

The Band Parents' Dictionary

(Useful Terms for Band Parents)

Like all of life's great endeavors high school bands have their own special jargon. This can be very confusing to new band parents. For these fine people, *who will soon be just like us*, here is the technical terminology used by band directors, band members and experienced band parents. Jargon such as this is subject to frequent changes.

(Disclaimer: Definitions are not necessarily the opinions of the WSHS Band, its directors, its members, other WSHS band parents, etc.)

Accent- 1) Playing a note louder and/or with a sharper attack for emphasis, 2) Marking in written music indicating that a note is to be accented.

Accidental- Markings in music such as sharps, flats or naturals which indicate that a note is to be played 1/2 step higher or lower than normal, so called because students accidentally overlook them.

Accompaniment- Music played too loudly by a band or piano as background and support for a solo performance.

Accompanist- Musician who plays an accompaniment, usually on a piano. In a band context this happens most often for a contest solo performance.

Administration- The executives of a public school system including superintendents, principals, staff coordinators, etc. They may or may not provide proper support for the band program.

Adjudicator- See Judge, Contest.

Adjustment- What the keys on a woodwind are always out of, which causes leaks which impair playability requiring costly professional repairs.

All-Region, All-District, All-City, All-State Band- Elite regional bands made up of the better players from many schools selected by audition, used as a carrot (or perhaps a stick) to get band members to practice their instruments.

Alternates- Band members held in ready reserve to replace band members who must leave a show due to illness, injury or disqualification. They lug and set-up pit equipment. If many or all alternates go into the show then band parents take over the lugging and setting up.

Alto- An upper middle pitched instrument between Soprano and Tenor as alto sax, alto flute, etc.

Alto Horn- A small euphonium in Eb (or F) sometimes used instead of French Horns in school bands and always used instead of French Horns in British brass bands, see Mellophone.

Amp- Short for amplifier.

Amplifier- Box shaped electronic device used to make instruments too loud.

Arranger- A person who improves music originally written for another type of performing group by rewriting it for use by a marching band, as in "The band parents paid an arranger to arrange 'Nixon in China' as a marching contest piece."

Attack- The beginning of a note, which may be more or less accented as required by the music.

Audience- Discriminating music aficionados in attendance at Band Concerts including yourself and all your friends and relatives.

Audition- Nerve racking solo performance before contest judges in attempt to qualify for an All-Something Band, to determine one's chair or to get a scholarship.

Auditorium- Large theater-like room in a school in which they hold band concerts, may be used for other purposes on non-concert days.

Auxiliaries- Non-instrumentalists who march and dance with the band carrying flags, props, etc. Sometimes worth valuable extra points at marching contests, see Drill/Dance Teams.

Band- 1) Any group of musicians who play together, 2) A large aggregation of wind and percussion instruments of inherent musicality. Once widely popular but now (due to the declining musical tastes of an untutored, television-besotted, lazy-eared public) largely confined to schools and universities.

Band, Brass- A band without woodwinds. Most common in Britain.

Band, Community- Band made up of volunteer players from the community. Usually a mixed group including school band directors, adult amateurs, under-employed freelance musicians and a few high school players who do not find the school program intense enough and seek even more band experience. So great is the popularity of band music that a typical American city of only 2 million people can support a community band of nearly 65 players.

Band Dad- Male band parent, especially one very active in band parenting.

Band Director, Associate- Second in band hall only to the Head Band Director. Has own feast day of obligation. Most Drum Majors want to become one.

Band Director, Head- Underpaid yet fanatically dedicated Commander-in-Chief of the band (whose wisdom and authority in the band hall can only be compared to that of a major deity), most Associate Band Directors want to become one.

Band Grandparent- A band parent's parent.

Band Room- 1) Center of band activities in a school, 2) your second home.

Band Members- 1) The students in the band including your child, 2) a mob of musical instrument wielding Visigoths.

Band Mom- Female band parent, especially one very active in band parenting.

Bands of America- A national organization, which sponsors really prestigious regional and national band contests.

Band Office- Small cramped Holy of Holies located in the Band Room containing telephone and also directors' desks, equipment, etc.

Band Officers- Mostly powerless elected or appointed student leaders of a band, being one looks good on college application forms.

Band Parents- The finest, most selfless, hardest working people on Earth.

Band Parents Meeting- Democracy in action

Band Parents Organization- 1) All the band parents as a group, 2) your primary waking activity during marching and concert seasons.

Band Shell- Over stage structure designed to reflect the sound of a concert band forward at outdoor concerts and to provide truly minimal protection from wind and rain. (Liberty is hoping for one of these!)

Banner- Large brightly colored rectangular cloth with a band's name and home city on it. Carried on horizontal pole in front of band at parades.

Banquet, Band- End of school year semi-formal meal for band members at which awards and scholarships are given.

Baritone- A lower pitched instrument between Tenor and Bass as baritone sax, etc.

Baritone Horns- 1) What Americans call euphoniums, 2) English brasswind in same pitch as a euphonium but with a cylindrical bore instead of a conical bore.

Bass- A very low-pitched instrument below Baritone as bass tuba, bass clarinet, etc.

Bass Clef- Handsomely stylized letter "F" used to identify the bass staff on which the lower notes (below middle C on a piano) are written. Tubas, trombones, bassoons and most euphoniums read the bass clef at proper concert pitch eschewing the awkward and confusing transpositions preferred by most treble clef instruments, see Treble Clef.

Bassoon- Large, expensive, double reeded, low pitched woodwind, which resembles a wooden bedpost. Noted for its complex fingering. Originally intended and used as a marching instrument in military bands but now only rarely used for marching.

Baton- 1) Short cute stick-like device used by conductors to make the beat easier to see, 2) often dropped ornamented stick twirled by auxiliaries called twirlers.

Beat- 1) Integral subdivision of time in music, marked by the waving of the conductor's arms, 2) What you do to a drum, 3) How a band parent chaperone feels at the end of a band trip.

Beating- Wavering sound produced when two players try to play the same note but don't completely succeed.

