McCosh's Column The Band Plays On

A brief contact with the publicity agents for two of the three Farmington high school bands, just as the local football season got under way this fall, brought back memories of my days stomping around on high school football fields, hitting the chalk lines with every fifth star.

How the marching band got started is lost in history, but presumably it was a bunch of soldiers who got tired of singing dirty songs while they marched and started to play instruments instead; or maybe they just couldn't learn the words.

How this institution got transferred to a football field is another unknown, but I suspect it happened when someone noticed the resemblance the game had to the ancient gladiators and decided to complete the parallel by adding cymbals and trumpets like they had in the coliseum in Rome.

THE MARCHING BAND will always be with us, but it is not often noted how anathema the custom is to anyone interested in playing music.

This stems from the fact that while you are rnis stems from the fact that while you are marching, strutting or employing any of the other unnatural steps popular in parades and football games, it is nearly impossible to get anything remotely musical out of any wind instrument.

Before you accuse me of cynicism prompted by the natural bitterness of a musical loser, let me relate a story once told by a professional musician.

This guy now plays the oboe in the Detroit Symphony, but in his struggling youth, he was playing any chance he could get in an Italian section of New York where he was raised.

The big gravy job during those depression years was playing a parade. On these jobs he happily strolled along with his instrument in his mouth, but like those guys who chew on empty pipes, it was a

Any attempt to blow the thing while in motion smashed the reed, so he just ambled along in silence, thinking about all the good things James Petrillo had done for the strolling troubadour racket.

NOT THAT ALL instruments are plagued with this problem, the harmonica and the glockenspiel sound pretty good in a marching band.

Even when you stop to make the shape of a turkey or something, there was a real danger the mouthpiece would freeze to your lips.

To combat this, you would keep warming the horn by blowing air through it. This makes water condense inside, and it sounds like you are gargling when it comes time for the "fight song.

While many people poke fun at marching bands (the little guy with the tuba, the guy who goes right when everybody else goes left), the bands have noth-ing but sympathy from this quarter.

After four years of smashed lips, frostbitten hands, and chronic crossed eyes from trying to look sideways down a line without moving your head, I still have more sympathy for the clarinet player with frosted keys than the quarterback who claims he fumbled because his fingers were stiff with cold.

1,100 Walk For Mankind Here



WALK.-An estimated 1,100 participated in the "Walk for Mankind." sponsored by the Farmington Jaycees to collect money for "project concern" and some local charities. The walkers followed a 22-mile route around the City of Farmington Saturday, with well-wishers following their

progress. The report of the amount collected is not yet available, but each walker had one or more sponsors which pledged a contribution for each mile

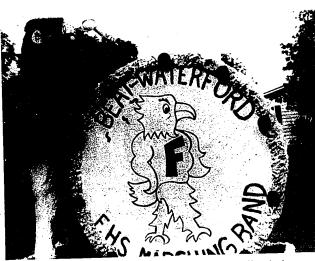


check point, (Evert photo)



DRESSED UP--Kevin and Kenneth Hale made the walk in costume.

Parade Highlights Farmington Homecoming



FLOAT--The floats sparkled as they moved towards the high school. (Evert photo)



DRUM--"Beat Waterford" was the theme for the day. (Evert photo)