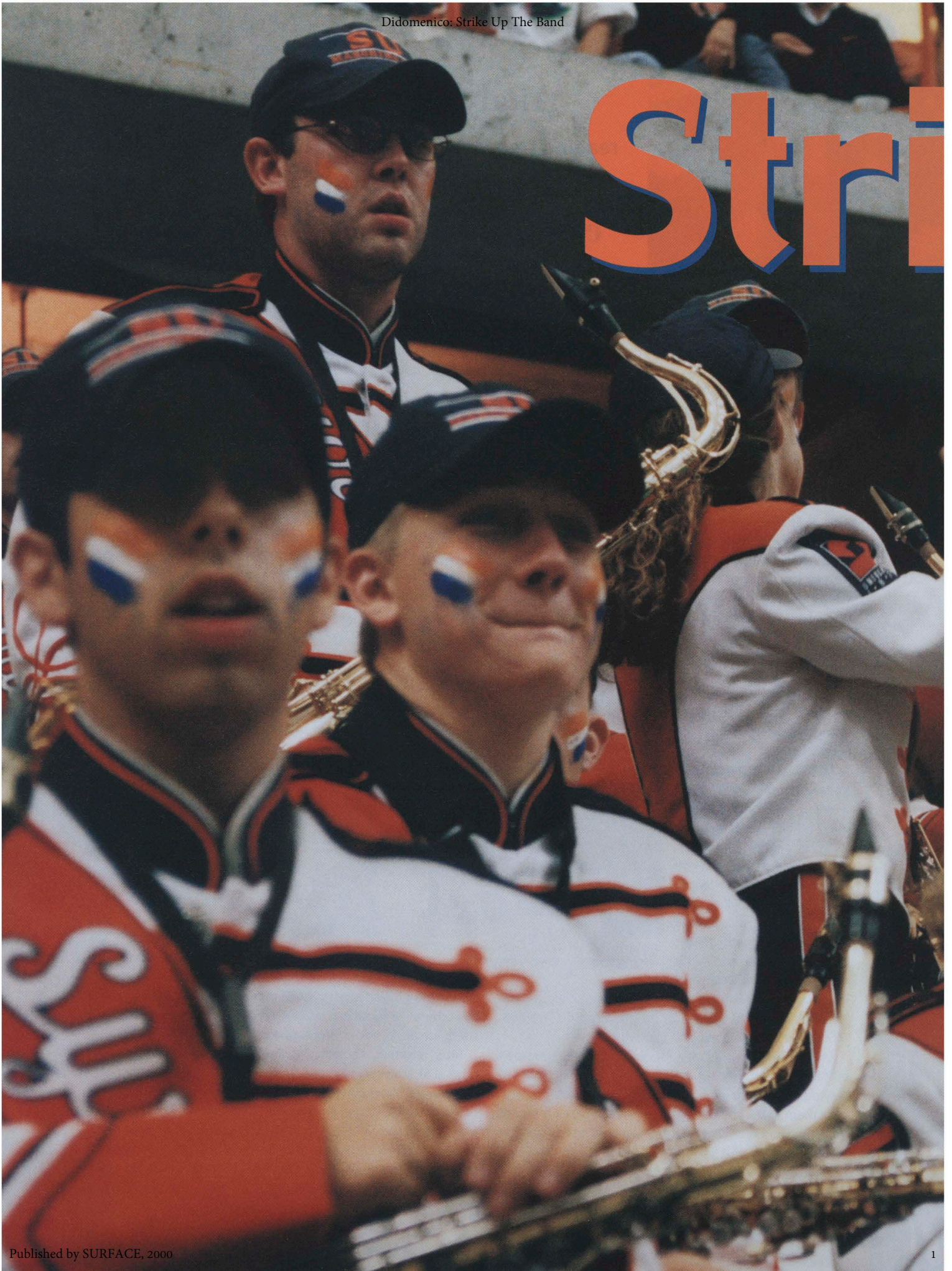
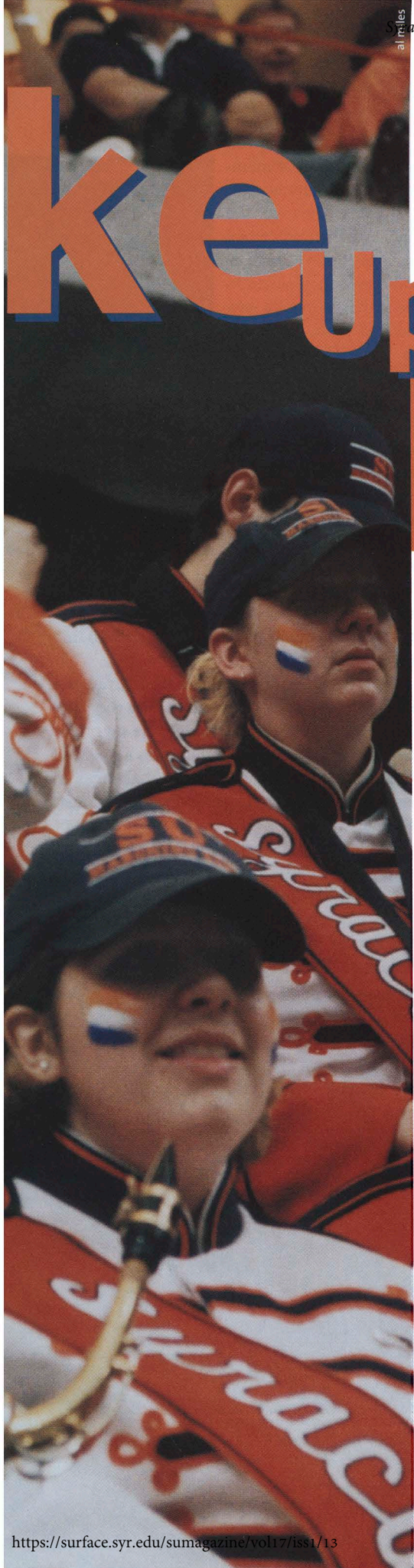