Bell- 1) A clanging tuned metal percussion instrument, 2) That part of a brass instrument which must point home during a marching show.

Bell Front- Bell on a euphonium, alto horn or tuba which is bent down and forward to direct the sound toward the front of the band, the opposite of Upright Bell. Once very popular but now the upright bell is generally favored except on sousaphones.

Bell Lyre- Mallet keyboard with tuned metal bars, it is small enough to be carried while marching and is played with a single stick.

Beret- A flat soft cloth hat sometimes used as part of a band uniform especially by sousaphone players since the sousaphone bell prevents them from wearing shakos.

Break- 1) Range of notes having particularly awkward fingerings on a clarinet, 2) Rest period during a rehearsal as in "water break", 3) To end a rehearsal as in "We will break at 3 o'clock.", 4) Transitional phrase between parts of a jazz piece, 5) What happens to instruments if you sit on them.

Brass- 1) The shiny loud instruments, 2) What the shiny loud instruments are made out of (which is a non-eutectic, non-magnetic, highly conductive metal alloy of 70% copper and 30% zinc in its most common "yellow brass" form. It has a face centered cubic crystal structure), see Red Brass, Nickel Silver.

Breathe- What low brasswind players rarely do deeply or often enough.

Bugle- 1) Strictly, a soprano conical bore trumpet-wrapped valveless (sometimes with keys in the 18th and 19th centuries) brasswind used for military signaling, 2) In modern usage, a conical bore trumpet-wrapped brasswind with 1 or more valves used in marching show drum corps, in some sizes with 3 valves identical to Marching Horns.

Bus, Band- A primitive, crowded, noisy motorized transport used to take bands to contests, games, etc. Use outlawed by civilized nations.

Bus, Charter - Comfortable and roomy but expensive hired bus sometimes used for band overnight trips.

Button- Familiar fastening device that often falls off band uniforms.

Cadence- Rhythmic repeated sound, usually a drumbeat, played while band marches onto or off of a marching field in the hope of keeping them together and in step.

Call Back- Exhausting second round in an audition in which the better players audition a second time to determine chair, break ties, etc.

Captain, (Percussion, Keyboard, etc.)- Field Officer having special responsibility for one sub-section of band.

Cases- Battered suitcase-like satchels for carrying and storing instruments.

Chair, First- The top player in a section as "Ethylbert made first chair flugel horn at the audition."

Chair, Last- The worst player in a section as "Aethylreda blew the mellophone audition and sat last chair."

Chair- 1) Ranking of band members in the same section according to ability (or some such thing) as determined by audition, 2) what band members sit on when giving band concerts.

Chairpersons, Band Parent Committee- Band parent in charge of a specific activity such as fund raising, chaperones, etc. Do not bother hiding; they will track you down anyway.

Chaos- State of order in Band Room except when band members are actually in rehearsal (and sometimes even then)

Chaperones, Band- Band parent band member tenders

Chimes- Chromatic set of tubular bells suspended by shoelaces from a frame held together with duct tape to form a keyboard instrument used in the pit.

Chord- Three or more notes played at the same time on purpose, the building blocks of harmony.

Choreographer- Person who creates choreography as in "The band parents paid a choreographer to prepare the new marching contest piece."

Choreography- Plan of body movements of band and auxiliaries in show including marching, drilling and dancing (band members improvise tripping, slipping and falling themselves).

Chromatic Scale- Scale, which moves up/down by half steps and so include every note of the traditional western scale, which makes it a very good scale to practice.

Clarinet- Popular single reed licorice-colored woodwind (now usually made of plastic) currently made in an amazing number of sizes including Ab piccolo, Eb, Bb, Ab, F alto (basset horn), Eb alto, bass, contra bass, octo-contrabass. Has a clear pleasing tone but an unfortunate tendency to squeak loudly in the hands of student players.

Clinic- Oddly named rehearsal that focuses on one aspect of playing, a single instrument, etc. See sectional and master class.

Coda- 1) Short section at the end of a piece of music, 2) By extension of 1, the last part of something such as a meeting, a letter, a career, as in "The graduation ceremony provided an emotional coda to Eglundtine's high school years."

Coffee- Liquid stimulant (active ingredient- $C_8H_{10}N_4O_2$) frequently taken by band directors.

Composer- A (often impecunious) person who writes music (band composers include J.P. Sousa, G. Holst, P. Grainger, V. Nelybel, R. Smith, C. Williams, P. Creston, G. Jacobs, R.P Clem, K. Husa, L. Osman, J. Bavicchi, T. Beversdorf, H. Owen Reed, P. Hindemith, E.F. Goldman, C. Williams, P. Yoder, K.L. King, V. Persicetti, A. Hovhanness and many thousands more.)

Concert, Band- Sophisticated high-class musical entertainment that appeals to the finer human sensibilities by featuring band performances.

Concert Band- 1) In general usage a band assembled to play concerts, 2) in school usage a band in ability above a varsity band but below a symphonic band.

Concert Dress- Uniform or other formal attire worn by band members when giving a concert. Varies from matching T-shirts and jeans (cheap and comfortable) to Tuxedos and Gowns (expensive and uncomfortable).

Concert Pitch- 1) The standard pitch for the treble clef second space A currently set at 440 Hertz but in practice fast pushing 442 or even 444, 2) The actual note sounded by a transposing instrument (trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, horn, treble clef baritone, etc) as opposed to the note read by the player.

Concert Season- Roughly December through May, the band parent's busiest time of year, see also Marching Season.

Conductor- Arm waving personage who leads band during a performance or rehearsal, usually one of the directors or drum majors but sometimes a clinician or guest conductor.

Consonance- Interval between two notes (such as 3rds, perfect 4ths and 5ths) which when the notes are played together in western music are generally said to sound "good", see Dissonance.

Contest Music- Graded music (1, Easy to 5, Difficult) chosen from a list provided by the sponsoring organization which is to be played at Concert or Solo/Ensemble Contests.

Contests, Concert- 1) Competitions among concert bands playing contest music before a panel of judges, 2) The focus of life in the spring.

