

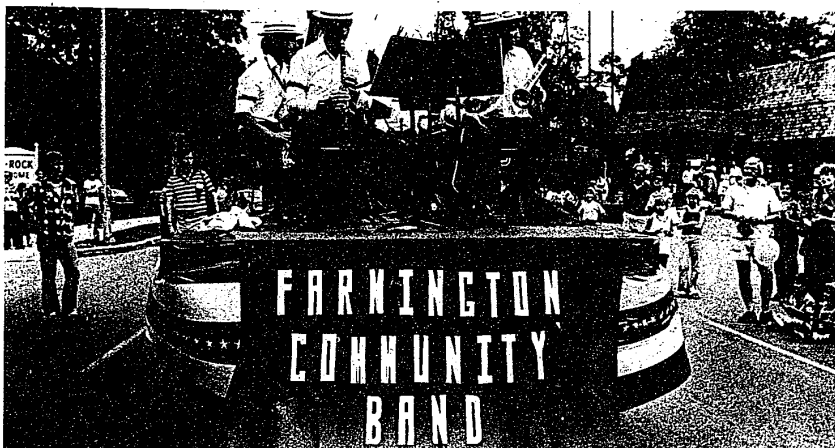


Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

Thursday, August 9, 1979

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The Farmington Community Band scheduled four concerts a year when it was organized in 1969. Now, with break-off groups, such as the Dixielanders riding on a float in Founders Festival Parade, (above)

and the Jazz Band, scheduled to play for a free dance tonight, members have hit a high of 21 performances in one year. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)



Richard Mitchell was solo chair cornetist when he played for Harrison High School's Symphony Band, and has been playing with the Farmington Community Band since graduation. (Photo by Sandi Horne)

Farmington Community Band

A gift of music from many members for many reasons

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Tonight at 8 p.m. Paul Barber will strike up the Farmington Community Jazz band for all who want a night of dancing to a variety of music.

The event is free and will be held in Oakland Community College's Building J.

The 75 musicians who make up the concert band, the brass ensemble, the Dixielanders and the dance band give their music as a gift. All are unpaid volunteers.

There are no age restrictions; one member of the band is 14.

There are no residential boundaries; one member travels for weekly rehearsals from Mt. Clemens.

College students have been known to return to rehearsals just to play with the band in the summer.

One father and son sit next to one another in the trombone section. One percussion player had three daughters come and go, but she's still playing drums for the band.

The group runs the gamut of careers, from engineers and dentists, through housewives to those who play no instrument at all, but are there to do anything from administrative to menial jobs, just in support of what the band is doing.

"WE MUST BE doing something right," said Barber, who began the entire concept of a Farmington Community Band 11 years ago with five

friends. "We had one woman still playing her horn until the day she went into the hospital to have her baby."

"We're not all music majors and we're not all musical hot dogs. We're very usual people who just like to play and sing. All I do is get up in front and wave my arms."

"It's no big deal to write about me and Fern. Everybody knows we're music-happy."

Fern Barber is lead clarinetist for the Farmington Community Band, active in Farmington Musicale. The couple both teach in the Farmington Public School system, and together headed this summer's Fine Arts Program for the public schools.

But contrary testimony about Barber's being "no big deal" comes from many sources.

Clarinetist Fay Williams called Barber "An outstanding conductor who exposes us to all kinds of music: marches, show tunes, the classic. There is no limitation at all."

Drummer Barbara Hughes said, "If you aren't a cut above average when you get in, you sure will be soon. Paul is an excellent conductor and that's why I'm in the band. He is a great challenge for our new, young musicians."

"The pace of the rehearsal is pretty frantic. We cover a lot of music in a very short time and I'm always impressed with what he can pull out of us."

Horn player Richard Cardecia

called Barber's handling of the musicians, "Much, much more professional than in college."

RECRUITS come from many places and for many reasons.

Ken and Dav Shesiek are both students in North Farmington High School and both are leaning toward a career in music, yet French horn player Ken says "We play mostly for fun."

"My brother is going to be an opera singer, and he's going to make it. But he takes his euphonium lessons from Paul and after he was in the band for a year I just followed. We just like it."

Mrs. Williams hadn't played her clarinet since high school days, but found she was "envious of the players" while she attended a concert when her daughter Sandra, an obolist, was a member of the band.

"Paul announced after the concert that he was looking for new members," she said. "It was a struggle. It took a while for me to get with it, but it opened up a whole new world for me."

Sandra Williams is now completing her first year of Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. Meanwhile, Mrs. Williams has joined the Farmington Musicale and the Detroit Recorder Society and will be a performer for the musicale this fall.

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-old John Brubaker talked his father into dusting off his trombone, "and now dad is taking over a spot for a woman who just had a baby. He played when he was in the service in Germany, and played for our church when we lived in New Jersey."

The Farmington High School student explained that auditions were pretty loose, especially for adults. "You just have to handle the part and most people can handle it if you practice."

Apparently the elder Brubaker is not only handling his part, but has taken to the band enough to become its new treasurer for the coming season.

Phyllis Hubbard travels to rehearsals and concerts in a car pool with a four-person contingent from the Southfield and Lathrup Village area.

She was a music major in college, (Continued on page 2C)

'We're not all music majors and we're not all musical hot dogs. We're very usual-type people who just like to play and sing. All I do is get up in front and wave my arms.'

— Paul Barber, Farmington Community Band Conductor



Jazz trombonist Kevin Perry returns from college for summer rehearsals and summer performances with the band. He joined the Farmington Community

Band when he was a student at Harrison High School. (Photo by Sandi Horne)



Danny Hughes became a member of the band after his mother and three sisters before him. He is now the band's new equipment manager. (Photo by Sandi Horne)



Every Tuesday night is rehearsal night for Paul Barber (upper left) who puts the musicians through their paces in Harrison High

School. The night, we visited the jazz band was in session. On other Tuesdays it might be the brass ensemble, the Dixielanders, or the

full complement of the Community Band's 85 members. (Photo by Sandi Horne)