

THE NORWICH HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

1963 – 1967



NORWICH. This photo was taken in 1965, I believe, as Nancy Davidson appears here as the Head Drum Major.....she was then in her senior year, and I in my junior. This photo was taken on the playing fields outside the, then new, Senior High School. The Band shown here featured the new fiberglass tuba horns at the rear, drum rank in the middle, and was in the Latin style period, as evidenced by the front rank, with timbale drums, maracas, and such. The members of this Band were recruited by Mr. Spang in his first years in Norwich, when they were in elementary school. The bands of these few years were driven hard, performed and competed constantly, and won more than their share of awards.

As I look at the photo, all these many years later, I can pass my eyes down the ranks and pick out faces that I recognize....and their names still are there in memory. Some may remember that the fellow directly to the right of Nancy Davidson.....Gary Steward.....playing the timbale drums.....was the one who created the drum cadence and roll-off that the Band used during this period. I can still hear it now.....all these many years later.....



PARADE. This photo is among the earliest I have of the Band.....taken on East Main Street, just past the Post Office. I would place this photo as somewhere around 1963, judging by the Color Guard uniforms and the glimpse of the Band in the background....the drums were in the front rank. You can see Mr. Spang marching with us.....visible between the second and third Color Guard form the right. The old rail car diner at the far left still stands.

As I look at this photo now, taken so long ago, I notice the figures at the left, along the parade route..... the women in full skirts, the two figures in front of them.....they seem to be at military attention.....but then, the Flag was passing.....a response, so natural then, so foreign, and missed, now.



This photo was taken just after the previous one, further along East Main. I don't recall who the Drum Major was at the time of this parade.....but it was either Betsy Ann Marshman or Sharon Slater. Notice, if you will, the middle rank.....here is evidence of the hand of the Director. The right feet are all touching down within a few inches of a perfect rank and the position of all the feet indicate the crisp precision that the Bands of these years were known for. That came from long hours of practice.

All of buildings in the background are long since gone. Notice the sign at the left rear "B and O Furniture". As this place was next to the railroad tracks, I suspect that this referred to one of the old rail lines that passed by...."The Baltimore & Ontario". The timeless "Ontario Hotel", also by the tracks, likewise.

MISS AMERICA PAGEANT. No pictures exist in my collection of the Band's trip to the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey in September 1963. I recall that Mr. Spang worked us hard to get ready for the parade. He knew, I imagine, that the parade would be the longest one any of us had ever done, and that it would take its toll. All summer long he would march us down to the Fairgrounds and march us around and around and around the racetrack to get us in shape.

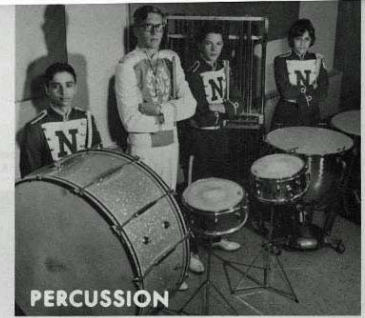
We were to represent New York State in the pageant. We stayed at the Hotel Jefferson on South Kentucky Avenue, just off the Boardwalk. We paraded on the Boardwalk at night, a stiff on-shore breeze blowing as I recall. It was a long march and towards the end we came to the review stand. All I remember are lots of bright lights as we passed through. It is easy to forget the impact this made on us.....all our lives in a small town...and then this....a city, the glamour of the Boardwalk...the honor of being chosen.....



Row 1: K. St. John, J. Violon, K. Reynolds, P. Ellis, R. Scalfidi, M. J. Rotundo, E. Natoli. Row 2: R. Kaulfus, J. ...
 Row 3: D. Rudy, E. Ring, ...
 Row 4: Biviano, T. Titus, E. Shields, L. Pooler.

NHS
 BAND
 COPS
 7

FIRST
 PLACES
 IN
 1964



Row 1: J. Toronto, T. Wagner, G. Steward, L. Garito.

Row 1: S. Brown, N. Spicer, K. Elio, S. Nelson, B. Vickers. Row 2: T. Holberg, M. Eagan, T. Lynn, T. Tyler, D. Breed, D. Hogeman. Row 3: P. Collins, F. Brown, E. Bliss, C. Pinney, C. Swerfager, D. Jones. Row 4: J. Natoli, C. Stevens, D. Franklin, P. Herman.

Row 1: S. Palmo, K. Cummings, C. Hayes, G. Forbes, J. Cornrike, L. Brunig. Row 2: B. Marchant, R. Biviano, J. Yazano, R. Stern, K. Gates, K. Pelton, J. Stewart. Row 3: S. Smith, L. Schieferstein, D. Sheppardson, S. Jackson, G. Burke, J. Kerley.



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A page from the 1965 Yearbook

1964. The year 1964 was a busy one for the Band.....we traveled to several large competitions, among them the American Legion Convention in Buffalo, and the Ogdensburg Seaway Festival, where we placed 1st. Memories of the remainder of the competitions are mostly lost to me now. We worked hard and never thought anything of it. We thought that was what you were supposed to do. There was little complaining.

Throughout all the years I was in the Band, Mr. Spang worked us hard.....all summer, every summer, we played every county fair or parade that he could find....he knew that there was no substitute for hard work, practicing....keeping your edge.

WORLDS FAIR. This is the 1964 Worlds Fair in New York City. This was one of the first big road trips the Band took under Mr. Spang. We played a concert at the Guy Lombardo Pavilion. I recall getting our uniforms on in the dressing rooms back stage, complete with all the mirrors and lights. This was the Big Time for us.....a thrill. Read the caption....last paragraph.



"Practice makes perfect."