Contests, Marching- 1) Competitions among marching bands before a panel of judges, 2) The focus of life in the autumn.

Contests, Solo and Ensemble-1) Competition among band members and band member ensembles, 2) The focus of life in the winter.

Contra- A prefix meaning "lower in pitch than" as in contrabassoon or contralto.

Copyright- Right of ownership of a piece of music or a recorded performance which means that band parents have to pay in order to use/copy the copyrighted material. Copyright normally lasts 75 years after the death of the composer so you probably have to pay.

Cork- Tree bark (yes, truly) used for woodwind joints/pads and as a cushioning material on valves and keys.

Cornet- What you get when you take the average of a trumpet and a flugelhorn.

Cornet, Echo- A cornet with two bells the second of which produces a quieter muted sound. It was used to provide tonal contrast on repeated musical passages. Popular with soloists during the Golden Age.

Corps Style Marching- Style of show marching pioneered by Drum Corps International featuring smooth upper body movement, difficult music and complex set shapes.

Costumes- Fancy dress worn by auxiliaries and Drum Majors, sometimes in keeping with show theme.

Cymbals- 1) Large diameter thin brass disks usually used in pairs, played by being smashed together, 2) Group of band marchers, often double reed players in real life, wielding and smashing cymbals of various sizes who do cymbal choreography in marching show.

Da Capo- 1) Direction in written music which indicates that from the place the Da Capo is written the players are to return to the beginning of the piece or movement and play again from there. 2) When spoken as a direction from a conductor it tells the band they are to play from the beginning, same as "From the top."

D.C.- 1) Abbreviation for Da Capo. 2) Abbreviation for District of Columbia, a popular destination for band trips.

Disqualification- 1) When a band member is barred from participating in band activities due to failure to meet academic standards, fear of this may inspire band members to study, 2) The barring of a band from competition due to a rules violation, see Eligibility.

Dissonance- Certain note intervals (including 2nds, diminished 5ths, etc) which when the notes are played simultaneously are usually considered to sound "bad" in western music, see Consonance, Tritone.

Downbeat- 1) The beginning or first half of a beat which is accented, 2) The first beat of a musical piece, 3) The beginning of a rehearsal or concert as in "Downbeat will be at 8 PM.", 4) How band parents feel when their band gets a low contest score, see Upbeat.

Drum- Cylindrical, hollow percussion instrument designed to deafen.

Drum, Bass- Big cylindrical, hollow percussion instrument designed to deafen.

Drum Line- Marching percussion, same as Battery (definition 1).

Drum Majors- Student conductors who lead bands on marching field, most field officers want to become one.

Drum, Snare- Drum with a snare of wires stretched across the bottom head which adds to the sound produced.

Drums, Tenor- Set of 4 or 5 single head tuned marching drums carried and played by a single player.

Dry Cleaning- 1) Expensive waterless cleaning process for clothes, which must be done by professionals, 2) The only way band uniform parts can be cleaned.

Ear- 1) Sound sensing organ without which there would be no point to all of this, 2) Ability to hear and interpret sound as in, "Herminone has a good ear for music."

Echo- 1) Reflected sound such as a band's sound reflecting from the side of a building, echoes are undesirable in concert halls, 2) A repeat of a phrase of music played more softly and possibly on different instruments.

Eligibility- The condition of being able under the rules to participate in a band activity, see Disqualification.

Embouchure- Funny faces made by band members when they are playing their instruments.

English Horn- Oboe-like instrument but larger, lower pitched and harder to play.

Ensemble- 1) Small group of players performing or auditioning together- duet, trio, quartet, etc. 2) Condition of a band's members playing together as in, "The beginner band's playing was marred by poor ensemble."

Euphonium- A tenor tuba.

Euphonium, Double Bell- A combination euphonium/English baritone horn with two separate bells, for many years standard in U.S. Army and Navy bands and popular in American bands generally during the Golden Age especially for soloists. The service bands switched to English style compensating euphoniums after WW II and commercial production of double bell euphoniums ceased in 1955

Euphonium, Oval- A euphonium with an oval wrap like a Wagner tuba (you do know what a Wagner tuba is, don't you?), a small diameter bell and side action rotary valves popular in central Europe. Some bands are beginning to use them in America.

Facing- Where the band members are facing when marching. Ideal is for all to be facing home regardless of direction they are marching.

Fair Use- Those very few things you can do with copyrighted material without the copyright owner's permission.

Fall- 1) What marchers do after they trip, 2) Marching Season.

Fees- Money paid by band parents to band program as in, uniform fee, bus fee, cleaning fee, band fee.

Fingering- Position of a player's fingers (open or closed, down or up, etc.) on keys or valves needed to sound a given note as in "What's the fingering for a high Eb?"

First Aid Kit- Case carried by band parent chaperones containing spare band socks, plastic trash bags, paper towels, etc. (The infamous "orange bag")

Flags- 1) Large pieces of colored cloth on poles waved by auxiliaries, 2) the auxiliaries who wave them.

Flat- 1) Overlooked marking in music which indicates that the following note should be played 1/2 step lower than written, 2) playing a note at a pitch slightly below the correct pitch which is personalized as, "You are flat!" 3) When an instrument is out of tune because the slides are pulled out too far.

Flautists- What overeducated people call flutists.

Flute- A very popular high-pitched silver-colored tubular shaped keyed instrument.

Flute, Closed-hole- A flute all of whose keypads are solid and completely cover the tone hole when closed even if the flautist's fingers are slightly misplaced, popular with younger students for that reason.

Flute, Open Hole- A flute some of whose keypads are open in the middle and must be covered using the finger-tip. Popular with older students since using one proves that one is not a younger student.

Folder- 1) Cardboard slipcase for keeping a band member's music together so that all of it may be mislaid at the same time as; "I can't find my folder." 2) same as chair as in, "She's playing second folder."

Folio, Marching- Easily lost or forgotten small loose-leaf booklet holding marching music, same as flip folder.

Foot- 1) The lower end of a flute as in C-Foot, B-Foot, 2) The part of a marcher in contact with the ground as in, "Step out on your left foot!"

