

Greenwood Marching Woodmen and Irish Guard

Alumni Newsletter
The Tradition Marches On



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50 YEARS AGO



Greenwood Marching Band history was made fifty years ago when the 1976 band won the Indiana State Fair Championship. We will celebrate that championship and the ongoing legacy of Greenwood Marching Woodman and Irish Guard on September 12, 2026. Every generation of alumni have their own set of cherished memories and experiences within the Greenwood Band program. We will gather to celebrate and remember all of it! The Greenwood Band Parent Organization and the directors have worked so hard to prepare a memorable day for all of us. We are so grateful.

Thank you for giving us this very treasured gift of time -
to gather together - once more.

GREENWOOD MARCHING WOODMEN OF 1976

50th
Years

CELEBRATION
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

Greenwood Community High School
in the IMC Library
immediatly following the
Stadium performance

This reception is for alumni and their guests
please RSVP via link by September 1st, 2026

www.ghsband.org



Itinerary for September 12, 2026

Greenwood Marching Band Alumni
September 12, 2026
Community Performance- Greenwood High School
615 W. Smith Valley Road Greenwood, In. 46142

- 1:30 Report to Greenwood High School and located door 2N. This will be the main entrance to the High School. Find your name-tag or create one.
- 1:45 Tour begins of the High School- Remember to soak up all the memories this building has and snap a few photos too!
- 2:15 Tour Ends
- 2:30 Transit to the stadium- Located your VIP seats near the 50-yard line and remember "Early is on time, On time is late, and late is unacceptable."
- 2:45 Take a seat and relax but be ready for the "Give me a G-R-E-E-N-W-O-O-D" cheer and your favorite The Woodman Warm-up!
- 3:00 Performance
- 3:15 Post performance: Introduction of our Seniors, Recognition of the 1976 State Fair Champion Band and other guest speakers.
- 3:45 Exit the stadium and report to the IMC, Media Center. This is where the meal and fellowship will happen. Meal served at this time.
- 4:15 Guest speakers speak as we celebrate all that Greenwood Marching Band and Irish Guard means to us.
- 5:00 Transit back to the band room for a Watch Party. The performance of the 1976 band.
- 5:30 Dismissal

Suggestions for you:

The parking lot will be very busy. Come early to snag a great parking spot. Practice will be occurring. We have a handicap ramp at the stadium, it is located nearest the Smith Valley Road side of the stadium. The Rainbow Market will be open if you need any new merch! See the last page of this newsletter for a map of the school. Enjoy your time with us as we are forever grateful for you!

Good, Better, Best. Never Let It Rest. Until Your Good Is Better. And Your Better Is Best!

More Information...

If you have not yet registered for the September 12th Celebration, PLEASE RSVP by [CLICKING HERE](#)

If you would like to contribute to the 76 Investing in Our Legacy Donation Drive, [CLICK HERE](#)

If you would like to send a check, please mail to:

Greenwood Band Parent Organization, PO Box 903, Greenwood, IN 46142

As of this writing, \$67,213.08 has been raised through this initiative!

The Celebration Continues! A FREE Homecoming Breakfast will take place on Saturday, September 26, 2026, 9:00 – 11:00AM in the Greenwood High School Cafeteria. The 1976 Band will be honored!



Hello Woodmen!

I'd like to thank Gayla Gunn for her work on this newsletter! I love to write this letter each season. It is an exciting time for all students, staff, and parents. A new marching band season has started and we are excited to share our concept, musical selections, and uniform design.

This year, our marching band show is titled "Reimagined". We have selected music that will allow us to present familiar melodies in some new and expressive ways. We intend on pushing the creative envelope by threading Imagine by John Lennon inside of several familiar musical works. We hope our creative journey is one you will enjoy and cheer on from the stands.

Musical selections include:

- Clair De Lune by Claude Debussy
- Bad Guy by Billie Eilish
- Take Me Home Country Roads by John Denver
- Beethoven in Havana - Symphony No. 7 by Ludwig Van Beethoven
- Imagine by John Lennon

Directors: Luke Aylsworth, Joel Matthews, and Eric Zielsdorf

Staff: Daniel Wiles, Eric Berger, Pam Wishmeyer, Curt Koehler, Matt Hahn, Jordan Lalama, Travis Beck, Rachel Martin, Madeline Cregar, Esther Houston, Jackie Porter, Willow Karlin, Breanna Abbey, Ross Werner, Peter Bates, Lisa Knartzer, Simon Harmon, Aaron Roth, Jacob Margheim, Ari Lee, Alex Flora, Noah Aylsworth.

Drum Majors: Lindsey Par and Annie Brinker

👉 [CLICK HERE TO SEE the 2026 uniform](#) - We understand this is a non-traditional look, but we believe it offers our students the best opportunity for competitive success. This particular uniform was designed by Greenwood Marching Woodmen alumnus, Ross Werner. The winds and percussion uniforms are a "Reimagined" version of a familiar Greenwood uniform from the past.

We hope to see you at a performance this season! See the schedule on the next page!