*Callow (copy)
 Be so very glad
 Remembered all the fun
 you had in the band
 The great Band Director
 Spang in the future
 Karen*

*To the drum
 major for 65-66
 Band W. Spang
 W. B. Spang*

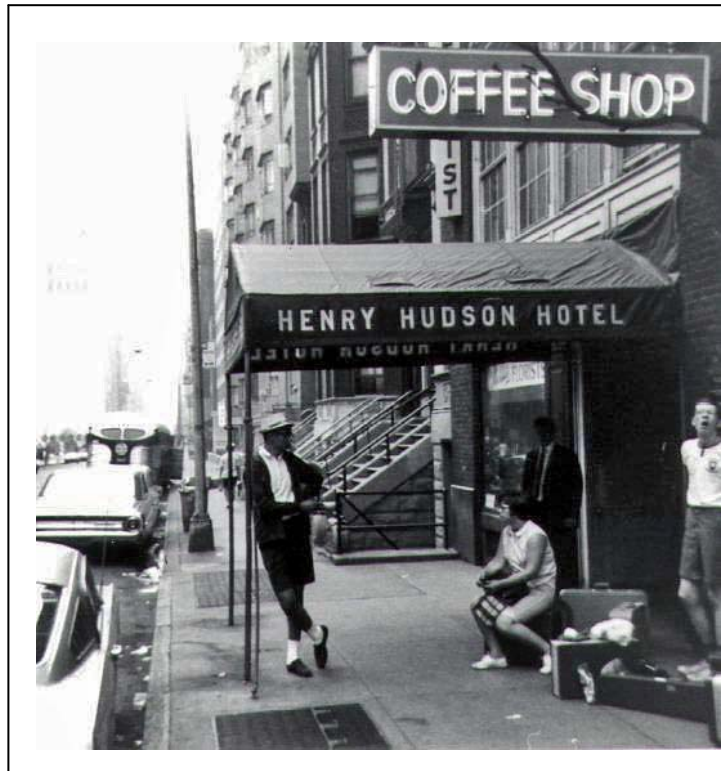
A highlight of the summer was the trip that a group of bandmen took to the World's Fair in New York City. They joined band representatives from other parts of the country to give a successful concert in the New York State Pavilion. Bandsmen have received an invitation to attend the Parade of States in St. Petersburg, Florida in the near future. Everyone wishes to express thanks to the dedicated director, Mr. Spang, who is responsible for their noticeable improvement.

Respectfully submitted,
 Betty Ann Natoli (Sec. NHS Band)

Our Director, Mr. William B. Spang.

DRUM GUARD—Row 1: A. Brookins, Commander. Row 2: J. Smith, L. Darling, Burrell. Row 3: F. Wilcox, K. Evans, J. Newman, P. Marano.





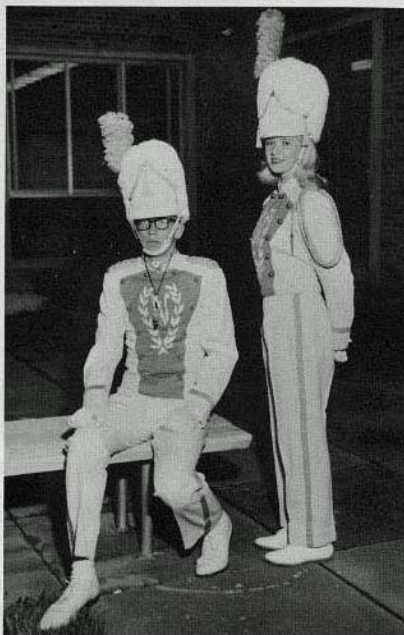
NEW YORK CITY. This was the hotel the Band stayed at while in NYC for the Worlds Fair, The Henry Hudson. I think it was on 52nd. St in Manhattan. For most of us, this was the first time in a big city and we were all eyes. I remember understanding what they mean when they say it's a "city that never sleeps". We watched from our hotel rooms, late into the night.....the traffic..... the sirens.....the life.....

We ate at an Automat near the hotel....little glass doors with the food behind, and stand-up tables for the folks too rushed to sit down. I believe the fellow leaning on the awning post is Ken St. John '67, and the other guy against the wall is Charlie Swertfager '67.

This shot was taken on the grounds of the Worlds Fair on our free time. Pictured are Jim Breed '65 and Laraine Pooler '67. Apparently there was a special on berets with bunny tails.

Many of our parents were in the Band Parents group and went along with us as chaperones on many of the big trips. I didn't think anything of it at the time, but now I now how devoted these people were, the sacrifices they made.....and how proud they were of us.

Top photo below shows Tom Wagner in his senior year, and Nancy Davidson, his second.



Drum Major Tom Wagner and Drum Major Nancy Davidson.

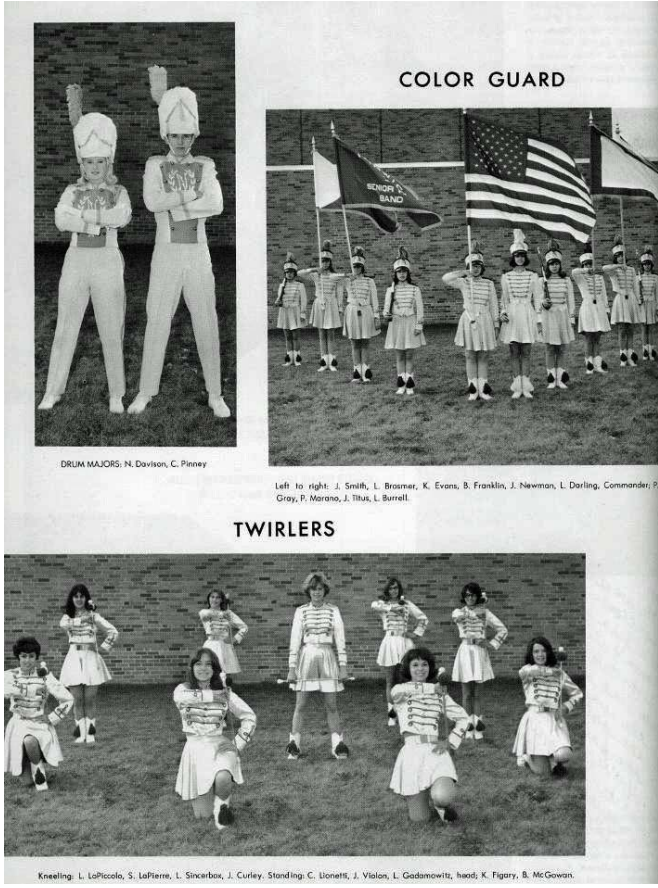
TWIRLERS—Row 1: J. Curley, L. Sincerbox, M. Wolfe, C. Lionetti. Row 2: B. Dixon, B. Bates, B. Bates, P. Burrell. Row 3: L. Godamowitz, D. Abramo.