Football- A game played on a marching field to entertain audience while the band is getting ready to perform.

Football Games- Events scheduled to provide opportunities for marching contest show dress rehearsals before marching contests.

Fourth Quarter- The part of a football game during which they start to load the band truck.

Free Blowing- Said of a brass instrument that offers very little resistance to air flow. It is a good thing, see Stuffy.

French Horn- Mellow sounding brasswind with narrow tubing, a large bell and a very small mouthpiece which makes it hard to play. Has string action rotary valves fingered with the left hand.

French Horn, Double- French horn with two air paths and two sets of valve tubing so that it can be switched between the keys of F to Bb which offers alternate fingerings, an increased range and an increased price.

Fund Rai\$ing- The most important band parent activity, involves making large quantities of money transfer to the band from any outside source.

"Funky Winkerbean"- Newspaper comic strip that contains an uncannily accurate depiction of modern high school band life.

Gig- Musicians' term for any paid playing job. Playing jazz at Bennie's Discount Hot Spot in Sandusky would be a gig, so would an appearance before H.M. the Queen at the Annual Royal Command Performance in the Royal Albert Hall, London. Band members can sometimes pick up \$10 playing gigs for church services, weddings, etc.

Gig Bag- Padded cloth bag for carrying instruments, music and equipment.

Gloves- Hand coverings, originally white but invariably soiled by the time of the performance, worn sometimes as part of band uniforms.

Grease, Cork- Sticky translucent goo used on the joint corks of a woodwind.

Grease, Slide- Expensive goo used to lubricate tuning slides, see Petroleum Jelly.

Guest conductors- Conductors, from outside the band organization, invited to conduct the band because they are famous fine conductors, they composed the music being played or they have a lot of money some of which the band has gotten.

Gymnasium- Large room in a school used for band concerts if there is no or only an inadequate auditorium, there are some sports that can be played in it.

Harmony- 1) A system of musical form in which the chords and the order of chord progression is what is most important, 2) The music part which has the middle and bottom notes of the chords in an harmonic piece of music, 3) When all is well in the band hall.

Harness- Elaborate strap used to carry larger instruments (drums, tubas, etc) while marching.

Hat Boxes- Carrying cases for uniform hats which are often left behind in uniform room at start of band trip or on band buses at end of band trip.

Half-time- The only interesting part of a football game.

Head- The part of a drum that is struck.

High School- Secondary school, the level at which band parenting becomes intense.

Home- 1) Place where marching contest judges sit when judging, as in "Point your horns toward home!" 2) Place where band members and parents briefly sleep between band activities.

Honors Band- In schools having multiple bands, the band of highest ability.

Horns- 1) Generic term for all wind instruments as in, 'Get your horns out and warm up!', 2) French horns, 3) The people who play French horns.

Ice- Frozen water lugged by band parents, used to cool band members on hot days.

Instrument- Expensive fragile device for making music, see Brass, Percussion and Woodwinds.

Instrument Manufacturers- Companies that make and sell musical instruments, no longer to be confused with instrument brands. (Many once proud instrument makers are now just brand names for conglomerates. King, Conn, Benge, Artley, Schilke etc. are now made by UMI while Bach, Selmer, Bundy etc. are all made by Selmer).

Instrument Repairmen- Difficult to find persons who repair instruments. Good ones are especially rare and should be accorded the deference and respect otherwise reserved for saints, Nobel prize winners and TV Stars (until their series are canceled)

Invitational- Snobby band contest only open to bands invited to participate by the sponsoring organization.

Jam- 1) To play an instrument, participate in a Jam Session. 2) To over-forcefully assemble which results in pieces being stuck together as in "The mouthpiece was jammed into the trumpet."

Jamming, Jammin'- Playing very well as in "The symphonic band was jamming today."

Jam Session- 1) Informal playing in a group with much improvisation. 2) A light lunch of fruit preserves and bread or crackers.

Jazz Band- Small band which plays jazz type music, heavy on saxophones, short on tubas.

Judges, Contest- Eagle-eyed, golden-eared, infinitely demanding persons who can spot unraised band member toes at a distance of 200 yards, at night, through fog while detecting one slightly out of tune clarinet during a brass fortissimo. Widely believed by band parents to take fiendish pleasure in giving out low scores at marching and concert contests.

Ketchup- Familiar condiment whose low toxicity and mild acidity makes it an effective and safe cleaning/polishing agent for *unlacquered* brass instruments like cymbals and cowbells.

Keyboards- 1) The black and white thing on the front of a piano or organ, 2) Inconveniently large and awkward instruments (a subset of the percussion and pit instruments) whose tuned elements are arranged chromatically like a piano's keyboard, as marimba, xylophone, bells and chimes.

Keys- 1) Fragile padded levers that are out of adjustment on woodwinds, 2) Tools used to unlock doors to Band Hall and Band Office 3) Tools used to tighten and tune drum heads, 4) Black and white levers on a keyboard used to sound notes.

Key Signature- Often overlooked marking in music, which tells in what key a piece is to be played.

Laps- 1) Running of these around a marching field is a common punishment for inattention or sloth during marching practice (just ask Mr. Wright!), 2) What tuba and euphonium players use to support their instruments when sitting down.

Lessons, Private- 1) One-on-one tuition of a band member by a private instrument teacher for which the band member is supposed to practice hence: 2) a Sisyphean endeavor.

Listening- Technique (in which many band members are unskilled) employing the ears to judge one's pitch relative to the band or to comprehend spoken directions of the band director.

Loading Crew- Loosely organized group of band members and parents whom load/unload the band truck.

Lyre- Device which is supposed to hold flip-folder on instrument while marching.

Major- Scale or key or chord in which the interval between the first note of the scale and the third note of the scale is 2 whole steps, there are 12 major scales, as in a C major scale, the key of D major, etc, see Minor, Chromatic.

March- 1) Short piece of music in double time intended to be played while marching in a parade, 2) the month during which concert contests usually take place.

Marching- Organized group walking around on a marching field or street.

