

# Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard

## Alumni Newsletter



### *The Tradition Marches On*

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## Welcome!



In the Spring of 1973, David VanVeld resigned as the director of bands at Greenwood High School. The school board hired Herman Knoll to build and expand on the foundation built by Mr. VanVeld. I was in the 8th grade that spring and Mr. Knoll came to Dan Rice's band class to introduce himself and meet his incoming freshman students. He told us about our practice schedule for that summer's State Fair show. I raised my hand and asked, "What music are we playing?" He replied, "The show starts out with a fanfare of "Somewhere Over The Rainbow." And so it began..... "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" was a part of every State Fair show for the next four years. Our senior summer culminated as the 1976 State Fair Champions. My friends and I got to be there at the very beginning. The directors and students that followed us kept the song and symbol of the rainbow alive. The "Woodman Warm Up" has been played by hundreds of you and it brings a tear to the eye every time it is heard. It represents decades of dedication and excellence of which we have all been a part. We each have our own unique experience with the band, but our commonality is the comradery that we share under the arc of that beautiful rainbow.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share some great memories, but most importantly, connect the alumni with today's band. I hope that collectively we will give the program strong support with our encouragement through financial backing, volunteering, and showing up to cheer. We were able to be a part of a great program that shaped us to be better people. Let's support the latest version of the Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard as the tradition marches on.

Gayla Gunn, Class of 1977

Hello Greenwood Marching Woodmen Alumni and Fans!

It is my honor to write to you today! First and foremost, I would like to thank Gayla Gunn for her willingness to put this newsletter together. I think this is a fantastic idea and I certainly appreciate the time and effort she has put into this project. I hope this provides a means to stay connected with the current version of the Marching Woodmen and becomes a place to reminisce about all of the wonderful band memories you made during your time with the Greenwood Band.

The last few years have been a challenge for band programs all over the nation. COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives in many ways. For band programs in Indiana, we have seen a drop in performing arts membership across the state. In addition, there have been many staff changes here locally at Greenwood. The senior class this year had three band directors over their four year marching career. In addition, several members of the

staff and design team have moved on. Now, don't get me wrong, we have put together an amazing staff for the Marching Woodmen for the coming season; however, all of that change and disruption can cause an unhealthy atmosphere for a band program. With this in mind, I sought out a show design for 2022 that would connect all aspects of the band program. I wanted to stay rooted in our traditions while advancing the performance in the modern pageantry arts design environment. At the same time, my goal was to gather all members of the GMWIG alumni, current students, boosters, fans, and staff toward a common goal. We all need to come together to maintain and improve this glorious program. When I accepted the position of Director of Bands at Greenwood Community High School, I made it my mission to be a steward of the program. I take that mission very seriously. To further that mission, I selected a show titled "Gathering Green".

Here are some quick details about the show:

#### **Musical Selections:**

- Follow the Yellow Brick Road - E.Y. Harburg & Harold Arlen
- Impetuosamente (from Pampeana No. 3) Op. 24 - Alberto Ginastera
- Fields of Gold - Gordon Sumner
- I Can't Make You Love Me - Allen Shamblin & Michael Reid
- Somewhere Over the Rainbow - E.Y. Harburg & Harold Arlen
- Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 - Sergei Rachmaninoff
- Original Music by Ben Lee, Harry Hutchins, and Nico Mendoza

**Directors:** Luke Aylsworth, Joel Matthews, and Donald Kalugyer

**Staff:** Dean Westman, Daniel Wiles, Eric Berger, Pam Wishmeyer, Markell Allen, Ian Hehr, Travis Beck, Grady Emmert, Josh Conley, Darrick Betro, Eric Zielsdorf, Charles Dieffenbach, John Morse, Megan Dudenhoeffer, Lisa Knartzer, and Dylan Watson.

**Drum Majors:** Anthony Maupins, Eric Ratliff, and Mallory Cregar

The show begins with pieces of a road in shambles. The tornado has hit the yellow brick road and the Emerald City. Over the course of the show, we will gather together to put the road and city back together. Each of these Oz references serve as an allegory for our program. COVID-19 and program changes have created great challenges for our students and staff. It is the responsibility of all of the Greenwood Band stakeholders to gather together and put things back in order; hence, "Gathering Green". Our 2022 show will do just that! By the end of the show, the yellow brick road will reappear intact and the Emerald City will be restored.

