you might be interested are:

*Collegiate Roundtable*

*Discovering Strings and Orchestras*

*Financial Planning 2009 for Self-Employed Musicians*

*Graduate from Music School with Years of Teaching Experience*

*Marketing 101 for Freelance Musicians*

*Strategies for Teaching Difficult or Challenging Students*

*Teaching Master Class for Music Education Majors*

*Tension Free Set Up*

*The Bottom Line: Grant Writing*

*The Confident String Player*

*The Psychology of Practicing and Performing (Can I recommend my own sessions?)*

*The Semantics of String Teaching*

*Yoga for String Teachers*

Plus all of the master classes, of course. There are also sessions on Rolland, Suzuki, Milstein, Rabbath, and Sevcik. There are sessions on intonation, practicing, memorization, scales, vibrato, assessment, efficient use of time, advocacy, musicianship, early music, etc., etc., etc. And I haven't even mentioned the many and wonderful Alternative Styles sessions. I hope I have made my point. See you in Atlanta!

## 2010 National Conference

The 2010 National ASTA Conference will take place in Santa Clara, CA on February 17-20. Mark your calendars now!

## Outstanding Student Chapter Award

The Outstanding Student Chapter Award is given to an ASTA student chapter for exemplary promotion of strings in and around the university community. Nominations are due December 1. [Please click here for the nomination form.](#) This award will be presented at the 2009 ASTA National Conference. Completed forms should be sent to Kari Hahn at 4153 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA 22030.

## Collegiate Student Chapter Handbook

The student chapter handbook has been revised and is now posted on ASTA's website. You can review the revised handbook by clicking [this link](#). Check out all the other resources at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) while you're there!

## STEP Program

The String Teacher Enrichment Program is a 45 hour comprehensive professional development program featuring topics specific to string teaching. This program is to be completed within the time frame of two ASTA national conferences over a four year period.

STEP is open to:

- Any string teacher interested in expanding their knowledge base on vital topics in string education
- Non-string playing teachers such as band directors who are now teaching strings
- Private lesson instructors now teaching adjunct in schools

STEP fills in gaps in coursework, introduces new concepts in education, and reinforces knowledge for string teachers of all kinds. More information can be found [here](#) on our website.

### Plan Ahead for Future Competitions!

The next Alternative Styles Awards will take place at the 2011 National Conference in Kansas City, KS. Please keep checking the ASTA website for details about the Alternative Styles Awards application process!

The next National Solo Competition will take place at the 2011 National Conference in Kansas City, KS. Participants must first apply at the state level. Please check the ASTA website for state contact information as well as more details!

### A Call for Volunteer String Clinicians

ASTA has launched a new program - Discovering Strings and Orchestras - to partner youth groups with local string educators to bring string music to young students. Funded by a grant from NAMM, this program will bring youth groups together with local string clinicians who will host a five-session workshop that explores string music. Geared towards students in grades one through three, Discovering Strings and Orchestras will include performances, activity books, group lessons, and more! If you are interested in serving as one of the volunteer string educators, please contact Mary Jane Dye at (703) 279-2113, ext. 12 or [maryjane@astaweb.com](mailto:maryjane@astaweb.com). For more information on the program, [please click here](#).

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