Marching Band- A band that plays while marching.

Marching Band Camp- A week of marching practice for band members, scheduled to conflict with parents' summer plans.

Marching Field- A field 100 yards in length, marked in 5-yard increments used for marching band performances. There are some sports (such as football and field hockey), which can be played on a marching field.

Marching Horn (French or Baritone)- Special version of concert instrument wrapped trumpet style to direct sound forward while marching so that French horn and baritone horn players can point toward home.

Marching Instrument- Inexpensive, often second hand, instrument used for marching to protect expensive new instrument from marching related damage.

Marching Practice- Band members principal waking activity from August through November.

Marching Season- 1) Roughly June through November, the band parent's busiest time of year, see Concert Season.

Marimba- Very expensive, large and heavy mallet keyboard with easily damaged tuned wooden bars.

Mathematics- 1) The only human endeavor which rivals band in importance, 2) low grades in which are a frequent cause of band member disqualification.

Measure- Division of a staff of music delimited by bar lines. Defined by the number of notes of a specific length contained therein as shown by the time signature.

Mechanical Rights- The right to make a recording of a piece of music for subsequent sale.

Mellophone- An alto horn wrapped like a French Horn but fingered with the right hand and having piston valves. Used almost exclusively as a training horn for students too young/small to manage a French Horn.

Melody- The part of a piece of music that people remember, see Theme.

Mess- Condition of Band Bus at end of Band Trip. When used by band parents the word 'mess' is often qualified by adjectives such as 'complete', 'horrible', 'total' or '&#@&^\$!'

Metronome- Infuriating clockwork or electronic device which indicates beats at a set rate per minute preventing student from slowing or speeding during practice.

Microphone- Electromechanical sound transducer used to input sound into a recording, amplifying or sensing device, so called because they are much smaller than the old acoustic sound horns they replaced.

Mike- 1) Short for "Microphone", 2) To amplify as in, "They miked the flute soloist so he could be heard in the stands."

Military Bands- 1) Just about the only remaining paying band job to which student musicians can aspire after high school, AKA "Service Bands", 2) British term for what in America is called a Concert or Marching Band as opposed to the British "brass band", 3) Wind band used by infantry when marching to give the soldiers something to march to, the first military bands appeared during the 17th century, military band instrumentation has changed several times through history.

Military Marching- Older style of band marching and also used by the military to move infantry.

Military Style Bands- Bands that do military marching as opposed to Corps Style marching, see Corps Style.

Minor- Scale or key or chord in which the interval between the first note of the scale and the third note of the scale is 1 1/2 steps and the interval between the 7th and 8th steps may be 1 or 1/2 steps depending on whether one's purpose is melodic or harmonic and on whether one is ascending or descending with the result that there are 36 different minor scales needed to cover all possible eventualities, as in a B minor scale, the key of Gb minor, etc, see Major, Chromatic.

M.M.- Mark indicating tempo in number of beats per minute, mm=100 means 100 beats per minute, thought to be abbreviation of phrases "metronome marking" or "Maelzel's metronome", sources differ.

Money- 1) That which there will never be too much of in the Band Booster's Organization's bank account, 2) That of which there will soon be much less of in the new band parent's bank account.

Mouthpiece- 1) An object made of brass which is often lost by brass players, 2) an object made of brass which is often stuck tight in an instrument, 3) that part of a woodwind instrument into which the reed is inserted.

Mouthpiece Puller- Screw or lever action device used to pull stuck mouthpieces out of brasswinds.

Music- 1) What the band members are playing down on the marching field or up on stage. 2) important pieces of paper which band members misplace immediately before a band contest or band concert as in- "I can't find my music!".

Musician- A person who performs music or tries to.

Musicianship- What band members are supposed to be learning.

Music, Grade 5- Most difficult of band music (beloved by contest judges), first sight of which often reduces even First Chair players to mute wide-eyed disbelief.

Music Store, good- Emporium selling instruments at competitive prices, a wide selection of sheet music and speedy expert instrument repairs. There is a rumor one exists in Indiana.

Music Store, local- Source of overpriced instruments, guitar fake books and slow inept instrument repairs.

Mutes- Device inserted into brasswind bells to reduce their loudness to tolerable levels.

Natural, Natural Sign- Notation in music which cancels a previous sharp or flat notation, see Accidental.

Nickel Silver- Silver-colored metal alloy containing absolutely no silver and precious little nickel. Closely related to brass it has a few percent of nickel in addition to copper and zinc. Used for trim and bracing on brasswinds. Sometimes French horns are made out of nickel silver instead of brass.

Notes- 1) The sounds instruments make, 2) black dots on a page of music which represent these sounds and come in a variety of popular sizes including whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, etc.

Notes, Wrong- What band members often actually play.

Oboe- Small conical bore woodwind with a double reed which produces a nasal sound. Difficult to play and even more difficult to play in tune.

Octave- Interval between two notes having the same letter name. An interval of an eighth. A note an octave higher than another note has a frequency exactly twice as fast as in "A 440" and "A 880". A scale spans one octave.

Octo- A prefix meaning an "octave" as in an octo-contrabass clarinet which plays an octave lower than a bass clarinet.

Orchestra- Large poorly balanced instrumental ensemble with many string instruments but few tubas, some band members may play in it when it is in full orchestra mode.

Organ- 1) Originally a keyboard instrument which made sound by blowing air across pipes or reeds, 2) An electronic keyboard instrument, often portable, which imitates a pneumatic organ.

Over Blowing- Forcing too much air into a wind instrument which produces poor tone quality and bad intonation, a particular problem with young sousaphone players who for some reason suffer from an unreasoning fear that they can not be heard out on the marching field so that they over blow and produce an ugly blating sound.

Overtones- 1) The higher notes that can be played using one fingering on a brasswind or flute by adjusting the embouchure, 2) The higher frequencies present in the sound produced by an instrument, the overtones are what give each instrument its characteristic tone quality, without them all instruments would sound alike.

Pads- Soft disk-shaped wafers on woodwind keys which cover the holes in the closed position until they wear or fall out at which point a professional re-padding is needed.