BAND OFFICERS—Row 1: R. Scafidi, J. Carrnike, J. Chant, S. Brown, L. Brunig, M. J. Ralunda. Row 2: F. S. Paine, K. Reynolds, K. Cumings, T. Halberg, D. F. B. A. Natoli.

The Norwich Senior High School Band marched through the 1964 football season with a high step and snappy cadence significant of their performance throughout the summer. They competed and placed first in the Ogdensburg International Seaway Festival, Binghamton Tournament of Bands, and the Sherburne Pageant of Bands, where they were also the proud recipients of the overall Achievement Trophy.





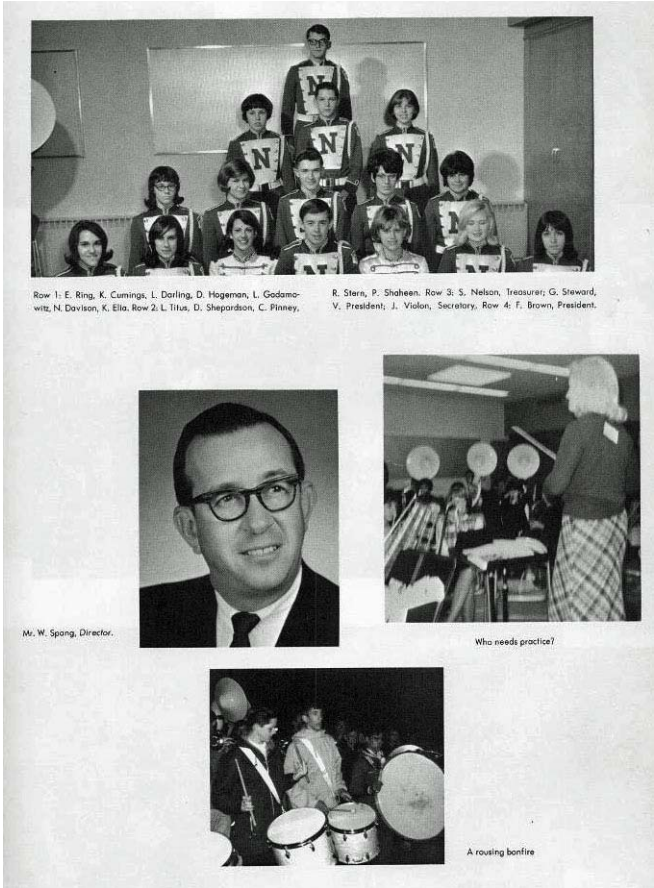
COLOR GUARD

DRUM MAJORS: N. Davison, C. Pinney

Left to right: J. Smith, L. Brasmer, K. Evans, B. Franklin, J. Newman, L. Darling, Commander P. Gray, P. Marano, J. Tibus, L. Burrell

TWIRLERS

Kneeling: L. LaPiccolo, S. LaPierre, L. Sincorow, J. Curley. Standing: C. Lionetti, J. Violon, L. Gadaniowitz, Heidi K. Figury, B. McGowan



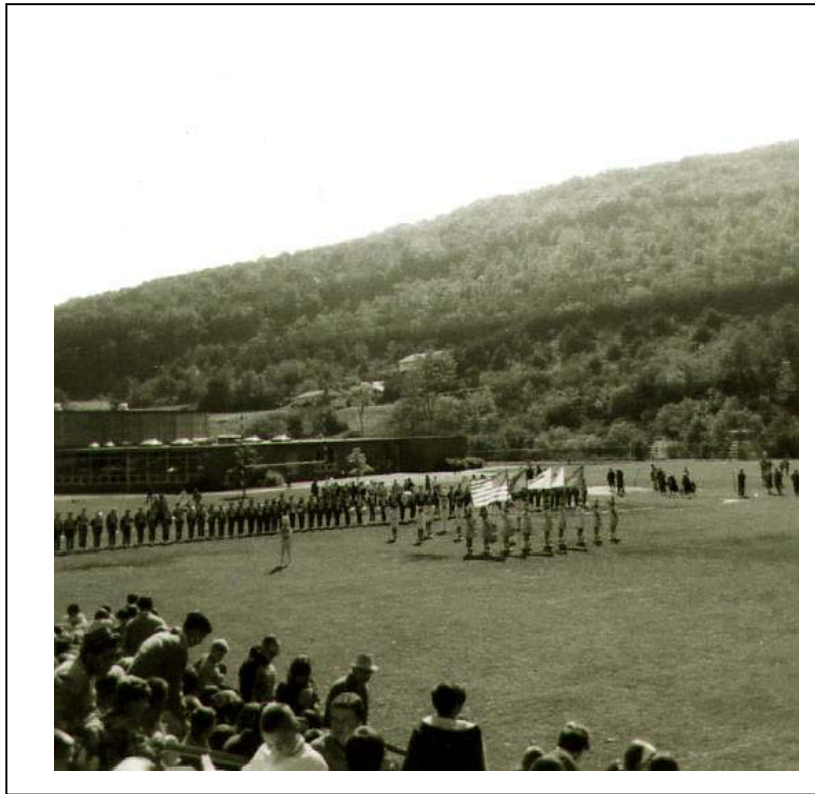
Row 1: E. Ring, K. Cumings, L. Darling, D. Hogeman, L. Gadaniowitz, N. Davison, K. Elia, Row 2: L. Tibus, D. Sheppardson, C. Pinney, R. Stern, P. Shaheen, Row 3: S. Nelson, Treasurer; G. Steward, V. President, J. Violon, Secretary, Row 4: F. Brown, President

M. W. Spang, Director

Who needs practice?

