

The DALLAS POST

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Inaugural memories

Bob Baird was 18 and solo trumpet player at Truman's inauguration

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post correspondent

Sixty years ago this January 20, Bob Baird was, at the tender age of 18, the youngest trumpet soloist to play at a presidential inauguration.

"It was special; I was just in awe," said Baird from his Trucksville home of the opportunity to play at President Harry Truman's 1949 inauguration celebration.

Baird started his career in Kingston when he was just 5 or 6 years old.

"Someone handed me a trumpet and I just took to it," he said, admitting that his parents were not musical. He played for Kingston High School, was a bugler at Boy Scout Camp Acahela and became a Pennsylvania State champion trumpeter. At 17, while attending Syracuse University on scholarship, he became part of the first New York State All-Collegiate Band.

"I decided to enlist and tried out for the Marine Band and auditioned at West Point," he said, but it was the U.S. Navy Band he finally chose.

"I guess they did a sales job on me," he said, telling how he was offered one of three soloist positions with the legendary corp. What Baird won't tell you is that he was accepted into every service band to which he applied.

"All of our service bands are the greatest in the world but for me, it (the U.S. Navy Band) was a good decision," Baird said. "I played most of the trumpet solos for the next four years."

The first chair trumpeter had played with John Philip Sousa, an American composer and conductor known as "The March King" because of his mastery of march composition.

"I was in awe of all the other players in the band," Baird said of those early years. He especially appreciated the musicality and concert quality of the U.S. Navy Band, aptly named the "world's finest band" in 1940 by the American Bandmasters Association, a title which still applies today.

Baird traveled around the country and Canada, lived in Washington and attended Catholic University where he studied trumpet with Lloyd Geisler, a player with the National Symphony Orchestra.

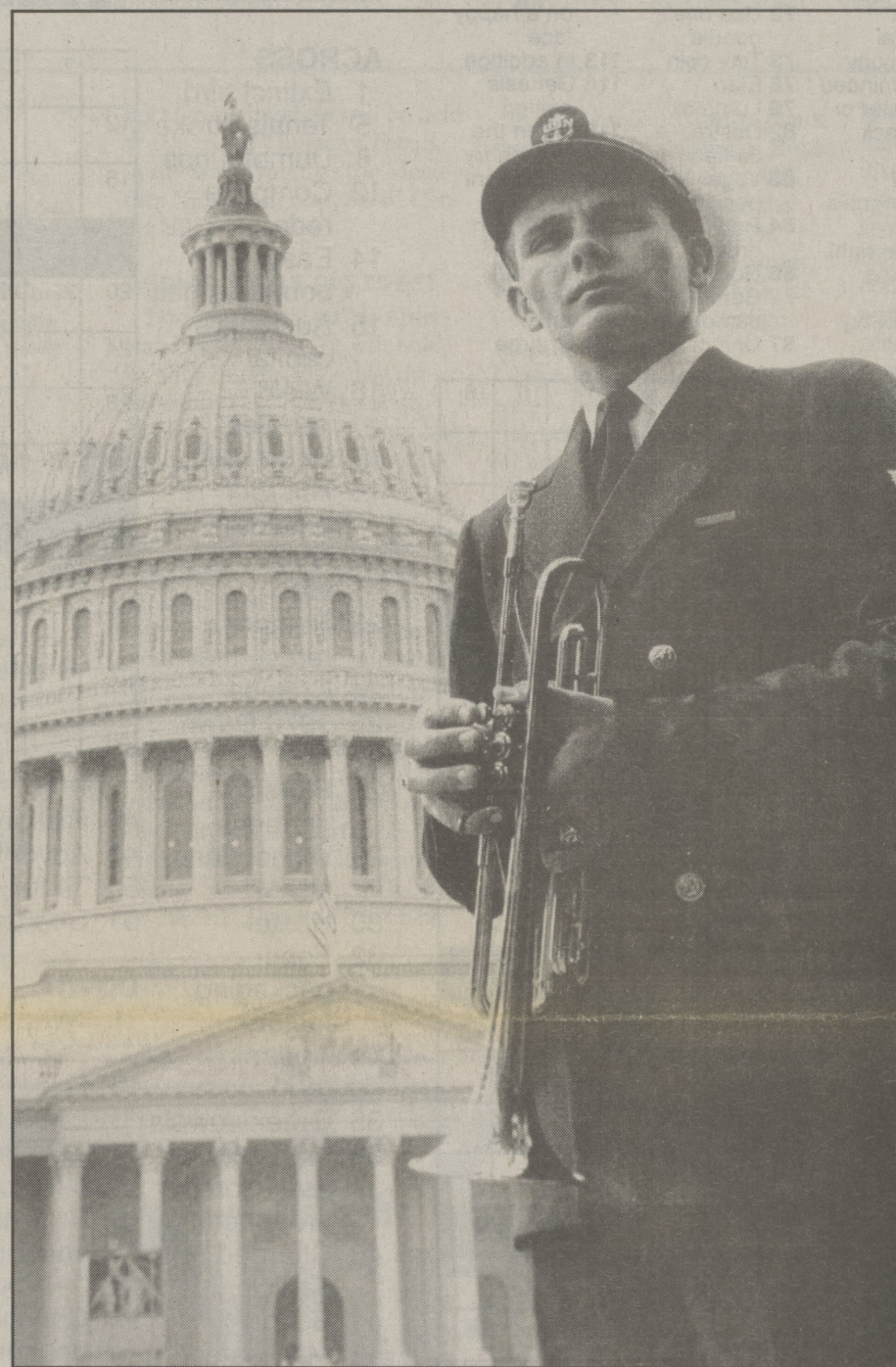
"It was a very special time and my only regret is not having stayed there for another 20 or 30 years," he said of his decision to return to Wyoming Valley to help his father operate the Baird Dairy in Kingston and have a successful career in radio broadcasting.

