

Volume XLIII, No. 1
Fall, 2020

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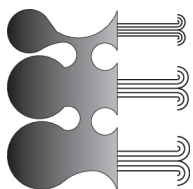
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**Fond du Lac
Symphonic Band**

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“Until We Meet Again” the Band mourns the loss of Music Director Ray Wifler February 18, 1937 - May 2, 2020

With his family and the community, the Symphonic Band grieves the death of “The Maestro.” Ray C. Wifler passed away in May, after several months of declining health.

Dr. Wifler took on the reorganization of the nearly-defunct Fond du Lac Military Band in January, 1974. Under his 43 years of leadership the Band earned a reputation throughout the Midwest as an exemplary community arts organization. His high musical standards and conducting skills molded the band into a top-notch ensemble that continues to attract the finest musicians from throughout east central Wisconsin. Beyond the music, Wifler’s vision for the community included development of the outdoor performance center in Buttermilk Creek Park, completed in 1988 and appropriately renamed the Wifler Performance Center upon his retirement as our Music Director in 2016.

Music Educators keep music alive during Covid-19

While the Symphonic Band itself has been dormant since March due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions on gatherings and access to rehearsal facilities, we note that many of our members continue to work in essential fields including health care, trades and professional services, food supply, essential products, teaching, and many more.

Notably, some twenty-four band members are actively teaching in area public and private schools, including 18 music teachers and 6 in other areas of education. They rose to the challenge of online teaching with almost no advance warning, and since then have adapted their teaching methods and practices based on ever-changing protocols and various in-school, online and blended schedules.

Ray’s many career achievements have been well-documented over the years in this publication and elsewhere, but not enough has been said about the individual lives he touched - the hundreds of college students that began their adult playing career in our band (many continuing to this day), older adults who were encouraged to dust off their instruments and return to playing, accomplished avocational musicians who appreciated a challenging group in which to perform, and scores of music educators for whom our band provides an outlet for their talents and a place to network with other musicians from the area.

At one time or another, each and every member of Ray’s own family has been part of our band family of musicians: wife Carla (bass clarinet), and children: Erin (oboe), Kelly (bassoon), Matt (clarinet) and Erika (trumpet). Our sincere sympathy to the Wifler family as they mourn his loss, and our thanks to them for designating memorial gifts to the band. (Memorial donors are listed on page 5 of this newsletter.)

Rest in Peace, Dear Friend! While you are no longer with us, memories endure and your legacy will continue for generations to come in the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band. -M. Arthur

John Ahlstrom (euphonium), teaches music at St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary. John says:

“At St. Lawrence all choir members are spaced around the rehearsal room – no use of choral risers – and are singing through masks. (Enunciation is an issue.)

“Band chairs are spaced as much as possible, and each player has his own folder and stand. Flute players have somewhat loose, blousy masks which allow the head joint to be brought in from the side and played inside the mask. All other woodwind and brass players have gaiter face coverings which have been altered with an oversize buttonhole which allows for the mouthpiece while still covering the nose. Trumpet, trombone and saxophone players have

continued on P. 3

Director's



On May 27, 1898, the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band, then known as the Fond du Lac Military Band began its long and uninterrupted musical service to the community. After 122 years, we have had to cancel last Spring's Pops Concert, this past summer's entire series and now our annual Cathedral Concert, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This has been an especially disappointing turn of events to a number of our current band members who have not missed performing in any of our seasons over the last 30+ years.

For me personally, the inability to meet musically, or socially for that matter, with the fine musicians associated with this organization has been disheartening. As disappointing as it is to not be making music with the Symphonic Band, I recognize that there are many other people in our community, state and country that are suffering far more than any of us not being able to perform with our band. My heart goes out to people who have lost their jobs, business, gotten sick or lost loved ones.