A rousing bonfire

A page from the 1966 Yearbook, showing Nancy Davidson as Head Drum Major in her senior year, and the hardworking Color Guard and Twirlers. The picture of Nancy directing at band practice, at the right, shows the new fiberglass tubas in the background, and a curious note on Nancy's back..... another hardworking group, the drum rank, is shown here, in part, with Jim Natoli and Gary Steward appearing in the foreground.

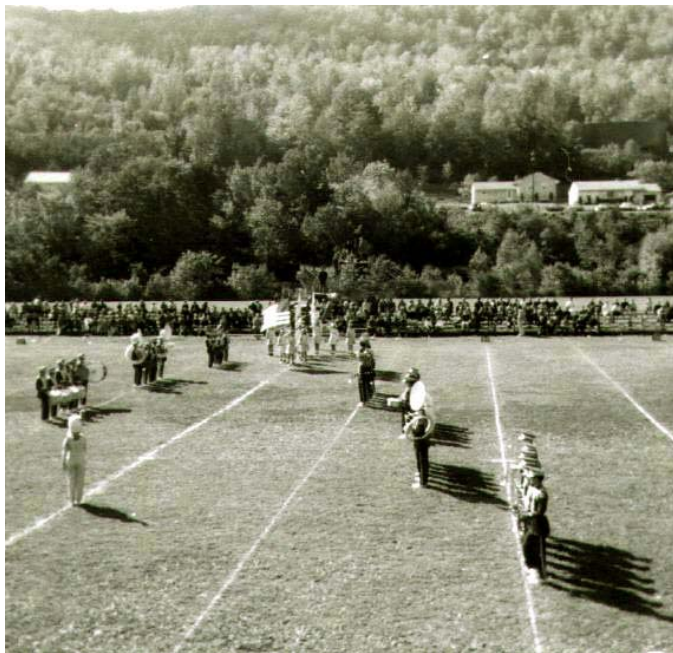


FOOTBALL SEASON. The NHS Band performed half-time field shows at all the football games, home and away. Here, at the beginning of an at-home show, we were company front on the goal line, Twirlers and Color Guard out front, and yours truly marching out on the diagonal to salute the crowd.

We spent a lot of time practicing the field shows, and many hours on the school buses going to the away games.....over the years, lots and lots of games.....when we traveled north into the Mohawk Valley, to Herkimer, to Little Falls.....on the way home Mr. Spang would always have the buses stop at the Gatesdale Diner....somewhere along Rt. 20, to grab a bite, to hold us over.....that was fun. The diner is still there.



Now out midfield, we close up to company front again and begin the show, right opposite the grandstand.



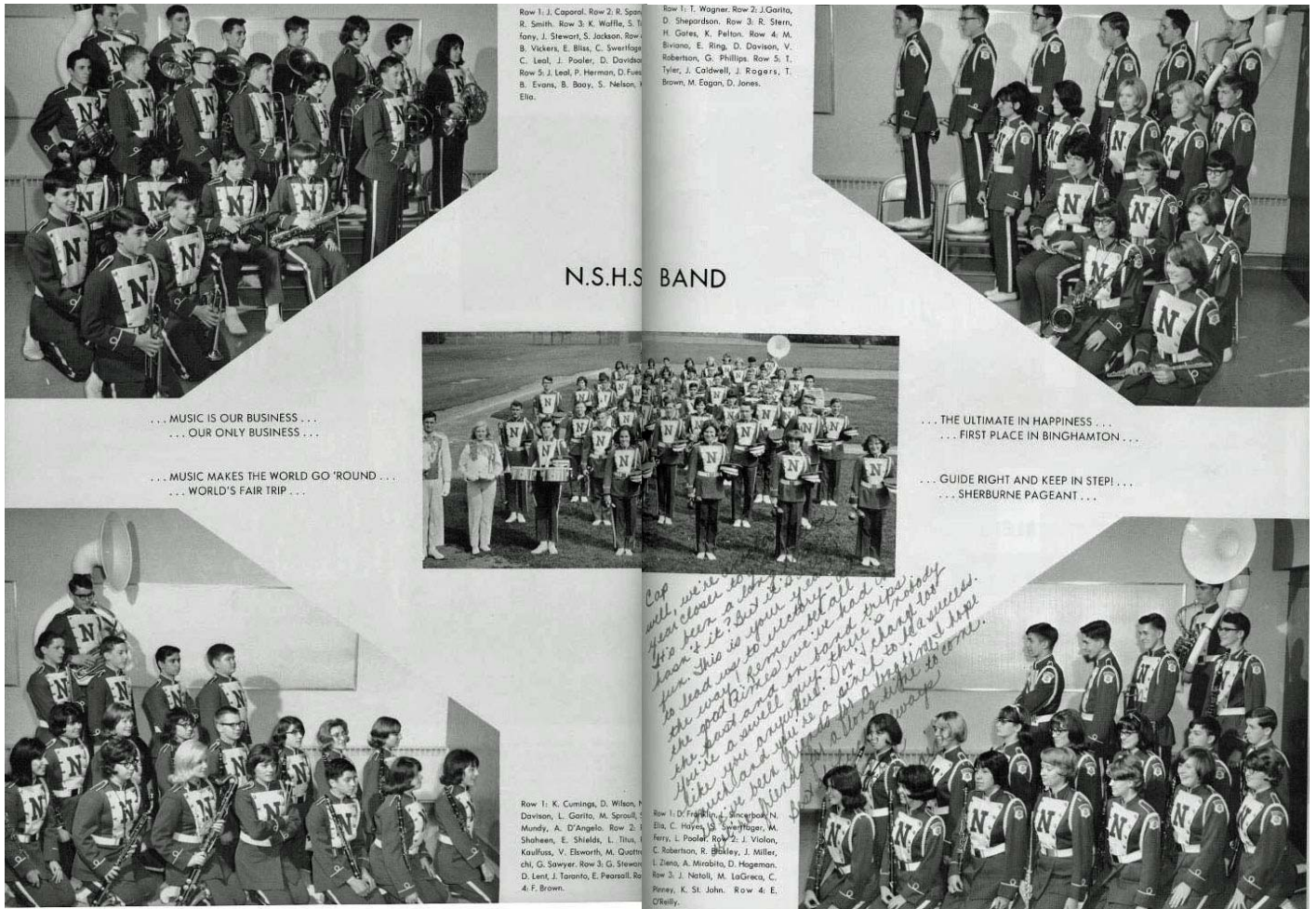
Now the band forms an inverted V, to receive the Color Guard marching in from the top. Notice the precision of the ranks on the grid lines and between them.....



