

# *Ten Years of Tuesdays*

**A brief history of The Old Dam Community Band  
beginning on Tuesday, February 29, 2000**

**By Terri Schultz**



The History of the Old Dam Community Band  
February 29, 2000 – January 2010.

## TEN YEARS OF TUESDAYS

Dedicated to everyone who ever played with us, and to Dan Schultz, who had the vision and the perseverance to make it all happen.

In the words of Dan Schultz:

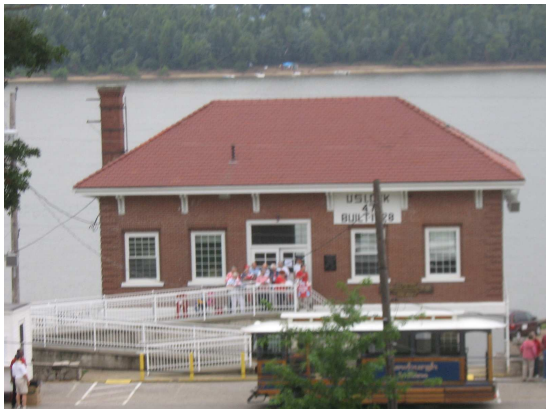


“The Old Dam Community Band was founded on February 29, 2000 by four people: Dan and Terri Schultz, who posted advertising on radio station 88.3 and had flyers placed in store windows of several Newburgh merchants, Larry May, and Tunis McElwain. We didn’t play at that first meeting but decided to spread the word and return the following Tuesday.”

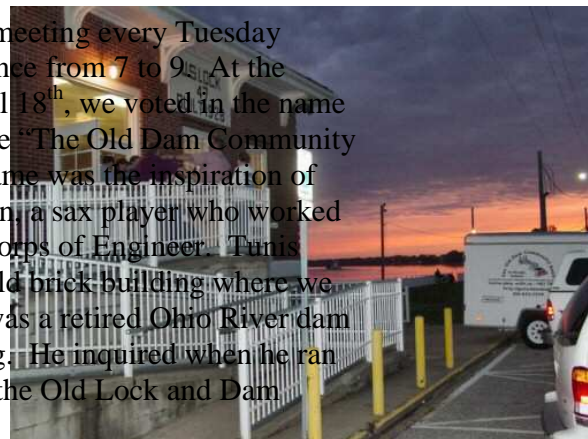
“On the following Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, five people attended... Larry May, Tunis McElwain, Jeff Westfall, who heard an announcement on the radio, Terri and myself. I had invited Michelle Brutlag of the Evansville Courier and she came to do a feature article about the effort to organize the band. She also brought a photographer. After about a half hour of talk, the four of us, myself, Larry May, Tunis McElwain, and Jeff Westfall, floundered through some Dixieland music, while Michelle interviewed Terri. Those first tunes were played from a booklet of tunes called “Dixieland Beat”... a book that the Little Old Dam Band still uses today. It didn’t sound too bad considering we had not played together before.”

Michelle did a wonderful article that appeared in the Courier on March 13... complete with pictures.

At the next meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>, we had seventeen players, some of whom had not had their instruments out in over 30 years. Jeff Westfall assumed the role of conductor and we played for over two hours.



We have been meeting every Tuesday evening ever since from 7 to 9. At the session on April 18<sup>th</sup>, we voted in the name of the band to be “The Old Dam Community Band”. This name was the inspiration of Tunis McElwain, a sax player who worked for the Army Corps of Engineer. Tunis knew that the old brick building where we were meeting was a retired Ohio River dam control building. He inquired when he ran up the steps of the Old Lock and Dam.



building where we met for 8 years, "Is this where the Old Dam band is?" The name stuck, even if Tunis didn't. Tunis played with us only a few times before being transferred in his work. That first year was exciting, as more and more band members came and went, and we found ourselves very much in the public eye. The Band has been there ever since.

### The Beginning

The idea for the Old Dam Community Band became a gleam in Dan's eye before Christmas of 1997. Dan and I were strolling around Washington Square Mall in Evansville when we came across Tuba Christmas, an ensemble of low brass playing Holiday music. Dan loved it! He told me then for the first time that he had played tuba from his fourth grade year at Delaware School all the way through his years in the Navy. I asked him then why he didn't play any more. So he bought a tuba and then couldn't find anyone to play with. A boy with a new toy and no one to play with! Only Dan could have found the answer so uniquely.

We weren't even married yet then, just mindless young people madly in love (!) I was living in Ft. Branch still raising my kids, but Dan was already involved in Newburgh town interests and living in the house that he had built and that we still live in today. He remembers asking Lou Dennis, the President of Historic Newburgh Inc., if she knew anyone playing in some sort of community band. She told him about Bill Haas, a Newburgh resident who played tuba with Germania Mannechor in Evansville. Bill and his wife Cookie invited Dan and me over one Sunday afternoon. Bill took one look at the old, beat-up tuba that Dan had bought, and offered him use of one he had. He also invited him to go play with the Rhine Valley Brass at Germania on Fulton Avenue on Friday night. Dan got his lip back in a hurry! Incidentally, that old tuba ended up as a fountain in a fish pond we had a few years later. Dan still plays with the Rhine Valley Brass.... and Bill ended up in the Old Dam Community Band.



We were married in Feb. 1998. That summer Dan played with the Warrick County Band, a group of musicians composed mostly of band directors in the area, that got together for 3 concerts in the summers. They rehearsed once or twice, then played a concert in Boonville, one in Chandler, and one in Newburgh. I think Dan got hooked that summer. But then autumn came and there was no band again.

By Fall of 1999, he was ready for a permanent band. So, in typical Dan fashion, he thought it out, and did something about it. First of all, he talked to John Whittenbraker, of the Warrick Band, and got some advice and direction on where to go and what to do. He ran an ad in the Evansville Courier looking for members for a new band. And in October of that year we had a band of sorts in our living room! At least it was a noisy bunch. Judi

Hardesty showed up with her flute, our very first band member. (She still comes occasionally to sit in with the Band). We also had two trumpet players from USI looking for a rock group, and a bass guitarist just learning to play who was thrilled to see some guy with a washboard come in. We had the makings of a country band, but not exactly what we had in mind. Where, exactly, did a tuba and a saxophone fit in all this?

So we started over, learning a bit in the process about how to advertise for a “band.” This time we mentioned brass and woodwind and percussion and talked more about a community band. And that is what led to February 29, 2000.... the day The Old Dam Community Band was founded.

### John Powell



I would like to recognize the enormous, but completely unspoken, contributions through these years from John Powell, our Band Historian, a tubist from the early ODCB days and the banjo player for all these years in the LODB. John has kept an on-line journal of all the gigs performed for all these years by the entire organization, and, without it, none of us could remember all that we have done. John is a quiet man who has given us all these memories, and I thank him.

In the 1880s and 1890s community bands numbered in the tens of thousands in the United States. Concerts in the park were as popular as rock concerts are today. The earliest community bands were associated with the military and evolved into business and community bands. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many towns had a band... in fact, there were over 10,000 bands. Bands were important for civic pride and town “bragging rights”. They were a major source of entertainment. Even job applicants were asked what instrument they played. Bands were flashy and loud... frequently dressed in colorful military style uniforms. The popularity of community bands peaked around 1910, when there were about 18,000 groups in the US.

Old pictures of the Newburgh Community Band of 1910 show 15 named members. They are dressed in uniforms and hats, holding their instruments. The picture shows drums, trumpets, saxophones, clarinets, trombones, and two tubas.





Kuebler Gardens in Newburgh, now the Favre House near the Newburgh Community Park and pool, was a private home of well to do people who sponsored their own band in the 1920s through, maybe, the 1940s. But Newburgh, and most of the country had no public bands during this era. Bands were confined to school children, college bands, and professional dance bands.



Community Bands are making a comeback in the United States now, with well over 1200 bands. A web page lists 38 community bands in Indiana in 2009. The Old Dam Community Band, alone, is responsible at least indirectly for two other bands in the area...

the Owensboro Community Band, founded by Hugh Whitaker of Old Dam Community Band fame, and the Spencer County Community band, founded by Jon and Tina Patton.

In 1928, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a lock and dam at Newburgh. This system served well as part of the program to keep the river navigable through periods of dry weather. Late in the decade of the 1960s, a new dam was built just upstream from the old one. When the old dam was removed, the control building and houses were given to the Town of Newburgh. When Dan Schultz founded the community band, it rehearsed in the control building. The rest is history still being made.

### The First Year... 2000

The first year that the band existed was exciting and busy. It had been decided at the very first, and Dan had always insisted, that the band meet every week, and Tuesday has always been rehearsal night. By April 18<sup>th</sup>, there were 32 musicians rehearsing at the Old Dam building and by May 20<sup>th</sup> we had our first concert. Appropriately, it was in downtown Newburgh for Historic Newburgh's garden tour. On May 27<sup>th</sup> the band played for the first of what would be ten years of Memorial Day services at Rose Hill Cemetery. By June 27<sup>th</sup>, the history notes that the band had its best rehearsal ever and more concerts followed on June 1<sup>st</sup> at Camp Brosend followed by the first of many July 4<sup>th</sup> Newburgh fireworks concerts.

Band members present at those early concerts included Jeff Westfall, the first director. All of us who remember those days remember Jeff and his love for German marches, which we played exclusively for a short time. About this time, a smaller, more portable version of the big band was formed which was informally called the Water Street Brass Band. This smaller band was led by Jeff, and its 6 to 16 musicians stuck to German polkas, waltzes and military marches. That little band played at least 6 gigs that summer, mostly in Evansville at its Saturday markets and even for Otters baseball games. Musicians who played with that group included Larry May, Tom Rusche, Dave Emery, Frank Book, Tina Wedding (Patton), Jim Sermersheim, Jon Patton, Mel Stowers, Wayne Jones, Bill Haas, Dan Schultz, and Dave King on drums. Many times Dan Keifer brought the whole Rhine Valley Brass to help out and they oomph-pahed as often as they could. The Water Street Brass Band eventually morphed into the Little Old Dam Band and turned into a Dixieland band, which it still is today.

### Jeff Westfall



Jeff received his degree in music education from IU, with his specialty in trombone. He played in army bands in Kansas and Germany, where he obtained a good working knowledge of the German language which he uses well at Germania Mannerchor in the men's choir and in the Ratskeller band. Jeff directed the Bloomington Brass Band in 1990 and a Circus Band for the Gentry Bros Circus, which originated the dog and pony shows seen at circuses today. He now plays baritone and tuba with Dan at

Germania and with the Red Bank ReUnion Band, which gives him a wonderful outlet for his interest in Civil War Reenactments and Civil War Memorabilia.

Jeff remembers the tiny band we were then, and how difficult it was to find music to play. And, of course, how loud we sounded anyway in the Lock and Dam building! He is back with us, now, playing tuba in the back row, amazed at how far we've come.



