

50 Years of PAS

Chapter 4:

1991–2000

By Rick Mattingly

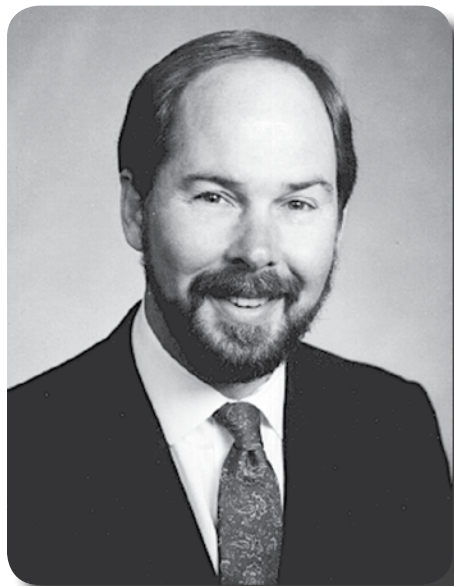


As the Percussive Arts Society celebrated its 30th Anniversary and began its fourth decade with newly elected president Robert Schietroma, some major changes were on the horizon. After years of occupying a series of small offices in several different states, in July 1991 PAS moved to yet another small office in Lawton, Oklahoma. But this was just a temporary space that was being rented while a permanent headquarters and percussion museum were being built in Lawton, thanks to the generosity of the McMahan Foundation and the support of the percussion industry. The new facility opened in May of 1992, reflecting just how far PAS had come. (For full details on the history of PAS offices, see “PAS Headquarters” in the March 2011 issue of *Percussive Notes*.)



But more changes were on the way. Like the rest of the world, PAS was feeling the effects of electronics and computers. Electronic drumsets and drum machines had already become a presence at PASICs and in *Percussive Notes* articles. In addition, the August 1990 issue of *Notes* contained the first mention of a World Percussion Network that was being developed by Norm Weinberg, Barry Zimmerman, and Blair Helsing, through which PAS members would be able to communicate with each other through their personal computers. At PASIC '90 attendees could see a demonstration of what was being developed for the WPN, and members were invited to offer suggestions. An article in the April 1991 issue of *Percussive Notes* reported on those suggestions and the progress that was being made. The next issue included an article that explained going "online" through a Bulletin Board System (BBS) to communicate with others quickly, which was how the WPN was going to function. (There was no Internet at this point.) A subsequent PN article explained how to use a modem. In April 1992, a report by PAS First Vice-president Garwood Whaley stated that one of the PAS goals was to have all chapter presidents connected through the WPN within the year.

Meanwhile, the society was growing stronger in a variety of ways. In the February 1991 issue of *Percussive Notes*, Administrative Manager Steve Beck reported that "1990 was a great year for PAS," citing that the society began offering grants to chapters for Days of Percussion and other special projects, with some of the money coming from sales of a new PAS publication titled *Percussion Education: A Source Book of Concepts and Information*, which was compiled by Gar-

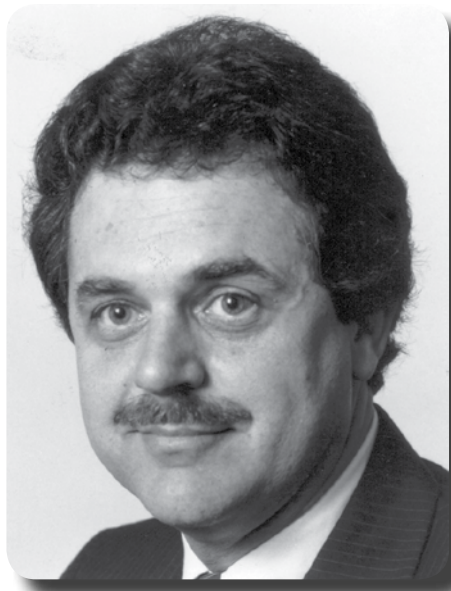


Garwood Whaley

wood Whaley and the PAS Education Committee. In addition, PAS chapters had sent out more newsletters and sponsored more events than ever before, and *Percussive Notes* had increased to bimonthly publication with no dues increase.