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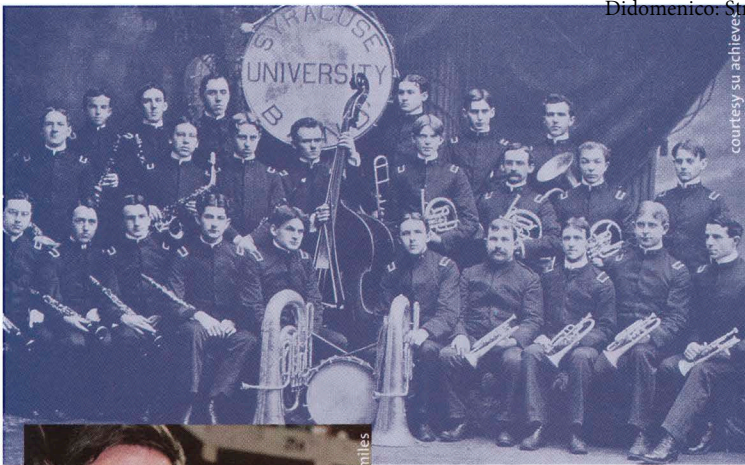
Keep Up The Band

The Pride of the Orange Marches On

BY TAMMY DIDOMENICO

From the male-dominated ranks performing in Archbold Stadium to the mix of men and women who now take the field in the Carrier Dome, the Syracuse University Marching Band (SUMB) has always thrilled crowds with its energizing half-time shows. The "Pride of the Orange" has evolved over the course of a century, but still marches onto the field during every SU home football game, members proudly wearing form-fitting, epauletted white jackets and blue pants with an orange stripe down each side. With more than 200 members, the band perpetuates the best elements of its long history.

The SUMB's role in University history is not lost on College of Visual and Performing Arts professor Bradley Ethington, who serves as assistant director of bands and director of the Pride of the Orange. He is committed to maintaining those qualities that made the band one of the most respected in the country. "To many people, especially alumni, the SUMB carries great tradition," he says. "The marching band is a constant source of pride for the University."



courtesy su archive

Playing in the Syracuse University Marching Band in the early 1900s was an all-male activity.



SUMB director Bradley Ethington and his family enjoy a performance.

From Parades to the Playing Field

Evolving from the Students' Army Training Corps, the early SUMB entertained during campus and city parades, as well as at many home and away football games. In 1925, the band, then directed by Marvin A. Fairbanks, began its official partnership with the athletics department. The SUMB has since performed at all home football games and now accompanies the team for one road

game a year and all bowl appearances.

When the band performed at Archbold Stadium, members marched across the Quad to the stadium at the start of each game. Today, the band still holds pregame concerts followed by the march to the Dome. Marc Perlowitz '87 recalls that when he was in the band, the longstanding tradition of running onto the field before the pregame show was briefly abandoned. Ethington has since brought it back. "There are so many little things that are part of the band's history," Perlowitz says. "Someone on the sidelines probably would never notice, but those little things mean something to band members."