Above is an image of the first 4<sup>th</sup> of July concert we played in Newburgh. Jeff is conducting. Other members present are: Front Row: Clarinets - Tom Rusche, Dave Emery (behind the conductor, Jeff Westfall), Frank Book, Ashley Cooper, and Tina Wedding & Carmen. Second Row: Saxophones - Bryant Taylor and Terri Schultz. F horn - Bill Smith: Trumpets - Jim Sermersheim, Larry May and Jon Patton. Third Row: Drums - Ben Rice, Dave King, Ray Smith. Trombones - Jack Hampton, Wayne Fiester, & Tim Long Tubas - Bill Haas, John Wittenbraker, John Powell and Dan Schultz

ODCB members present and accounted for another early concert, a patriotic bash hosted by Camp Brosend, a youth camp in Newburgh, included Hugh Whittaker and Jim Sutter on baritone: Tom Rusche, Frank Book, Ashley Cooper, Dave Emery, and Tina Wedding on clarinet: Bill Fox on French horn: Dave King, Ben Rice and Ray Smith on drums: Wayne Fiester, Jack Hampton, and Tim Long on trombone: Claudia Huffman on flute: Bryant Taylor and Terri Schultz on sax: Larry May, Jim Sermersheim, Rick Huffman, and Jon Patton on trumpet: and Bill Haas, John Powell, and Dan Schultz on tuba. Many of these early members are still with us today, either in the regular band or in the Little Old Dam Band. Sadly, Claudia Huffman and Bill Haas have died. All of these, and other, early members remain our friends, and many continue to sit in with us when they can.

Those of us who remember those first early days in the band will never forget a few events. One memorable rehearsal was held in what was then the Jaycee clubhouse, one of the houses on top of the hill across from the old Lock & Dam Building. Twenty members showed up that May evening and we overflowed out on the porch, putting the percussion section, Ray Smith and Dave King, out there to swat bugs and try to keep the motion sensor lights on. Another event, the big Newburgh fireworks, found Shorty Smith, Ray Smith's little dog who accompanied him everywhere, lifting his leg on a lady in our audience. We know that Shorty loved Ray, but we aren't sure he liked the drums much. Every time that Ray would hit the cymbal, Shorty would start backing up. By the end of the rehearsal, that



little dog would have backed his way outside! We've had other dogs through the years, like Jona Witherspoon's Daisy and, of course, KiKi... Mike and MaryAnn Decker's little pooch, who faithfully wears her ODCB sweater when she comes with them to events.

On July 6<sup>th</sup>, Dan addressed members of the Newburgh Parks Board about waiving the rental fee on the Old Lock and Dam Building. The Parks Board voted unanimously to allow us to use the building on Tuesday nights free of charge. We did for over 8 years before moving on.



Band members were treated to many beautiful sunsets over the Ohio River through the years, as well as a few rip-roaring thunderstorms. We played in barely-air conditioned 90 degree evenings, as well as bitterly cold winter nights. We sweated and shivered through a lot of music in that concrete and brick box, and we have always thanked the town for letting us play there by entertaining them whenever we can.

On August 22, 2000, Jon Patton and Hugh Whittaker took home the conductor scores of some new music Dan had acquired and agreed to direct the second hour of rehearsal the next week. Much of the early music that has contributed to our huge library was acquired at that time when Dan bought a store full of old scores from Schuttler Music when they closed their doors. Larry May, a retired band director and, at that time, still principal at an Evansville school, donated his library of old band tunes to us and much of our music still has "Rochester School Band" stamped on it. We thank that school system for its quiet contribution to a southern Indiana community band! Many, many pieces of music were donated by many different band members through the years, and it has all added to the



wealth of enjoyment we've all squealed and squawked out of it. Most of the time, it all ended up sounding somewhat like it was supposed to. We always strive to improve. The Old Dam Community Band now boasts a library of over 800 titles.

By October 22, the band had organized itself, with by-laws enacted and officers elected. Dan Schultz was elected chairman, a post he has kept all the years of the band's existence. The first Board of Directors consisted of Dan, Ray Smith, vice-chairman, Tina Wedding, Secretary-treasurer, Larry May, Jon Patton and Jim Sermersheim. By Nov. 2000 the band had its tax exempt status as a 501(3)c group. We were official.

Before that first year was out, the new Old Dam Community Band had played officially 11 times in Newburgh and the surrounding areas. We played indoors at nursing homes and churches, and outdoors in all sorts of weather for all sorts of events. We played patriotic tunes at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in Newburgh and at Rose Hill Cemetery on Memorial Day. We welcomed the cyclists at the end of the Great Pumpkin Metric at the 4H center in Evansville in October and played in Garvin Park's bandstand in September. December found us on the streets of Newburgh entertaining shoppers for the town's Silver Bells Christmas festivities for the first of what would become an annual event for us. We had discovered a place for ourselves as well as a purpose, and the Newburgh area had discovered us.

## 2001



The new year started for the band on February 18 when we helped Ted Gore celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ted had joined the band during the first year as a percussionist and would bring his wife, Rachelle, with him as a groupie until we all talked her into helping us by banging on the big bass drum. Ted and Rachelle were the second couple, after Dan and me, to play together in the band. Through the years, we have given many married folks something new to do together on Tuesday nights, and have

sometimes seen a parent bring his or her kids along to play, too. In those early years, Carmen Wedding often came with Tina to rehearsals and performances, and the little girl and Shorty, Ray Smith's dog, entertained the audiences as much as we did.



Pictures of the band in 2001 show us wearing white, Greek fisherman caps with the band logo on the front, or straw boaters and white shirts for performances. The picture to the left was taken on the same steps as the image of 100 years ago that's noted earlier in this book. Tina Wedding had helped Dan make red and white striped vests for everybody and my daughter-in-law, Sherri Dewig, a graphic designer, had come up with the idea of a



riverboat at the bottom of water falling over a dam for The Band's logo. Her sketch turned into a beautiful embroidered logo with a lot of work on Dan's part. It still appears on all our wearables and official gear.

All but two of our performances that year were outdoors and we played everywhere. We played for events for Newburgh and for two block parties for neighbors close by. We played for Evansville's Tour de Bloom Walking and Cycling Tour and for Owensboro's 'Friday after Five'. We helped the Silver Classics, a small group of musicians led by Beau Miley, at the Haubstadt Sommerfest in Gibson County. We played for three church socials and the first Newburgh Jazz Festival. We entertained a huge group of Airstream Campers at Scales Lake in Boonville. And we helped the Evansville Nut Club with their Santa Days in that drafty, cold tent on Franklin Street where we have returned every year since.

A program for the July 4<sup>th</sup> concert on Newburgh's riverfront lists the following music:

Star Spangled Banner  
 Washington Post March  
 Music Man  
 The Thunderer  
 Down by the Riverside  
 You're a Grand Old Flag  
 Amber Waves of Grain  
 Colonel Bogey  
 Liberty Bell March  
 Armed Forces Salute  
 Sempre Fidelis  
 El Capitan  
 1812 Overture  
 Stars and Stripes Forever  
 Jon Patton , conducting.



That program also asked the public for help in purchasing a portable band shell, which we did acquire soon after that. This is a big, white canvas bird-like awning that soars above the band and provides a bit of shade and protection on a hot afternoon. We used it many times on the riverfront and it is still available for outdoor events.

Articles in the Evansville Courier that year profiled two ODCB members. Jim Sermersheim, trumpet, was featured on September 24th with a tribute for his many-year tradition of giving doughnuts to the residents of Parkview Nursing Home on Evansville's west side. He and his wife are shown on October 1<sup>st</sup> setting out the American Flag that



they fly daily at their business.

Jim has been a faithful ODCB member and is the trumpet in the Little Old Dam Band. He showed up early in our history, and was the first of many surprises for Dan. Jim and Dan had known each other for 20 years as fellow Corvette enthusiasts, but neither knew the other was a musician. Carolyn pointed out a newspaper article about The Old Dam

Community Band to Jim and questioned “is that our Dan Schultz”?

When Jim showed up for a rehearsal, both he and Dan were dumbfounded to see the other. Jim and his wife, Caroline, accompanied the Little Old Dam Band several years later to England to play in Newburgh, Lancestershire, and he will always be fondly remembered for providing the rest of us with a lot of amusement during that trip! Most of us had never flown overseas before, at least not commercially, and Jim had brought some sleeping pills with him to help him get some rest on the flight. Regrettably, and after several Bloody Mary's also taken to help him sleep, they finally took effect about a half hour before landing. We had to have help unloading a very groggy man off the plane and onto a train for our connection to Wigan, England. When the train stopped, we shoved the still-snoring Jim into the nearest taxi to take him to our hotel so he could sleep it all off.

On another trip, this time to Germany with the Rhine Valley Brass, Jim ended up in the wrong restroom after assuming “Damen” must mean “the men”. Makes sense to me! But, unfortunately, it didn't to the two women who came squealing out after he made his entrance into the ladies room at that restaurant! Jim can always be counted on to provide a lot of good-natured fun when we go anywhere! He still plays regularly with the Little Old Dam Band, and has recently returned to play again with the ODCB. In late 2010 Jim had open heart surgery and mid-2011 was still recuperating in a nursing home. We miss him.

Another article in 2001 featured Wayne Fiester in its Dossier column. It lists his membership in the ODCB right up there with his job as marketing manager for Pioneer Plastics. Wayne and his wife, Nance, are another of the couples who have played in the band with us since the beginning. Although Wayne had played his trombone in high school and in the Purdue Marching band during his years there, he had not picked it up again until 2000 when he saw that first article in the paper and decided to come see what this new band

was all about. Since he graduated from Purdue in 1969, that means he hadn't played in over 30 years! He and a lot of others!

The ODCB has always welcomed anyone to come play with us. We have never had tryouts. An awful lot of us hadn't played since high school, and, for too many of us to count, that was a long time ago. Dan hadn't seen a tuba since his Navy days in the late 60's. I hadn't thought of my old sax since 1965. Jim Sermersheim had played professionally in dance bands 30 years and more ago, but hadn't played again until 2000. Many, many more of our members to come hadn't thought about it for that many years, or more. But a few of our players are young, some still in middle school, or high school, or college. Some have played professionally in all sorts of venues. Some have learned because they want to play in the ODCB.

Nance Fiester decided in 2005 that she was tired of sending Wayne off to play all the time, leaving her home alone. So she took it upon herself off to take percussion lessons and has mastered the snare as well as the bells. Rachelle Gore has learned to play the bass drum and bangs away on that big boy every week. I decided early on that I wanted to play, too, and dug my mom's old C melody sax out of my sister's attic so I could. I'm still learning, but I sure play better than I ever did in high school! Ray Koch has taken lessons on the French horn so he can join his wife Mary Ann and kids, Alex and Andrew, in the band. Mike Decker took the trumpet up again so he could join his wife, Mary Ann... who plays clarinet with The Band. Mike Filipi taught himself to play tenor sax because he wanted a change from his trumpet. Geniece Snow is learning to play French horn because she can no longer play her beloved flute. We are so proud of all of us. It is obviously never too late to learn to play a musical instrument and contribute to a community band.