As someone who has been involved with the performing arts my entire professional life, it concerns me a great deal that many of the professional performing arts organizations such as symphony orchestras, Broadway and other "live arts" venues are closed until the Fall of 2021. The negative effect on this art form, that many depend on for their livelihood, could be devastating for those highly trained and talented professionals. Hopefully, things will soon begin changing for the better, and all performing artists will eventually be able to return to their respective stages and concert Halls. Please know that the Symphonic Band's Board of Directors is constantly monitoring the current Covid regulations and guidelines, anxiously looking forward to a time when we can resume rehearsals and concerts. We will keep you posted and please, continue to support the performing arts and arts in general.

Writing this newsletter at a time when the band is not rehearsing or

performing is a bit unusual. During these unprecedented times, I wanted to highlight one group of professionals that represent about 25% of our band's membership; current educators. (The percentage is actually quite a bit higher if all of our retired educators were included. For this article however, I'm only addressing those that are currently working.) I taught for 38 years in the public schools and continued to teach for an additional 5 years after my retirement at UW Oshkosh and Marian University. Throughout those 43 years, I never experienced anything similar to what the current educators are having to contend with in today's teaching environment. I wish them all the very best and empathize with them as they navigate the day to day uncertainty of the current state of education. A list of all of our teaching members is included in another portion of this *Fanfare*.

One member of our band was one of those teachers who had to adjust to remote learning during the last few months of his career. After a 37 year career, 34 of those years as the Lomira High School band director, Rodd Eggert retired at the end of the 2020 school year. To have worked all those years and had that much influence on so many students and then not be able to celebrate your life's work with the people you care most about, your students, had to be a bit of a let down. Granted, this is not a hardship or tragedy that rises to the level of what many others have had to deal with during this covid outbreak. However, in Rodd's words, "This is not what I expected retirement to look like."

Rodd has been a loyal and dependable member of our band for 30+ years. One anecdotal comment I would like to make regarding Rodd, his relationship to our band and his career. He is a graduate of Sturgeon Bay High School where Chuck Mahnke was the band director. Chuck has been a member of the Symphonic Band for a number of years. Jason Ehlert, who coordinates rehearsal and concert set-ups and plays tuba/trombone in the FSB, was a student in Rodd's Lomira band. Chuck, Rodd and Jason are not only connected through their student/teacher relationship and as members of the FSB, they are all trombone players as well. These are the connections

which make our band so very special. Congratulations Rodd on a wonderful teaching career and hopefully you will be able to enjoy your retirement as it was meant to be in the very near future.

This past May, my predecessor and Conductor Emeritus of the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band, Ray C. Wifler passed away. Mary Arthur, the band's former Business Manager who worked very closely with Ray for 40+ years and was his close friend, has eulogized Dr. Wifler elsewhere in this *Fanfare*. As his successor, I have a few thoughts of my own regarding the musical and educational icon of this community.

I met Ray about a year after moving to Fond du Lac 31 years ago. I joined the band shortly thereafter. Ray and I became close friends and kindred spirits over the next 30 years. Musically, our thinking regarding concert bands, how they should sound, their instrumentation and the kind of literature that should be performed was very much alike. We are both clarinet and saxophone players and enjoyed "gigging" together in a variety of ensembles.

Although I never had the experience of being under Ray's tutelage at Marian, the UW-FdL campus, Lomira or Juneau as many of the other area musicians and current or former band members were, his influence on me personally was notable. He gave me insight into the production, marketing and endless possibilities that encompass an adult community band. What he built in Fond du Lac over his 43 year tenure at the helm of this organization is remarkable: Building the band itself into a quality and well respected musical organization; conceiving of an outdoor performance facility, acquiring the funding, then getting the Wifler Performance Center at Buttermilk Creek Park built; his influence on the Sadoff Arts Center and the Fond du Lac Arts Council during its inception and development.

He was a remarkable man with a long term vision for this band and our community. I am honored to call him friend, and humbled to currently be standing in his shoes as Music Director of this prestigious ensemble. I think I speak for most, if not all when I say this community, the musicians and patrons alike, are better off because of what Ray C. Wifler brought to the arts table in Fond du Lac and the surrounding areas.

