

# CATAWISSA MILITARY BAND

October 2005

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 5

### Knoebel's Rides and Circular Logic

by Lisa Chernesky  
Used by permission.

It was Jean Piaget (1896-1980), the French-Swiss psychologist who developed the theory of mind-body dualism. Mind-body dualism is the concept that the physical and mental self are separate entities. This concept, along with many others, slipped into my subconscious to stay dormant for more than twenty years.

Who would think that a simple trip to Knoebel's Amusement Park would reawaken those Psych 101 theories?

My sister invited me to join her family at Knoebel's one Saturday afternoon. My 12 year-old niece, Andrea, is a lot like me in that she will ride anything. I'll ride almost anything. I say "almost" because if it "double spins" I get sick. I can handle any twisting, turning, upside-down roller coaster, but the tea cups make me ill for the rest of the day.

After going on some family-friendly rides together, we split up. Andrea and I hit the roller coasters and some of the rougher rides, while my sister took five year-old Billy to the kiddie section.

We were coming from the Antique Cars when I spotted the Roundup. Now it has been 25 years since I last rode this ride at the Bloomsburg Fair.

**Continued on page three**

### The Irish Pennywhistle

by Neil Kepner

*Editor's Note: The following was furnished by the author. Used by permission.*

I began my musicianship in 1947, at age 13, with an old alto saxophone. The tenor, baritone, and soprano saxophones followed and I was soon playing with practically every community band throughout the area. After collecting various string instruments, and harmonicas, leading a 10 piece German Band, and 30 years playing bass guitar and tenor sax in a Top-40 group, I accidentally discovered the Irish pennywhistle.

In 1988 my hometown of Berwick began an exchange program with Berwick upon Tweed, England. At that time, my daughter Jennifer was a member of the Berwick High School Band and played with the Catawissa Military Band. The exchange program began with the high school band traveling to England, along with a contingent of adults. My wife and I were a part of this trip. Browsing through the local music store, I came upon this little, six holed, whistle. The fact that it was selling for the equivalent of \$7.00 (American) was an incentive to immediately purchase one. An even larger bonus came when I discovered that the fingering is practically the same as a saxophone.

Once I began to play the whistle, I immediately recognized the sound that is found in most Celtic folk bands. I purchased several books of Celtic music that have grown into a library of hundreds of the folk tunes performed throughout England (Northumberland), Ireland and Scotland.

During my seven trips to Berwick upon Tweed, I met, played with, and formed lasting friendships with musicians from two local folk bands. It is a challenge to play with these people, as they have all the tunes memorized, and I have to sight read ... at full speed!

This past April, I traveled to Berwick upon Tweed once again. Just prior to departure, I was pleasantly surprised to find that nine of my friends had set up a five day trip to Haan, Germany, and that I was to be the 10th member of the band.

Upon my arrival in Edinburgh, Scotland, I was picked up by a friend,  
**Continued on page three**

### Fall Concert

Sunday, December 4, 2005  
2:00 p.m.

Christ United Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Catawissa

No Admission Charge

## Coming Events

Nov. 7, 6:30 p.m. Dinner and a Story. Stories about dining out and food with Anne Cosper at the Bloomsburg Public Library. For good listeners 3 - 8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Nov. 6, The Catawissa Military Band will be performing for part of the Benton Veteran's Day Ceremony. Benton High School Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. Free admission.

Nov. 13, Touch of Brass will perform for a Night of Christian Music at 7:00 p.m., First Baptist Church, Front Street, Berwick. There will be a free-will offering.

Nov. 14, 7:00 p.m., Touch of Brass at Hurricane Relief Benefit sponsored by the Women's Christian Fellowship Outreach Ministry at the Albright United Methodist Church, Nescopeck.

Nov. 26, Holiday music with Touch of Brass at the BTE Treefest 3:30 p.m., Caldwell Consistory, Market Square, Bloomsburg. Three dollar admission to Treefest and concert.

## THANK YOU

The Catawissa Military Band wishes to thank those members who participated in the recent Mid-Penn Band Festival. The Military Band's sixteen players represented the second largest contingent from area bands. Special thanks are given to Frank Schmidt for conducting the Catawissa Military Band segment, and to Warren Kline for supervising the stage set up.



Submissions or comments may be sent to the Editor at [delta2@ptd.net](mailto:delta2@ptd.net) or Stevan Galbreath at [sagalbreath@hotmail.com](mailto:sagalbreath@hotmail.com).

Written material may be given to Stevan Galbreath.

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# From the Archives: The Early Catawissa Halloween Parade

By Stevan Galbreath

The Catawissa Halloween Parade is counted among the oldest continuous events of its type in the state. The first Catawissa Halloween celebration was held in 1907. From newspaper accounts in both *The Morning Press* (Bloomsburg, Pa.) and the *Catawissa News-Item*, it was more on the order of a block party or street fair than a traditional parade. However, at one point in the evening, the Military Band did play while costumed marchers paraded past a judging stand. There is no record of such an event being held in either 1908 or 1909.