Here we are with the Latin section front and center and in front of them myself and my second, Jeanne Violon. I dreaded this part of the show, the dance in front of the crowds, I can't believe that I did it...but such were the orders from the Top.



The end of the show..... marching off the field, Color Guard, Twirlers, Drum Major, and Band.



A page from the 1966 Yearbook.

Some of the names escape me now.....but the faces, each one, bring back some old memory, some scrap of a scene from the minds eye. We were friends, we were family....we had joined the Band one at a time, each for his or her own reasons....maybe it was the music, maybe the marching....maybe just to be part of something that you could be proud of. Whatever the reason, joining the Band in those days was more than just joining a school club.....it soon became a way of life.



VICTORY PARADE. When the team won, at home or away, we would lead a victory parade down through the middle of town.....here we have just turned the corner in the center of town, and are headed down East Main Street past the park.

You just don't see much of this sort of thing nowadays....people back then enjoyed this sort of thing.....now, probably, the motorists stuck behind the band, would be contemplating some sort of road rage incident.....slowing them down.

	<p>Norwich High</p>	<p>Senior Band</p>	
<p>Row one: S. Tiffany, L. Tins, D. Franklin, G. Sawyer, Row two: A. Goldstein, J. Thompson, W. Ellis, D. Swerdlow, Row three: J. Miller, L. Zinn, K. Chan, J. Crawford</p>			<p>Row one: K. Richards, M. Amitt, N. Corbett, C. Clark, Row two: M. Rowson, S. Miller, G. Jones, J. Corwin, Row three: D. Franklin, P. Paul, C. Tins, D. O'Brien</p> <p><i>Collette About 10 years - Cool guy - One of the best guys - Best of luck M.A. '64</i></p>
<p>Row one: J. Caproni, F. Parnell, G. Jones, T. Minchko, Row two: R. Spring, T. Tyler, D. Higgins, W. Chamberlain, Row three: J. Rogers, E. Biss, L. Marlowe, J. Caldwell, Row four: E. O'Reilly, K. St. John</p>	<p>Row one: J. Garth, D. Wilson, A. D'Angelo, E. Wallis, Row two: M. Spraul, R. Binkley, K. Rosen, K. Wulfs, Row three: D. Ellis, G. Phillips</p> <p>Excellent—Parade of Champions Second—Binghamton's Columbus Day Parade</p>	<p>Row one: A. Reed, S. Jackson, E. King, L. Garth, Row two: K. Smith, L. Packer, K. Stone, J. Nardi, Row three: E. Wagner, D. Lind, K. Patten, Row four: B. Vickers, P. Cummings</p> <p>Second, Marching—Sherburne Pageant of Bands First, Field Competition—Sherburne Pageant of Bands</p>	<p>Row one: D. Gifford, J. Spivey, R. Smith, W. Evans, Row two: B. Bess, J. Packer, J. Davidson, D. Phillips, Row three: L. Boynton, M. Luffman, C. Lind, K. Luffman</p>



A favorite photo of mine. At this time I was Assistant Drum Major, shown here with Nancy Davidson in her Senior year. We had just rounded the corner and were headed down East Main toward the high school. I am turned toward the figure in the foreground.....Paul Pooler, father of Laraine, who is to the right side in the foreground. The Pooler and Pinney families were very close.....I had grown up around Paul.....he had become another father figure to me.

Paul Pooler served in the Army Air Corps during WWII, stationed in England. He was a mechanic and part of the ground crew at a bomber base. He worked on B-17 Flying Fortresses and when they landed, all shot up, Paul was one of the first to reach the plane, open the hatch, and go inside to get the crew out. Over all the many years that I knew him he very rarely spoke of the war, and then only when asked. What I really knew about what he did, I learned from my folks, and from reading history.

The inside of those bombers was a charnel house of broken bodies and blood. What he saw I can only imagine, the sadness that he felt as he carried those he knew, friends and mates, out to the ambulances.....well, he never spoke of it.....but this was common among the veterans of WWII that I have been privileged to know.....the telling of “war stories” serves to glorify the teller....these men were big enough to know that the glory belonged only with those who fell, the ones among them that did not return home.....those who had given the last full measure of devotion....

He's gone now.



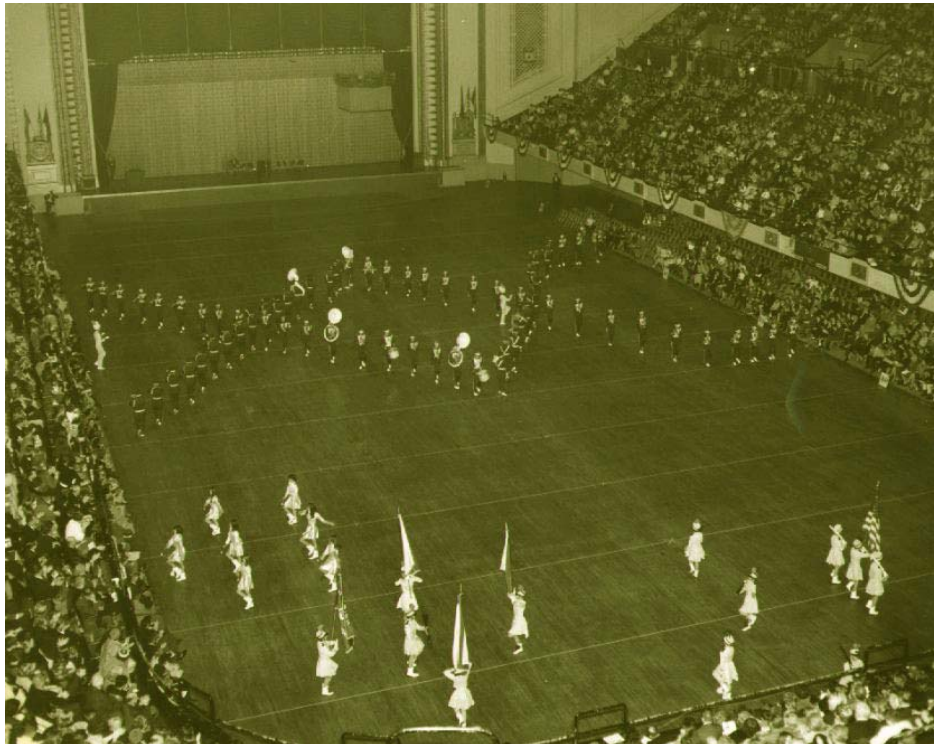
PHILADELPHIA. Cardinal Dougherty High School held an annual Battle of the Bands, so called, in Philadelphia. We were invited to compete during my senior year....so this would have been 1966-1967. The venue was the Philadelphia Convention Hall.....the largest crowd we had ever played before in one place.