2002 started off with the Little Old Dam Band playing for the old folks in downtown Evansville's McCurdy hotel, which had become a residential center for senior citizens. By this time, the Little Old Dam Band had evolved into a full-fledged Dixieland group which played everywhere. A picture from the McCurdy hotel shows Dave Emery, Frank Book, and Tina Wedding on clarinet, Bryant Taylor on tenor sax, Wayne Fiester on trombone, Jim Sermersheim on trumpet, Hugh Whitaker on baritone, Dan Schultz and Bill Haas on tuba, John Powell on banjo and Ted Gore on drum set. This group, which gained and lost a few members through the years, has



played literally hundreds of gigs and has contributed immensely to the popularity, and notoriety, of the Old Dam Community Band in general.



The Little Old Dam Band has played when the Delta Queen riverboat docked at Newburgh, as well as on the Chattanooga Star, where Hugh Whittaker became an instant star himself with the Red Hat Society ladies who had booked the boat. Hugh has been the band's vaudeville act since the beginning, entertaining at the literal drop of a hat. He kept himself busy on the little Chattanooga Star teaching the ladies to dance the "Ballin' the Jack". Dan always has said he thought those little old ladies

would have liked to have taken Hugh home for breakfast!



▲ **THE PATRIOTIC PACK:** Members of Newburgh's Old Dam Community Band including (left to right) Dan Schultz, John Powell, Jim Sermersheim, Ted Gore, Wayne Fiester and Frank Book, show their community pride and patriotism while visiting the sister city of Newburgh, England.

That little Dixieland group has entertained at birthday parties and anniversaries, at church socials and farm markets, at every nursing home in the tri-state, at bike rallies and Newburgh town events, and every year at Evansville's Really Big Show at the Centre. Their presence is remarkable and thorough, and the band is well known for performing anytime anyone asks. But the absolute best time the Little Old Dam Band ever had was when it was invited to play in Newburgh, England.

Newburgh, England, a little village of 650 located just south of Manchester and east of Liverpool, is the sister city of Newburgh, Indiana. In 2005, the little village celebrated the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its charter as a market town in Lancastershire. Newburgh, Indiana, has hosted, through the years, many members of Newburgh, England's town council, and has had

a wonderful, social relationship with the little town, which extended to the Little Old Dam Band being invited to participate in the festivities in 2005. Talk about an exciting vacation!

Six members of The Little Old Dam Band were able to make the trip across the pond. Jon and Tina Patton were unable to go at the last minute, but Ted and Rachelle Gore, John and Frances Powell, Jim and Caroline Sermersheim, Wayne Fiester, Frank Book, and Dan and

I had a wonderful time on our first-ever trip to merry old England. We traveled together by plane out of Evansville to Manchester, took the train to Wigan, and were met by our wonderful hosts from Newburgh. We stayed at various homes in that beautiful little village or at the Red Lion Inn, and were welcomed like American royalty.



The band played in the town post office courtyard and at the British Legion Club in McGull, when the guys got to sit in with the Chicago Teddy Bears, which, believe it or not, is a popular British Dixieland band! The visit topped out when the band led the town parade, playing Washington Post March and Back Home Again in Indiana for the folks of Newburgh, England.



‘The Boys’ rode on a utility trailer decorated with both US and English flags. Have you ever played “The Thunderer” while bumping along a cobblestone street?



Rachelle, Frances, Caroline and I danced alongside the parade float with Mardi Gras parasols, throwing New Orleans style beads to the crowds. Also pictured on the left in the picture is Shirley Porter... wife of Newburgh (UK) council president. I’m sure the nice English folks thought we were hilarious, but they

seemed to enjoy us as much as we did them. That evening we all dressed in costume for the medieval ball and turned into ladies and knights, monks and jesters. What a memorable trip!

Most of us stayed on in England for another week, giving ourselves plenty of time to see

the beautiful English countryside. We traveled to Liverpool for the Beatles Tour especially for Ted, who is a huge Beatles fan, and saw Penny Lane and the Grotto and the homes where Paul and Ringo, John and George grew up and grew great. We took the train to York and to Chester, and walked the walls of those Roman towns. Later Dan and I went on to London and Stratford upon Avon, and the Gores and Powells visited Canterbury and London. We took only public transportation, including that country's wonderful train system, and we all agreed that the good old USA could use some good railroads again.

The guys had time while in Newburgh to see some English cricket, and, if you must, ask Dan all about that strange game! While they did that, some of the local ladies whisked off the rest of us to see their wonderful old homes. And I do mean old. Some of those houses dated back to the 1500s, and were wonderfully maintained, stone cottages with two foot thick walls. The whole town was beautiful with glorious typically English gardens in full bloom. As you can surely gather, we had a wonderful trip!

The Little Old Dam Band has brought more contributions to the band as a whole than most people realize. Although never charging for a performance, (in fact, their motto is "we play for food"), the Dixieland group has always been glad to accept donations that it gives in full to The Old Dam Community Band. The guys in this group have aged gracefully together, and today the LODB consists of Dan Schultz, Wayne Fiester, Ted Gore, Jim Sermersheim, John Powell, Frank Book, and Carl Zimmerman. Through the years, many others have joined in to play for one gig or many, and today Mary Ann Decker plays her clarinet with the boys. Joe Harbert has contributed his trumpet sounds since late 2010 when Jim could no longer play... and Dave Guillian plays banjo. Hugh Whitaker plays when he can, but Bill Haas has gone on to play with that great Dixieland band in heaven. Bill's sudden death in 2007 left a hole that has never been filled.

Bill Haas



Bill was ushered out with the first Dixieland funeral in Newburgh. His tuba was beside his casket and an empty chair held his straw boater hat. The band played in his honor many of their popular tunes, including "When the Saints come Marching in", at the funeral home. I hope we all can go out with such flair and that we are all missed so much. Thank you, Bill, for many good years.



## Hugh Whittaker



Of all the people who have ever been in the ODCB, no one but Dan quite has my heart like Hugh. Hugh has been with us since the very beginnings of the band and when he danced into the old dam building he brought joy with him.

Hugh was born in 1925 on the southern Vaudeville circuit, and his first crib was a band box. His dad was the leading man, the comedian, and the minstrel. His mother was a chorus girl and sometimes the ingénue. Hugh was placed on the one and only Al Jolson's knee as a small child, dressed in black face, while the great minstrel sang "Sonny Boy" to him. All this fabulous theatre must have been absorbed by Hugh, the only vaudeville act most of us have ever seen in person.

And Hugh is a vaudeville act all his own. He was educated in Owensboro and graduated from Murray State with a music education degree acquired on the GI bill and taught in Owensboro area schools for years. I bet he was a teacher no one ever forgot! When we got to know Hugh, he was doing his own version of the singing telegram, and his Naughty Maudie was something to see. Ask Mike Reising, one of our resident horn players, about old Maudie at his wife's birthday party a few years ago! Mike says that Hugh puts the "Brr in Burlesque".

Hugh tells me he has always played in one band or another, including dance bands and for his beloved church. He founded the Owensboro Community Band with a little help from our music library, and plays with that group every Sunday afternoon and for dozens of gigs every year. He has been a founding member of the Little Old Dam Band and contributed his spirit and wit to hundreds of tri-state audiences, as well as to us. Hugh has played baritone with us, but trumpet was his instrument of choice when he had his "chops." Entertainment has always been his real forte, and until recently he entertained us every Tuesday night, dancing with Sandy Rawls, and catcalling to the director. Have we EVER played "Themes Like Old Times" without him yelling "Wait!" at the more-or-less appropriate time? Hugh may have his companion oxygen tank now, but he still can blow that horn, and he still can dance. If he can't be with us, someone always anxiously asks "where's Hugh?"

Hugh IS the spirit of the Old Dam Community Band. He is what we're all about. He is pure and simple pleasure and it's a privilege to have him with us. Who could not be a better person for having known this really cool old man?



## Tracy McConnell



Tracy has played flute with us since 2001 and has always been a vital member of the band. She served as secretary for the board for years and is personally responsible for most of the grant money that the band has received through the years. This is an enthusiastic lady who makes things happen!

Tracy is an environmental engineer, educated at my own Purdue University, where she played in the Purdue Marching Band in her spare time. Today, she plays with us in the spare time she has with raising a family of foster children. We have always known how fortunate we are to have Tracy join us with her talent, both in music and in organization. Besides, she's a lot of fun, too! Ask Tracy about some of the times we had in the early days of the band. She remembers a lot of hilarious details that some of us will just deny!

## 2002

The ODCB played over 2 dozen times in this new year! Although rehearsals continued every Tuesday at the Lock and Dam Building under the directorship of Jon Patton, our first concert was on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Airstream Owners Club Dinner at Scales Lake in Boonville. This was one of our favorite events, and certainly our largest so far, since we played for well over 100 people who appreciated our kind of music. Tunes played then are certainly recognizable and many are still in our folder:

Star Spangled Banner  
Alley Cat  
At the Hop  
Armed Forces Salute  
Tommy Dorsey's Boogie Woogie  
Sail Along Silvery Moon  
Beer Barrel Polka  
Limehouse Blues  
The Stripper  
Peter Gunn Theme  
Gypsy  
Just a Closer Walk with Thee  
Sammy Davis Jr. Salute  
Rock Around the Clock  
Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue  
Bugler's Holiday  
Blast from the Past  
The Music Man  
White Sport Coat

Colonel Bogey March  
Stars and Stripes Forever  
Jump, Jive and Wail

What a concert! And the Little Old Dam Band played a few tunes, too. Somehow I can't quite imagine doing such a long concert now, but, at that time, we simply played one tune after another, usually getting louder and faster all the time. But the crowd loved it all and passed the hat for a great donation. Believe it or not, no one left early and they applauded 'til we did one last "wail". Higher and louder was our motto then, but we sure had a good time. Virgil Miller and Mike Reising can tell you about the term "blastisimo", which they invented just for the ODCB! No one wanted to sit in front of the trumpets!

The band played then for every event in Newburgh and almost every one in Evansville, it seemed, and for any one who asked us. We played at the American Legion in Newburgh, and at the Handy Blues Festival in Henderson. We played for the Indian Motorcycle Poker Run at Angel Mounds and for Bill Haas' birthday party. The band ushered in the "Music Man" at Castle High School for the Warrick County Musical that July. We played outdoors at the Pagoda on the river in Evansville, outdoors for a nursing home in Boonville and for a couple of church socials.

That 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the band was surprised to find Alfred Savia, the conductor of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra in our audience.



He was asked to conduct "Stars and Stripes Forever", and we all sat up straight and paid attention as he took the podium. I remember that he took that piece at least twice the tempo we were used to, and we all sweated that one out, both literally and figuratively! We played from 7PM until shortly before 9PM to a nice, appreciative audience waiting for the fireworks, as we have every year since for the town of Newburgh.

Christmas season found us on the streets of Newburgh for its annual Chestnuts Roast and to serenade shoppers for Silver Bells.



We froze another two afternoons helping the West Side Nut Club elves at Santa Land, playing every Christmas song we had in the folder. In those early years, we played often and outdoors in all sorts of weather. We thought we'd pass out from the heat bounced off the east side of the Lock and Dam Building for the fireworks concert in July, and shivered in the snow at Christmas. We played every time someone asked for us. I believe this early, constant exposure allowed the band to become well known and appreciated for what we have always tried to be: ... an asset to our community.