Parades- Festive street processions interesting since they often include bands, usually held as part of a holiday celebration, i.e., Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Groundhog Day, etc.

Parts- A single instrument's or section's portion of a piece of band music as in clarinet part, bassoon part, tuba part, etc. see Score.

Pep Band- Small band, which plays in the stands at indoor sporting events like hockey or basketball games.

Percussion- Very loud banged instruments.

Percussion Feature- 1) Portion of marching show during which only percussion plays, 2) wind players embouchure rest period.

Photo Buttons (Pins)- A picture of your band member(s) in their band uniform in button form, which you proudly wear to games and contests causing no end of embarrassment to your band member(s).

Piccolo- A mini-flute producing high-pitched penetrating sounds, which define the word "shrill".

Piston Valve- Direct action cylindrical valve developed in France and widely used on brasswinds (except French horns) manufactured in France, Britain and America.

Piano- 1) Short for "Pianoforte", 2) Direction in written music that it should be played at low volume levels. The most ignored of all written directions in band music.

Pitch- The vibration frequency of a note usually expressed in Hertz (cycles per second), see Concert Pitch.

Pizza- All-purpose band member food.

Plumes- Fragile feather-like adornments worn (in fine weather) on uniform hats.

Plume Box- Unwieldy large heavy box (moved about by band parents), which has compartments for storing plumes.

Podiums- Raised platforms upon which conductors stand so that band members can see them easily and have no excuse for not being in time and on beat.

Practice- The hardest thing in the world to get band members to do. Even getting them to study is easier!

Private Lesson Teacher- Underpaid Sisyphus.

Program- A listing of the music to be played at a concert or contest.

Props- Things used (usually by auxiliaries) as part of marching show such as flags, back drops, bicycles, batons, pompoms, balloons, masks, CO2 canisters, light field artillery, etc., etc., etc.

Quick Step- Military marching at mm=120, same as quick time.

Quarter Tone- How out of tune young band members sometimes are.

Quartet- Small ensemble having four players

Quaver- 1) To play with a trill, 2) an eighth note (old usage but still current in Britain).

Rain- Inclement weather which interferes with marching practice.

Rain Catcher- A Sousaphone with an upright bell. The Rain Catcher Sousaphone, no longer made, was the type of Sousaphone actually used in Sousa's Band.

Recording- 1) A preserved musical performance as on tape or compact disc. 2) The act of making a recording.

Recording Bass- A bell front tuba, so called because of its use in the days of acoustic recording when tubas were used instead of string basses (which

were not loud enough) and the bell front was used to direct the tuba's sound at the recording horn.

Reeds- 1) Easily damaged devices made of reed that are often forgotten by woodwind players. 2) The instruments that have reeds taken as a group.

Reeds, Double- 1) Fragile reed made of two pieces of reed held together by wound string, 2) The instruments that use double reeds including oboes, English horns, bassoons, etc.

Reeds, Single- 1) Reeds consisting of a single piece of reed. 2) The instruments that use single reeds including clarinets, basset horns, saxophones, etc.

Rehearsal- Organized group practice of band (or other) music as, "When asked on his 95th birthday what he still looked forward to, the conductor Leopold Stokowski replied, "The next rehearsal!"."

Rehearsal, Dress- Traditionally disastrous rehearsal in full uniform using all elements (auxiliaries, costumes, props, etc.) that will be used in the formal performance, it is usually the last rehearsal before the performance.

Rehearsal, Sectional- Intensive rehearsal for one section of the band, usually held after school and sometimes conducted by a clinician.

Re-padding- Replacing the worn-out pads on a woodwind instrument, typically costs \$15.00 for the pads and \$250.00 for the labor.

Repeat- Direction in written music that the just finished section of music is to be immediately played a second time, often repeats are ignored deliberately in order to shorten the playing time of a piece and as a result sometimes some people will become confused and part of the band will take a repeat and part will not with lamentable results.

Repertoire- List of music a band performs or is prepared to perform.

Rest- 1) Symbol in written music indicating that no note should be played as in "The bassoons had fifty measures of rests during which they finished their algebra homework." 2) What band parents do after a band trip.

Riff- 1) A musical phrase, a term used originally in jazz, 2) To play a riff.

Rod, Cleaning- Long metal stick about which cloth strips are wrapped, intended to be (and sometimes actually are) used to clean out woodwinds before putting them away in their cases.

Roll- 1) Rapidly hitting a percussion instrument alternately with each of two sticks, as in drum roll, tympani roll, etc. 2) A small roundish bread or pastry which makes a good quick breakfast or snack while on one's way to the band hall.

Roll Call- Taking attendance of band members on band bus.

Roll Off- Four bar percussion riff, in which usually only the third bar actually contains a drum roll, which in parade marching indicates to a band that it is time to start playing.

Roster- A listing of a band's members.

Rubber Bands- Small elastic bands used for temporary repairs to keys or valves when springs break.

Rhythm- Temporal relationships among notes, accents and beats.

Rhythm Section- The percussion and bass instruments together.

Saxophone- A keyed and conical instrument made of brass but considered a woodwind with a single reed mouthpiece, best known as the instrument that the sarrusophone didn't sound as good as. Made in many sizes and keys.

Scales- Series of ascending/descending notes which band members should, but often don't, practice and memorize.

Scatter- Part of a marching show during which band members walk freestyle to the next set instead of marching in step, mistaken by less astute contest judges for poor marching.

Scholarship, Music or Marching or Band- Tuition money offered by many colleges (but not all of them by a long shot let me tell you) to students willing to play in one of the college's bands. Audition usually required.

Score- 1) All the parts in a musical composition printed together for use by the conductor in spotting mistakes by band members, 2) numerical rating of a

band's or band member's contest or audition performance as in: low score, poor score, bad score, etc.

Section- A grouping of like instruments as "trumpet section", "bassoon section" or "euphonium section".

Session- A period of group music making as in "jam session", "recording session", etc.