I hope each of you will be able to attend a performance this season and enjoy some familiar and significant musical selections. The students are working hard and we have a wonderful student leadership team assembled.

Thank you all for your support! It is my honor to lead this great band program!



Luke Aylsworth  
Director of Bands  
Greenwood Community High School

## From Our Directors



We lovingly remember David VanVeld, Director of Greenwood Bands 1965-1973.

Mr. VanVeld passed away in 2020. He is pictured here in 2018, with two of his grandchildren



As most of you know, I taught band at Greenwood Middle School for 40 years. During that time it was my privilege to have many students in class. I often think back on those years with fond memories. I hope I taught you more than just how to play an instrument. The friendships, the discipline, belonging to a successful group - these are wonderful life lessons that will last forever. I still live in Greenwood with my wife Kathy. I always enjoy seeing former students around town and recalling the instrument they played. I hope you will stay connected to today's band as you were a big part of its history. I wish you the very best always.

Dan Rice, Middle School Director 1969-2008



Thank you for inviting this old person from your former lives to attempt using a few words to describe our time together. There isn't a time that Sandy and I see a band (or drum corp) that we don't think about our time in Greenwood. You and our time there are embedded in our hearts forever. If there was magic in Dorothy's shoes from the Wizard of Oz, or if the yellow brick road took her on a path of love and excellence, that begins to describe the time we were privileged to share with you.

In my aging mind, I can still see and hear our practices and performances. The times spent in the old band room, parking lot and of course, the "special times" at St. Joe's College, gave us memories and friendships that have lasted throughout our lives. While our performances mattered, the journey we shared, is what made us all better for life.

I am truly honored that the alumni of the Greenwood Band would continue to care so much for today's band and its future. My wish for this year's band, and for Mr. Aylsworth, is that they can catch that enthusiasm and magic that you all provided during my time in Greenwood. The tradition that marches on warms the heart with each and every step taken.

Herman Knoll, Director 1973-1976



Greetings to the members and families of the Greenwood Community High School Band program, past and present.

It was an honor of a lifetime for me to have had the opportunity to be a small part in the legacy of this great band program. I remember so many incredible musical moments and celebrated victories on the field, too!

To those of you whom I was blessed to teach and with whom to collaborate, and for all those students now participating in the Marching Woodmen, I send you my sincerest appreciation for all that you have done and are doing for this school and community through these past several decades.

Your tremendous work ethic, your amazing desire to excel and your intrinsic will to be successful has lifted the legacy of the GCHS Band to a legendary status that only a few band programs in America now enjoy.

As significantly, the students of my era at Greenwood High School have fostered in me the desire to strengthen my love of teaching and my musical goals these past four-plus decades. I salute you, and revere all of your families who contributed so much care and love through those days. I will certainly always cherish both the successes and challenges that we experienced. Thank you for all of this!

I urge the current and future members of the Greenwood Community High School band program to continue this incredible tradition and to reap all the great rewards that such a historic band program can enjoy!

Please continue to work hard with a deep appreciation for your membership in such a spectacularly successful team!

Tom Leslie, Director 1976-1979



I have the distinction of being the first assistant band director at Greenwood H.S. I had taken a one year leave from my first job to attend ISU full time for my master's degree (1977-1978). One of the main reasons I chose to attend ISU was because of Herman Knoll. I met him when he judged my concert band and later (before he went to ISU), I was at an ISSMA clinic where several bands including Greenwood were doing demonstrations at the ISU stadium. I was very impressed with his work at Greenwood and wanted to get to know him better. It was a pleasure to spend a lot of time with him at ISU and I learned a lot from being around him. I was looking for a head director's job near the end of the year and Herman mentioned that Greenwood was adding an assistant director and asked if I might be interested. Since it was Greenwood, I said absolutely. He put me in touch with the Superintendent and after interviewing, I was offered the job. I started in the summer of 1978 with teaching beginners and working with the H.S. band. Tom Leslie and Dan Rice

were very welcoming and turned out to be great friends. I couldn't have asked for better people to work with. The extended staff included Pam (Smith) Wishmeyer, a great guard instructor and Ron Bell, the choir director and valuable supporter of the program. When we started working on the marching show, I got to meet another extremely talented person by the name of Eric Kincaid!

Putting the 1978-1979 marching show was a real labor of love with everyone working so hard to make it a great show. It would take too long to share a lot of the details (they are forever etched in my mind), but it was one of the best experiences of my career.