In June 1991 PAS Executive Secretary Genaro Gonzalez reported that a handbook was being developed that would list specific duties of PAS officers, board members, committee chairs, and PASIC hosts, in order to bring more consistency to the organization. In addition, the society was going to start subscribing to an "electronic mail system" for communication among officers, board members, PN editors, and committee chairs.

The society was also working to increase its international profile. Former PAS President John Beck and the International Committee were working to establish additional PAS chapters outside the U.S., and in June 1993 it was announced that 13 countries outside the U.S. now had PAS chapters, with Canada having seven. PASIC was inviting more artists from other countries, and *Percussive Notes* was running more articles featuring percussion activities around the world. At first, "international" percussion was not necessarily synonymous with "world" percussion and the emerging hand-drumming movement. Most of the international articles in *Notes* and artists at PASIC represented symphonic and mallet-keyboard percussion. But the "international" focus would soon expand. Hand drumming and "recreational" percussion were becoming more common at PASIC, as were evening drum circles, and the August 1995 issue of *Percussive Notes* had a lengthy cover story on the uses of hand drumming for team building, with at-risk students, with Alzheimer's patients, and for fun.



Robert Schietroma

November 1992 saw the debut of International Drum Month (IDM), sponsored by PAS and NAMM (the National Association of Music Merchants). November was chosen primarily because it was the month that PASIC was always held. IDM was designed to increase awareness of drums and percussion through a variety of promotional and educational events, and was supported by many members of the percussion industry.

In his December 1992 President's Message, Robert Schietroma announced another major change for PAS. In the future, the Board of Directors would be elected by the membership at large, rather than being elected from within the Board itself.

Garwood Whaley took over as PAS President in January of 1993, and in his first President's Message he listed several goals, including: develop a public relations program to bring PAS to the public's eye; shift many of the PASIC duties from the local host committee to the Lawton office; develop the PAS museum; get the Board of Directors more involved in projects, duties, and regular operations; do away with committees that are no longer needed and create new committees where needed; develop a "club" or "junior" membership category; increase membership to 10,000 within two years; develop additional membership benefits; develop the World Percussion Network; and develop a task force to "internationalize" PAS.

A year later, Whaley reported on the previous year's accomplishments and the state of the society:

The present state of the Percussive Arts Society is excellent. We are currently experiencing a "success cycle"—a positive feeling about PAS that is permeating our organization. PAS has become more visible and has attracted more members, more advertisers, and more exhibitors than at any other time in our history. For instance, our membership stands at 6,305—about 1,000 more than last year at this time. And our attendance at this convention [PASIC '93] is 3,858—a record for PAS.

The following is a summary of actions and events that have occurred since January 1993:

1. Membership benefits have been expanded to include health/life insurance, a travel club program, a credit card program, and *Modern Drummer* magazine subscription discounts.

2. A successful PAS/Industry Conference was held at Lawton this summer that provided focus and direction in smoothing communications between industry members and PAS.

3. An annual "Outstanding Service Award" has been established to recognize

service to PAS. Congratulations to this year's honoree, Ed Soph.

4. The Lawton PAS staff has been re-organized to provide greater service and professional support to our membership. This reorganization has included creating job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions, which will be used in evaluation and job announcements, and setting goals as a regular part of office operations.

5. PASIC duties are being shifted from a local host to the Lawton staff as a means of developing continuity from year to year.

6. We have developed an internship program, which began with one internship during the spring 1993 semester and will expand to four internships per semester by the fall 1994 semester. This program provides an outstanding, hands-on working opportunity for college students and an economical supplementary workforce for PAS.

7. We have redesigned and restructured our publications for wider appeal to our diverse membership. To assist in this effort, we have created the position of director of publications to insure coordination of identity and production of all PAS publications.

8. We are actively marketing PAS through advertising in other percussion- and music-related periodicals. Additionally, we are sending 900 free newsletters to music and drum shops, organization leaders, and others every month, and we mail 300 news releases monthly for reprint in other publications.

It was also announced that Steve Beck, who had served as Administrative Manager for the society for five years, had been named Executive Director of PAS.

In June of 1994, a PAS press release announced a major development in the World Percussion Network:



Steve Beck

LAWTON, OKLAHOMA—Remember this number: 405-353-1441. It's the new phone number for the World Percussion Network (WPN), the Percussive Arts Society's bulletin board system devoted to percussion topics and percussionists everywhere.

