

# Mary Persons High School Band Program



300 Montpelier Avenue  
Mr. Stephen Braswell  
Associate Band Director

Forsyth, Ga. 31029  
Mr. Eric Thompson  
Director of Bands

Phone (478)994-2812  
Ms. Melissa Pettinger  
Associate Band Director



2.23.15

## *NOTES from the Director* *Preparing for the Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade*

### WHAT IS "BAND?"

The Mary Persons High School Band Program is a co-curricular and extra-curricular program designed to engage students in instrumental performing arts. Concert and marching bands provide opportunities for students to participate during the school day as well as be a part of an exciting extra-curricular program. This edition of "NOTES from the Director" will hopefully answer frequently asked questions regarding participation in the Mary Person High School Band Program.

### WHO ARE THE DIRECTORS?

**Mr. Eric Thompson** is in his fifth year in education and second year as Director of Bands at Mary Persons High School. Mr. Thompson began teaching at Treutlen Middle & High School in 2010. As director of the Treutlen's bands, he increased student participation by 25%. While at TMHS, Mr. Thompson's bands scored superior ratings, received best in class at the Jeff Davis Yellow Jacket Marching Band Invitational, and 30% of his band made and attended district honor band. The TMHS Band travelled and performed at Universal Studios, Six Flags over Georgia, and Wild Adventures Theme Parks.

Mr. Thompson has been director of Bands of Monroe county Schools since 2013. Under the direction of Mr. Thompson the band program has increased by 55%, has had an increasing number of students attend District and All-State Honor Band, expanded the Booster organization to include grades 4-12<sup>th</sup> grade band, and has been instrumental in the design and purchasing of new uniforms. Mr. Thompson is also an active member of the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA), National Band Association (NBA), International Trumpet Guild, PAGE, and a member of Phi Mu Alpha, the men's national music fraternity.

Before becoming the Director of Bands in Treutlen County, Mr. Thompson attended and received his Bachelors of Music Education degree from the University of Georgia. While at UGA his most notable accomplishments were being principal trumpet of the Symphonic Band, principal trumpet of the Wind Symphony, trumpet soloist with the Redcoat Marching Band, being the featured trumpet soloist at Midfest, traveling abroad to China for a 15 day performance tour, and studying under the world renown trumpet player, Fred Mills.

Mr. Thompson is originally from Macon, Georgia and appreciates all of the love and support he has received since coming back to central Georgia. He is proud to be part of Monroe County Schools Band family.

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**Ms. Melissa Pettinger** has been the Director of Middle School Bands for the Monroe County School District and Associate Director of Mary Persons since 2014. Previously, Ms. Pettinger served as director of bands at Miller Fine Arts Middle School in Macon, GA.

Ms. Pettinger graduated Summa Cum Laude from The Florida State University with a degree in Music Education. While at Florida State, she concentrated on saxophone studying under Mr. Patrick Meighan, and participated in several ensembles including Symphonic Band, Marching Chiefs, Saxophone Orchestra, Seminole Swing Machine, Campus String Orchestra, Choral Union, and Mas N Steel. As an active member of the College of Music, Ms. Pettinger participated in Sigma Alpha Iota Professional Music Fraternity and the College of Music Board of Advisors. Today, Ms. Pettinger remains a strong advocate for and active member of the music education field as a member of Professional Association of Georgia Educators, Georgia Music Educators Association, National Association for Music Educators, and Pi Kappa Lambda Music Honor Society.

