

# Notes of Interest

## The Mississinewa Valley Band Newsletter



March 2016

Volume 11, Number 1

### In the Spotlight—the Brass 6

Not long after the Mississinewa Valley Band was formed, it became obvious that there was a need for a smaller musical group – one that could play at venues that could not support the full band, or even the swing band. So a new group was formed – a brass quintet. The group actually started as an ensemble that accompanied choir specials and congregational singing at College Church. When the church went another direction with Sunday music, lead trumpeter Ronda Jones had the idea to venture out to other churches that might enjoy live music. Word of mouth then brought invitations from retirement centers, street fests and holiday gatherings.

Through the years, the quintet has changed and developed into what we know today as the Brass 6. Six brass players – two trumpets, one French horn, one trombone, one baritone and a tuba – make up this ensemble that has had a very busy itinerary during 2015. They have played everything from birthday parties to political events to fund raisers to church services, both inside and out of doors, and to audiences ranging from 30 to 700 people. They play swing music, polkas, marches, sacred, pop, Christmas and patriotic tunes. Some of the venues make for a more intimate setting where they are able to interact with the audience involving them in sing-a-longs or helping with cowbells and sleigh bells. Once they even passed out elementary school rhythm instruments to the audience, who accompanied them as they played. They have become so popular that they have had more

invitations than they can handle.

The group rehearses on Thursday evenings in the orchestra room at Marion High School. They try to have music for almost any occasion in their repertoire. Through their rehearsals and performances, they have developed a camaraderie amongst themselves that ties them together and keeps them moving forward. They feel that they have made a difference on several occasions with the music that they have played. Here are some of their comments:

- “It has been really neat to hear the stories of some of the people that tell us how a song we played touched them in a special way when we have played at church services.”
  - “I love the reaction of the audience in general. I think people really enjoy live music.”
  - “Personally, I enjoy each gig we play. The type of music is secondary to seeing the people who enjoy the event. If we bring people closer to God, honor a veteran, or just get folks toe-tapping, I am happy.”
  - “We know we have made an impression at a retirement center when folks come up to us afterwards to tell us what instrument they played in high school.”
  - “It’s always an honor to play for veterans. Anytime we play service songs those veterans stand tall no matter their age.”
- Of course, there are always funny stories to tell. Larry Norris (trumpet) shared a couple of his favorite funny moments: My fun-

ny moment came during a church service. Ronda (first trumpet) and I had some nice harmony going until my trumpet started sounding like a clown horn. The spring on a spit valve had broken in the middle of a selection! I spent the rest of the performance with one hand moving the trumpet valves and the other holding the spit valve closed. Another time, Jerry (Fox) accidentally dropped his mouthpiece down the bell of his tuba before a performance. It was entertaining watching him trying to retrieve it.

Michael Blaughter (trombone) sort of fell into the group by accident. He had recently moved from Fort Wayne and had quit several bands that he had been playing with. He was looking to join another small band when he was asked to play as a substitute for a gig at the Tree of Life Bookstore. He found that the Brass 6 was a good fit for him and has been a permanent member ever since.

In short, the Brass 6 is a group who simply like to play good music and appreciate the opportunity to brighten the day for people – another example of the way that the Mississinewa Valley Band is truly a community band.



### Upcoming Band Events

Tuesday May 3 Springtime at the Phillippe  
Tuesday June 7 Gas City Park  
Thursday June 30 Honeywell Center, Wabash  
Thursday July 21 Matter Park



It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley



## Finding Your Match Written by Trey Reely

Online dating sites are all the rage these days. Here are some tongue-in-cheek personal ads for the socially challenged band geek. Hey . . . Band geeks need love too!

**Handsome, humble trumpet player, 21**, looking for nice, confident woman who will worship the ground I walk on and constantly remind me of my many fine attributes.

**Gravitationally-challenged tuba player, 34**, looking for woman who likes to cook. Ideal woman must have a truck or car with trunk big enough to carry a saxophone during marching season (I march in a university band) and concert tuba in the spring (I play in a community band). I live with my mother, but am quite independent.

**Cool guitar player, 27**, seeking woman willing to support me as I work on my solo career. Willingness to sick backup a plus, but not required. Why not take a chance on me? We could be the next John and Yoko.

**Drummer, 19**, seeking woman who can read music and help me learn marching snare parts. Must love to hear me rap and tap on all flat surfaces within my reach. I am the best looking dude in my section.

**Slightly bowed but huggable bass drummer, 38**, looking to date former majorettes who would not have had anything to do with me in college. Sometimes things change. I am definitely worth a second look.



**If you are looking** for a talented clarinet player, I am the one. I am seeking man of equal talent who earned at least 20 solo and ensemble medals during high school on grade three and above literature. Brass players preferred. However, I am willing to negotiate.

**Saxophone player, 23**, available, but probably not for long! Seeks stable relationship. No cheaters or liars please. No trombone players either. (I've had no luck with those.)

**Smart, opinionated horn player, 42**, seeks mate who loves debate and can pose an intellectual challenge. Must

be able to accept defeat humbly when appropriate. Must be able to perform second horn parts in duets on dates. I hate Sousa marches, jazz and Kenny G.

**Mature, female harpist, 92**, tired of playing at weddings of other couples. Ready to retire and settle down for the long haul with just the right man. If you are between the ages of 26 and 96, you may be the one for me.

**Cute, loyal piccolo player** seeks someone who loves listening to *Stars and Stripes Forever* by candlelight.

**Woman** seeking marriage or someone to play trombone in a brass quintet.

**Rebel female third clarinet player, 20**, who is tired of being kicked around. This is my last chance at love. (Seriously! I've said it before, but I mean it this time!)

Trey Reely is director of bands at Riverview High School in Searcy, Arkansas and is a contributing editor to *The Instrumentalist* magazine. These selections appeared from his article called *My Funny Valentine* in the February 2016 edition of *The Instrumentalist*.

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