After we arrived, all the bands had rehearsal time in the hall. We took the floor and ran through the show....it was a disaster. We had practiced the show countless times back in Norwich, out on the field.....but this was way different....the huge space was unnerving. The show fell apart several times....I mean fell apart....as in “came to a screeching halt”. We never did get through a full show flawlessly....not a good feeling going into it.

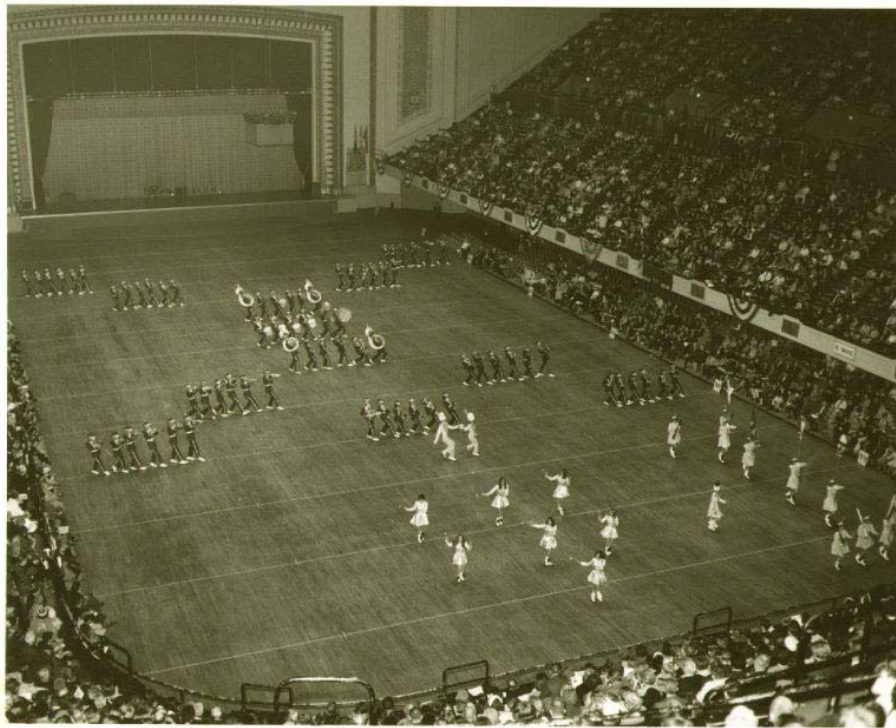
After rehearsal we stayed in the hall to watch the other bands rehearse. Peg Bennett and I went up to sit in the balcony and watch the bands. I recall watching one band come out and nail it, big time.....a great performance...dynamic and precise. I was bummed out....fretting about our performance, thinking we were going to crash and burn in front of all these people.....I guess you could say I endured some moments of self-doubt. Peg listened to it for a while, then said something to the effect of “get a grip”...it’ll be OK.

Before the competition, we had a full dress inspection back stage, behind the drawn curtain. I recall being told that, not long before, the Beatles had performed on that very stage.....the closest I ever got to them.

The picture above shows the band just moments after starting the program.....a double rank company front, Color Guard and Twirlers center stage. I had marched out silently and alone, on the diagonal, toward the judges, stopped, saluted, and then, in a much practiced move, spun around, raised my arms, instruments up, and into our lead-in tune....."Shangri-La".....we nailed it.



Here, later in the show, we were doing one of our trademark moves....intersecting lines in motion.....the lines look good and straight....we were "on". Due to the scale of the figure, we had to position my assistant, Jeanne Violon at mid-floor, conducting along with me, so that the entire band could see the beat. Notice the position of my right arm and hers...we were on the beat.



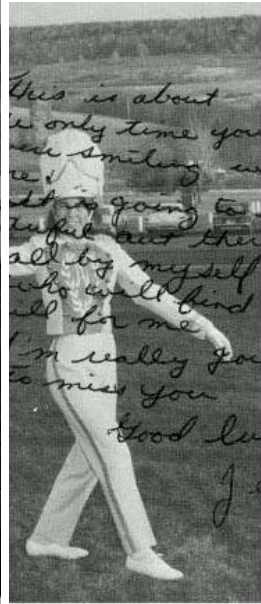
Towards the end of the program, we marched directly towards the end of the hall, from where this picture was taken, and played “Dominique”. This is the small touch of the showman that Mr. Spang was....he knew this was a Catholic school and that there would be a large contingent of nuns in attendance. They were there, as he knew they would be.....and the song was perfect....they loved it.....we spoke to them.

This picture shows another trademark move....The Dance.....the entire band was dancing in step.....Jeannie and I were doing the high step.....I look at this now, all these years later, and just shake my head.....unbelievable.