“A fine band is one of the most practical of municipal assets. The spirit of the citizenry is a matter of prime importance. Become a musician. JOIN THE BAND”.



2003

2003 had its place in Newburgh history as the bicentennial celebration of the town's founding, and the Old Dam Community Band was in the thick of things. The year started early with our first concert on January 5<sup>th</sup> at the opening ceremony of the bicentennial held in the Newburgh Presbyterian Church on the river in downtown Newburgh. Our concert featured the "Ode to Newburgh" written by our conductor, Jon Patton, with lyrics by Wayne Fiester. Wanda Kavanaugh, a soprano with the Evansville Philharmonic Chorus and a lifetime Newburgh resident, sang the words as the band played in the sacristy of the church.



**ODE TO NEWBURGH**  
Composed for the Newburgh Bi-Centennial Program January 5, 2003

Music by Jon Patton  
Lyrics by Wayne Fiester

**Majestic**

6

Set on the banks of the O - hi - o Riv - er, You'll find a great town, it's New - burgh, my home.

10

Two hun - dred years now, it's seen lots of chan - ges, Yet keeps up its charm and good will.

14

Old Lock and Dam marks its place a - long the riv - er, You'll find har - mo - ny and peace a - mong its streets.

18

Set on the banks of the O - hi - o Riv - er, A great town, it's New - burgh, my home.

22

Herb Fests, an - tique shops and walk - ways are found there, Flat - boats and steam - boats have passed by its shore.

26

The charm of this vil - lage will pull on your heart - strings, A great town, it's New - burgh, my home.

30

Ghost Walks, Sun - mer - fests and Jazz Fests ev - ry Fall, It's fun to be here, and live the his - to - ry.

34

Set on the banks of the O - hi - o Riv - er, A great town, it's New - burgh, my home.

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We played for everything Newburgh hosted that special year. The highlight that year, however, started when Dan received an e-mail from the Stavanger, Norway Brass Band in March. This fabulous band was going to play at the North American Brass Band Association's (NABBA) contest in Little Rock, Arkansas, in April, and would be going from there to Columbus, Ohio, for another concert on a tour of North America. They were fishing on The Internet for a place to stay between the two locations, and picked out several possibilities to contact. Dan was the only one who immediately answered.



He contacted the Bend in the River Brass Band, which was at that time practicing in Newburgh, about helping us come up with home stays, and the whole thing came together in a hurry. The 33 piece band of young adult, amateur musicians unloaded their bus at Castle High School on April 13<sup>th</sup> and entertained the community with the most wonderful, unusual, enthusiastic concert we could have imagined. This was high class stuff, as this band was internationally famous for their innovative work. The ODCB and the Bend in the River Brass Band both also played on stage at Castle, and felt so lucky to play on that stage preceding that wonderful band. It even turned out that the Stavanger Band had just won the international brass band competition and were, right then, the best in the world! Newburgh is listed in their program as the second concert of their USA tour, which included the contest in Little Rock, concerts in Columbus, Ohio, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, LaPorte City, Iowa, North Judson, Indiana, and Chicago.

Those of us who hosted band members got to know some very intelligent, talented young people from Norway, who were grateful to have a place to stay. Dan and I stayed up late that night visiting with the young married couple, Margrethe and Morten Tonnesen, who stayed in our guest room, and we were so very impressed with them. I remember that she was a kindergarten teacher and the best flugelhorn player I've ever heard before or since. They all spoke good English and were obviously very educated, personable ambassadors for Norway. Only Dan, and the ODCB, could have pulled this international event off so quickly and so well.



That year the Little Old Dam Band welcomed the Delta Queen when it docked at downtown Newburgh on one of its last cruises before it was retired. What a thrill that was for all of us who played or watched as the passengers and crew brought that beautiful old steamboat alongshore for an afternoon in an old river town. Later that summer, the little dixieland group sent the LST out of Evansville on its summer cruise downriver. The big band welcomed the American Veteran's Vietnam

traveling tribute to the new lock and dam location on the river at Newburgh on July 27<sup>th</sup>. We were everywhere again that year.



Members present for a picture taken in 2003 were:

Pat King, Bob Buchanan, Elissa Bakke, Mike Filipi, Bryant Taylor, David Motz, Jona Witherspoon, Ed Ellis, Mike Dix, Charlie Dewig, Nick Dewig, Mark Taylor, Ted Gore, Virgil Miller, Ray Arensman, Bryan Hartig, Jim Sermersheim, Jim Bolte, Gene VanStone, Carl Becker, Wayne Fiester, Jeff Middleton, Mike Reising, Terri Schultz, Tom Rusche, Dave Emery, Jon Patton, Mary Demotte, Tina Wedding, Frank Book, Hugh Whittaker, Jo Frohbieter-Mueller, Matt Shepherd, Anna Hartig, Dan Schultz, John Powell, Bill Haas, Jack Hampton, and Dave King.

We proudly stand on the old steps in downtown Newburgh in our striped vests and white fisherman's caps, with the band logo visible. We stand in the same place as a picture of that old Newburgh band in 1910. Music is alive and visible in our little town, and is still going strong 100 years later!

## Elizabeth Emmert



Through the years, the ODCB has had members come from all walks of life. Very few of us are professional musicians, but, of course, all of us love music. Band members have included many teachers, band directors included. Betty “Liz” Emmert, my aunt, has been a valued band member for several years, after retiring as band director at Haubstadt High School and later Haubstadt Community School. This lady is responsible for the musical education of many of our present day band members, including me. She taught me to play the sax in 1962! Liz also drove a truck cross country in her varied life and raised six children to be teachers, five of them band directors! She currently has many private students on varied instruments and directs the children’s choir at Saints Peter and Paul church in Haubstadt.

Recently widowed, and despite a couple of heart attacks, she never misses a rehearsal or a performance, and plays first clarinet in the ODCB. Aunt Betty came to play with us the evening of the day that her husband died because we, and music, are her comfort. I think that says a lot for the band, and for her love of music.

ODCB members come from all walks of life. We are doctors and nurses, social workers and pharmacists, teachers and postal workers, engineers and electricians, architects and businessmen, lay ministers and even a priest. We are ordinary people, but always interesting people, because, despite all our differences, we love music. Our tastes certainly vary: Some of us like pop music, some of us are stuck in the 60’s or 70’s, or even the 40’s and 50’s. Some love classical music or rock and roll. Some of us are good musicians, some are true professionals, some of us are still learning, and some never will. Some of us are college students, or perpetual students, or still middle and high school students. A community band is so many things, but, more than anything else, it is an opportunity for anyone who has the desire to play music to rehearse every week with others who feel the same way. It is the chance to shine for an audience, maybe a chance to solo, or the choice to blend in and just be a member of a great organization. It is the chance to play again in a band, maybe years after storing your horn in your mom’s attic. For many of us, it is an opportunity we never thought we’d have.

2004



On Saturday, April 17, the highlight of the spring social season with the ODCB was the wedding of our director, Jon Patton, and Tina Wedding at the Newburgh Presbyterian Church. Jon and Tina had met while in the band, and the band helped them celebrate with a reception at, what was then, the band house on the hill above the old lock building where we rehearsed. The town of Newburgh had given us an upstairs bedroom to use to store music and supplies, as well as the key to the house that was empty otherwise. We took good care of that old house for them, in return, cleaning it completely of the accumulation of years of neglect. For Jon and Tina's wedding reception, several of us worked for hours cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms, as well as decorating the front room for the party.

Jon and Tina have gone on to start Patton Music in downtown Newburgh, a successful music store that offers private student lessons as well as musical instruments, sheet music, and all the stuff that goes with it. They now live in the country between Reo and Owensboro, and have a son, Cory. Carmen, the little girl who spent so many rehearsals playing with Shorty the dog is now a teenager at South Spencer High School! The Pattons have founded the Spencer County Community Band in Rockport and continue to provide the area with wonderful music.

That old house on the hill, incidentally, has become a really nice vacation rental unit, owned by the town of Newburgh. The band rented it for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and fireworks for the first time in 2010, and it was a cool retreat with kitchen and bathroom facilities that we'll probably utilize again. The town has also renovated the Old Lock and Dam Building and it is looking a lot better these days. However, by 2010 we have outgrown it!



On May 8<sup>th</sup> of that year, 2004, the band hosted what was billed as "The First Annual Spring Hillside Concert" at the Old Lock and Dam Park on the river in Newburgh. Along with the ODCB and the Little Old Dam Band, "O'Capella", a contemporary accapella group, The Emerald Society Pipe Band, a bagpipe band, Rhiannen, a Celtic group, and the Bend in the River Brass Band all provided entertainment for an assorted group of music lovers and passers-by. The Newburgh Arts Community provided some refreshments, but, if I remember right, it was



very hot that afternoon and we mostly perspired for each other rather than for much of an audience.

Memorial Day weekend found both the big and little bands very busy. The concert band played as it always has for the Rose Hill Cemetery ceremony, then the guys in the Little Dam Band raced from the Weber family reunion party in Midway, Indiana, back to the Newburgh Presbyterian church for their Strawberry Festival that evening. We've always seen that events fall into groups somehow, and demand can exceed performance. But we always try!

### Mary Williams

Mary showed up this year with her saxophone to join Bryant Taylor and me, the lonely altos. She had joined the Owensboro Community Band when Hugh Whitaker started it that year, and came along over the big blue bridge to Indiana to play with us in Newburgh, too. She's been sharing her talent and her wit with us ever since. When Mary's there, the alto section has too good a time! Mary has bought and donated many tunes to us and to the Owensboro Band, and we can count on old rock band charts and musicals to come with her. Grease and The Incredibles are two of her donated pieces, much to Carl Becker's dismay!



Mary remembers such memorable moments as the Easter Parade when we froze, but wore the "peep bonnets" she concocted on the parade float through downtown Newburgh. She also came up with the idea for a unique lighting technique for the parades at the West Side Nut Club Fall Festival every Fall. Ask Bryan Hartig about that sometime. She figured that we ladies could use some stick-on battery-operated lights to illuminate our music, until we decided that we'd just be illuminating our own feet instead! We DO have a good time, even if we are a bit rowdy, in the sax section!

We can always count on Mary to bring an old man or two along with her to rehearsals and concerts; Hugh, now that Al is gone, rides shotgun for her on their trips from Owensboro. She and Al always have seen that Hugh gets to practice in recent years, and I, for one, will always be grateful to her for that, because she brings her own joy along as well as Hugh's.

Incidentally, when she dies, Mary wants to be shot out of a cannon while the ODCB and the Owensboro Community Bands together play the "1812 Overture." We'll see, Mary!

On June 9<sup>th</sup> six members of the Little Old Dam Band, and 4 spouses, made our way to Newburgh, England, to help that little village celebrate its 700<sup>th</sup> year as a chartered market town. Jon and Tina Patton had planned on making the trip with us, but Jon developed serious eye problems that kept them from joining us. We were thankful, along with them, that he kept his vision and recovered his health, although we missed them on our journey to the old country.