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Bob Baird as a trumpet soloist with the U.S. Navy Band during President Harry Truman's inauguration in 1949. Baird was only 18 years old at the time.



Bob Baird, at age 18, was a soloist trumpeter for the U.S. Navy Band at President Harry Truman's inauguration in 1949.

"It was special; I was just in awe."

Bob Baird
On playing at
President Harry Truman's 1949 inauguration celebration



THE DALLAS POST FILE PHOTO

Keith Gillette (No. 4) and Aaron Klamovich (No. 18) of the Back Mountain Bandits lacrosse team battle for ball possession during an away game on April 19, 2008 against Southern Lehigh.

Lacrosse makes gains in Back Mountain area

By REBECCA BRIA
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Lacrosse may be the biggest sport to hit the Back Mountain in recent years.

Members of the Lake-Lehman School Board are contemplating forming a district-supported lacrosse team and beginning this spring, Dallas School District will incorporate lacrosse as a non-supported district sport.

The Lake-Lehman School Board discussed initiating a district-supported lacrosse team at the board's work session on Monday, Dec. 8. As of now, Lake-Lehman students will play lacrosse competitively in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) under non-supported district teams in the Back Mountain Bandits Youth Lacrosse League.

"There have been no decisions to this point," said Jim McGovern, superintendent of the Lake-Lehman School District.

The Dallas School Board voted in September 2008 to incorporate the Back Mountain Bandits boys and girls lacrosse teams to play in Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) competition under the district as a non-supported sport.

According to Bandits President Dr. Rich Cohen, Tunkhannock School District will also participate in the league with its own non-supported district boys and girls lacrosse teams as well.

TO JOIN:

Back Mountain Bandits sign-ups
Saturday, Jan. 31
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School lobby
Print and complete all forms found on the registration documents link at <http://bmylax.lalax.com> and present them at sign-ups.

Because the districts do not support the Bandits teams, students from all three districts who play for the Bandits must pay all incurred costs.

The Back Mountain Bandits Lacrosse League was started by Cohen, of Shavertown, in the spring of 2007. Cohen played intramural lacrosse at John Hopkins University for three years in the late 1970s.

Cohen's sons, Mitch and Morgan, played lacrosse at Wyoming Seminary Lower School. When the boys transferred to the Dallas School District, their father decided to start a community lacrosse league in the Back Mountain.

"Really, I did it because the kids enjoy playing the game and I thought it was a great game," Cohen said.

The league offers U9, U11, U13, U15 and U19 teams for boys and fifth and sixth-grade, middle school and high school teams for girls.

"The game is completely different for boys and girls," Cohen said. "The equipment that you wear is different, the markings on the field are different and there are different numbers of players."

Cohen says the girls' game is about speed and finesse, while the boys' game has more contact. The sticks used in lacrosse also vary according to the gender of the players.

Due to a lack of lacrosse teams in the area, the Bandits are forced to be a travel team. Youth teams play in the Penn Valley Youth Lacrosse League that spans from Lehigh to Bucks counties while high school teams play Lehigh Valley and Columbia County teams, as well as Wyoming Seminary. Home games are held at the Back Mountain Recreation Field, Camp Orchard Hill Recreation Center and Upper Field and Dallas Middle School.

About 145 young people participated in the Bandits league last season which runs from the beginning of March through the end of June. Cohen expects that number to increase if girls' soccer is moved to the fall.

"I think there's no question this is going to get bigger," Cohen said of lacrosse. "This is the fastest-growing sport in the country.... it's growing very rapidly."

The Back Mountain Bandits teams are open to boys and girls from any school. Sign-ups will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31, in the lobby of Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School. For more information, visit <http://bmylax.lalax.com> or e-mail banditsboard@bmylax.com.

Women trying to save cats facing adversity and police

By REBECCA BRIA
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Shala Marszalek and Wilma Schierer just want to continue what they've been doing for the last four years - feeding and trapping feral cats in a barn on the corner of Second Street and Ellsworth Hill Road in Dallas Township.

But Brenda (Elston) Allabaugh, owner of the land on which the barn lies, says she never wanted the women to feed the cats in the first place and has ordered the two to stay off her property.

"We closed the barn down like four years ago," Allabaugh said.

Marszalek and Schierer, both residents of Harveys Lake, have walked along Second Street in Harveys Lake, which continues into Dallas Township, every other morning for nine years. The barn is on the women's walking route and they often encounter the cats looking for something to eat. They have trapped some of the cats and found homes for them.

"That's why we started feeding them, because we'd see them across the street and they'd get hit," Marszalek said of the cats.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

A black feral cat emerges from a closed barn on the corner of Second Street and Ellsworth Hill Road in Dallas Township. Shala Marszalek and Wilma Schierer have been feeding and trapping the cats for years, but owner Brenda (Elston) Allabaugh does not want the women on her property.

ON THE WEB

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According to Marszalek and Schierer, no one had a problem with them feeding the cats in the past, although the women suspect someone was poisoning the animals at one time because they found dead cats. The women say hawks in the area also died from eating the allegedly tainted cat carcasses.

"We kept feeding until they closed the barn,

but before they closed the barn, we had talked to Brenda," Schierer said. "She was telling us her brother is getting tired of hearing of the cats and he said he was going to take care of them. And we went in there one time and there were three dead cats."

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