

H. S. Band Reached High Peak in State

MOUNT PULASKI TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT BAND



Front Row, left to right—Connie Stoll, Jo Ann Van Hook, Lois Ahrens, Susan Connolley, Becky Singley, Randy Rogers, Jana Rockwell, Linda Hamm. Second Row: Vickie Passmore, Karen King, Judy Stuckel, Judy Lucas, Susan Jaggi, Camille Kafka, Elva Gordon, Sue Ingram, Carylyn Fuhrer, Lois Tendick, Sharon Wachter, John Kilhoffer, Ruth Stogdell, Diane Hamm, Kay Cooper, Marion Dierker. Third row: Pat

Leimbach, Sally Ayers, Blaise DeMuth, Carol Dillsaver, Lynne Romer, Lloyd Burdick, Marylyn Fuhrer, Steve Stuckel, Leslie Hild, Larry Turner, Mike Kilhoffer, Russell Messersmith, Janice Jaggi, Bill Downing, John Kelly, Danny Lanham, Denny Myrick, Alana DeMuth, Maxine Van Fossan, Steve Lynch, Jim Berg. Standing—Wayne Downing, John Reeves, Sharon Green, Mike Berg.



DRUM MAJOR AND MAJORETTES of Mount Pulaski Township High School. Left to Right—Susan Connolley, Gary Zimmermann, Sharon Wachter. Kneeling—Judy Stuckel.

MOUNT PULASKI TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DANCE BAND



Front Row, left to right—Wayne Downing, Lois Tendick, Sharon Wachter, Kay Cooper, Marion Dierker, Ruth Stogdell, John Kilhoffer, Mike

Berg. Second Row—Marilyn Arney, Sue Ingram, Alana DeMuth, Ron Peterson, Janice Jaggi, Dick Romer, Bill Downing.

Mount Pulaski Township High School Band history was born in back in September of 1941—a dark-complexioned young man came out of the northern part of the state—Les Wernitz. Instrumental music had been a very minor part of the curriculum of the high school until that date.

The transformation from a mediocre band did not come overnight, but took a lot of hard work on the part of the director and his musicians to attain the high spot it attained in high school music contests. It was not until 1948 that the first top honors in the state contest were won. From then on the record was an outstanding one.

1948—Mount Pulaski Township High School band won its first State Division rating this year, competing against 19 other schools.

1948—Five soloists and ensembles won first places out of 12 entered. This was the first of the state competition awards that were to make the band the most talked of at the state contests for the next few years.

1949—Band again first place winner at State Finals. The school with a Class D enrollment (number of pupils in school) was entered in Class C competition and had their been any vocal entries winning points would have won Sweepstake honors.

Individuals and ensembles won 12 firsts and 10 seconds.

This year eight members of the band were elected on the All-State band which played at MacMurray College, Jacksonville. Five of these eight occupied the first chairs.

1950—This year out of 26 first division ratings in the District, 13 won firsts at the State, 9 won second ratings and 4 thirds.

1951—The band this year won a first division rating at the State competing against 22 bands.

Individuals and ensembles won 17 first awards at the State, and 9 seconds. Again they placed second in sweepstakes due to no vocal entries or points. Their winnings were the heaviest in the state in instrumental.

1952—Band won sweepstakes in the State this year the hard way—they won enough points on instrumental alone to win this coveted honor.

Band Director Wernitz really did make his musicians win their first division rating and sweepstakes the hard, hard way. The numbers he chose for them to use in competition were Class A numbers, while the band was in the Class C division.

A grand total of 19 firsts were received—11 solo firsts, and 8 ensemble firsts.

1953—Despite Director Wernitz's absence to further his study at the University of Illinois, the band went on to again win first division rating at the State.

1954—With Director Wernitz back on the job musicians found out what really hard work was

for he was determined to win back the standing lost the year before.

The band again won a first division rating and 13 firsts were awarded on solos and ensembles. This exceeded any other entry in the state.

1955—13 state firsts out of 18 entries.

1956—14 firsts at the state out of 20 district winners.

The band was without the services of Wernitz for some time during World War II when he was called into service. Several other directors carried on in that period. Chuck Harned, Betty Sams, and Mrs. Sherwood, were some that we remember.

The band made two memorable trips in '55 and '56. The first jaunt was a two-day trip to Chicago and the second was to St. Louis. Band Boosters sponsored the trips and those who went along had the time of their lives.

Wernitz left here in the fall of 1956 for Freeport his home town, to take over the Junior High band where he has made another fine success. Directors who followed were Robert Barstead and Ed Hinderland.

Then along came another dark-complexioned young man from the western part of the state—Claus Tanner. The highest tribute we could pay him is that "he's another Les Wernitz".

Under Tanner's direction the past two years, the band has made tremendous progress, after having fallen apart badly. The new director not only knows his profession, but works at it doggedly, with the result that the band is now on its way back to its former high rating in the music field. The band is making a big increase in membership through the efforts of the new director.

This spring 28 went to the district contests, winning 18 firsts and placing 10 firsts at the state. A higher percentage than any other school.

Band Wows 'Em

(Dec. 25, 1941)

From the time of the appearance of the high school band in classy new uniforms, as they marched thru the west doors of the gym to put on a marching and musical display, the crowd was wildly enthusiastic over the wonderful showing of this group of some 30 youngsters.

Drum majorette, Alice Cook, resplendent in a white outfit, from shako to boots, maintained perfect control over her marching mates as she put them thru their paces. The band was a revelation even to those who heard them before, but had not anticipated their marking prowess, score a big 'V' in Mount Pulaski high's homecoming history. To Lester Wernitz in his first year as director of music, goes the credit along with the fine cooperation of his band members.

WINNING DUO - Les Wernitz and Claus Tanner