The WPN was recently moved to PAS headquarters here, thanks to the efforts of systems operator Barry Zimmerman, World Percussion Network Committee chairman Norman Weinberg, committee members Blair Helsing, D'Arcy Gray, Ed Hartman, James Lambert, Joseph Youngblood, Rebecca Kite, Richard Gipson, Richard K. Jones, and Russ Girsberger, as well as the many users and industry members whose contributions made purchasing the necessary hardware and software possible.

"Now that the PAS has officially taken the WPN under its wing, its visibility, growth, and usefulness to the percussion community at large is certain to increase," noted Weinberg.

The WPN has been in operation since April, 1991, when Zimmerman set up the network prototype in his home in Lakeland, FL. Since that time the network's user base has expanded from just a few to more than 300 active users, with new users logging on daily.

The network is designed to provide PAS members the opportunity to exchange electronic mail, MIDI, and text files, and the ability to research percussion material online. In addition, some percussion industry members have uploaded their catalogs to the File Libraries section of WPN, and a number of publication indices, such as those for back issues of *Percussive Notes*, *Electronic Musician*, *Modern Percussionist* and *Modern Drummer* are available. Future plans for the WPN include online access to back issues of *Percussive Notes* and other research materials stored at the PAS Research Library, and access to an annotated bibliography of percussion works compiled by graduate students at the University of North Texas under the guidance of past PAS president Bob Schietroma.

The June '94 issue of *Percussive Notes* also saw the publication of Norm Weinberg's article on "Guidelines for Drumset Notation," which would eventually be expanded into a book as a project of the PAS Publications Committee that Whaley formed.

The Percussive Arts Society was going strong, giving members a sense of identity and community. Although percussion education had come a long way since the birth of PAS, there were still challenges to be met, reflected by two articles in that same issue of *Notes*. In one, "Drumset's Struggle for Legitimacy," author Dennis Rogers explained that, "In 24 years of college music teaching my greatest dilemma has been the way in

which non-percussion music faculty view drumset. General discussions with these colleagues confirm that drumset is a legitimate instrument that is quite acceptable in the percussion curriculum. Yet, when it comes time for juries or recitals, it is considered 'most inappropriate' for students to display their drumset skills."

The rudiments also continued to be a controversial topic, as reported by Dan Moore in his article "The War of the Rudiments": "Rudimental drumming in general and drum rudiments in particular are often at the center of heated debate regarding their relevance to a contemporary percussion program. Should they be given only cursory mention due to their historical significance? Should they be a part of every percussionist's technical development? Should they be dismissed as a useless, antiquated teaching tool never to be used?"

In August '94 it was announced that the McMahon Foundation had given PAS a \$200,000 grant for the purpose of adding a 2,000-square-foot instrument storage area to the museum and to increase the size of the museum by 2,000 feet. According to Whaley, "PAS will contribute \$100,000 toward the project, which we will be able to do without additional fundraising and without asking for percussion-industry donations! In fact, the original loan for our building, which was due in 1997, will be paid off by the end of this year and the additional loan for the expansion will be paid off by the original loan date of 1997. At that time, PAS will have a \$750,000 state-of-the-art museum/storage/office facility for which we paid \$200,000, and we will have an endowment fund of approximately \$125,000, with a daily reserve account balance of \$50,000. With our organization's ongoing success has come the need to expand our facility. Many instruments have been donated to us and we are currently storing them in a rented facility. Our museum is not large enough to display the many instruments that we own or that we anticipate receiving within the next several years. This expansion will provide ample storage for years to come, including a work/repair area and an office/work station for museum interns. It will also increase the museum display area to accommodate our current and future collection needs."

Typically, Executive Committee members served two-year terms, and so Whaley's term as PAS President would have ended in December 1994. But it was reported that "in response to requests by numerous members of the percussion industry and by PAS board members, President Garwood Whaley agreed that the current committee should continue in office to 'complete the goals that we have established' and 'develop long-range stability for the society.'" There-

fore, the Executive Committee consisting of Whaley, First Vice-President Randall Eyles, Second Vice-President Genaro Gonzalez, Treasurer Mike Balter, and Secretary Bob Breithaupt would remain in office through 1996.

