

# Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard

Alumni Newsletter  
*The Tradition Marches On*



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### From Casey Norton

Hello to all! My name is Casey Norton and I am your current president for the GBPO. I am thrilled to have this position as I have 2 sons in the program. Dru is a junior marching trumpet and Ethan is a 7th grader who plays trumpet in the middle school band. I have always had a strong love of music. It started when I was in high school myself. I was a fellow clarinet who then became the drum major of my band. I am excited to lead the GBPO in allowing kids to be our main focus. Together we can see kids becoming their best selves! In my spare time during marching season you can find me on box 9 or I'll be with my husband in the stands cheering on our awesome band. I look forward to all aspects of our program and will support in any way I can. I feel like I have a front row seat to watch the magic happen!

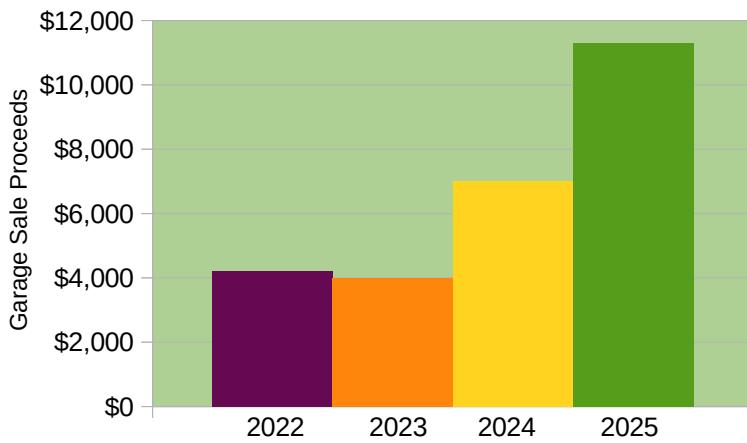
So excited for things to come!

Sending you all my very best,

Casey Norton



## Alumni and Friends Make A Difference



This graph illustrates the growth in the garage sales since they began four years ago!

Last year Alumni and Friends donations to the band totaled \$10,913, when combined with garage sale proceeds. We have already surpassed that total this year through the garage sale alone. How high can we go?!

To make a direct donation to the Alumni and Friends Philanthropy efforts, [Click Here](#).

To donate a specific item from Mr. Aylsworth's Amazon Wish List, [Click Here](#).

To donate your time at the Greenwood Invitational, [Click Here](#). (Don't worry if you are not sure how to do your job – the chairperson will teach you!)

We have several alumni who have their own children in the band our guard now. Alumni are always welcome and encouraged to share their story with us!

## The Tradition Marches On...



### Melissa Gobel Morris and Son Charlie

He's a front ensemble member (marimba), class of 2028. I was in the Irish Guard, class of 1995 (flag, sabre and rifle lines) and I was on staff from 1999-2005. My favorite show as a student was "I Am." It was an honor to perform that show and be part of that season. As a staff member, I loved watching the students win a state championship and Mr. Sutton directing them in the Woodmen Warmup before they left the field.

Being on the parent side of this journey has been a true gift. I love watching Charlie's growing love of music and this organization. It has been a wonderful full circle moment.



## Hello Woodmen!

I'd like to thank Gayla Gunn for her work on this newsletter! I always enjoy updating the alumni and fans of The Marching Woodmen—and 2025 is going to be a fun season!

This year, our marching band show is titled "The Guest House." It's based on a poem by Jalaluddin Rumi, which the design team was introduced to through the Coldplay song Kaleidoscope. The portion of the poem we are using is included below:

*This being human is a guest house  
Every morning a new arrival  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
Some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
Because each has been sent as a guide.*

In a modern context, Rumi's poem speaks to how we can navigate emotions, mental health, and personal growth in today's fast-paced, often overwhelming world. It is our hope that the student performers realize that the daily experiences they encounter are opportunities—tools they can use to develop new skills, emotional strength, and maturity.

### Musical selections include:

- Kaleidoscope by Coldplay
- In the Shadow of Time by Thomas Adam Habuda
- When We Were Young by Adele
- Me, Myself, and I by Jo Blankenburg
- It Was a Life Worth Living

**Staff:** Daniel Wiles, Eric Berger, Pam Wishmeyer, Ben Lee, Jordan Lalama, Travis Beck, Rachel Martin, Braedon Bomgardner, Madeline Cregar, Esther Houston, Jackie Porter, Megan Dudenhoeffer, Breanna Mader, Matt Hahn, Zach Schilcher, Ross Werner, Peter Bates, Lisa Knartzer, Simon Harmon, and Noah Darby.