Rest in musical peace my friend.

Kerry Winget is the writer of our *Meet a Member* this issue. Kerry is an oboe, English horn and clarinet player in our band. Our band has been blessed over the years to have many who have volunteered to do the unenviable task of band librarian. They made sure hundreds of copies of music are placed in individual folders for each of the band's performances. Kerry was one of those people who did this job incredibly well. It is a pleasure to have Kerry as a member of our band.

Finally, I hope this edition of the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band's *Fanfare* finds all of you healthy and able to enjoy life as much as possible during this pandemic. As difficult as this current life experience is, we will get through it and the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band will return to our performance schedule. When that time will be is still very much up in the air, but it will happen. Until then, stay safe, be healthy and keep your eyes and ears open for our inevitable return.

--**Dale Shipe, Music Director**
Fond du Lac Symphonic Band

Music Educators

(from Page 1)

two nylon knee-high socks stretched over the bells of the instruments, and my wife Amy (who modified the gaiters) has made bell covers for tubas, euphoniums and French horn. (The horn cover has a built-in pocket which allows for proper hand placement inside the bell.) All students and staff are required to wear masks or other face coverings at all times, with the exception of meals. We've been in class on campus since August 17, and so far we have had no positive tests among our students."

Beth Mohr (bassoon), relates that she continues to actively make music with Oakfield band students as well as elementary students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade.

According to Beth, "Elementary students receive full time face-to-face instruction including one music class a week. Students are learning regular curriculum concepts and are having lots of fun using classroom instruments to work on rhythms and pitches. We still play singing games, but some movements have been adjusted as students stay near their desks and don't

pass items.

"Middle and high school students are in a hybrid learning system, so band students meet every other day in a modified block schedule. We have at least one face-to-face and one virtual class per week. Oakfield band students have been focused on some basic rhythm concepts and were able to select some Halloween full band music rather than focusing on pep band performances this year. We hope to release at least one full band song on the internet in November and will then start new full band music."

In her free time, Mrs. Mohr still plays her bassoon at church and has been improving her ukulele skills!

John Hall (clarinet) reports: "I teach lessons for several Lutheran grade schools in the Winnebago Lutheran Academy group of schools. I finished the last school year teaching lessons via Zoom. This year I teach at five schools plus I share conducting duties for two middle school bands at WLA. My students were very glad to get back to playing together, even though we are sitting far apart.

"Unfortunately, my doctor will not allow me to play in public, no concerts or dances. He hopes things will return to normal next summer. I have done a little practicing, but I need to do more! I'm writing a duet and I hope to record it for the band's virtual recital.

A later update from John: "Several of our grade schools have cases of the virus, so I have switched all of my lessons to virtual (online). I'm still going to do the in person band rehearsals once a week, for now."

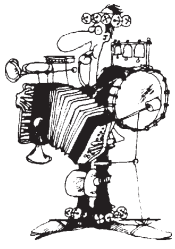
Mary Liz Julka (clarinet) writes:

"I am the 5th Grade Elementary Band teacher for the FdL Public Schools. I teach students at all 9 of our elementary schools. This year all beginners are all being taught remotely. This has been a big change to start kids on their instruments over the computer screen. Our lesson groups have 1 - 4 people per group. It has been going very well and the students are all doing well. The biggest change has been that I give them many links to many video resources and I have gotten used to making videos. One advantage to having their lessons on Google Meet, is that they can see themselves as they play. The computer acts as a mirror and

it is very helpful. I used to carry a hand mirror with me, so I no longer need to do that! The most difficult part has been teaching the clarinets and saxes to put the reed in the proper place on their mouthpiece."