It needs to be noted, I think, that never has the Old Dam Community Band paid anyone for playing or conducting. No one has ever been compensated for participating in the band, and trips like the one the little band made to England were paid for entirely by the participating members themselves. We may have had an expensive personal trip, but were rewarded in so many other ways, and have always felt privileged to have represented the band and the town of Newburgh on that wonderful, busy vacation.

July 4<sup>th</sup> brought the fireworks on the river and our annual fireworks show at the old lock and dam site. That July also featured the Little Old Dam Band playing for such varied venues as the Folsomville School Reunion, a “boot sale” for the Newburgh Arts Community, and several church homecoming celebrations in the area. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, this little group traveled to Indianapolis to play in the lobby of the Indiana State museum. Once again, this small Dixieland band helped remind Indiana residents that music is alive and well in our pocket of southwestern Indiana.

Back in Newburgh, the ODCB again sponsored Band Fest on Sept 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, this year spanning two days and featuring many more area groups. On Saturday, the show featured “O’Capella”, the Rhine Valley Brass, a group of students from Opus One Music, and the Little Old Dam Band. The Mt. Vernon High School Jazz Ensemble started Sunday afternoon off, followed by Reitz High School Jazz Band, and the Christian Fellowship Praise Orchestra. At 3pm, the Revolution Dance and Stomp Ensemble from Providence, Kentucky entertained the masses with an exciting performance. The Bend in the River Brass Band once again helped us out, as did a new group called “De Ja Vu”. And Newburgh’s own Old Dam Community Band rounded out the evening with a rousing performance.

We have tried, sometimes unsuccessfully, through the years, to bring entertainment and music to the Newburgh area. Dan and members of the Board have always envisioned a real town spirit and perhaps an entertainment venue by our beautiful Ohio River. We’ve yet to reach that goal, but I hope it still gleams somewhere in the future.

## Dan Schultz



Dan is the founder of the ODCB and, in all respects, the glue that holds us together. This man had an idea, to start a community band, and he thought it out and made it happen. This is how Dan lives his life. When, after a life of working in manufacturing, during which he obtained a couple of degrees in engineering, and married and raised two daughters, he found himself divorced and jobless in his early 50s, he reinvented himself as the Village Tinker and the president of a band, not to mention finding and marrying me!

Dan was born and raised in Evansville and started playing the tuba in grade school at Delaware Elementary, where, he says, he was late getting to the first band practice and handed the only instrument left, the tuba. Dan worked his way through high school and joined the Navy in the late 60s, ending up with Navy Intelligence in Scotland, where he joined the local town band in Montrose, for something to do on Tuesday evenings when he was not on duty. Some 35 years later, he would take me back there and we found that same town band, under the direction of the same band director, still practicing at the same location on the same evening of the week. When we walked in off the street, that director... James Eastman... took one look at us and said, "Well, Dan Schultz! Where did you go?" Because of his father's unexpected illness and death, Dan had been forced to return home all those years ago without saying goodbye. Since Dan had been the only 'US Navy boy' who ever played with the local band, that director remembered that boy Dan had been, even down to his name and the instrument he played! What a memorable trip that was for us.



Dan and I met through a dating service with the Evansville Courier, the precursor to today's E Harmony.com, I guess. He had dated dozens of women, but I was the last, and so I have always felt chosen by a very special man. We moved into the house he had built years before in Newburgh, and started our life together before the band. We were only married a couple of years before he decided we needed music to make us even happier! So he started the band.

I have learned through these years that Dan has a very unique way of doing anything he sets his mind to do. He gets an idea, then thinks about it for days or weeks, during which I've never been quite sure what he's up to, and plans exactly how he's going to do it. Then he does it. And, almost always, he does it well.

He started his own business as the Village Tinker, repairman of musical instruments, when his career in manufacturing in the automation industry nose-dived in 2003 and he found

himself non-hirable because of his age. This man just made himself over. He thought it through, investigated the repair business, and made it his own. He is now regarded world wide as a leader in tuba repair and knowledge because of his presence on the internet and several web sites.



We plan our vacations around music events, going to conventions with the Association of Concert Bands around the country, or just taking our instruments along in case we see someone to play with. We arranged a 3 week trip to California and northwest Canada and back by car a few years ago, planning the whole trip around the rehearsal schedule of half a dozen bands around the country. All Dan did was get on line, put out our suggested route, and we had about 20 bands who invited us to come play with them for an evening! What a fantastic vacation idea! Sightsee during the day and play with local community bands in the evening. I highly recommend it. As Dan says, “We could just sit around and watch TV in the motel room!” ... Or we could meet interesting musicians from all walks of life all over the United States and get a chance to play with all sorts of folks.

Dan works daily for the ODCB, and I doubt if any of us knows how much time he puts into it. The band exists because of all us, but it rolls smoothly along because of Dan. Sort of like my life. Thank you to that special man who makes it all worth while.



2005

Jim Fox



today.

This year brought Jim Fox to us as our new band director. Jim had recently joined the band, playing euphonium, and was a fine musician. Multi-talented, Jim was also a psychologist and the director of the choir at the Newburgh Presbyterian Church, where his wife is minister. By this time, Jon Patton was newly married and had moved to the Spencer County countryside. Under Jim's direction, the band started playing some new music, and all of us remember especially the first time we tried "The Incredibles"! It was incredible, all right, but eventually we did get the hang of it, and we still occasionally play it

Jim also introduced us to tunes such as the "Blues Brothers Review", "American River Songs", the "Chicken Run" (remember that one, guys?) and to John Williams. We were definitely playing more sophisticated stuff! Much of the music he introduced us to then is still in our active library today.



This is the year the band purchased our parade trailer. We tried it out for the first time on June 11<sup>th</sup> for the Newburgh Summerfest parade. On the trailer that day were Wayne Fiester, Hugh Whitaker, Steve Pitt, Tracy McConnell, Pat King, Kathy Parker, Frank Book, Anna Hartig, Rick Williams, Mike Reising, Carl Zimmerman, Mary Williams, Virgil Miller, Terry Bailey, Janet Pirtle,

Bill Haas, Ted Gore and Nance Fiester. Dan walked alongside with his sousaphone. Luckily, the parade route was short! Jim Fox directed from a perch at the back of Jim Sermersheim's Lincoln Navigator. Jim Fox is a big guy, and everyone was a bit nervous that Jim Sermersheim would buck him off a couple of times.

Parade riding carries its own set of rules and fun and risks. We learned to rig lights up so we can see our music during the West Side Nut Club night parades. Dan found out that we need a back-up battery to run the lights long enough to get us through the whole route. We learned to at least try to catch our breaths once in a while. We learned to tape our music to the backs of the musician sitting in front of us because there's just no room for stands as well as people on that trailer when it's full.



Jim Sermersheim drove his Navigator to pull our parade trailer in every parade we were in through November of 2010 when he underwent heart surgery. He almost lost the lot of us after the West Side Nut Club Fall Festival parade one time when he, obviously, forgot about the rather fragile load he was pulling... eighteen folks sitting on folding chairs on an open flat trailer! We went roaring through the West Side at 35 MPH with all of us hanging on for dear life! Luckily, Jim Fox had gotten inside to ride back to our cars, or he'd have landed on a lot of people that evening. Who says being in a parade isn't fun? Or adventurous?

On February 19 of 2005 the Little Old Dam Band played for the first time at the Evansville's ARC fund raiser, "The Really Big Show", held in The Centre. The guys played in the lobby, as they have every year since, to entertain the audience as they gathered for the show in the auditorium. They were so popular that they delayed the start of the show that year while a large crowd waited to hear their last tune. From then on, the band learned to stop playing a few minutes BEFORE show time! By 2011 the band has graduated to the stage and will play there for the first time instead of in the lobby! Way to go, guys!



During 2005, the LODB played a total of 18 shows, including its 100<sup>th</sup> show since its founding, from nursing homes to charity fund raisers, from cruises on the riverboat "Spirit of Jefferson" to car shows and bank openings. They played that year for the 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of Bill and Cookie Haas and for the Junior League of Evansville's Holiday Mart fund raiser. As usual, this remarkable Dixieland band was the source for much of the donated funding for the ODCB, as well as providing an enormous amount of exposure and publicity. And these guys have fun, too! Looking snazzy in their straw boaters and sequined vests, they play great Dixieland tunes

and sing-a-longs such as the ever popular “Back Home Again in Indiana” and “Waitin’ on the Robert E. Lee”. Wayne Fiester provides the audience with song books so everybody knows the words, and some of the folks at the nursing homes can belt it out with the boys.

The ODCB performed 17 times during 2005, including 5 Christmas concerts at various locations! We played for the Evansville Arts in the Park and for our own Spring Concert. We took the parade float out twice, and played concerts for the Strawberry Festival at the Presbyterian Church in Newburgh and for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities, where we nearly blew away in a terrific thunder storm that outshone the fireworks. The Christmas concert that year was recorded for posterity with the following holiday tunes:

Do You Hear What I Hear  
Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!  
Sleigh Bells  
The Most Wonderful Time of the Year  
Carol of the Bells  
Jingle Bell Fantasy  
A Fresh Aire Christmas  
March of the Little Tin Soldiers  
Feliz Navidad  
Jingle Bell Rock  
White Christmas

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005, a huge tornado hurtled through parts of Evansville and Newburgh, killing 25 people in the area and destroying the homes of 4 of our band members. Wayne and Nance Fiester, Bryant and Joann Taylor, Bryan and Rose Hartig, Anna and Laura, and Don Ellis and his family all lost their homes to this destructive storm that came roaring through their neighborhoods at 2 in the morning that awful day. They all probably still have nightmares, but, thank God, no one was seriously hurt and they all have rebuilt their lives. Dan and I were in Michigan on a business trip when we got a cell phone call from Wayne, who assumed we were at home in Newburgh, asking us if we were OK. We were asleep in a hotel room and were just confused over what he was frantically trying to ask us. Our home was not touched, even though we live only a few blocks from some who lost everything, but we saw the story on CNN the following morning and were so horrified to see what everyone at home was going through. That was a terrible day for all of us, and certainly worse for some of our band members. We just are grateful that all of our good friends got out from under the destruction with their families and their lives. Thank God, life (and The Band) goes on.

## 2006

The new year found both the ODCB and the LODB busy as usual. The LODB continued its habit of representing the band in area events ranging from family reunions to library and bank festivities to habitat house fund raisers. The guys even entertained Donna, the famed Mesker Park hippo, for her 50th birthday party, and it was noted that Donna enjoyed the music as well as her popsicles. A concerned monkey in the immediate vicinity harassed the band with well-timed jeers, and a nice crowd enjoyed it all.

The guys also played for the Henderson Fly Fishing Club, where they were fed chicken, of all things. They played 28 times this year, including several birthday parties for people with no monkey to sing or hippo to smell bad. These guys will play anywhere!

The big band took the trailer out on three parades this year, including the first Newburgh Easter Parade, which wound around a couple of blocks down by the river on a freezing cold day. Dan Schultz, Bill Haas, Ted and Rachelle Gore, Hugh Whittaker, Bryan Hartig, Frank Book, Carl Zimmerman, Dave McGill, Tracy McConnell, Wayne Fiester, and Mary Williams (who wore her Peep Easter bonnet, which tried its best to get away) rode, with Jim Fox conducting and Jim Sermersheim driving the towing Navigator. For some reason, in Newburgh, the parade is usually bigger than the crowd watching it!