I conducted the jazz band, the second concert band and was Tom's assistant for the wind ensemble and marching band. Several changes took place at the end of the 1978-1979 school year. Tom decided he wanted to move out west and resigned his position, which turned out to be a great move since he is now director of bands at UNLV. I was offered his position but was lured away for drum corp. There have been many times that I wish I would have stayed in Greenwood (Mary never wanted to leave) but did meet a lot of interesting people in drum corps. We even had several Greenwood students in the corps (Evansville), and I was able to get Eric to oversee the color guard.

Even though I was only at Greenwood for the summer of 1978, the 1978-1979 school year, and the summer of 1979, I worked with some great students and staff. I made some wonderful lifelong friends in Herman Knoll, Tom Leslie, Dan Rice, Ron Bell, Pam Wishmeyer, Eric Kinkaid, and many others associated with the Greenwood Band program.

Kim Fillingim, Assistant Director 1978-1979



Greetings former Greenwood band students!

How wonderful to be able to connect again after all of these years! First let me honestly confess; wow was it ever hard to leave all of you when I did in the middle of the 1981-82 school year!! It was the most difficult decision of my life! But as it often happens in life, we can't predict when doors of opportunity will present themselves. Then it's up to us to decide whether or not to open those doors and make the plunge. In hindsight this was absolutely the right decision. After 40 years, I'm still working for Hal Leonard publishing company in Milwaukee, WI. I'm director of band publications, still writing for concert band, and traveling around a bit for guest conducting events.

My wife Kathy is active in various artist and quilt guilds, and stays busy with art quilts and painting. She has also been a costumer for various local theater groups and schools. We have 4 kids and 5 grandkids. Some of you may remember our oldest, Samantha, who was just a wee tot when we

were in Greenwood. She's now a high school counselor in Minnesota with 2 kids of her own, both in high school! In my spare time, I go fishing whenever possible (lots of lakes and rivers around here!), and pursue my obsession with traditional Irish music by playing whistles and bodhrán in local weekly pub sessions.

One thing that I've come to realize in my years since leaving teaching is that, in everything we do, kindness matters. The world is rather messed up right now, but if we can all take a step back and respect each other as fellow human beings, that will go a long way towards making things better. School music programs can and should provide a safe and caring environment for all students involved. That was the case during my time at Greenwood and I'm sure that tradition has continued through the years. It's so important for us to support these music programs in whatever way we can, and make sure these experiences remain an integral part of students' lives.

Best wishes to all,

Michael Sweeney, Assistant Director 1980-1982

Mr. Sweeney arranged "The Woodmen Warm Up."



I am excited that a Band Alumni Newsletter is going to be reaching out to the former members of the band and guard. I thank Gayla Gunn for putting together this long-awaited newsletter and look forward to hearing about all that is going on with former students. My wife and I are still in Greenwood and love being part of the community. I am humbled and proud to be part of the incredible history of the Greenwood Band Program and think often of the fantastic students that I had the opportunity to work with. It is through their hard work, dedication and love for the program that makes Greenwood stand out as one of the finest programs in the state. I hope the students have been able to apply to their lives the attributes learned during their time in the program (hard work, dedication, goal setting, leadership skills, teamwork, etc.) and that they are happy, successful and contributing members in the community where they live. I feel blessed to have known you and will always feel like you are part of my family. I continue to follow and support the program and help when asked. There has been some staff turnover recently, but I strongly feel the school administration has done an excellent job of getting the right

people in place to guarantee the continued success of the program. I totally support Luke Aylsworth and his team as they work to maintain and improve upon the great success of the Greenwood program.

Jon Sutton, Director 1982-2007



Greetings to all former and current members of the Greenwood Band!

I am happy to report that I am into my 4th year as a school administrator in the MSD of Decatur Township as an Assistant Principal at Decatur Middle School. I love my job and the students I serve but I certainly miss my daily contact with music students and the Greenwood band family. My family is well. My son Wyatt is in 2nd grade and is an excellent student and reader. He loves soccer, taekwondo and swimming. I am looking forward to when he will start an instrument!

I am so thankful for the opportunity to reach out to my former students and our Greenwood band family. I am so fortunate to have served as the Director of Bands at Greenwood and it is an immense point of pride for me. I am the person and educator I am today due to the lives that touched mine in the Greenwood community. I remember when I

first came to Greenwood in 2008 I was welcomed not only by the students, staff, parents and community at that time but also by our wonderful alumni.

