

A chance of showers Sunday, fair high, 34 low; Friday: 8 a.m., 52. for beef in March and 2.9 percent more for smaller rise than in previous months nation's No. 1 economic problem.

Dogwood parade marshal, at 88, won't be riding

By BARBARA B. KALFS
Gazette staff writer

PIKETON — The dean of southern Ohio musicians, Raymond W. Connett of Pikeston, will be grand marshal for the Pike County Dogwood Festival Parade at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Instead of riding in state as parade marshals usually do, the indomitable 88-year-old Connett will step out in front of the Adelphi Community Band of which he is director and 15-year performer. The band, which annually performs at the festival in Pikeston, also ranks in longevity by being touted as the oldest musical aggregation of its kind in the state.

A native of Athens, Connett adopted Pikeston as his hometown in 1949.

With a twinkle in his eyes, he says, "I've never been sorry. I fought retirement because I wasn't ready for it."

Connett was a member of a U.S. Army Band attached to an artillery unit during World War I. He recalls they shipped out in early November, 1918, for Europe but turned around in mid-ocean due to high seas to return to the States. On disembarking, they learned the war had ended without their having reached foreign soil.

The parade marshal who has more than a passing knowledge of most band and string instruments, organized the Ohio University Marching Band in 1923. An OU alumnus, he has been a school band director in Topeka, Kan., Athens and Madison Counties, Buckland, Selma Valley (Pikeston) and Eastern Local Districts of Pike County.

After his retirement in 1970, the bandmaster continued his previous sideline of tuning pianos and opened a piano shop in Pikeston where he repairs and rebuilds all types including player pianos. He presently is rebuilding an instrument which will use a tape deck.

This latest venture will soon take him to Chicago where he will take a technicians' course in tape deck installation and maintenance. Connett explains, "The tapes can be installed on any existing instrument and I'm really excited about this new venture."

Connett annually participates in the Windjammers Association week-long convention for circus band musicians. (He used to play in circus bands which visited towns where he was living.) Last September he and his tuba made the convention trip to Indianapolis where the Windjammers played for a city park dedication. The spy octagonation plans to be on hand for this year's get-together in Atlanta, Ga.


The Adelphi Band makes at least 33 appearances annually and Connett is always on hand, directing in his distinctive, bouncy style. His other music-related travels this year included Portland, Ore., for the Piano Technicians Guild convention which he rarely misses. He also attends guild seminars and general meetings throughout the state.

In order to be sure of keeping busy, Connett teaches a physical fitness class of the county organization and, as a member of the Ohio Senior Citizens Council, attends workshops throughout the state.

He is also active in the Jasper United Methodist Church where he formally directed the choir. He says music is his life and he augments his love of it by attending all Buckeye Community Concert performances and by lending his talents in performances by area school and civic band groups.

For his 88th birthday, his children gathered last Sunday for a family celebration at his home. They include: a son, Harry of Delaware; five daughters, Mrs. Edgar (Iris) Dixon of Pikeston, Mrs. Arthur (Iris) Farmer of Lansing, Mich., Mrs. Al (Walfred) Long of Yuha City, Calif., Mrs. Eugene (Sarah) Brubart Route 1, Waverly, and Mrs. Howard (Jeanette) Rowe of Indianapolis, Ind.; and 19 grandchildren.

Several of them intend to be on hand Sunday when "Dad" acknowledges, in his courtly manner, the applause of spectators along the parade route.



Raymond W. Connett

Clipped By:



mathew5554
Thu, Mar 21, 2019