**Drum Majors:** Araceli Garns, Cady Mathias, and Lindsey Par

We also have some exciting news: The Marching Woodmen will debut a brand-new look in 2025! Alumnus Ross Werner, who contributes to set and uniform design, has collaborated with Fred J. Miller Company to create a custom uniform look for our winds and percussion sections. This marks a bold departure from past designs.

As the pageantry activity continues to evolve, many programs are moving toward uniforms that are closely tied to the show's theme. The use of traditional hats and plumes has also decreased significantly. Ross is a recognized leader in the field, and we're thrilled to debut his innovative designs for our 2025 season.

We understand this is a non-traditional look, but we believe it offers our students the best opportunity for competitive success. We hope to see you at a performance this season! See the next pages for examples of the 2025 uniforms (grey is the drum major uniform) and our 2025 schedule!

Luke Aylsworth  
Director of Bands  
Greenwood Community Schools







## Greenwood Marching Woodmen 2025 Schedule

9/6 – Community Preview Performance

9/13 – Pride of Paoli Invitational

9/20 – Ray Skillman Greenwood Marching Woodmen Invitational

9/27 – Avon Invitational

10/4 – Cavalcade of Champions at Center Grove HS

10/11 – ISSMA Invitational at Whiteland HS

10/18 – ISSMA Regional at Evansville Central HS

10/24 – BOA Indy Regional

10/25 – BOA Indy Regional and/or Whiteland Invitational

11/1 – ISSMA Semi-State

11/8 – ISSMA State Finals

11/13 & 11/15 – BOA Grand Nationals

## COMMUNITY PREVIEW *Performance*

Sept 6th, 2025  
Greenwood High School  
Stadium

Gates open at 2:30pm  
Greenwood performs at 3:30pm

### Admission is

Pretzels  
Cheez-Its  
Goldfish (not extra cheddar)  
Ritz Bits (peanut butter or cheese)  
Rice Krispy treats  
Fruit snacks  
Packaged cookies  
(Nutter Butters, Chips Ahoy, Oreos, etc.)  
Peanut butter cracker  
Plain animal crackers  
Granola bars





## Alumni Spotlight: Ross Werner



When I think back on my time as a member of the Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard, I'm filled with a deep sense of pride and gratitude. Greenwood is where my journey in the marching arts began, and where it continues to grow in new and meaningful ways.

I played trumpet with the Marching Woodmen and had the honor of serving as Drum Major during the 2012 and 2013 seasons. The 2013 state championship is still one of the proudest moments of my life. Not just for the trophy, but for what it represented: the commitment, the unity, and the tradition that defines this program.

My passion for drum corps began early, and I was incredibly fortunate to have mentors like Mr. John Morse, Steven Fletcher and Donald Kalugyer, who encouraged me to take a leap and audition for Phantom Regiment where I performed as a trumpet player in 2014. That experience opened new doors, and through the support of friends and colleagues, I auditioned and became a drum major for Carolina Crown where I served from 2015-2017. Standing on the podium with Crown, I never forgot where I started. The leadership, musicality, and discipline I first learned at Greenwood served as the foundation for everything that followed.

After graduating from Greenwood, I attended Butler University and earned a degree in Arts Administration with a Marketing Minor. That path led me to roles at Paige's Music and eventually to FJM, where I am now in my 6th year serving as Marketing Director. At FJM, I've had the privilege to contribute not just as a marketer, but as a graphic designer, taking part in the creative process behind printed garments, show costumes, and uniform concepts for bands across the country.

One of the most meaningful parts of my journey has been returning to Greenwood, not just as a spectator, but as a creative partner. Since 2018, when I first designed the Charlie Chaplin silhouettes, I've had the privilege of contributing to many of the program's productions. Over nearly seven years, I've been honored to design props, floors, flags and visual elements for the Marching Woodmen, Irish Guard, and Indoor Percussion ensembles. Most recently, Mr. Aylsworth and I worked closely on the 2024 fall production, collaborating on everything from the large "star" prop structures to the custom-designed FJM uniform tops.



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It's funny how small the band world really is. My seat partner at Phantom Regiment in 2014, Peter Bates, now teaches and designs drill for marching bands out of Salt Lake City, Utah. When Mr. Aylsworth began exploring creative ideas for last year's show, he mentioned needing someone with experience in light programming. I immediately thought of Peter, whose expertise in this area, particularly with indoor percussion ensembles, made him a perfect fit. He ended up consulting with Greenwood and programming all of the lighting sequences that brought last year's show to life.

When it came to designing the band's look for 2025, I'd be lying if I said that I didn't feel the weight of thousands of Marching Woodmen Alumni on my shoulders when brainstorming ideas. Designing for Greenwood is personal. I was continually asking myself, "If I were in the band right now, what would make me feel immense pride and empowerment when I put it on?" That philosophy guided our work on the newest look, which is a bold step forward, while still honoring our tradition.