It is with great humility that I still am allowed connection to the school and band program through my many relationships there and Mr. Aylsworth. He has been kind enough to continue to include me in the family circle of the Greenwood band program. When I have the opportunity to visit and contribute I am in awe of the job he is doing there to further the traditions of excellence that have made being a part of the band program at Greenwood so impactful for thousands of students.

The lessons our students receive in the Greenwood program have not changed over time. Students gain so much through music and performance but the most important things they learn are skills and lessons that benefit them throughout their lives. Hard work, setting goals, maintaining high standards, working effectively on a team, leadership, trust, passion and being early (because on time is late...) serve our students throughout their lives no matter their chosen path. These lessons will continue to benefit students for years to come.

Should you find it within you to be able to give back to the Greenwood band program your contribution would go a long way to helping sustain this essential part of the Greenwood community. I know during your time in the program you most likely knew students and families in need that were supported to be able to participate. No student is turned away due to lack of resources but the nature of the activity of music requires resources. If you are able to assist in any way your contribution can help insure that current and future students had the same opportunities you had in the Greenwood band.

I hope you and your families are well and you are forever in my heart! Band, heels together! GO!

John Morse, Assistant Director 2008-2009  
Director 2009-2019



# The Tradition Marches On - In Families!



Lexi Hamilton, Class of 2024, with grandmother Cheri Hudson Hamilton, Class of 1977.



Gary Brooks, Class of 2025 with father Chris Brooks, Class of 1999.



Charlotte Hollingshead, Class of 2023, with mother Jennifer Villines Holingshead, Class of 1995 and father Charlie.



Mabel Fee, Class of 2024, with mother Gina McClain Fee, Class of 1988 and grandmother Jane Teets Williams, Class of 1965.

## Did You Know?

Prior to 1971, the Greenwood Marching Woodmen proudly displayed the school colors of blue and gold.

Dean Everett (Class of 1980) travels from his home in Chicago each year to volunteer for the Greenwood Band Invitational.

The Greenwood Band has its own store called the Rainbow Market which sells Marching Woodmen SWAG – including the following vintage items:



“Box Moms” support the band members throughout the season in many ways, including individualized cards before each performance. These cards include an inspirational message. For many years, the message prior to the state performance has included a poem written by Sheri Irwin Gardner (see next page).