In the Military Band minutes, there is an entry for 1910 authorizing an October "Mummers Parade" in Catawissa. It is accompanied by a pencil notation in the handwriting of Secretary Charles Cleaver stating that it was the first Halloween Parade. While this was apparently the earliest parade sponsored by the Military Band, Charlie Fegley (the last surviving member of the Catawissa Boys Band) believed that he had played in the first Halloween Parade. He said the parade was small -- just the band leading a group of costumed kids around town. Since Fegley did not join the Military Band until 1914, it would have to have been with the Boys Band and before 1910 (probably 1909).

The Military Band sponsored the parade until financial and personnel problems connected with the 1926 closing of the railroad shops made it impossible to continue. A committee of businessmen took over the following year with several band officers serving in an advisory capacity. Over the years, there have been many changes in the composition of the committee, but Catawissa remains the premier Halloween Parade in the region.

## NOTES

It is with regret that on October 4th we noted the passing of Honorary Member James Erdman. A D♭ piccolo player, Jim joined the band in 1932 under the arrangement with the high school to accept instrumental students (there was no high school band at the time). The band's senior surviving member, he served as secretary from 1967 to 1976, and retired from active playing in 1982. The band extends its condolences to the family.

Band members and family are invited to the band hall for refreshments following the Catawissa Halloween Parade.

Due to several requests, the CMB Newsletter will be made available on a subscription basis to non-band members who make a donation to the band. The donation will be used to cover printing and mailing costs. Contact Stevan Galbreath, manager, for information.

## DID YOU KNOW

A candidate for the title of oldest band in the United States is the Salem Band of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. It was organized in the Salem Moravian community as a trombone choir in 1784 and converted to a brass band sometime around 1835. The group gained its greatest fame as the band of the 26th North Carolina Regiment during the Civil War. In addition to performing, they served as medical attendants in several major battles (including Gettysburg) before being captured late in the war. The war diary of bass player Julius Leinbach is a valued primary source on the experiences of Civil War bandsmen. After the war, the Moravian community helped rebuild the band. It is still performing as a concert organization today.

Stevan Galbreath

Visit the Catawissa Military Band Website at:  
[www.geocities.com/Broadway/Orchestra/6422](http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Orchestra/6422)

# Harry Shuman: A Legacy of Teaching and Performing

by Anne Cospser

*Note: On a snowy day in March, Harry Shuman was generous enough to welcome Steve (Galbreath) and me to his home and share his stories.*

*Harry Shuman has lived an interesting and full life of the sort that most of us can only imagine. We thank Mr. Shuman for his time and stories.*

*Harry Shuman's story continues with his vocal group changing their name to the Skylarks when they joined the Jimmy Dorsey big band in 1947. Conclusion of the series.*

When Harry Shuman was younger, the Dorsey brothers, Jimmy (saxophone-clarinet) and Tommy (trombone) were starting to build a following. Originally from Shenandoah, PA, the Dorseys toured the coal region. The circuit included their hometown, Shenandoah, Mahanoy City, and Shamokin. Shuman recalled listening to the Dorseys' radio programs on a crystal set earphone.

As a member of the Skylarks, Shuman spent a year touring with Jimmy Dorsey. During that year they recorded several songs with Dorsey, including *Three O'Clock in the Morning*. Shuman describes Dorsey as "quiet" and "easy to work with."

The Skylarks were on the same bill as the Will Madsen Trio, featuring a then unknown Sammy Davis, Jr. Davis, talented and friendly, would enter the dressing room and soon have everyone laughing at his improvised skits. Shuman spoke fondly of the talented entertainer, calling Davis an "innovator."

The tour concluded in December of 1947. Family commitments made touring less attractive and Shuman left the group at the end of the year. While Shuman returned to Wayne State University, founder George Becker and the others continued touring and performing.

In the early 1950s Shuman began a career as a music teacher in the Detroit School District. He spent 37 years as a teacher, starting with elementary school and ending at the



Harry Shuman, age 86, rehearsing with the Catawissa Military Band, March 2005.

Keettering High School.

Although Shuman has many fond memories from his years teaching, of special importance is a letter he received from student Vincent Bryson. In the letter Bryson thanks his former teacher for all the things that he taught him, not just music. Currently working in California with the Ronald McDonald House Charities, Bryson, during the 1950s, was awarded a full scholarship to The Paris Conservatory of Music and Dance. While it is still difficult for foreigners to secure admission to the Conservatory, it was even rarer for an African-American.

WVIA's polka show was the catalyst for reconnecting Shuman with another former student after a more than 40 year separation. An elementary school student of Shuman's, Gaylord Klancnik, polka band leader and accordionist, is considered to be "Michigan's Polka King." When Shuman saw Klancnik on television he contacted the band leader and they renewed their friendship.

Shuman spent seven years during the 1950s with the Detroit Concert Band. Business like and a perfectionist, director Leonard Smith expected 100% from his players. The Detroit Concert Band was union and mostly comprised of area music teachers.

Shuman didn't make the band when he auditioned, but was surprised to later

receive a call from Smith asking if he was "keeping up with [that] instrument?"