Thanks to John, John, Beth and Mary Liz for sharing some of their experiences with us. We also acknowledge with thanks and appreciation ALL recent and current band members who have continued to teach during the ongoing pandemic conditions:

Kari Adamson, (percussion), K-5 General Music, Lakeshore, FdL Schools; **John Ahlstrom**, (euphonium/trombone), Band Director, St. Lawrence Seminary; **Callie Barbeau**, (saxophone), Band Director, Sabish MS, FdL Schools; **Chris Barnes**, (euphonium), Band Director, Fond du Lac High School; **Clarissa Brisk**, (French horn), K-5 General Music, Parkside, FdL Schools; **Alex Chanto**, (tuba), student teacher, Mayville and Kewaskum; **Kari Eggert**, (flute), Band Director, Lomira MS, Lomira; **Mike Fedyszyn**, (trumpet), Band Director, Bessie Allen MS, NFdL Schools; **Jon Gilliland**, (percussion), Student Teacher Supervisor, UW-Milwaukee; **Amy Lawonn**, (percussion), 1st & 2nd Grade, St. Luke's School, Oakfield; **John Hall**, (clarinet), private lessons, Band, Winnebago Lutheran Academy group; **Ashley Heitpas**, (clarinet), Band Director, Woodworth MS, FdL Schools; **Mary Liz Julka**, (clarinet), 5th grade elementary band teacher, FdL Schools; **Nickole Kawleski**, (saxophone), Band Director, Theisen MS, FdL Schools; **Abigail Kurth**, (trumpet/baritone), Band Director, Winnebago Lutheran Academy; **Julia Laituri**, (trumpet), Band Director, Horace Mann HS, NFdL Schools; **Beth Mohr**, (bassoon), K-12 Music and Band, Oakfield Schools; **Marcie Ninnemann**, (euphonium), Band Director, St. Francis Xavier MS, Appleton; **Janice Peterson**, (flute), English Teacher, Kewaskum HS; **Phil Schmahl**, (string bass), Band Director, St. Mary's Springs Academy MS; **George Smith**, (tuba), Principal, St. Mary's/St. Michael's Catholic School; **Denise Thompson**, (flute), Instructional Assistant, FdL Schools; **Chris Watters**, (clarinet), Band Director, Montello School District; **Heidi Zabel**, (bassoon), 2nd Grade, St. Peter's Lutheran School.



Kleine Stücke

Congratulations to **Stephanie Core** (flute) - she and her husband recently bought their forever home - 20 acres in Lamartine with a horse barn and heart stopping sunset views. They are working to settle in and make the house a home. Stephanie reports they were blessed with a double rainbow on moving day.

Congratulations to **Jen Ahlstrom** (former FSB percussionist) and **Nicole Brandt**, who were married in Eau Claire on Oct. 10. Attending her sister as bridesmaid was **Angie Ahlstrom** (former FSB horn). Unable to attend due to Covid-19 travel restrictions were bridesmaid **Becky Greenstrom** (also former FSB horn) and her daughters **Sophia** and **Fiona**, who were to have been flower girls. Proud parents **John** (FSB trombone/euphonium) and **Amy Ahlstrom** and a greatly reduced group of guests enjoyed the occasion.

Baby Remington Larry Albers was born 7/31/2020 to parents **Stephanie** (flute) and **Jeffrey Albers** and proud big brother **Chevy**. The newest member of the Albers family weighed in at 5lbs 6oz, and was 18 in. long. Congratulations to all!

Combined Fund Drive in 2020

Typically the Symphonic Band holds two fund drives each year - the first in June to support the Buttermilk Festival guest artist series, and the second in early fall to support the General Fund (i.e. operating expenses) of the Symphonic Band.

When the band's activities were suspended back in March, we decided to hold off on fund-raising until we had a better handle on whether we would hold performances in 2020. Ultimately, as the pandemic unfolded, it became clear that we would not

Meet a Member

Hi readers! My name is Kerry Winget and you can usually find me in the oboe section.

I was a late comer to joining school band when I was young, starting lessons in high school to join my best friend who was having so much fun in band. Rehearsals, lessons, concerts, marching band and pep band kept my high school schedule filled with activities.