In early 1995, it was reported that PAS had 7,500 members, and that attendance at PASIC '94 had been 4,500, an all-time high. It was also announced that Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith had donated one of his drumsets to PAS. It would be displayed in the museum when it reopened after the expansion, and then auctioned off to fund a scholarship.

The expanded museum reopened in August of '95, prompting coverage in *Modern Drummer* and *The Instrumentalist* magazines.

New at PASIC '95 were several sessions directed toward beginning players called FUNDamentals, which have continued to this day. And by the end of the year, PAS membership had passed 8,000.

During the summer of '96 the Board of Directors met in Lawton for a brainstorming session—the first time the Board had ever met outside of PASIC. Around the same time, Steve Beck announced that he was leaving PAS to take a job with Pro-Mark. First Vice-President Randy Eyles, who was set to become PAS President at the end of the year, was named to succeed Beck as Executive Director, and so Second Vice-president Genaro Gonzalez moved into position to assume the presidency in 1997.

For his final message as President, Whaley offered an overview of where PAS stood:

Our present state of affairs is unparalleled in our thirty-five year history. We have completely paid off our headquarters/museum and now stand debt-free. In addition, we

have developed a solid financial plan that is now in place. Our membership is larger than ever and growing steadily. Our publications are award-winning. Our professional staff is comprised of outstanding individuals in their field, including an executive director who holds a doctorate degree and was the former principal percussionist and soloist in the United States Air Force Band, one of the finest professional bands in the world. Our museum currently attracts more people in one month than it did in its entire first year of operation. Our conventions are not only bigger and better, but they are more sensitive to the needs of our diverse membership. We have more membership benefits than ever before, and we are a happier and more positive organization. Our far-reaching effect on drumming and percussion is truly remarkable and, as our mission statement mandates, we are a viable network of performers, teachers, students, enthusiasts and sustaining members whose purpose is educational, promoting drums and percussion.

For his first message as PAS President in 1997, Genaro Gonzalez addressed the goals set by the Board at their summit in Lawton the previous summer: "The topics that were identified by the Board as being the most critical to the future success of the PAS included (1) PAS staffing, (2) international activities, (3) state chapter activities, (4) improving and expanding WPN/Internet, (5) PASIC related topics, (6) developing and expanding the PAS Museum, (7) developing outreach programs, (8) expanding scholarships, (9) developing the PAS Library, (10) establishing ongoing commissions, (11) PAS building improvements and (12) several miscellaneous items. As you are reading this article, the Board of Directors

is already hard at work accomplishing these goals."

Mention of the Internet was especially significant, and once again showed PAS being on the cutting edge. At the time, WPN was still operating as a Bulletin Board System, and to access it one had to call a number from a modem. Calling often or from outside the U.S. resulted in huge phone bills. But something called the Internet, or World Wide Web, was being developed, through which people could have access to any organization that had a "web site." The Internet was in its infancy and was more of an idea than a reality, but the WPN committee was keeping track of progress, and very soon the WPN would be part of the WWW.

In August '97 came word of a new PAS committee: "The Percussive Arts Society announces the formation of a new committee that will focus on topics concerning health issues of percussionists. The first meeting of the Health and Wellness Committee will be held at 8 A.M. on Thursday, November 20 at PASIC '97. John Beck will chair the initial meeting with the purpose of determining interest in making this a formal standing committee as well as leading discussions to set plans for future activities. If there is enough interest to form an active committee, then a formal search for a chair will take place."

There certainly was enough interest, and the Health and Wellness committee has become a major part of PAS, providing regular articles in *Percussive Notes* and sponsoring clinics, panel discussions, and hearing tests at every PASIC.

At the end of 1998, Genaro Gonzalez reported on PAS progress over the past two years:

I am pleased to report that this Executive Committee was able to complete the work on a number of projects and goals that were first developed at the Board of Directors Summit of 1996. In addition, the PAS office has experienced a much needed upgrading of a variety of office equipment. Several excellent new staff members have been hired to replace departed staff. Our award-winning publications, *Percussive Notes* and *Percussion News*, are now arriving to members earlier than at any time in our history. The new Museum Concert Series has been a tremendous success, and the new PAS Web site is just the start of exciting things to come in the area of electronic access to PAS as we move toward the 21st century.