Set- 1) One of the layout positions of band members the moving amongst of which forms the choreography of the marching show as in Set 1, Set 2, etc., 2) Loudly shouted syllable, as in: "SET!!!" which combines the imperative and exclamatory forms. Purpose is to encourage band members to get into position, at attention and be quiet.

Sharp- 1) Overlooked marking in music which indicates that the following note should be played 1/2 step higher than written, 2) playing a note at a pitch slightly above the correct pitch which is personalized as, "You are sharp!", 3) when an instrument is out of tune because the slides are pushed in too far, 4) what the various cutting tools in band hall's tool box aren't, 5) how the band looks all dressed up in uniform.

Sharp, Double- Overlooked and somewhat rare marking in music which indicates that the following note should be played a whole step higher than written.

Shoe Laces- Short lengths of woven cotton yarn used for emergency repairs of percussion instruments, they can also be used to lace shoes.

Shoes, Marching- Expensive shoes worn with band uniforms and suitable for no other purpose, usually white with grass stains or black with scuff marks, frequently forgotten or lost by band members. (aka Harry Dinkles)

Show, Marching- The music and choreography performed by a marching band and auxiliaries.

Side Action Valves- Valves on a tuba or euphonium (piston or rotary) placed so that the player's hand reaches around and in front of the horn and the bell leans towards the player's left, same as front action valves, see Top Action Valves.

Sight Reading- Playing music that one has never ever seen before. Widely held to be the true test of a band's or individual musician's ability. Widely detested by school and amateur musicians.

Silver- Costly metal used to make the more expensive models of very small instruments (piccolos, flutes).

Singing- Music made without an instrument using only the voice, used by choirs which may sing with a band in concerts and sometimes used in marching shows.

Slide- U-shaped section of brasswind tubing which fits inside two slightly larger diameter tubes or over two slightly smaller diameter tubes and which can be pushed in or pulled out to shorten or lengthen the air path of an instrument. Extreme example is the slide on a slide trombone.

Slur- Marking in music, sort of a curved line above or below a group of notes, which indicates those notes are to be slurred, see Slurring.

Slurring- Beginning the next note without tonguing and while keeping the air flow going from the previous note to create a smooth movement from note to note.

Socks, Band- Familiar article of clothing for the feet (often black in color) frequently forgotten by band members.

Soloists- Band members who play a featured part by themselves in a performance, half of the band wishes that they were a soloist, the other half of band are glad that they are not soloists.

Sopranino- A ridiculously high pitched instrument above Soprano as sopranino recorder, etc.

Soprano- A high pitched instrument above Alto as soprano sax, etc.

Sousaphone- Marching tuba which wraps around player's body and is made visually conspicuous by a large flaring bell front, idea of which is attributed to Golden Age bandmaster John Philip Sousa, see Rain Catcher.

Sports- Various non-band athletic activities at schools, undesirable because they sometimes distract band members from band duties.

Spring- 1) Wound tensioned metal wire that, until it breaks, moves valves and keys back into the open or closed position, 2) Concert Season.

Stadium- Marching field with stands (and fences, gates, lights, parking lots, etc.), the place where marching contests and football games are held.

Staff- 1) Five parallel lines on which clefs and notes are written to show pitch, 2) The band directors, clinicians, etc. as a group.

Stage- 1) Raised platform on which the band sits during band concert, usually contained within auditorium, hall or band shell. 2) Get band members and equipment lined-up and ready to move to the performance area.

Stands- 1) Tall deskettes for holding music so that it can be seen while playing, 2) tiers of uncomfortable benches in a stadium on which audience sits at marching contests and football games, 3) devices which support larger instruments.

Step- The condition of having a band member's feet go up and down in perfect synchronization with all the other band members, as in, " The saxophones are not in step!"

Stick- 1) Generic term for a device used to strike a percussion instrument (drum stick, mallet, hammer), 2) a baton, 3) what un-oiled valves and keys do.

Stinger- A short accented repeat of the last chord of a march on the second downbeat of the very last measure, often stingers are not played in concert performances.

Stop- To mute a French horn by putting the right hand deep into the bell.

String Bass- A double bass viol played with a bow, sometimes used in concert bands and jazz bands.

Straps- Lengths of cordage/leather/plastic used to suspend instruments (saxophones, bassoons, tubas, drums, bell lyres, etc) while playing.

Students- All of the enrollees of a school including those who are not in band.

Study- What band members must do to pass classes, especially in mathematics, in order to avoid disqualification.

Summer Band Camp- 1) Summer camp run by a university music department where band members can squeeze in additional band experience during summer break, 2) same as Marching Band Camp.

Superbone- A combination valve and slide trombone used by some modern jazz artists, notably Maynard Ferguson.

Symphonic Band- 1) In general usage a large concert band, 2) In school usage a band in ability above a concert band but below an honors band.

Symphony- 1) A piece of music usually in several movements one or more of which is in sonata form, 2) same as Orchestra.

Syncopation- A common yet invariably effective and most certainly popular musical device in which an accented note is shifted from the down beat (where the accent would usually fall) to the up beat and is held through the next down beat. Used extensively in jazz.

Tails- Formal suit sometimes worn by male or female drum major as in "white tie and tails".

Tam Tam- What that instrument you think is a gong probably really is.

Tape- 1) Any of various types of adhesive backed cloth, plastic or paper strips used to repair everything a band uses, as in, 'Have you got any tape?' 2) Video and/or audio recording of band's performance.

Tenor- A lower middle pitched instrument between Alto and Baritone as tenor sax, tenor drum, etc.

Tenor Horn- Old name for English Baritone Horn except in central Europe where the name Tenor Horn is still used.

Tidy- Condition of band's section of stadium or band bus after band parents finish cleaning up.

Time- One of the four components of the multidimensional model of space-time in the physics of relativity. It is used to define the temporal relationships among notes in music, see beats.

Time Signature- Fraction-like numerical symbol which defines the length of a measure in terms of number of types of notes contained therein.

Toes- Band member appendages (approximately 10 each) which must be up when marching forward and on which they march when going backward.

Tom Tom- A snare drum without the snare.

