

I'm Jeff Mathew, and I've been asked to say a few words about Byron and the two bands in Ohio that he was a part of here.

The Adelphi Community Band and The Circleville Pumpkin Show Community Band

And I am happy to do that.

Just as background, Adelphi is a small town of about 400 people in Northeast Ross County.

The band started in 1880.

To put that into perspective.

1880 was:

- 15 years AFTER the Civil War
- BEFORE Pat Garrett killed Billy the Kid
- BEFORE the Gunfight at the OK Corral
- BEFORE the Washington Monument, the Statue of Liberty, and the Eiffel Tower.
- The SAME year as "**The Circleville Tarlton and Adelphi Telegraph Company**" was founded (*dissolved by 1914*).

This band has traveled through 3 different centuries, 15 decades, has gone from a horse drawn band wagon to now several members in the band playing plastic band instruments.

Based on records kept, we know that in just one 52 year period, **1923-1975**, we had almost 200 different musicians became a part of the band. **We still have many people who have been in the band for over 50, 60, and 70 years.**

Summers would be filled with band jobs, pretty much covering every summer holiday, many weekends, and sometimes several jobs in the same day and in the same week.

The Circleville Pumpkin Show Band was started in 1979 because the older musicians in Circleville wanted to have a reason to keep playing music once they left school. As of a couple years or so ago, the band still had @ 5 original members left.

The Pumpkin Show Band plays year round, and during the Pumpkin Show week will play as many as **5-6 times in a 4 day stretch.**

Between the two bands, some of the musicians will **play as many as 9-10 performances during the 5 day run.**

Often both bands would play at the same festival, and after one group would perform, it wasn't uncommon to see after a band member quickly change uniforms to go play with the other band.

Both bands would often be in the same parade, and some people would try to play with both groups.

The musicians do this for free.

They do all this because they love to play, and it is their way to be able give back to the community.

Now, I said all that to say this.

We generally don't get to choose who we spend time with during our work life.

But our parents were right about this all along when they told us that you can tell a lot about the person by who they spend their free time with.

I have @ 85 years total with both bands.

But the important thing that I became aware of many decades ago, is that when I am asked what it's like to play in either band, my response has been **that these are the people that you can trust your children to be around.**

- **Almost all of us started as kids.**
- **Some of our KIDS started as kids.**
- No one told inappropriate jokes.
- There was NO hazing
- Often 80 to 90+ year old musicians would sit next to 10 year old musicians, and help them keep track of their place in the music, share the correct note fingerings, etc. Often the younger ones would help carry stuff for the older ones when the older one finally accepted that they could use some help.
- There were no political arguments or hatred.

That's not to say that there weren't political discussions, but that's different. Often, two best friends who were farmers from different political parties would often fuss about how one President had made him poorer, while HIS President had made everyone's lives better, etc.

Everyone, including the two best friends, would laugh about the exchange, since they all knew that it was in fun.

And at the very next performance, you could hear almost the exact same discussion happen all over again.

These were the people who Byron chose to spend his personal time with.

The difference between a musician and someone who just plays music, is the passion.

If you just play music, then you probably don't even crack open the case on your instrument , even if you know which closet you put it in, unless you are at a practice or performance.

If you are a musician, you get excited over **music things**. Instruments, music, concerts, other bands, etc.

Byron was a musician.

Between the two bands, you could usually see him playing Clarinet in one, and usually Saxophone in the other. He played where he was needed most.

I remember he once came to a band engagement and was excited about a new concert venue he found in Columbus and talked about the bands that would be playing there. He convinced a couple of the members to go there to check out the bands and the venue.

Or he would talk about any music related item that caught his interest, or about any of a number of things related to music.

This is the Byron Carter, the musician, that I knew.

Unfortunately, Byron hasn't been physically able to be with either band for the last few years, but I will say that we all looked forward to the time when we hoped he would be able to come back, **and that he will be missed by all of us who have had many years of playing music with him.**

Thank you.

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