For his first message as the new PAS President, Bob Breithaupt outlined his goals as increased electronic access and fundraising for the society. "I view electronic access



Randy Eyles



Genaro Gonzalez



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Robert Breithaupt

as the means by which PAS can 'connect' with the world of percussion to a degree that we could only imagine just a few years ago," he said in *Percussive Notes*. "In addition, the ability for students and international members to join PAS as 'electronic' members will provide an efficient, cost-effective means to receive the information that the society has to offer. In short, we plan to create an environment that allows one to view our publications and also to do research, using our thirty-five years of published materials, through 'keyword' access.

"I must mention that the concept for this was not a dream of mine; it will be the realization of the vision of members such as Norm Weinberg, Rebecca Kite, and members of the WPN Committee, who have been challenging us to think about electronic services for many years. Their ability to predict the future has been uncanny and has served us very well."

At PASIC '99, attendees got their first preview of pas.org, which evolved from the WPN. As Breithaupt explained in a subsequent PN message, "With the advent of the re-designed www.pas.org (January 1, 2000 is the launch date for the new Web site), PAS members will have the opportunity to communicate with each other at a level not previously experienced. Through interest groups, chat rooms, and online committee work, www.pas.org will encourage an expanded level of communication on the subject of percussion."

It was also announced that a new membership category was available. One could now join as an "electronic" member (ePAS) for \$25 per year, and instead of receiving PAS publications through the mail, the publications would be available online in a "member's only" section of the site. It was

hoped that this option would be especially attractive to students and non-U.S. members, and college teachers were encouraged to require membership of their students, as the \$25 cost for an electronic membership was less than the cost of a typical college textbook.

As the new website was being discussed and taking shape, one idea was that the PAS newsletter, *Percussion News*, might eventually be discontinued, with all of its content going on the website. At that time, *Percussion News* was printed on tabloid size newsprint, and it was not paying for itself through ad sales. But when the electronic membership category was created, the newsletter had to be redesigned and made to fit on standard letter-size paper for the benefit of ePAS members who might wish to print some or all of the pages from their personal computers. The new format, designed by PAS Graphic Designer Hillary Henry, was so attractive that more companies started buying ad space in the newsletter, and it started making a profit. Although new product information and programs were moved to the website, plans to discontinue the printed newsletter were dropped.

Meanwhile, *Percussive Notes* began to take advantage of the website capabilities by offering "sound enhanced" articles. In the December 2000 issue, articles by Jerry Tachoir on chord voicings and an article on the cylinder recordings housed in the PAS Museum had accompanying sound files that readers could access through the PAS site.

In June 2000 it was announced that the headquarters and museum would be expanded once again. At the end of the year, President Breithaupt summed up recent accomplishments:

The conception, development, and launch of the redesigned PAS Web site, www.pas.org, amounted to the "reinvention" of PAS in many ways. We are just beginning to see the benefits of the by-products of this effort: lower cost memberships through the ePAS memberships, the new format of *Percussion*

News, the ability to survey our members, the chat sessions and conference centers, and the scanned products yet to be released are just a few of the benefits.

Our fund-raising initiatives have netted significant contributions, highlighted in a generous donation from Fred Gruber, scholarship funding in the name of a number of other individuals that are in the planning stages, outreach efforts, the Lawton community, and finally, another major gift from the McMahon Foundation, allowing us to construct another addition to the headquarters. Major changes in the profile of the PAS Museum are about to unfold as well. PASIC continues to expand its scope and present events that are produced professionally in more appropriate venues, while not sacrificing the spirit of community that is such an important element.

Our interest and commitment to connecting with members and non-members outside the United States have led to "official" representation by PAS at percussion events and gatherings in Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

On the administrative side, committee activities, by-laws revision, communication with chapters, and the comprehensive involvement of PAS members in the development of the PAS Strategic Plan have helped to lay the groundwork for an organization that is vital, vibrant, and important to its members and the world percussion community.

By 2000, PAS had a permanent headquarters and museum (that had already been expanded twice), which had only been a dream ten years before, and the society had moved solidly into the Internet age, which couldn't have even been imagined ten years before. In the coming decade, the society would face—and survive—some new challenges. PN



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