Tonal- Based on traditional western harmonic structure, as in tonal music, the vast majority of music heard in America and Europe is tonal, see Atonal.

Tone- 1) A musical note or sound, 2) The quality of a played musical note as in, good tone, bad tone, full tone, etc.

Tone Holes- Carefully sized and located holes which are bored, drilled or punched in the body of a musical instrument. They are covered or uncovered (with fingers or keypads) to change the note being played.

Tonguing- Using the tongue to control the flow of air into a wind instrument at the beginning of a note usually moving the tongue as if saying the syllables 'TA', "TO", "TE", "DA", etc.

Tonic- 1) The first note of a scale, 2) What New Englanders call Soda.

Top Action Valves- In tubas and euphoniums, piston valves placed at or just below the upper bow so that the player's hand reaches over the bow or thru the horn, the horn's bell leans toward the player's right, see Side Action Valves.

Tower, Observation- Tall wooden or metal structure on which band directors stand during marching practice.

Treble Clef- Crudely stylized letter "G" used to identify the treble staff on which the high shrill notes (above middle C on a piano) are written. In a band flutes, piccolos, trumpets, saxophones, clarinets, horns and some euphoniums read in treble clef, see bass clef.

Triad- A chord having three notes especially one in which the notes are separated by intervals of a major and minor 3rd.

Trigger- Lever on a tuning slide on a more expensive brasswind (usually trumpets/cornets but sometimes also euphoniums and tubas) used to move the slide quickly in or out to correct intonation as in, 1st valve trigger, 3rd valve trigger, etc.

Trill- Rapidly switching between two notes.

Trio- 1) Ensemble with three musicians, 2) The middle or final section of a march or other short piece of music usually in a contrasting key or meter.

Trip- What inexperienced marchers often do.

Trip, Band- A (sometimes loosely) organized mass transport of a band for the purpose of giving a performance at a location remote from the band room.

Trip, Overnight Band- 1) An organized mass transport of a band for the purpose of giving a performance at a location so remote from the band hall that they must stay overnight at an hotel, 2) An activity loved by band members and dreaded by those band chaperones who still retain a shred of sanity.

Tritone- An interval between notes of 3 whole steps thought by many to be the most dissonant interval although some feel the interval of 1/2 step, the minor 2nd, is at least equally sour, same as augmented 4th, diminished 5th.

Trombone- Valveless brasswind whose air path length is changed via a large freely moving slide which can strike into musicians standing in front of trombonists which is why trombones march in the front of the band in traditional parade marching as in "Seventy-six trombones led the big parade.....".

Trombone, Bass- A large bore trombone with an F rotor attachment used for playing very low trombone parts.

Trombone, Valve- An English baritone horn wrapped like a trombone, used when trumpet or euphonium players have to quickly switch to the trombone without time to learn to use a slide.

Tromboon- Hybrid instrument which is part bassoon and part trombone. It is said to fully possess all the disadvantages of both. Invention of the tromboon was attributed to P.D.Q. Bach after his death when he was no longer able to disavow it.

Truck, Band- Undersized, usually rented, vehicle driven by band parents used for transporting percussion instruments, etc. (Bun 1)

Trumpet- Popular high pitched cylindrical bore brasswind with a very loud brilliant tone. In recent years trumpets have all but replaced cornets in American bands.

T-shirt, Band- Matching shirts worn by band members to make them easy to spot by chaperones when out of uniform.

T-shirt, Band Parents- Matching shirts worn by band parents to make it easier for band members to spot and avoid them.

Tuba- The finest musical instrument of all, closely related to sousaphone, bombardon, bass, brass bass, helicon. Sadly under appreciated by the public.

Tune- 1) An optimistic attempt to adjust instruments to the same concert pitch, 2) the state of being in the correct pitch, as, "The clarinets are in tune.", 3) the lead part or melody or theme in a piece of music.

Tuner- Electronic device which tells band members how out of tune they are.

Turf, Artificial- Rubber like artificial covering for a marching field which becomes slippery and unusable following rain.

Turf, Natural- Grass covered surface of a marching field which becomes muddy and unusable following rain.

Tympani- Expensive large copper or brass bottomed drums, four or more of which must be moved to every place the band performs, same as kettledrums, timpani.

Uniforms, Band- Snazzy matching suits, usually with hats, worn by band members to make them easier to spot by chaperones, distributed and altered by band parents.

Uniform Room- Huge closet-like room in which uniforms are stored between performances, also used for private lessons and ensemble/sectional rehearsals.

Upbeat- 1) The second half of a beat which is unaccented, 2) How band parents feel when their band gets a good contest score, see Down beat.

Valve- Thing-a-ma-bob on brass instruments pushed with the fingers to help change pitch, see Piston Valve, Rotary Valve, Top Action Valve, Side Action Valve. In standard design the 1st valve lowers pitch 1 whole tone, the 2nd valve lowers pitch one-half tone, the 3rd valve lowers pitch one and one-half tones, the 4th valve lowers pitch two and one-half tones. The size of 5th and 6th valves sometimes found on CC, F and C tubas is not standardized but 5th valves often lower pitch a little more than one whole step.

Valve Oil- A lubricant for valves usually not in the possession of young brass players.

Warm-up- Light playing on instruments before a performance to ready lip muscles and (literally) warm the horns.

Water- Common but heavy liquid lugged by band parents and used to refresh band members after performance of marching show.

Water Key- Polite euphemism for "spit valve".

Website, Band- Fascinating WWW page, usually maintained by band parents, with information, pictures, etc. about your band program.

Whistle- 1) Loud shrill sound used by drum major as a signal, 2) Device used to make the loud shrill sound.

Wind Ensemble- A small, often elite, band.

Woodwinds- Skinny, quiet (compared to brass and percussion) instruments requiring frequent expensive repairs.

Wrap- How the tubing of a brasswind is coiled as in, tight wrap, open wrap, Geyer wrap, etc.

Xylophone- The only thing used in bands that starts with the letter "X".

Zither- Plucked harp-like stringed instrument almost never used in bands
(OK, you come up with something better starting with "Z")