Smith's Band was featured in a British documentary about the life of John Philip Sousa. The Detroit Concert Band ventured into film again when they portrayed Sousa's Band in *Stars and Stripes Forever*. Premiering in 1954, *Stars and Stripes Forever* starred Clifton Webb, Robert Wagner and Debra Paget. The film was a commercial success.

Shuman recalls with amusement how the musicians were required to do "stunt work." While filming a scene portraying a collapsed band stand, the players were asked to lean sideways as if they were falling.

Under the direction of Leonard Smith, the Detroit Concert Band went on to make the definitive recordings of all 136 published Sousa marches. While Shuman played on most of the recordings, it was his son Jeff, a trumpet player, who joined the band and participated in all the Sousa sessions.

In 2000, Shuman's former group, the Skylarks were recognized by the Vocal Group Hall of Fame and Museum with an induction into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame.

Located in Sharon, PA, the Vocal Group Hall of Fame and Museum is "Dedicated to honor the Greatest Vocal Groups in the World". Other 2000 inductees included The Flamingos, The Kingston Trio, Ben E. King and the Drifters, and Dion and the Belmonts.

Shuman began his involvement with the Catawissa Military Band while in high school. He credits his mentors, fellow trombonist Luther Reese, of the vaudeville team Cleaver and Reese, and director Charles E. Smith, for encouraging his musical talent.

After a 50 year absence Shuman returned to the Catawissa Military Band. He now plays string bass and participates in the organization's year round rehearsals and concert performances. Welcome back, Harry!

## **Knoebel's Rides Cont.**

Shortly after I gave up fair rides the Roundup disappeared from Reithoffer's line-up.

Maybe it was the cheesy '80's music we sang in the car, or the fond memories the ride evoked when I saw it, but something prompted me to get on it. While my sister and Billy watched from a bench across the walkway, Andrea and I got into the short line to wait our turn.

The premise of the Roundup is centripetal force. Riders stand along the interior wall of a cylinder, facing center. The ride spins in a counter-clockwise motion until the riders "adhere" to the wall. Once a certain speed is reached it lifts into a vertical position. As the ride lifted, I began second guessing my decision to get on it. I felt my internal organs shift from side to side. Thinking that I was nauseous from a constantly moving focal point, I closed my eyes for relief. It was at this moment that I recalled mind-body dualism.

My brain was already in youth mode from the '80's music, and spending the day with children made me feel even younger. My body's physical reaction to the ride quickly reminded me that I am approaching my fourth decade.

"What were you thinking!" my body screamed to my brain. For a brief, fleeting moment I believed mind-body dualism was true. That thought was immediately overtaken by another, "Let me off!"

Rather than admit I was "getting old", I told my sister that I was sick from riding on an empty stomach. We ate supper and later rode the train, a ride I can handle. It makes a big circle. A very big circle....

## **Pennywhistle Cont.**

and transported to Berwick upon Tweed, 60 miles away. The next morning, at 5:00 a.m., we drove back across Scotland to Prestwick and flew to Dusseldorf, Germany. We were then driven to the city of Haan, where we spent the next five days performing in parks and restaurants before finally playing in a large auditorium in front of approximately 300 people. The evening's program consisted of performances by the local male chorus, a small group of vocalists from Berwick upon Tweed, Celtic dancers and a 5 piece bag pipe band. The Celtic dancers and bagpipe band were from Germany.

Our group, which I was honored to have named "Both Sides Now", because of the connections from both sides of the Atlantic, consisted of piano, accordian, banjo, guitar, a bohran (Irish drum), two fiddles, two pennywhistles, and a caller who led the dances.

During one of their visits to America, we took the English contingent to Niagara Falls for a two day visit. On the first night, approximately 12 of us ended up in one of the motel rooms where we played music until the management emphatically told us it was time to go to bed. After the visit was over and the English had returned home, I composed a Scottish type tune and named it *Niagara Nights*, in remembrance of the great time we had during the visit. I sent the music over to England and received some favorable comments.

Can you imagine my shock when I learned that *Niagara Nights* was to be part of the performance in Germany? The night of the concert, they announced that I was the composer, and also the only "American" in the place. It was a real high to hear my little tune performed by a 10 piece Celtic group thousands of miles from home in another country.

When we returned to England, I spent the next two weeks traveling with the Jim Smith family to the south of England. Just recently, the Smith family spent 17 days with us in Berwick. During the visit, I arranged for three of us (harmonica, pennywhistle, and bohran) to play a few numbers for the Jerseytown Tavern's Bluegrass Night. To our amazement, we were a hit and played seven tunes instead of the two that were originally scheduled.

It amazes me to think of all the money I have spent on expensive instruments and then realize how much I accomplished by purchasing a \$7.00 pennywhistle.

The exchange program that began in 1988 has blossomed into an alternating, every two year exchange between the two communities, with the English group coming over again next year.

As of this writing, I am looking forward to several more exchange visits for as long as God is willing and my health holds out.

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*Your tax deductible contributions are gratefully accepted by the  
Catawissa Military Band. Donations may be sent to:*

*Catawissa Military Band*

*115 S. Berger Ave.*

*Catawissa, PA 17820*

*Thank you for your continued support.*

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