In June, the band went to Haubstadt to join the Sommerfest Parade, which covered every street in that little town where I grew up, winding past almost every house with every porch and yard filled with happy folks of German ancestry enjoying the beautiful day and the parade. In October we were back at the West Side Nut Club Fall Festival Parade, slowly traveling the few blocks on Franklin Street packed with more German West Siders than we quite know what to do with! These folks do know how to enjoy a parade!

Summer of 2006 saw 10 members of the ODCB travel to northern Ohio to participate in the Northern Ohio Adult Band Camp at Ashland University. In 2005, Dan and Wayne took off on their own to spend the week at camp, staying in a dormitory and enjoying their time at camp so much that they convinced a few more of us to go with them in 2006. Adult band camp is a little different than what you might remember from those fun days in high school when you spent hours on a hot parking lot learning new marching band routines. We spent hours learning new music, but it was all spent indoors in a nice rehearsal hall at a pretty little university, and we had a wonderful time.





Those attending The Ashland Band Camp that year were Gene Van Stone, Hugh Whittaker, Mary Williams, Nance and Wayne Fiester, Tracy McConnell, Jona Witherspoon, Ruthe Potami, and Dan and me. Some of us stayed in a local hotel, but the girls enjoyed a dorm room, sleeping under wet towels to stay cool! We all thought we were going north and it wouldn't be quite as hot as it turned out to be. Since then, Mike and Mary Ann Decker have gone to Ashland every year and report that it's still as wonderful as it was that first time. There are other band camps especially for us grown ups around the country and, if you haven't ever gone, you should consider it. Believe me, you learn a lot from experts in a very short time! Plus, we had a good time doing it.

The ODCB, and, of course, the LODB, have always enjoyed playing for area nursing homes and retirement villages. Our concerts at Lakeside Manor and Atria and Solarbron are always looked forward to by us and, we suppose, our hosts and audiences. There are always nice crowds and people who appreciate our kind of music: people to sing along and clap to the beat: people who remember how to tap their toes to big band sounds and Sousa marches: people who are our friends and neighbors and who, like some of us, are getting older and only better. They are our biggest supporters and we usually have our biggest band turnouts for these events because of them.

Starting about this time the big band performed for the first time at the new Ohio Township Public Library, sponsoring our own concerts for the public in this beautiful new facility. We have seen our audiences grow larger at every concert as word gets out that we actually sound pretty good, and we certainly appreciate the library for allowing us to have these concerts almost every month in recent years. It is a good venue for us: large enough for our growing numbers and our growing audience, bright enough for even old eyes, set up by the nice maintenance staff: and free!

2007

Carl Becker



This is the year that Carl Becker took over the baton from Jim Fox who had taken on a position that required him to be on call and not able to attend rehearsals on a regular basis.

Carl Becker plays F horn with us now but held the baton for a year or so until we wore him out. He says he plays now because he wants to keep going, and advises us all to keep practicing and always try to improve, a motto he certainly tried to drill into us every Tuesday night in 2007! I'm afraid we defeated him for the first time in his professional career!

Carl started off on the trumpet at age 11, and by 13 was playing professionally for local dance bands for \$5 a night. (Yes, per gig. 3 hours for \$5!) He played with the Glen Gregory Band, Jackson King and Martin King Orchestras, the Ted Weems Band (which is where Perry Como got his start), the Red Skelton Band, and the Red Wick Orchestra, among others. He played in the Third Armored Division Band from 1951-1958, and his solo in Trumpeter's Lullaby was recorded by RCA Victor during that time.

This music educator taught locally at Plaza Park and Lodge Schools, as well as Mater Dei HS, before moving on to Brownsville, Texas. He traveled the world with that high school band, touring Mexico City and most of Europe, as well as attending the Chicago International Band and Orchestra Clinic. This band met Carl's high standards!

In 1991, Carl and his wife moved back to Evansville to retire. So, now, instead of directing a great high school band, he's playing in the ODCB, the Bend in the River Brass Band, and the Christian Fellowship Church Orchestra and Praise Band. He travels twice a year to LA to hear "good jazz" and avoids pop music at all costs! He's a modern jazz fan and tolerates good symphonic music. Why he tolerates US is a mystery, but, when music is in your blood, you'll play anywhere! Carl is the best example of this phenomenon that I can think of!

Carl appreciates good music and good musicians, and many times we had discussions at rehearsals about what constitutes either. This man has never compromised his principles and will probably never enjoy newer pop music, but he led the band through fifteen concerts that year, as well as weekly rehearsals, and we appreciate his loyalty and his leadership and his willingness to put up with us.



Our first concert in 2007 was on April 17 at the Ohio Township Library, where we played for an audience of about thirty.

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, another concert was co-directed by Joseph Choi, the director of the Owensboro Youth Symphony, as well as choir director of the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Evansville.

The ODCB played at the Rose Hill Cemetery Memorial Day observance and then at the Newburgh Presbyterian's Strawberry Festival on May 26<sup>th</sup>. These full days have always been a challenge as well as a lot of fun, since we rush from one event to another on a holiday weekend.



Many times, the whole cast changes, it seems, and this day found us with two directors, Dave McGill and Jon Patton, helping out. Dave usually plays in the trombone or baritone section, but he'll grab that baton in a pinch.



May 27<sup>th</sup>, the next day, found a lot of us traveling to Lincoln Park Amphitheater in Spencer County to play for a small crowd in a combined performance with the Owensboro

Community Band and the Spencer County Community Band. Directors for this performance were Steve O'Neal from Owensboro, and Jon Patton. The day was very hot, but, then, so was the music! We played together with our neighboring bands many, many tunes we share from our early folders, and it was a pleasure to get so many of us together again. Several of us play in all 3 bands, at least when we can, and members of both the Owensboro and Spencer bands have helped us out at concerts many times and are our friends. But what a busy weekend we had!

Two days later we were at the Eastminster Presbyterian church in Evansville, under the direction of Joseph Choi, performing in the sanctuary for 150 churchgoers. I think after that most of us went home and collapsed. Four concerts in such varied venues over such a short period under four directors is a challenge even for us!

By late June, though, we had recuperated enough to be back on the road. We had our usual "sold-out" concerts at Lakeside Manor and Solarbron, followed, of course, by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show on the river in Newburgh. We also had two concerts late that summer at the downtown Evansville main library and at our own Ohio Township library.

October found us in the parades for the West Side Nut Club Fall Festival and for the Newburgh Halloween festivities. In November we performed on the patio of a downtown Newburgh café and were caroling on street corners in early December. Christmas concerts included the downtown Evansville library, a combined concert in Owensboro with the Owensboro Community Band and the Spencer County Community band, and one dedicated to our own Bill Haas at the Ohio Township library.

Needless to say, this was a busy year, with the entire organization participating in 46 concerts! The big band played 15 times, we rode in 3 parades, and combined with two area bands for 2 more gigs. And the Little Old Dam Band played for 26 shows!

That LODB! These guys were everywhere that year, from the SWIRCA 'prom' for senior citizens in Evansville to churches all over the tri-state. From birthday parties to the 'Smile of Downs Syndrome Buddy Walk'. From the Really Big Show to Santa Land.

On November 25, the LODB and the ODCB lost Bill Haas, who died at home after a short illness. The LODB played its saddest gig for Bill at the funeral home, where his place was marked by his hat and his tuba, the first Dixie land funeral in Newburgh as far as we know.

Several band members, in fact, thirteen of us, have been with the band since that first year, 2000. These musicians include Bryan Hartig, Virgil Miller, Jim Sermersheim, Bryant Taylor, Mike Fillipi, Jeff Middleton, Frank Book, Dave Emery, Wayne Fiester, John Powell, and Ted Gore, as well as Dan and me. In 2001, Tracy McConnell and Mike Reising joined us and stayed. If you check the band website today, January 2011, you will find some 69 members pictured and the year they joined us. Many, many musicians have come and gone through the years, leaving us for many reasons, and staying for others. Every one of these people, old and young, whether they moved away or moved on, became



ill or old, or, sadly, passed away, are all our friends and part of our community. We thank each and every one of you for contributing to this band and enriching our lives.

These early, hardy souls especially deserve our thanks, I think, because we have been through much together. Ten years, for one thing. Of these early members, four lost their homes in the tornado of 2005! Two... Jim Sermersheim and Dave Emery, cannot play with us presently due to illness and age. Bill Haas has passed away. The rest of us play on, coming to rehearsals when we can.

Bryan Hartig



Bryan is our trumpet/fluglehorn soloist who has contributed his wonderful talent to almost every concert we've ever performed. He is an electrician by trade, but a true musician in his heart and ours, trained on bass as well as horn. He and his wife Rose, as well as their daughters Anna and Laura, have been contributing to area music for years, playing for weddings and funerals and other events all over the tri-state. They helped found the Owensboro Community Band and play there regularly, organizing and maintaining their music library, as well as performing. Through the years, the ODCB would have found itself in a real quandary on many occasions without Bryan and his trumpet and we appreciate his leadership and talent and loyalty and friendship.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow saxophone players who have been together for these 10 years, too! Jeff Middleton, Mike Fillipi, Bryant Taylor, and me. Sometimes it seemed we never had a sax section, but we always did, didn't we? When I was researching this history, I remembered us floundering along sometimes, doing our best with "Big Band" tunes that featured the saxes. Sometimes one or two of us were all we had for a rehearsal or concert, but we were always there, learning as we went. Good for us.

When Ted and Rachelle Gore showed up their first evening in 2000, I looked across that concrete floor in the Old Lock and Dam Building and saw my cousin walk in with her husband. I didn't know them well in 2000, but Rachelle and I had grown up two houses away from each other, and I had known her all my life. Who would have known that, in 2000, we would become good friends again under such different circumstances? Band will do that to you! Dan and I feel so fortunate to count Ted and Rachelle among our very good friends: these, funny, truly nice people who help us wind up any party and add so much to our lives.

## Mike Reising



Mike Reising. Here, again, is a phenomenon of sorts. Mike and I knew each other when our kids went to school together years ago in Ft. Branch. And there he came in the door at the Old Dam building in 2001, complete with trumpet! He plays the French horn now and keeps us all on our toes with his wit and his personality, and, once again, is such a part of our lives now that we can hardly remember doing without him. Mike usually sits right behind me in band and his rhythm is right on, keeping us all on the beat if we just listen to him. His is the first voice a newcomer will hear, welcoming anyone to come play with the band!



Frank Book, Dave Emery, Jim Sermersheim, John Powell, Wayne Fiester, Ted Gore, and Dan Schultz. What have we here but the Little Old Dam Band!! The very core of the band through these ten years. The men who kept it all together, both the ODCB and the LODB. We know these guys so well, because our lives are so intertwined after so many days and evenings spent together, traveling to gigs all over the area and even the world. Their wives and I are the groupies for the LODB, cheering for the guys when no one else remembers them over in a corner at an event, yelling with everyone at other events who appreciate them being there. We are all good friends and these guys together are a class act. Come see them together and you'll see what I mean. They fit. They like each other. And now that two of the gang are laid up a bit, they take the band to them in their retirement homes. What a nice group of men.