I left for college and kept music as part of my studies, playing in the university marching and concert bands. I spent much of my day in the music building and felt at home there, happily using the auditorium lobby couches as my study space. With the grad school class and study schedule, my oboe sat dusty in the closet, though. Patiently waiting, I like to think.

Fast forward a few years...my husband and I moved to Fond du Lac with new jobs and a new house and I was drawn to the Symphonic Band advertisement on the back of the telephone book. Luckily for me,

they welcomed that very rusty player without a second thought. Rehearsals became a place to meet new friends and feel part of something bigger. I also served as the band's music librarian several years ago. I loved having the 'inside' music scoop and learned a great deal about the 'behind the scenes' operations that keep a band performing. I can't say that I miss the 1000s of pages of paper shuffling though!

This unusual year, there are no Monday night rehearsals or Cathedral concert preparations. I am enjoying listening to CDs of past concerts and re-reading their program notes. Playing in the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band has helped me continue my growth as a musician, but also as a person and a community member. I know that music will always be a reassuring constant in my life.

(Ed. Note: Kerry is a speech language pathologist at SSM St Agnes Hospital, helping rehabilitate patients with communication and/or swallowing disorders.)

return to "normal operations" until 2021 at the earliest.

That said, while many of the expenses of a fully-operational year were not incurred in 2020, there remain the many fixed expenses and need to secure funds for future seasons. And so, in lieu of separate "fund drive" mailings, we chose to provide a combined 2020 Fund Drive envelope in this newsletter mailing.

At your discretion, the enclosed envelope may be used for donations to either or both the General Fund and Buttermilk Festival Fund. With your gift of \$60 or more, you may choose a "thank you" gift as shown on the envelope, and you may combine gifts to both funds in one check.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Symphonic Band and the Buttermilk Festival!

A special thank-you to all those who donated to the band's General Fund in 2019; they are listed on page 5.

(2019 Buttermilk Festival donors were listed in the Fall, 2019 edition of Fanfare.)

New Business Manager named

Cyndi Nienhaus, CSA, has been appointed the new Business Manager of the Symphonic Band. She replaces Marsha Matthews, who resigned last spring when she and her husband moved to LaCrosse WI.

Sr. Cyndi has played flute in the band since 2013. She teaches at Marian University, where she received her B.S.Ed. followed by an M.A. at St. Francis Seminary and Ph.D. at Fordham University in New York City. She is also General Councilor of the Congregation of St. Agnes.

We welcome Sr. Cyndi to the Band's management team! We thank Marsha for her dedicated service as Business Manager and a long-time member of our euphonium section.

Thanks also to **Kathy Nachtwey** (French horn) for taking on core manager duties on an interim basis over the spring and summer months.

Thanks to our 2019 General Fund & Wifler Memorial Donors

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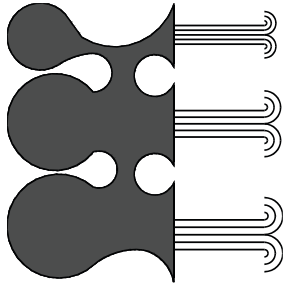
Fan Fare

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Fond du Lac Symphonic Band, Ltd.

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Fond du Lac WI 54936-1483

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



2021 Concert Schedule

(All events are tentative pending changes in group gathering guidelines.)

- April 24 41st Annual Pops Concert
- June 16 Symphonic Band
- June 23 Dorf Kapelle / symphony or visiting band tba
- June 30 Dorf Kapelle / symphony or visiting band tba
- July 4 Symphonic Band - Americana Concert
- July 7 Symphonic Band – Family Night
- July 14 FdL High School Summer Band
- July 21 Symphonic Band
- July 28 Kids from Wisconsin
- Aug. 4 Symphonic Band
- Aug. 11 Brass Differential
- Aug. 18 Symphonic Band
- Nov. 14 45th Annual Cathedral Concert



**We wish you all a
holiday season
of peace and
joy! We miss
you, and we
look forward to
entertaining you
again in 2021.**