The chest harkens back to the window props that will be on the field, while the printed mesh skirt was my idea of light coming in through the curtains of the Guest House. With all of the things that make what we're wearing this year tremendously different than in the past, it should not surprise you that the primary yellow across the chest and down the middle of the skirt is not an accident, but indeed, a callback to the traditional 'Marching Woodmen Yellow'. Every detail was chosen not just for aesthetic impact, but to evoke a sense of identity and purpose for the performers wearing it.

To my fellow alumni: If the new uniforms catch you by surprise, I get it. Change can feel unfamiliar, especially when we hold so many memories tied to what we wore. I still have a shadow box of my classic Greenwood uniform proudly displayed in my office! But while the look on the field may be different, the heart, tradition, and dedication behind it are very much the same. Let's celebrate the students not just for how they look, but for the incredible effort and passion they bring to every performance.

To the current members of the Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard: Although your uniforms may look different, you are part of something greater than yourselves... a legacy of excellence, tradition, and heart. As an alumnus, it fills me with pride to watch you take the field and continue the story we all share.

-Ross Werner, Class of 2013



# Through a Dad's Eyes: By Luke Aylsworth



This will be my twenty-sixth year as a band director. That happens to be the same number of years my father, John Aylsworth, was also a band director. My grandfather, grandmother, and father were all music educators. In our family, several members have either participated in or directed band for over ninety years—ninety-one years, to be exact. Many of those years included a parent directing and an Aylsworth child participating in the band. This year is no exception. However, it will be the last for the foreseeable future.

Noah, my youngest son, is a senior and will graduate in the spring of 2026. While many Aylsworths before him graduated as Blackhawks, Noah will finish his high school marching career as a proud Greenwood Woodman.

Noah started his marching career at Springs Valley Jr./Sr. High School in French Lick, Indiana. I had completed twenty years of teaching there, and when we left Orange County, Noah was just a 7th grader. We had been planning and looking forward to the 2020 marching season for some time. It would have been the only season when Noah and his brother Aidan could march together—Noah as a seventh grader and Aidan as a senior.

However, COVID had other plans, and the 2020 season was canceled. At Greenwood, the season went on with the “Chasing Rainbows” show and a few local contests. In French Lick, we canceled our season and instead focused on winter percussion, winter winds, and winter guard. Noah did get to march one season with his older brother in winter percussion, and both were members of the IPA Class A State Champion Winter Winds program we fielded that year.

That spring, I received an offer to become the new Director of Bands at Greenwood Community High School—an opportunity too good to pass up. We packed up and moved from French Lick to the big city of Greenwood.

When we arrived, we were amazed by the welcome we received from the Marching Woodmen! It was 2021, and Noah began his Greenwood journey with some pre-camp rehearsals in June. He had marched bass drum at his previous school and played synth in the winter winds ensemble. We originally intended for him to stay on synth his first year at Greenwood. However, some returning students quit the drumline, creating a need for new members. Travis, Greenwood's longtime drum instructor, asked if Noah would be interested in joining the battery. I said, “Put him where you need him.”

Little did I know that on the next break, I'd walk in to see eighth-grade Noah—all four feet of him—carrying a marching snare. The bottom head nearly touched the ground. Travis said, “I think he can do it!” I had my doubts, but Travis worked diligently to get Noah caught up and ready to join the mighty Greenwood battery. I can't thank Travis enough for taking Noah under his wing and making him feel welcome.

Noah was very upset about switching schools—it was a lot for a kid his age. We ordered him a special drum carrier designed for smaller body types, and soon he was marching with the rest of the Woodmen in the “A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Thanks” show.

From a father's perspective, I can't thank the Marching Woodmen enough for accepting Noah and welcoming him into the ensemble. He has made lifelong friends. He has learned the value of hard work and dedication. He has learned the importance of upholding tradition and ensuring it is preserved and improved for the next generation. He has developed so many skills and positive traits by being a Woodman.

It will be difficult to finish this season knowing I won't have a child in band anymore. There are so many wonderful aspects to band life. I'll miss the conversations about the season, and those early Saturday morning car rides won't be the same without a teenager snoring in the passenger seat. Most of all, I'll miss sharing my band family with my own family.

For over ninety years, band is all the Aylsworth family has known. But I know Noah will move forward in life as a better student, a better person, a better man, and a better son—because we made a move when he was in middle school. A move that led him to become a member of one of the best band programs in the nation.

Thank you, Greenwood Marching Woodmen, for helping raise our 2025–26 senior.







## **Thank You!!**

Julie Lash  
Tim Braden (New Rainbow Picture)  
Jared Klingler  
Casey Norton  
Melissa Gobel Morris  
Luke Aylsworth  
Ross Werner