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**Mr. Stephen Braswell** is finishing his first year as the elementary school band director and Mary Persons High School Associate Director. He graduated from the Shiloh High School in Snellville, Georgia in 2006 where he studied tuba under Andrew VanDevender and Dion Muldrow. After graduating from Shiloh High School, Mr. Braswell attended Gainesville State College. While at Gainesville State College, Mr. Braswell performed in many ensembles including the Gainesville State Symphonic Band, Tuba Ensemble, Tuba Quartet, Brass Ensemble, Brass Quintet, and Trombone Ensemble. While at Gainesville, Mr. Braswell studied tuba, trombone, and euphonium under Don Strand. Once completing two years at Gainesville, Mr. Braswell attended the University of Georgia where he performed in numerous ensembles including the University of Georgia Wind Symphony under director Gregg Gausline, the University of Georgia Redcoat Band, the UGA Tuba Ensemble, and a UGA tuba quartet. Mr. Braswell studied tuba under David Zerkel and Brenard Flythe at the University of Georgia, and graduated from UGA with a Bachelors Degree in Music Education in 2011. Mr. Braswell has performed numerous recitals, taught band camps at over nine different high schools, performed with the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Dekalb Symphony Orchestra.

### **HOW WILL DIRECTORS MAKE DECISIONS?**

The goal of all decisions made by either the director or assistant director will be to meet the needs of Monroe County Schools' students in an effort to ensure a high quality music program. Each decision must be made with the understanding that individual issues have a potential impact on the entire band during a performance. As decisions are made, know each decision must be made with the understanding that each student's issue may be individual but the decision must be able to be applied to any other student who has a similar situation arise.

### **CAN I PARTICIPATE IN BAND AS A CLASS AND SPORTS?**

**Yes.** Students can participate in both athletics and band with careful planning and coordination of practice schedules. Specifically, playing a sport and being in band as a CLASS during the school day should never be a conflict. Most conflicts arise between required after-school rehearsals for marching band and sports. In the spring, both concert and symphonic bands rehearse in sectional and full band formats. Students and parents should provide at minimum a 48 hour notice of a conflict so a resolution/compromise can be sought.

### **CAN I DO MARCHING BAND AND SPORTS?**

**Yes.** If there is a conflict between a particular fall sport and marching band, parents and the student musician should contact the director to arrange a time to discuss the situation and possible solutions. As students prepare for life after high school, having a high quality academic resume mixed with fine arts and sports is the perfect trifecta for college acceptance. If you will work with us, we will work with you!

### **IS MARCHING BAND MANDATORY?**

**No.** Marching band is not mandatory, but is one of the most exciting extra-curricular programs you can be a part of while in high school and even college. The marching band is the most visual aspect of the Mary Persons High School Band Program in the community. The marching band is a performing extension of MPHS. Members of the marching band demonstrate pride in their high school just as student athletes who participate in sporting events. *The marching band supports the football team but it also competes at competitions, marches in parades, and performs at various other events as requested.* Marching band teaches skills that are essential for success in not only band, but life. Time-management, commitment, hard work, team-building and determination are skills taught daily. You must be in marching band to attend our spring trip

### **I WANT TO BE IN MARCHING BAND...DO I HAVE TO GO TO BAND CAMP?**

**Yes.** Missing band camp is like missing 4 weeks of after school marching band rehearsal! How so? In one day of band camp, students will accomplish the same amount of work practicing the half-time and competition show as in a full week of marching band rehearsal once school has started. The band does not have extra instrumentalist/marchers sitting in the stands waiting or prepared to take the place of a student who misses practice or a performance. If a student is missing, sound quality is compromised and there is a hole in the marching formation. Students are expected to be present for practice in order to perfect marching and playing skills. Fellow band members need you present because you are an integral part of the production

### Is Band camp hard?

If you mean, will it be tiring? Absolutely! If you mean, will you be lost or unable to do what everyone else is doing? NO! Last year there were 8<sup>th</sup> graders just like you who thought they'd be lost or unable to march, march and play an instrument, or march, play an instrument, and memorize the music. Now, they're "pros" at it! Some have gone on to make things like district honor band.

Band camp is not just marching all day. A great deal of our time is spent becoming a "family". Yes, a significant part of our time will be spent practicing the music and marching but there is also time for you to socialize with your friends. Indoor musical rehearsals are held to minimize our time out in the extreme heat. We will have theme days, water games, and other fun activities to break up long practice days. You will work hard during band camp but you will also have a great time creating memories of your time in high school that will be priceless.

### WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR MARCHING BAND?

There are basically two divisions of time for rehearsal for the marching band: Summertime (various camps as listed below) and after-school rehearsals once school starts in mid-August. Below is a chart that explains the summertime commitment. Once school resumes in the August, the practice schedule is consistent. The after school schedule is also listed below in the second chart.

### MARCHING BAND (MB) PRACTICE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2014

Date	Event	Who is involved
June 8, 2015	Drumline, Pit, and Trumpets Spring Camp 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Trumpets
June 9, 2015	Drumline, Pit, Alto Saxophone, Mellophone Spring Camp 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Alto Saxophone, Mellophone
June 10, 2015	Drumline, Pit, Low Brass and Low Woodwind Spring Camp 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Low Brass and Low Woodwind
June 11, 2015	Drumline, Pit, and Flute Spring Camp 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, and Flute
June 12, 2015	Drumline, Pit, and Clarinet Spring Camp 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, and Clarinet
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Rookie Camp at Mary Persons High School 8:00AM-12:00PM	New Members and Leadership Only
July 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Optional Trip to Ga Dome for DCI Cost	Marching band members who have paid
July 27 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> , 2015	Music Audition/Show Music and Marching Technique Camp 9:00AM-5:00PM @ M.P.	Entire MB
August 3 <sup>rd</sup> -August 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	Band Camp 8:00AM-6:00PM	Entire MB

### MARCHING BAND SCHEDULE ONCE SCHOOL STARTS

Day of week/time	Event	Who is involved
Monday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB
Tuesday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB
Thursday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB

The marching band's "peak event" is the last marching contest we attend held in late October. After this event, marching band is reduced to one rehearsal per week, for approximately a one hour rehearsal. ***The busy part of the season is actually only from the first week of August to October, a period of only 11-12 weeks.***

### HOW DO I GET IN MARCHING BAND?

**Easy!** Turn in your commitment form In April and make your marching band payments for band dues and you are good to go.

***DURING CLASS REGISTRATION, BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR BAND! YOU MUST SIGN UP FOR BAND IN THE FALL AND SPRING!***

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

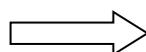
Unfortunately, marching band is not free. The cost to march in the Mary Persons High School **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** is \$250 or \$225 if you pay by June 12, 2015. The fee to participate in marching band may sound expensive but in comparison to many other bands, \$250 is inexpensive. Many programs charge participants more than \$500 to participate in marching band. The \$250 fee covers additional staff brought in to assist with band camp, music, arrangements, drill, and supplies specifically related to the marching band. Money should NEVER be the reason not to march. If you need to make arrangements or have special circumstances, you and your parents should discuss them with the director. There will be fundraisers to assist in offsetting costs. The Band is not in a position to scholarship students. Below is a payment schedule for those that would like to pay throughout the year.

Payment Schedule	
April 17, 2015	\$50.00
June 12, 2015	\$50.00
August	\$30.00
September	\$30.00
October	\$30.00
November	\$30.00
February	\$30.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>

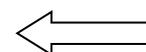
**Students who marched the previous year must make sure that all debts to the Band Booster be paid by  April 1<sup>st</sup> or will automatically forfeit a year of eligibility to participate in Marching Band **

**Note: Additional financial obligations may come up during the year. Most of these are optional such as District Honor Band, All-State, Janfest, Letter Jackets, Band trips etc...**

***THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS OF BAND DUES***



• Monroe Band Boosters Association  
P.O. Box 126  
Forsyth GA 31029



We hope these pages have served to answer the most frequently asked questions we encounter from new and aspiring **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** members. It is hoped that additionally, you can see that the scope of activity that is possible in an active and superior band program such as ours is quite different from the middle school experience, both for the band student and their parents.