Luke Aylsworth
Director of Bands
Greenwood Community Schools



Greenwood Marching Woodmen 2026 Schedule

- 9/12 – Community Preview Performance
- 9/19 – Ray Skillman Greenwood Marching Woodmen Invitational
- 9/26 – Zionsville Invitational
- 10/3 – Cavalcade of Champions at Center Grove HS
- 10/16 – BOA Indy Regional
- 10/17 – BOA Indy Regional
- 10/20 – ISSMA Regional at Center Grove HS
- 10/24 – ISSMA Semi-State
- 10/31 – MSBO West Clermont Invitational
- 11/7 – ISSMA State Finals
- 11/12 & 11/14 – BOA Grand Nationals

Alumni Spotlight: Kurt Weimer



What an incredible milestone being celebrated this fall: the 50th anniversary of the Greenwood Marching Band winning the 1976 Indiana State Fair Band Day contest. Gayla asked if I would write something in the alumni spotlight this month, and I can't think of anything more fitting than to pay tribute to how the success of that day had so many ripple effects, one that often gets tied to first place trophies, but is so much more than that.

I am currently the director of operations at a K-8 school for the arts. Prior to that I was a band and orchestra director for 25 years in Evansville and Elkhart. My wife, Kristine was an elementary music teacher for a couple decades. She was in the Concord Band, a perennial competitor of Greenwood over the years. It was fun to have both of our band directors (Jon Sutton and Max Jones) and their spouses (Peg and Diane) at our wedding, and both were couples that also taught band and general

music - it was a pretty common thing! I have enjoyed having our own kids in band with me and glad they got to have the band experience. My son Ben, a percussionist, and daughter Elizabeth, a clarinet player and Drum Major.

I grew up in the "Suburban Acres" neighborhood - two miles north of the high school. Like most kids in the '70's on a Saturday morning, I grabbed my bowl of cereal, and parked in front of the TV to watch at least 3 hours of cartoons. In the background - inevitably - was this distant rhythmic sound. I asked my sister (Dawn, class of 79) at one point what it was: "that's the marching band." It was like a subliminal message that was repeated, over and over, year after year. The sound of those drums calling to future band members all over town. I remember the buzz in the house as a 5 year old as the paper reported the Indiana State Fair champion band was from my hometown... My journey started that very same year at Southwest elementary.

I loved music class with Mrs. Zimmer. I remember when her son, Jack, came in to demonstrate the tuba - an instrument I'd eventually play. It wasn't many years later that Jack died while hiking at McCormicks Creek park. That was the first time I was faced with the reality that a long life is not guaranteed. When Mrs. Zimmer finally came back to the classroom, I felt so sad for her. No one knew what to say. But she got behind that piano, and music made it just a little easier. A couple years later, when it was time to start thinking about "joining band," I remember going up to her declaring my intent to play in the band. "Kurt, that takes an awful lot of dedication - I'm not sure it's for you." Nowadays, you wouldn't say that to a kid, but back then, it's exactly the ultimatum a kid like me needed. "I'll prove her wrong."

And much to Mr. Rice's dismay, I would prove her RIGHT for the next three years...

I put down three choices: trumpet, drums (to make mom happy - she really wanted me to play drums), and oboe. At the instrument try-out night I walked into the Greenwood band room for the first time, and was greeted by a bunch of guys with mustaches... and... trumpet it was. Sorry, mom. No drummer in the family (yet.) Or oboe. I have a feeling they knew oboe was not a wise choice - better give this kid something he can't break too easily. So, off to summer band to learn to play this thing. It was a good thing, because basketball sure wasn't panning out for me.

"Good morning. Open your cases," says one of the mustache guys. This one is "Mr. Sutton." I could at least tell them apart. Fields had the mustache and beard, Rice had the wizard goatee, and Sutton, just the mustache - and a 7-Eleven cup of coffee at all times.

And away we go...

I was not good at all and had the attention span of a gnat. But once a year, the TV cart with the VCR would get rolled into the band room, and they would play a videotape of the marching band. "The Maaaarching Woooddmen, from Greenwood, Indiana!" Pretty cool.

Well, it was spring of my 8th grade year and time to decide whether to continue on to high school band with an audition. "See if you can play this," Says Mr. Sutton as he places a short piece of music on a stand:

Third trumpet part, Carnival Overture, Saint Saens.

Are you kidding me? I've never seen so many notes and some of them are above the staff! Oh, and I just got braces. Thppt! Berrrrt! How was that? I think I got a couple notes right. I sign on the dotted line, join the Marching Woodmen, and go through all that is "training" for a Freshman band member.

Fast forward to our first football game. It's time to suit up. And the uniforms are brand new and really bright yellow. We are in front of the school ready to line up for pregame. The drum majors are standing together next to one of the light posts. I worked up the courage to ask, "How do you become a Drum Major?" And with no judgement of this lowly, gangly, geeky freshman, Jeff Van Valer, occupant of the coolest castle-looking house on "roller coaster road," proceeds to tell me the process and give me encouragement with no prejudice in his voice. Like he truly believed it was possible for anyone - including me - who really wanted the job to get it. I will never forget that.