Drum Major: C. Pinney, J. Violon

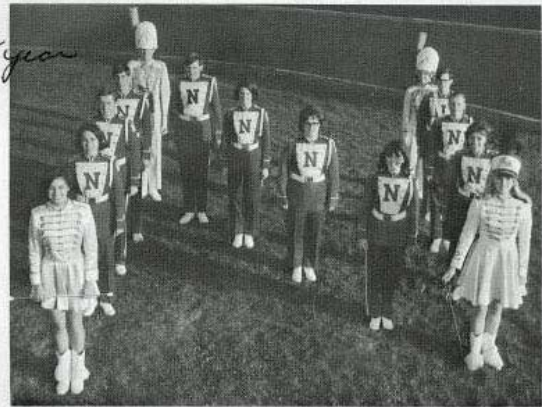
*Who did a Ft. W
Feb as Drum Maj
Best Wood
WMB Spaw*



*This is about
the only time you
see smiling with
it's going to be
useful and this
all by myself
who will find
all for me
I'm really going
to miss you
Good luck next year
I come*



Twirlers: S. LaPierre, L. LoPiccolo, B. McGowan, Head; N. Nolan, K. Figary, T. Wagner, L. Rahn.



Officers: B. McGowan, Head twirler; E. Ring, Treasurer; D. Hogeman, President; J. Natoli, Vice-President; C. Pinney, Drum Major; C. Leal, Quartermaster; R. Stern, Historian; D. Wilson, Quartermaster; D. Franklin, Quartermaster; J. Heath, Captain of Color Guard; L. Garito, secretary; R. Smith, Assistant Secretary; K. Pelton, Assistant Treasurer; J. Violon, Drum Majorette.



Color Guard: J. Newman, S. Hopson, D. Calicchio, K. Evans, J. Heath, Captain; M. Karlson, K. Ring, M. Biviano, D. Davison, S. Collins, L. Brasmer

A page from the 1967 Yearbook

The Twirlers were a daring bunch of gals....out front, alone, for all to see, and braving the falling baton, over and over. The Color Guard was a group onto themselves....they worked hard, bracing the flags on a windy day..... swinging the rifles on many a steamy hot day. They were all very good at what they did...were tough, devoted, and endured a lot of long marches.

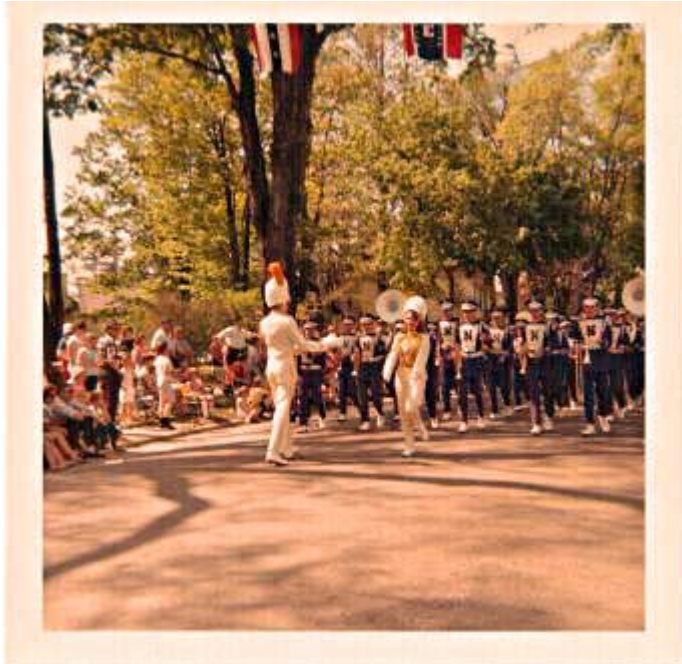
THE PAGEANT OF BANDS. The annual Sherburne Pageant of Bands. This was a big deal back then....bands from all over central New York State....from Vestal, West Genesee, North Syracuse, from all over. There was a concert competition in the morning, followed by a parade performance, and a field show. This was the most difficult competition of the year....all three types of performance needed to be practiced and practiced, until mastered. It always seemed to be hot and sunny on that day.



I remember vividly the parade competition in my senior year, 1967. I believe in my heart that Mr. Spang's Norwich High School Band reached its zenith that year.....we had been playing and marching together for years....our lines were straight, our music tight, our drum beat a perfect cadence. That drum cadence.....I can still drum it with my fingers perfectly..... snare part and bass drum both. It will stay with me forever.

In the center of town was the judging stand, where each band, in passing, tried to be at their best. The crowd was huge...it was packed deep on both sides of the street. Here Mr. Spang showed his command of the field again. Just before passing the stand, we stopped dead and silent in the street. The crowd was silent also, waiting.....they had seen us before, knew we were damn good, and the air had a feeling of anticipation.....all eyes were on us. That year we nailed it...better than we ever had before. We went through a choreographed start...my turning and saluting the judges, the band going to parade rest, instruments at rest..., then I would pivot around to face the band, bring them to attention, and then, arms coming up over my head, all in one motion, give them the down-beat.... and the band crashed into sound.....BANG!.....we nailed it...tight, crisp, the sound of brass and drum bouncing between the buildings, booming and echoing.....god... we were good....the crowd, I think, was transfixed by our power and precision. Then off we would step, smartly, past the review stand, the applause, their appreciation and respect for what it was that made that booming, tight sound possible.....hard work.

These two pictures are from my mother's collection, and transport me easily back to those days, in fact back to *that* day.....I remember it well. This was taken along the parade route somewhere past the reviewing stand in the center of town, and



shows the Band turning a corner to march back towards the Sherburne School. In this photo my arms are up and pointing in the direction of the turn. I am looking right to gauge when the front rank is in the right spot to begin the pivot. When that point came, I would, with great flourish, swing both arms around in unison, signaling the front rank to begin the turn. Then I would pivot to face in the new direction, and step off smartly with my second, as shown in the following shot.

This maneuver, as well as a couple of others, was created by

Tom Wagner, former Drum Major, and passed down to me. I remember when Tom took over.....he set a new standard in drum majoring.

It was a fine early summer day in June. Look at the crowds, even here, so far from the reviewing stand. This was another place and time, forever lost to us, except in memory





MR. SPANG. Of all the pictures I have of those days, this is my favorite. Our Director, Mr. William Spang, in full uniform, squats in the foreground, watching his band perform at the Sherburne Pageant of Bands. The day, perfect, the June sun high and bright, the field fresh mown.....the rolling hills beyond.