Often, we describe high school band like this: "It's called band, just like in middle school, but therein the similarities end." High school band/Marching Band at Mary Persons is truly an opportunity for many wonderful memories, rich musical experience, and life-changing events that successful young adults need in the "real world," regardless of their occupational or educational choice upon graduating. During my time as a director, I have had many former students come back to tell me of how their experience in band was a major factor in their success in college, business, etc. **DON'T** miss this chance- the chance to be a part of memories and music that are SUPERIOR!

### **EIGHTH GRADE EXCUSE LIST FOR NOT WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN MARCHING BAND**

#### **"I can't memorize music."**

**TRUTH:** All MB members now in the band once said the same thing. They were able to memorize the music and you will too. We teach you how to memorize your music. The music selected will be in within your ability to perform. It will be work but you can do it.

#### **"I heard band camp for new members is awful!"**

**TRUTH:** It is work. It is challenging but the survival rate for band camp is very high. In fact, out of last year's 2012-2013 "rookie" class, all participants survived and are doing well! ☺

#### **"I don't know how to march."**

**TRUTH:** Walking is a skill that took you roughly 12-18 months to learn. You will learn to march like a pro in 6 hours! The more difficult skill is playing your instrument and marching at the same time. You will be able to do both before the end of Band Camp!

#### **"I don't like getting sweaty/cold."**

**TRUTH:** Yes, MB is an outdoor activity. During the hot weather, we take lots of water breaks. We will take every reasonable precaution to keep you safe.

#### **"I can't afford it."**

**TRUTH: Money will never be a reason that someone cannot participate.** In cases where a legitimate financial situation exists that warrants it, we will work out payment plans, extend deadlines, etc. to make participation financially feasible. We have a history of making this happen for people who need it. Every student can participate in fund raising. Efforts will be made based on school and band booster guidelines to allow funds raised by students to be used to offset expenses when possible. **Note: When "extra" trips are planned through a travel company, we cannot alter the trip payment plans at all.**

#### **"It takes too much time."**

**TRUTH:** The marching season is "intense" for an 11 to 12 week period, roughly from the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August through the last week of October. After marching contests end, we cut the MB rehearsal schedule back to about an hour a week, just enough to make sure Friday night games rock! MB is the place where you'll make memories that last a lifetime....a small sacrifice for such an awesome experience.

#### **"It isn't fun."**

Ask a **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** member! They can tell you better than anyone how much you will enjoy being a part of the MB.

# Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade Commitment Form

We are **EXCITED** to have you be a part of something that for so many is one of the highlights of their time in High School, Marching Band. We hope you will join us in cultivating a culture of excellence and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

**YES- I am committing to being in the Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade for 2015-2016 and I am enclosing my \$50 non-refundable commitment fee (Auxiliary \$200 non-refundable. I understand the cost of marching band is \$250 or \$225 if paid by June 12<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**YES- I am participating in band as a CLASS, but not committing to marching band. I understand the other consequences of not being in marching band as explained in the accompanying material (i.e. exclusion of some awards, lettering in band, etc.)**

**NO- I am not participating in band at all and will be removed from any band roster.**

**\*\*\*Checks or money orders for Marching Band (Grades 8-12) must be turned in with this form and should be written to the\*\*\*  
Monroe Band Boosters Association and turned into the Band Box located in either the Middle or High School Band Room. You may also choose to mail it to.**

Monroe Band Boosters Association  
P.O. Box 126  
Forsyth, GA 31029

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Phone # and Cell-Carrier (ex. Verizon, Sprint..) Parent Phone # and Cell-Carrier (ex. Verizon, Sprint..)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Grade (current) & Instrument

**MARY PERSONS**



**BLACK AND GOLD BULLDOG BRIGADE**

COMMITMENT FORMS FOR ALL CURRENT BAND STUDENTS ARE  
**DUE BACK NO LATER THAN Friday, April 17th, 2015 ALONG WITH THE \$50 NON-REFUNDABLE COMMITMENT FEE. AUXILIARY \$200 NON-REFUNDABLE COMMITMENT FEE IS DUE 5.1.2015.**

"Teaching expression, passion, and self-discipline through music"  
-Monroe County Schools Band Mission Statement