

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

More On ‘Opening’

In reflecting on the process of “opening the [Nebraska] headquarters through dialogue” (June 20 *World Tribune*, p. 1), it occurred to me that there were some important steps not included in the article.

Early in the process, I, as the headquarters chief, asked the planning board members if they participated in discussions to advance their own opinions or to support my opinions. About half of the leaders confessed to the latter. Expressing my gratitude for their support, I asked that they try to openly express their own thoughts on any agenda item.

Thinking that to be a partial solution, we then established an “executive board” of the headquarters men’s and women’s division leaders. We hoped that the other planning board members — chapter leaders and headquarters youth division leaders — could discuss items more openly if we were not participating.

When this youthful planning board came to the exec board for approval of their actions, it became clear that the exec board level would not work. If it was possible for the execs to overrule the planning board, which had discussed the items in earnest, this would be disrespectful on the part of the execs. If there were wisdom in the men’s and women’s headquarters leaders, that wisdom should be tested in open dialogue.

The next stage in our development recombined the planning board and executive board. As we met together then, I was pleasantly surprised how we could discuss all matters without consciousness of level or position. And if there were any wisdom in the senior members or important SGI tradition known only to the seniors, it would come out so all could see and evaluate. A great camaraderie developed; we all felt we were heading in the same direction.

This all occurred before the district leader forums were begun. I hope this additional information is useful.

— RALPH HICKEN, Omaha, Nebr.

You Go, Brass Band!

I agree with Cathi King’s letter on the Brass Band and Music Corps in general (June 20 “Mailbox”). I’ve been practicing since late 1969 and was a so-called hippy during high school and my first semester in junior college. The Brass Band really made me straight and helped train me for society and being responsible as a young man and as an adult. I was in the Brass Band until 1977 and later joined the bagpipe band. I marched in Hawaii in 1975 and 1985 and New York in 1976. In 1972, I played trombone in the Los Angeles convention.

Because of the spirit of the SGI practice and the practice of my instrument, I could become a third trumpet and play in the Hollywood Bowl and Louis Armstrong Stadium in New York. I’m not and never was a professional musician, and never even played an instrument till I joined the Brass Band.

I’m glad there is a revival of the music movement in the SGI-USA now. This will really help youth and all the members.

Briefly, in our district, our men’s division and young men’s division members are creating a blues and pop rock-type band. We played at a district meeting and every member enjoyed it. When we practice, I try to relate my experience of the Brass Band to the younger members.

— PHILIP RAY, Santa Barbara, Calif.

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