

December 10, 2010

Dear Trojan Band students and band community,

The culminating portion of this year's marching band season could not have been better. After an extremely hot early marching band season, the 275-member Marching Trojan Band rebounded from the loss time with a splendid product at the end of the season. Our "... for the Common Man" marching band show finally settled in around mid-October and proved to be one of our better presentations in years. The extreme heat coupled with nearly 100 first-year members proved quite trying at times but in the end, we matured into a great band. Successful performances at the Cobb County Exhibition, Sprayberry, Collins Hill and at the Bands of America Atlanta Regional in the Georgia Dome stabilized our position as, yet again, one of the southeastern region's best marching bands.

As we turned our attention to the parade season, the students were ready to go!! We were excited to see the local media embrace the band once again. One commentator even referred to us as, "our Lassiter Band." We'd like to offer our thanks to 11Alive TV, FOX 5 TV and to the AJC for their outstanding coverage of our events before and after Macy's. Their viewership is wide reaching and we now have hundreds of thousands of new supporters and admirers. We also participated in the Marietta Veteran's Day Parade and in the Children's Healthcare Parade in Downtown Atlanta. The Children's Parade was viewed by over a quarter of a million Atlantans in person and was televised locally by WSB-TV. Through these events, the band members have gained a different perspective of a broader Metro Atlanta community, especially of the young children along the parade route.

The events surrounding our trip to NYC and participation in the Macy's Parade couldn't have been better. To most involved, the trip was picture perfect. The tours and experiences of the "Big Apple" were varied and had something for everyone. From our visits to Times Square, to seeing "Lady Liberty" up close and personal, walking through Central Park, visiting Ground Zero, attending the theater, to the wonderful Rockettes show at Radio City, the students appeared to enjoy every minute of the world's greatest city. The Thanksgiving's Day Parade was even better than advertised. Thanks to our special rehearsals at White Water in Marietta and Giants Stadium in NYC we were expertly prepared for the parade. It was extremely exciting to witness 3.5 million well-wishers along the parade route while realizing another 65 million viewers were watching at home. The band performed splendidly while weaving themselves through the cavernous skyscrapers along the route.

Thanksgiving Dinner at our home hotel for 560 of our best friends was a great evening. Our Drum Majors and Band President Suter, and assistant band directors Borchert and Thompson did special remembrances to highlight the evening. The day was a fulfilling one and it was great to share in a wonderful dinner with so many extended families.

We'd like to offer our sincere thanks to our principal Dr. Richie and his wife Mrs. Dr. Richie (yes, she's a PH.D too) for joining our chaperons and staff for the entire trip, including marching in the parade. Dr. Richie even rode the bus with the band to NYC. You've got to see the beautiful oil painting Mrs. Richie presented to the band in appreciation of her families experiences in NYC. She painted the 4 ½ foot painting in one day!! Thanks also go out to Cliff Shuart, Tim Sumner and his Roadies for providing excellent support all season, climaxing with the beautiful new design of our band truck. We'd like to offer a special debt of gratitude to Tim Sumner (and Becky) and Frank Sturgill for sacrificing the bodies and sleep to drive our band truck 18 hours to New York. That is volunteerism at its finest and they should be commended for doing so. Band booster presidents Sherry Nikodem and Renee Plumley did a wonderful job of assisting with the planning of the trip and provided for every student interested in going on the trip to be able to travel with us. Thanks to Lassiter football coaches Irwin and Brown and several football players for assisting in setting up the LBBA Christmas Lot in our absence. We are overjoyed to have such high character, honor, and loyalty to LHS, as demonstrated by the new coaching staff. We are proud of your state playoff season.

Footage of the NBC-TV telecast of the band is currently available on YouTube. We are trying to get a copy from our local NBC affiliate. Group Photos, the official photographer of the parade, has a series of great photographs and DVD's at: <http://www.groupphotos.com/t/categories/parades/thanksgiving-day/20> We are working to get a photo montage of behind the scenes memories from our personal images not available to most in our community. We will try to get this to you before the holidays.

As we move into the concert portion of our year and beyond, we will all have fond memories of the fall of 2010.

Happy Holidays,

Alfred I. Watkins