



## October Ramblings

By Chris Casteel

As I write this article, it is the first Saturday in October; otherwise known as the first weekend of the field competition season! I would imagine that today, a good many instructors are probably standing on a track somewhere watching their guards with crossed fingers and sweaty palms; all the while hoping, praying, pleading that they will come through their first competitive experience of this season unscathed and successful! So as you stand at the starting line of the field season (to be quickly followed by the winter guard season), I was hoping to send a little encouragement your way.

Most of these things, I have stumbled upon in my wanderings as a teacher. Some of it, you may have already heard. However, there might just be a few tidbits that can be taken, shared and used for encouragement in the months ahead.

This first one seems a bit odd, but if you read into it, the connection to our activity is clear. It is titled *What We can Learn from Geese*; the author is unknown.

1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird following it. By flying in a 'V' formation, the entire flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if only one bird flew alone. *People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the strength of one another.*
2. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. *We need to make sure our 'honking' from behind is encouraging, and not something else.*
3. When a goose gets sick, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again. *If we have as much sense as geese do, we too, will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.*

*"A lack of confidence is the heaviest anchor you can place upon your creativity or performance."*

*"Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you"* William Arthur Ward

*"Dancing with the feet is one thing, but dancing with the heart is another."*

*"Dance is the poetic baring of the soul through motion."*-Scott Nilsson

*"Excellence is not a singular act, but a habit. You are what you repeatedly do."* -Shaquille O'Neal

*"Limitations live only in our minds. But if we use our imaginations, our possibilities are limitless."*- Jamie Paolinetti

If you have made it this far in the article, I am sure you now understand the title, October Ramblings! Without a doubt, this article has certainly been mishmash, a mixed bag, or a muddle of miscellany, but sometimes the best treasures can be found in a pile of hodgepodge. Who knows, maybe you found something in this? Whatever the case, as you stand at the starting line, looking ahead to the months of competitive seasons, my wish for you is that you would be encouraged, inspired and strive for the very best in you and your performers.