Most of these forever members have held office in the band at one time or other. Virgil Miller has been on the board and never misses a rehearsal or a concert if he can, sitting in the trumpet row wherever he's needed, adding his own brand of humor to the situation, whatever it is. Tracy McConnell, of course, has been the source of a lot of the band's funding through the years, serving as secretary and chief cheerleader. Frank Book is absolutely always wherever anyone needs him to be, with his friendly smile and quiet optimism and wicked sense of humor, which comes out when you least expect it.

#### Wayne Fiester



And Wayne Fiester. Our master of ceremonies. The leader of the LODB. Vice President since day one. What can be said about Wayne? He, too, is a fellow Purdue graduate, who happened to attend that big university in the same years I did back in the 60's. He marched in the Purdue Band, playing his trombone, as he had at North High School in Evansville before that. And then he stored it in the attic and went on with his life until 2000, when he saw the article in the Courier about this new Old Dam Community Band.



The first evening he came, he showed up at the old Lock and Dam Building without his trombone, but turned around and went home and got it when everyone was so glad to see him. He's been playing ever since, anchoring the trombone section as chief soloist and first chair (if we had such a thing). He uses his speaking ability at every concert, entertaining our audiences with music facts and a few pleas for contributions, while we all regain our chops between numbers. His obvious level of comfort in this capacity makes it fun for everybody, and he ramps up our concerts a few notches every time he speaks, introducing soloists and directors, acknowledging arrangers and admitting mistakes made by the band in the previous piece played, and always hoping that we do better next time!

Wayne is Dan's conscience sometimes, and they play off each other well, balancing each other and the band with their opposite personalities. I enjoy seeing them together, because they are such good friends and so very different, each contributing in their unique ways to both the friendship and the band. They're like a microcosm of us all: unique personalities making for a special group.

Wayne also "directs" the LODB and is the spokesman there, too. We have had amazing adventures in England and all over the States with Wayne and the little band, and with Wayne and Nance Fiester, who invite us over for delicious meals, knowing we don't cook but do enjoy eating! Thanks, guys, for that, and for your friendship...

2008

The new year found the LODB busy again, playing at least fifteen gigs that year. On September 4th the guys played for the SWIRCA 'senior' prom in Evansville and entertained a crowd on the riverfront on September 11, with the Newburgh Senior Citizens Kazoo band. This kazoo band had debuted earlier with the ODCB on August 12<sup>th</sup> at the Ohio Township Public Library and became an instant hit.

The Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> concert was Carl Becker's last as our director, although he still never misses a rehearsal or concert playing F horn in the third row. We thank Carl for all those years, and for all the wisdom he shares with us. He recently brought in an original recording of the Sousa Band playing El Capitan at a ridiculous speed! Who is the world does John Philip Sousa think he is anyway?

James leslie

By September 19<sup>th</sup>, the band had its first open rehearsal at the library under the direction of James Leslie. James comes to us from Evansville, where he first attended Stanley Hall Elementary school before moving all across the states as an Army brat. He ended up back in Evansville at Bosse High School and then the University of Evansville. He was on the Board of Directors for the Imperial Guard Drum & Bugle Corps in Evansville in the 70s and played with the Salvation Army Brass Band in England. He tells a story about casually dropping into the Albert Hall in London where he came across an empty rehearsal hall, and tried out a horn when nobody was looking! You're all the first to know!



James came to us in the ODCB in 2007 and remembers his first rehearsal when Hugh literally ran down the steps of the Lock and Dam Building to get a baritone out of his car so James could play. After that, he was here to stay. James agreed to help us out as director as long as his health permitted, and we were so lucky to have this nice guy help us when we needed him. That baton is hard on people, though, and today James is back in the baritone section. We all celebrated with James when he married Sandie in 2009, and have welcomed her when she comes along to rehearsals and concerts.



## The Koch Family



Ray and Mary Ann Koch started driving from Haubstadt to play with us in 2008, bringing with them their kids, Alex and Andrew, who are Betty Emmert's private music students. Alex is a freshman at Reitz HS now and Andrew a middle schooler at St. James in Haubstadt. Mary Ann and Andrew play trumpet, Alex the flute. At first, Ray would drive the family to rehearsal and sit and listen. Then.. one day Liz Emmert decided it was time to teach Ray to play an instrument. She started Ray on a Bb mellophone and eventually he 'graduated' to F horn. He now plays with The Band so he can complete this "Trapp Family" of musicians. These special people come to us as a family and certainly demonstrate what "family time together" can mean. How cool is that? Don't leave the kids at home! Bring them along!

## Al Barthlow



The Old Dam Community Band has been fortunate through the years to have had many, many good musicians play with us. But, perhaps, Al Barthlow has been one of the few real professional musicians to join us. Al hails from Owensboro, Kentucky now, but was raised in Evansville, learning music at Delaware Elementary. His teacher was Albert Venneman, a German expatriate from WWI who told the young Al that he would never play trombone because of an overbite and too-short arms! But Al prevailed and was good enough to perform for War Bond Assemblies during the early WWII years, playing with the "Little German Band" and earning him early status as a true ham.

Al went on to the old Central High School under the direction of Burnell Smith (our own Jenny Deters' dad), Harry Hart, (Nan Baum's dad), and Wesley Shepherd. He was honored as "Mr. Evansville Teenager of 1948" and given the trip of a lifetime to New York City, with a suite at the Waldorf-Astoria. He remembers dining at Sardis, and "21", and the Stork Club, doing a national radio show sponsored by Coca Cola and meeting famous band leaders of the era while being escorted about town in limousines and dancing on the famous Hotel Astor Roof. What a heady experience for a boy from Evansville, Indiana! He, as others had, was already playing in dance bands around Evansville, even though under-age. He also was given a uniform and paid for playing his horn for the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Regimental Band of the Indiana State Guard while still a teenager. This would

later save him from Korea, since he ended up in the 89<sup>th</sup> Army Band at Ft. Sills instead of the infantry he had trained for.

Al played with Doc Stocker, Roger Kinkle, Ralph Corum, Red Asbell and other local jazz men in the Evansville area. These men taught him jazz and allowed him the opportunity to be in the right place at the right time when Art Kassel, of “Castles in the Air” jazz band fame, allowed him to sub for the regular trombonist at Club Trocadero. By age 19 he was on the road with Chicago’s “Sugar Blues” band before being drafted during the Korean conflict in 1951 and meeting his future wife in Miami. By the end of that conflict, Al says the Big Band era was dead and that drafted “Bill Haley and the Comets” ruined music forever.

There was certainly no room for trombones in those early rock and roll bands, so Al moved his young family back to Evansville and worked for a Mortgage company for 25 years, playing when he could, and moving all over the Midwest. He and his wife moved to New Orleans in 1981 to finally give him the opportunity to play a little music while he still could. And play he did! Al has recorded with 16 or 17 groups, played with the likes of Al Hirt and Pete Fountain, and been music director for Harry Connick, Sr. He enjoyed more than 3 years with the Delta Queen Steamboat company and played over 3 years with the “Dukes of Dixieland”. The “Dukes” played Carnegie hall with the New York philharmonic under the direction of Skitch Henderson, and took Al with them all over the world, playing gigs in Europe, South America, Canada, and Asia.

Al ended up back in Owensboro after a series of health problems and the death of his much-loved wife, and, to our delight, ended up finding us! Dan got a phone call from Al a couple of years ago, after Al was given his number as someone to talk to about playing in a band again. Not knowing who he was talking to, Dan invited Al to come play with the ODCB in a concert at the library that evening. Al came, retrieved his beloved trombone from his car, and surprised us all with the talent he showed that first night with us. The trombone section has never been the same! Wayne Fiester always has said he thought” who WAS that guy? “Wow.

We have been entertained ever since. Al can still play that trombone, and he blasts us with his wit every time we see him. Forever the entertainer, he now plays with the ODCB, the Owensboro Community Band, the Hadi Shrine Temple Brass Band, and the Bend in the River Brass Band. This man is 79 years old and has lived through an era of music that most of us can only dream about, playing with famous musicians that all of us have heard about and wondered over. We are privileged to know you, Al, and honored to have you in our band.

I had written the above in early summer of 2010.

Al Barthlow died suddenly on July 27, 2010. He died with his boots on, so to speak, and had been with us for band practice on Tuesday and with the Owensboro band on Sunday afternoon.

The ODCB, along with the Owensboro Community Band, the Bend in the River Brass Band, the Hadi Shrine Band, and the Owensboro Symphonic Band performed a memorial concert in Al's memory on Sept 11, 2010 at the museum in downtown Owensboro. I hope Al heard that concert and, in his newly acquired angelic state, didn't criticize us too much! We try, Al!

By late 2007 the band had developed a venue problem. The big band had always rehearsed in the Old Lock and Dam Building, and, even though it is a big concrete and brick building with terrible acoustics, it served us well for 7 years. Aside from the acoustics being bad, it was often too hot or too cold, but the town had allowed us to use it every Tuesday evening at no charge. Now it was to be renovated and so closed to everybody for the duration. Our Board of Directors looked at other venues, such as the new Newburgh Town Hall, but none were really available on a regular basis. The Newburgh Kiwanis club offered us the use of one of their meeting rooms in their new building for a rehearsal hall, and we took them up, gratefully, on their offer, where we met weekly for a few months.

The new room was not really set up for what we needed, though, with a low ceiling and limited space. Dan purchased and installed acoustic panels on the walls but since we were growing, we had to find a venue more suitable before we all went deaf! We utilized the Ohio Township public library during this time, at least once a month, for what we called open rehearsals, where the public was invited to watch us rehearse in the combined meeting rooms there. And then, in 2008, Jerry Reese offered us the use of the then Castle Junior High rehearsal room. Wow. We were finally in a real rehearsal hall! Honestly, I think most of us were flabbergasted at the difference in how we sounded and how "professional" it made us feel. We have settled down to be a real band. Rehearsals are actually real rehearsals where everyone works hard at learning new music and the rewards are great. Still, I don't think we have sacrificed our original principles for becoming more professional, because we still have such a good time at band! And this, too, is so very important to an adult community band. The "community" part, you know.

2009

The LODB started the new year by playing at the Angel River Health and Rehabilitation Home in Newburgh for recuperating band member Carl Zimmerman, who had recently had life-changing surgery. They played the Really Big Show again for ARC and helped Castle High School alumni celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as ITT celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup>. They helped ease ODCB member Mark Taylor's father into eternity with its second Dixieland funeral. They played again for all the area nursing homes, whose residents benefit from their generosity on a regular basis.

#### Geniece Snow



If ever there is an inspirational musician story, Geniece Snow's story is it. Geniece joined the ODCB when she moved to Newburgh to be near her son who was very ill at the time. She brought her flute which she had mastered so many years before, to us because she heard the band playing "Stars and Stripes Forever" at an outdoor concert. She joined the ladies in the front row, adding her talent and quiet wit to the band. Within a very short time, all that would change.