## The Story Behind...Sheri Irwin Gardner's Poem

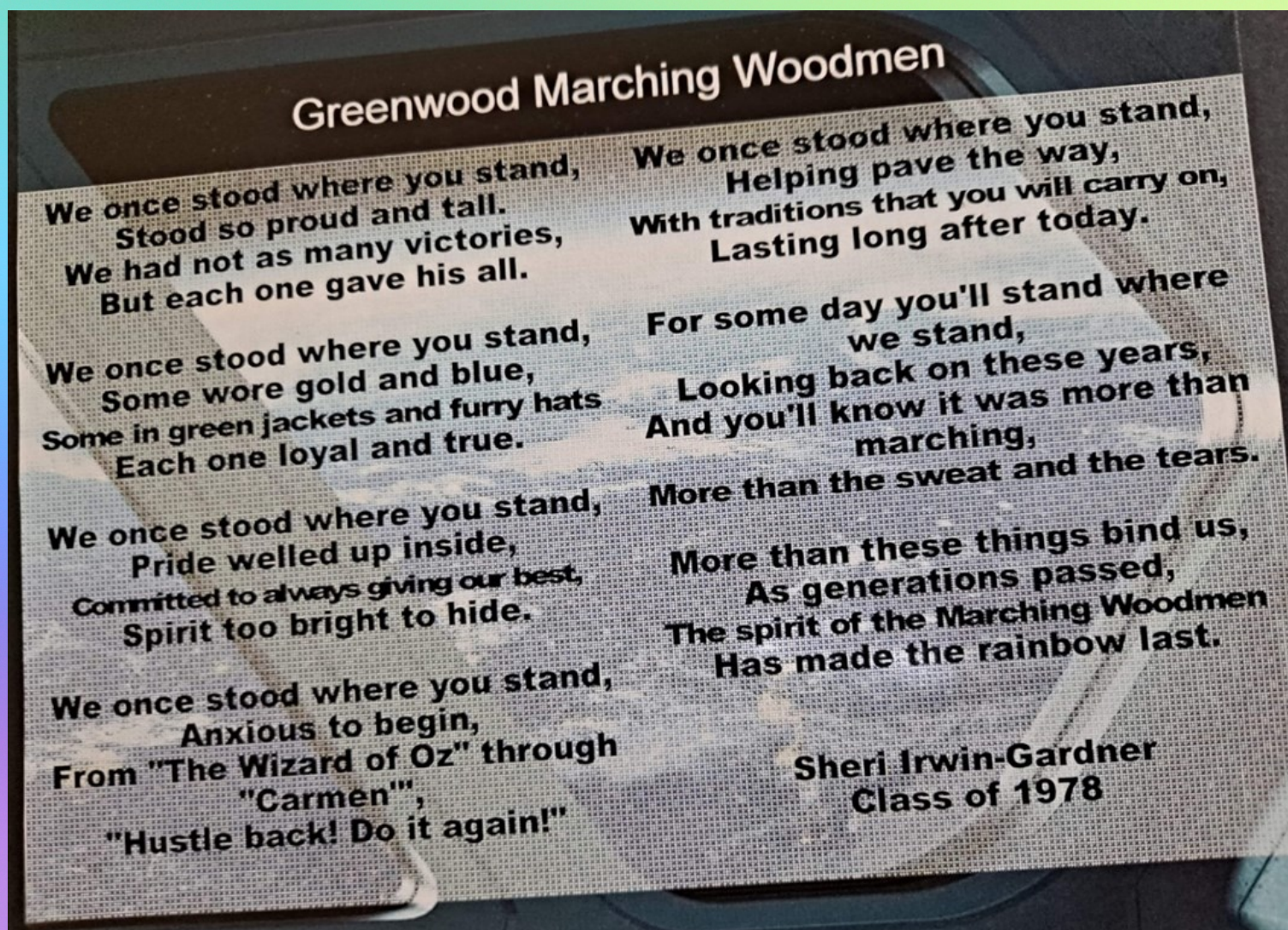


In 2006, under the direction of Jon Sutton, The Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard performed "The Rainbow Revisited", in tribute to the 30-year anniversary of the 1976 victory at the Indiana State Fair Band Day competition. This was the first time the band won a major competition. (At this time, "State Fair" was THE major competition for area marching bands.) Alumni from the '76 band were invited to be recognized at a halftime performance of the show.

Sitting in the stands that night, I watched as the band begin to file in at the north end of the field. I began to feel the usual nerves and excitement I have ALWAYS felt before Greenwood marches. I looked around at the life-long friends I have because of band. Sitting with us were several alumni from the 1960's who had come to show their support. I got goosebumps, just thinking about how band had brought us all together. I thought, "I am part of something so much bigger than I can even imagine." I thought of former students of mine who were now marching with the band. And I wanted to tell them that I understood EXACTLY what they were feeling every time they took the field. The poem began to form in my head as I watched. By the time I got to paper and pencil that night, it wrote itself.

The following Monday, I shared it with Mr. Sutton and Mr. Rice, just hoping they would read it and know the profound effect the band program had had on me and SO many others. I am always humbled and honored that my words are still read today.

Sheri Irwin Gardner, Class of 1978





## How can Alumni Support the GMWIG?

- Follow the band activities and book mark the following website: <https://ghsband.org>
- Encourage your band friends to register for the alumni database. (See Alumni section at band website.)
- See the show! The band performs at home football games and invitationals.
- Volunteer.
- Consider supporting a fund raiser. There will be a specific opportunity for alumni to make a donation in 2023... more to be revealed!

## Future Newsletters

My own connections to the band are deeply rooted in the 1970's – early 1980's. There is so much more to celebrate and remember. I invite any of YOU to contribute to this newsletter project. If you would like to share a memory, write a reflection, contribute pictures, ask questions, give feedback, etc. please contact me at [gaylagunn1977@gmail.com](mailto:gaylagunn1977@gmail.com)

## Thank You!

Julie Lash  
Andrew Short  
Sheri Irwin Gardner  
Norman Lasiter  
Luke Aylsworth  
Andrew VanVeld

Dan Rice  
Herman Knoll  
Tom Leslie  
Kim Fillingham  
Mike Sweeney  
Jon Sutton

John Morse  
Cheri Hudson Hamilton  
Gary Brooks  
Jennifer Villines Holingshead  
Gina Fee