When we marched in the street, Mr. Spang always marched right beside us, even with the front rank, but here, during the field show competition; there was nothing for him to do, but watch.

Mr. Spang grew up in Sheridan, Pennsylvania, attended school in Newmanstown, and after the war attended West Chester State Teachers College. After college he taught music education at Penns Valley High School in Spring Mills, PA. In 1950 he moved to Norwich where he taught instrumental music.

There are so many remembrances I have of Mr. Spang.....he stands out in my memory as the one teacher, in all my years in school, that I learned the most from. I remember that day in sixth grade, at the Stanford Gibson Elementary School, when he first appeared. He must have been intent on developing a good marching band, and he must have known that the band he envisioned was there among us....to be molded and shaped. I was in the band even then, playing drums. I

remember the day so clearly when he met with those of us who were in the band. He had too many drummers, not enough brass....he came up to me and asked me if I would like to play the trombone.....I must of just been staring at him, because he mimed playing the trombone...his hand holding the imaginary slide extending out suddenly within an inch of my nose. I guess he thought I didn't know what a trombone was.....I knew what it was....I just didn't want to play it....that's why I was playing the drums....I said "OK, I'll play it". Such was the power of a natural leader...a shaper of men....and boys. He went around to all of us that day, changing this, leaving that....when he was done....he had what would become part of the core of what I believe was the best band he ever fielded.

I remember one year when we were headed to Sherburne for the Pageant of Bands.....it was another perfect summer day, the sun bright, the day, though early, already hot. We were riding in a school bus....I and two or three of my



chums....probably, Dave Hogeman, Ken St. John, Ed Bliss...were sitting up front on either side of the aisle, just behind the front row. Mr. Spang sat in the front seat on the side opposite the driver. Somewhere along the way he turned around in his seat and started to talk to us. He said that this was a special day for him....on this day in 1944 he parachuted into France behind the German lines....yes, he was talking about D-Day. He talked to us for awhile about that day, about being scared, about how rough it was, about how a lot of guys didn't make it back....I forget the details now, other than he had been a Sergeant in the 101st. Airborne, but I do recall we boys said little, just listened. It was the first time any of us had heard him talk about his past....he talked to us then, not as band members, but as sons, passing on an oral history. It was a measure of the significance of that day, so long ago, that brought him to turn to us, and tell the story.

I am now, and always have been, an amateur military historian. I know now who my band director really wasso many things he said, the way he acted, how he expected, and got, so much from us.....all now makes sense, falls into place. Mr. Spang was a Sergeant in the 101st Airborne.... the "Screaming Eagles". They, along with the 82nd. Airborne, were the two divisions that the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower, chose to spearhead the invasion of Europe. They parachuted into Normandy the night before the beach landings....to destroy big guns and wreak havoc in any way they could. In the annals of modern military history, there are few equals to the renown and respect that follows the name of the 101st Airborne. He jumped out of a plane, in the dark of night, shells bursting

all around him, a hundred pounds of gear on his back, knowing the chances were very good that he would not live to see the light of day. I have always felt privileged to know, personally, such a man as this....the Airborne were the elite...and all had volunteered. Bravery. Fortitude. Courage.

In my Junior year I ran for the position of Assistant Drum Major. I don't recall all the guys that were up for it....I suppose the prime requisite was that you had to be tall enough so that you could be seen in the back of the band. The election was held and the winner announced at a special dinner at the Canasawaukta Country Club. The date was May 15, 1965, the season lush and green, the spring of the year. I was very happy....I wanted it, and got it. To celebrate, my bud, Jim Breed '65, and I left after the dinner was over and bombed around town in his Dad's Chevy station wagon...our hands and feet pounding out the beat as we listened to the Rolling Stones on the radio playing "Satisfaction".....ah, those were the days.....

Some time later, during our daily band period at the high school, Mr. Spang turned to me and said "come with me". I followed him into the adjoining Choir Room.....he shut the door behind us.....just he and I in an empty room. The next few minutes yielded memories and lessons that are with me to this day. Mr. Spang came up close, right in my face, and said "*You are going to be the Drum Major of my Band.....there is a lot of glory goes with that position...don't let it go to your head...his finger stabbing my chest....one hundred and twenty people are depending on you.....don't let them down.*" And then....." *lets get one thing straight.....I'm the Captain, and you are my Lieutenant....your job is to make me smell like a rose....got it?*" I said "yes, I get it". Such is the power of a natural leader. I know now, that in that moment, the man standing before me was not Mr. Spang, the music teacher, but Sergeant Spang, 101st. Airborne. Sergeants know how to take charge.

Many, many years later, as I sat in the library of my home in Maine, on a quiet, sunny summer day, the phone rang. It was Mr. Spang. I don't recall exactly when that was....somewhere in the mid '90's, I guess. I was blown away. He explained that his daughter lived in Maine, he was up visiting. From time to time my mother would tell me that she had seen Mr. Spang in Norwich and they stopped and chatted.....so he knew where I was.

The conversation was fairly short, but I made the most of it. Over the years, I have related the tales of my years in the band to friends and acquaintances....I had repeated the things that he used to say, weaving a story as I went. I knew in those few moments that this would be the last time we would ever speak together, and I did what I rarely did then....I told him of my feelings, of how much he had meant to me, how much I had learned from him, how grateful I was for those years in his Band.....I repeated his own sayings back to him...in my way I was saying "Thank you".

It is, perhaps, a measure of the significance of those days in the way long ago, when his years of preparation and hard work had come to fruition, when he fielded his

first championship marching band, that he took the time to look me up. Through me he was reaching back to a yesterday beyond his reach, beyond anyone's reach. Maybe, as he grew into his old age, he was looking back....back to his glory days....back to the days when he was "in command".

He's gone now.

Would that I could travel back to those days..... and march, just one more time, leading his Band. *I hope I made you smell like a rose, Captain, my Captain.....*



Carlton Pinney, Hampden, Maine, December, 2006