

Fred Cornell
5159 Mira Loma Circle
Colorado Springs CO 80918

Air Force Academy Band Superintendent

Mrs. Eric E. Bottoms
2619 North Pocomoke Street
Arlington VA 22207

Dear Mrs. Bottoms

It was indeed delightful to read your letter and the article you sent. I shared them with my commander, Col Ronald W Carl, and others in the band who found them most interesting. I feel I know you and your family well after reading your letter.

Many familiar items made the letter and article even more interesting. My wife and I grew up in Michigan, Bonnie near Grand Rapids and me near Battle Creek. I studied music at the University of Michigan and played in the band there under Dr. William D Revelli. I never met Leonard Smith, but, of course, heard much about him and his summer band in Detroit. My first assignment in the Air Force was with the 661st Air Force Band at Wright-Patterson AFB, and like your son-in-law, I am nearing the 20-year mark, and consider that I have one of the best jobs in the world!

A few other "coincidences" are intriguing. You mentioned in your letter to Mr. Smith that two of your dad's best friends were Merle Evans and John Philip Sousa. We had the privilege of meeting Mr. Evans about a year ago at a concert we performed in Sarasota, Florida. In addition, just a few months ago, John Philip Sousa's grandson visited the Academy and we had the opportunity to meet him. I enjoyed the story about Mr. Sousa's white gloves and your mom making him take them off to eat. I told our kids (Carmen, 16, and David, 12) it sounds like Mr. Sousa was the Michael Jackson of his day (What a comparison!)

We live about 90 minutes from Cripple Creek and it is a great place to visit, with a very colorful history. But, oh my, what a horrible place to be stranded with no money - even today, let alone in the time in which your dad must have had his experience.

A musician's life is certainly interesting, isn't it? It's not all ecstasy - the strange hours, the many miles and days of "life on the road", and the frequent lack of appreciation for all the hard work that goes into a single performance; but there is the immense satisfaction of making good music, of entertaining people, and of meeting people you would never meet otherwise. There is one story of mine that you might find interesting. When I was in high school (the early 1960's) in a little town called Colon, Michigan (the "Magic Capital of the World"), I sang a solo in a town talent show. I don't even remember the song. I was having trouble with knowing what to do with my hands while singing. There was living in Colon at the time, and helping with the talent show, an elderly man who was a pretty well-known magician and vaudeville

actor named Monk Watson. I remember very clearly that he suggested that I hold a match in my right hand and hold the hand at my waist, with my arm bent at the elbow, while allowing my left hand and arm to hang at my side. It was a marvelous suggestion, and helped to put me at ease. In the years since then, as I have spent a lot of time on stage in front of audiences, I often remember that special moment with a stage personality of a bygone era. Now, I can't help but wonder if your dad and Monk Watson ever met, or, perhaps, worked together on a vaudeville production. My parents sent a newspaper clipping noting his death just a few years ago.

I am sending you a copy of the program we performed in Symphony Hall in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 25, 1986. As you can see, we opened that concert with your dad's "Purple Carnival" march, which as a tuba player, is one of my favorites. *(It is also one of Col Carl's favorites.)*

I am also sending you, separately, three records. The one entitled, "United States Air Force Academy Band and Cadet Chorale," is a recording of our concert band and the Academy's Cadet Chorale. It is an old recording, but the most recent one we have of our concert band. The one entitled, "The Higher We Fly," is about a year old and features our jazz band, The Falconaires, and our Moods In Blue Singers. The third is our newest, and features our rock band, Blue Steel, and our country and western band, Wild Blue Country. If rock or country and western music are not your musical "cup of tea", perhaps you have friends or grandchildren who might enjoy them.

Thank you again for your very gracious letter. I hope we may have the privilege of meeting in person some day, and that you enjoy the records.

Sincerely

Ard Carrell