Geniece had rotor-cuff surgery on her left arm and was recovering, although recently diagnosed with the same form of leukemia that had killed her son. Then, after a routine iron infusion in her right hand, she contracted a series of infections that almost killed her. She was left with a decision to undergo amputation of her right lower arm, and, with it, lost the ability to play her beloved flute.

This remarkable lady, though, did not lose her ability to play music, nor her desire to contribute to the band. She took up the only instrument she could... the French horn... an instrument she had played only briefly in grade school. She took lessons, bought a horn, and came back to us to join the guys and gals in the third row. She has a "modified" horn, which surprises people sometimes when they see the glove she leaves in the bell, but she has the humor to go with it, and the guts and determination to unpack her own horn and put together her own stand, as well as driving herself to practice and going out to dinner with the flute section or sometimes to "Archie and Clyde's" to celebrate another good rehearsal with anyone who wants to go.

We in the ODCB are honored to have this truly nice lady in our organization. Geniece, you leave us all humble as well as inspired. By "golly", if you can do this, we can surely practice and perform as well as we can. We can have fun without complaining about the petty differences in our lives and abilities and personalities. We can appreciate what we have. We do appreciate you, as well as admire you, and thank you for sharing your ongoing talent every Tuesday with us.



## Carl Zimmerman



Carl's story, too, is inspirational. Carl is the anchorman for the sax section, playing his tenor down at the end of the row every Tuesday evening. He also wails that sax with the Little Old Dam Band all over the area. But, Carl also lost something in these last few years. He lost his leg, also to an infection, and spent several months recuperating in a rehab hospital and a nursing home.

Carl, too, is back with us again. And he, too, lives his life as we all should, with quiet enthusiasm and unflinching determination. So we thank you, too,

Carl, for sharing your talent and yourself with us all these years.

The big band again had several concerts at the Ohio Township Library and downtown at the courtyard on the corner of State and Jennings. Former Castle band directors John Sakel, John Wittenbraker, Tom Listenfelt, Larry Eifler, and Jack Schernekau helped James Leslie and Jerry Reese direct concerts that Spring, and we enjoyed their various styles and learned so much from all of them. Those concerts also acknowledged Jerry Reese as our new director and the new Castle South Middle School as our practice venue. What a blessing both have proved to be. We thank the Castle School System for allowing us to practice in their schools and providing these modern practice rooms for us! We are really "uptown" now!

## Jerry Reese



MISTER Reese, as he is known around these parts to anyone younger than 40 or so... because he taught everyone or their kids at Castle High School... came to us in 2009, surely sent directly from a higher power. He came to us to direct and stayed to teach. This man is a marvel. Just ask anyone who has ever known Jerry.

Jerry was born in Sandford, Indiana, a little town just across the Illinois state line, and attended West Vigo High School and Indiana State University at Terre Haute where he received his bachelor and master's degrees in music education. He has taught at Pike HS in Indianapolis and Pioneer HS near Logansport, before coming to Castle Junior High in 1978. After a couple of years there, he moved on to legendary status as director of bands at Castle High School where he took that huge band to class A state finals 9 times.

Probably everybody in this area knows Jerry in one capacity or other, and surely most of his students or former students, which includes a lot of area musicians by now, appreciate

what he has done for them and for music in Newburgh. He plays euphonium and loves percussion, but his real specialty is writing and arranging music. He teaches now at Castle South Middle School, judges band contests all over the area, and directs the Old Dam Community Band!

Jerry and his wife, Chandra, who met when she was the auxiliary (flag girls and baton twirlers) teacher, have a married son and live in Newburgh. When Jerry gets up on the podium in front of us on Tuesday nights with his baton, we know how fortunate we are that they ended up in our area so many years ago!

We appreciate this man at every rehearsal and every performance. Jerry is a born teacher, and, as he directs us, he teaches us. I guess he enjoys us. I hope he does. Because we certainly enjoy band with him at our helm. And we get better as we learn from this wonderful music teacher. Thank you, Jerry, for each and every rehearsal.

### 2010 Band Birthday Party our 10<sup>th</sup> !!



60 members present!!! An all time record! Rehearsal was directed by Jerry Reese at the South Castle Middle School band room, and followed by a dessert party in the school cafeteria.

Members present included:

Flutes: Tracy McConnell, Pat King, Sharon Reineke, Summer Aulich, Alex Koch, and Sandy Rawls.

Bassoon: Jenny Deters.

Oboe: Carla Martin.

Clarinets: Frank Book, Betty Emmert, Kenny Chaung, Mary Ann Decker, and Marsha Wines.

Saxes: Fred Hormuth, Mary Williams, Terri Schultz, Dusty Smith, Sandy Miller, Mike Filipi, Jeff Middleton, and Sandy Caputo, and Bryant Taylor.

F Horns: Mike Reising, Elizabeth Fooks, Carl Becker, Geneice Snow, and Ray Koch

Euphoniums: Dave McGill, Steve Pitt, Terri Palmer, Hugh Whitaker, Gene VanStone, and James Leslie.

Trumpets: Bryan Hartig, Mark Taylor, Virgil Miller, Mary Ann Koch, Andrew Koch, Flynn Dunbar, Jon Patton, and Mike Decker.

Trombones: Wayne Fiester, Pete Venstra, Mark Myers, and Roy Doris,  
Tuba: Dan Schultz, Mike Koehne, Jim Hadley, Jeff Westfall, Charlie Dewig  
Percussion: Ted Gore, Rachelle Gore, Nance Fiester, Joanne Johnson, Jerry and Shirley Tenbarge

And... of course... our director Jerry Reese.



Pictures taken that evening, and a short phone video, show Hugh Whitaker dancing with Sandy Rawls, a tradition they've established this winter. Hugh may be on oxygen most of the time now, but he can still dance!! And so can Sandy, with her wardrobe of cowboy boots, and her husband Jerry. Jerry, incidentally, has started the nice habit of being the doorman at our concerts, urging people to contribute generously by handing round the money jug, as well as the programs.

No one at that party could help but see the social organization this band is. We have such a good time together! New members and long time members, young people and old people, people from so many backgrounds and making their livings doing such diverse things, people of so many different faiths and churches; there we all are together making music. Through the years, we have seen many, many talented people come join us, and we have seen a few leave us for various

reasons, but I think we have benefited from every one of them. I hope that they have become better musicians, or at least had a better time than they had otherwise in their musical lives. I know that Dan and I are better people because of every one we have met in any way with this band. Our lives are enriched and exciting and we look forward to every Tuesday. Because Tuesday evening is band night. We have had ten years of Tuesdays so far, and, hopefully, will have tens more. How privileged we are to know all of you.

I hope this band is good for all of us. For one evening a week, at least, we can come to rehearsal and forget everything else. For a couple of hours we can just make music. We can talk to people who know us in this part of our lives and laugh and listen to their stories. We can forget for a little while the tribulations of daily life whatever they are. We can get out of the house, forget the TV and the cell phone and the computer, and go back to doing what people have done for thousands of years: make music with their own talent.

Many times after rehearsal on Tuesday nights, we continue the good times at Archie and Clyde's, a pizza bar in Newburgh Plaza. Everyone is always invited to these informal get-togethers, and the good folks at the restaurant always save us a few tables and look forward to the Band showing up.

Other times, the ladies in the flute section invite anyone who wants to meet for supper at

various restaurants in Newburgh before rehearsal. Dan and I always throw a Christmas/New Year's party for the band on the Saturday between the two holidays, and the "Dirty Santa" gift exchange has proven a real winner. Various band members have hosted parties at their homes through the years, and who can forget the party at Jo Frohbieter-Mueller's that special Christmas? The home of that musician and artist in Evansville is a mirror of itself and was a treat for all of us, as was Jo.

Nance and Wayne Fiester have thrown a Labor Day barbeque a couple of times. Of course, that time of year can hustle a party indoors in a hurry if a thunderstorm shows up, too! The band members have even hosted a wedding reception for fellow musicians, and, regrettably, attended and played for a few funerals, too.

There are so many people I want to acknowledge, somehow, in this account of the band. Early members who helped get us started: people like Jeff Westfall, our first director. Larry May, Jon and Tina Patton, Jim Bolte, who directed for several months. Jim Sutter, Dave King, Ray Smith, Tom Rusche, Jo Frohbieter-Mueller, Jona Witherspoon, and Ruthe Potami. Young people who played, or still play, in our band: Anna Hartig, Matt Shepherd, Ashley Cooper, Alex and Andrew Koch, Sam Milam, Elizabeth Fooks (who, now that she's 21, no longer qualifies as a "young person", I guess! Sorry, Beth!). And all those people who come every week now to rehearsals: people like Mark Taylor, Mark Myers, Sandy Rawls, Nana Baum, Jenny Deters, Sharon Reineke, Pat King, Marcia Wines, Summer Aulich, Charlie Dewig, and Roy Dorris. People like Steve Pitt, Gene Van Stone, Terri Palmer, Jim Hadley, Joanne Johnson, Pete Venstra, and Jerry and Shirley Tenbarge. Carla Martin, Dan Wheelock, Dave McGill, Dave Guillam, and Sally Hill. Fred Hormuth, who sells shirts for the band when he isn't on the Board or playing alto beside me. Faril Bunner who plays one magic French horn when he isn't making Jerry look very short on the podium. Flynn Dunbar, John and Megan Lenox, Deb Oliver, Mike and Mary Ann Decker. Ray and Mary Ann Koch, who bring their family to play together every week they can! And, of course, all those whose stories I have tried to tell.

I want to acknowledge, again, all our directors, all those men and women who have taken up the baton to try to direct a sometimes-unruly band, and who tried to get us to play something resembling music. These people include Jeff Westfall, Jon Patton, Jim Fox, Jim Bolte, Elizabeth Emmert, Ruthe Potami, Hugh Whitaker, Dave McGill, Carl Becker, James Leslie, Faril Bunner, and, of course, Jerry Reese. We have had many guest conductors through the years, including Joseph Choi, Alfred Salvia, John Sakel, John Wittenbraker, Tom Listenfelt, Larry Eifler and Jack Schernekau. There are probably some I've forgotten, but none that we've not appreciated for not throwing that baton at us for some deserving reason. Thank you for being so kind and teaching us so much.

For every person I've named, there are some I've forgotten. To every one of you, I say thank you. Every person makes a difference in my life and everybody has contributed so much to the band. It would not be the Old Dam Community Band without all of us and we should be very proud of that. I certainly know that I am.

This "book" has been a labor of love for the first real band I've ever played in since high



school. I know how much I've learned from this experience, both musically and socially. I know it's heavy on "people stories", but, then, this is what we are. A bunch of real people getting together weekly in a social group to make music. Wow. Tell your friends. That's how we've grown to be what we are today.

Ten years of Tuesdays so far. Decades more to come. I look forward to it.

Terri Schultz



The Old Dam Community Band in 2009



The Old Dam Community Band early 2011

Get the WHOLE story by visiting The Band's website at <http://www.olddamband.com>