We've had our first few contests and now it's time for the "band trip" and we're going to Murray, Kentucky. We sleep on the floor. It's a strange rubberized basketball court. Can't get to sleep. It's hot and kids are being idiots. Well... I may be one of those idiots.

Time to get up!

Alumni Spotlight: Kurt Weimer

"Get your instruments! Section leaders... come get the warm-up."

Whatever the energy level of this group was, it just suddenly doubled. The older kids are buzzing. What is on this little slip of paper that Brian Sizemore is passing out?

Trpt 3 Woodmen Warm-Up arr. Sweeney

A bunch of whole notes. And a little action at the end. At least it's not the mellophone part. Poor guys hold the same stinkin' note almost until the end. Wait... We are memorizing this, too? For today?!? This looks like it's been around for a while. Any chance we could have gotten this a little sooner?

Ah... I see... when you play it together, it's pretty and you hear "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

Time for the prelims show. It's raining. You've got to be kidding me. We do this in the rain, too? Whoa. This place is big. And the press box is... WAY. UP. THERE.

We face the backfield and play the warmup. The rain stopped. A rainbow appears. Are you kidding me? (...it really happened). I think my blood just turned GREEN! Amazing show. This might just be fun. We get to perform at the night show.

A couple weeks later it's State Finals at the very new Hoosier Dome. I've been here several times for the Colts games, where my entertainment has come not from the games but in my sometimes successful attempt to land a paper airplane onto the field during a play. Because the Colts aren't good... not one bit. But I've not gone through these enormous Big Blue Doors before. I played quite a few more notes than my audition of Carnival Overture, learned to swing to "Ole' Man River," and "Poet and Peasant" by von Suppe is now in my repertoire. By golly, I was in step 99% of the time, too. We earn fourth place and tie with this other band "Northview." Never heard of them. Must be pretty good...

Over the next two years we set new standards (literally) for what a high school marching band can do. Mr. Sutton assembled a team of teachers and designers that challenged everyone. We've won Greenwood's first ISSMA State Championship in 1986 - what a cool nod to ten years prior. The 1987 Championship show was so standard-setting in design and performance it was shown in judging clinics for several years. Everyone who drives down US31 is reminded of how good we are with Mr. Jackson's (original) sign.

By my junior year I'm enrolled in every band class. I even branched out and learned the tuba, an instrument I'd end up playing far better than the trumpet. I also have one period as an AV assistant for Mr. Mellencamp. That's where my love of Greenwood Band history came from. I found all the old reel-to-reel videos and 16mm films from the 70's and watched them over and over. I even transferred them over to video so I could watch them at home and share with others. Those bands were SO good.



By my senior year I finally made Drum Major. I had to really prove myself. Over and over. But I loved conducting the Greenwood Marching Band. What an honor. I remember receiving a very meaningful letter of encouragement from former drum major Eric Kincaid before state finals. Our senior year Wind Ensemble was the first Greenwood band to make ISSMA Concert State Finals. Later, as a band director I'd come to realize what a big deal that was.

The "Rainbow Connection" is one of the more interesting aspects of my life. I wanted to write drill for marching bands so I was fortunate that Matt James, who had been writing the drill for Greenwood since 1985 had taken the job as assistant band director at Greenwood just after I had graduated, and I was able to apprentice with him and also learn from Greg Hagen, color guard director for several years in the 80's and 90's. Jimmy Haskell hired me right out of high school to work his North Montgomery

band camp. I started writing more drill - one was Franklin Central where I worked with Greenwood alum Danny Fyffe on their State Fair Championship shows. Kim Fillingim (Greenwood assistant band director in 78 and 79) had reached out to Dan Rice to ask for anyone who was available to write the drill for Reitz High School in Evansville, and I got the job. Not only that, I ended up becoming the assistant band director. After three years I took the head director job and had the great fortune of hiring John Morse (future Greenwood band director) as my assistant, although we really approached the job as co-directors. Working with John was truly one of the highlights of my career. One of the years (because of a piece of music they premiered) we invited UNLV band director Tom Leslie (Greenwood band director from 76-78) to work with the band for a couple days. And of course we'd run into Herman Knoll and Mike Sweeney at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. It really is crazy all the connections to the Greenwood Band that have shaped my path and likely countless others!

There is no question that my 7 years in the Greenwood Band program had a tremendous influence in every aspect of my life. Early is on time, work smart AND hard, be organized, leave places cleaner than you found them, details matter, be humble in your success. It also prepared me for college band at Ball State and my season with the Star of Indiana Drum and Bugle Corps. We had such great teachers and mentors in Mr. Sutton, Mr. Rice, Mr. Barmore, Mr. Hagen, Ms. Smith ("Wish"), Mr. Fyffe, and Mr. Herrick. It is great to see the tradition of excellence continuing with Mr. Aylsworth and his team. Good luck this season!





Thank You!!

Julie Lash
Luke Aylsworth
Joel Matthews
Eric Zielsdorf
Casey Norton
Jamie Oeffinger
Wendy Weber
Charlene Dudenhoeffer
Julie Weaver
Jared Klingler
Kurt Weimer

First Floor **Greenwood High School**