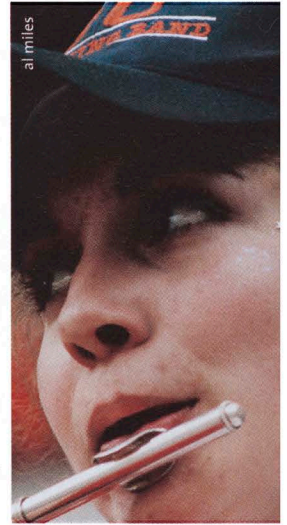
Over the years, the band tried a variety of novel ideas to enhance its performances, including a short-lived experiment that put members on horseback. In 1947, the first baton-twirling "Orange Girl" joined the SUMB, her performance choreographed to the band's music. Dorothy "Dottie" Grover '53 achieved renown usually enjoyed only by the football players. She capped off her appearance with the band—then known as "One Hundred Men and a Girl"—at SU's first-ever Orange Bowl game in 1953. The band went to the bowl sporting new uniforms, donated by Learbury Clothier of Syracuse. Richard Picolla '56, G'60, a freshman trumpet player at the time, fondly recalls the white straw hats that topped the band's navy

blue blazers and slacks. But he also remembers the hats as a source of aggravation. "People used to try to steal them all the time," he says. The hats took their proverbial bow at the final game of the 1956 season, against Colgate. Band members planned to toss the hats into the stands at game's end, but the choreography had them facing the Colgate section at the crucial moment. "We ended up throwing oranges at the Colgate fans," Picolla says. "Then we turned around and threw the hats to the Syracuse fans."

Among the most memorable events in SUMB history was the opening of the Carrier Dome. Gone were the days of marching outside in the raw, late fall weather of Syracuse. "One of my fondest memories is opening night at the Carrier Dome in 1980," says Deb Lombard '81. "It had to be 100 degrees-plus on the field that night, and we were in those wool uniforms, but we knew we were making history. It was absolutely thrilling to march onto that field for the first time."

Robert Spradling, SU director of bands from 1980 to 1993, says the opening of the Dome was a major turning point in how the band put together its shows. "That was a time of change," he says. "The University was reviewing the band's role and there was a renewed interest in the football team. There were certain challenges in putting together a show for a crowd that large—even in just adjusting to the volume in there."

Spradling, now director of bands at Western Michigan University, says the band was especially grateful for head football coach Dick MacPherson's support during those early years in the Dome. The band also appreciated that, under MacPherson's leadership, it became commonplace for the football team to earn a bowl bid. When the team goes, so does "The Pride."



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Despite some lean years, overall band membership grew steadily, from 60 members in 1925 to more than 200 last year. Ethington, who expects to direct about 240 members this fall, isn't surprised by the interest. "It is still one of the few non-athletic campus activities, if not the only one, that is truly a team effort," says Ethington. "Decades later, students look upon it as one of their most memorable college experiences."

Kathleen Sacks '85 vividly remembers Saturday morning rehearsals on game days. "Who else on campus was up at 8 a.m.?" she says. "But there was always something special going on to make it fun. Sometimes we showed up in our pajamas. Near Halloween, we dressed up in costumes. The 'bandies' were always up to something."

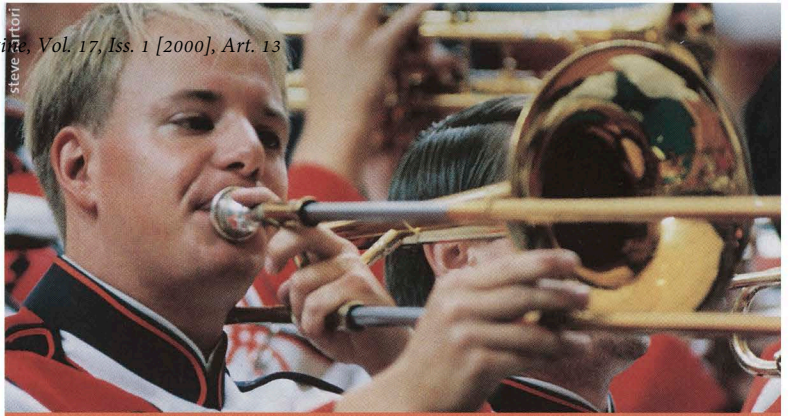
Perlowitz says memories of his days in the SUMB are what keep him active as an alumnus. "During my first year in the band, the football team beat the Nebraska Cornhuskers, who were ranked number one. It was one of the biggest upsets of the year. I remember walking back to my dorm after the game in my band uniform. Students would come up to me and start talking about the game. We all shared in the excitement of that moment. Those experiences stay with you."

A Tradition of Excellence

Ethington, who has guided the Pride of the Orange for five years, expects students to commit to the band's high standards of excellence—musically and otherwise. Students are introduced to the rigors of band life through "Band Camp," which begins a week before the start of fall classes. For freshmen, it's an opportunity to establish a network of familiar faces. But it also is a crash course in dedication. Over the years, the means of breaking in freshmen have varied. Hazing, a fairly common activity of the formerly male-dominated SUMB culture, is now strictly forbidden. But some rituals have survived the passage of time. New band members are still required to sing the fight song and the alma mater in perfect four-part harmony by the end of camp.

Ethington says band members come to camp eager to join a proud tradition. "Every time we put on our uniforms, we represent SU," he says. "Everything we say or do reflects on the University. We consider ourselves to be ambassadors of the University's best, so we hold ourselves to a high standard."

Alyson Wasko '02 says the SUMB's leadership structure, which evolved gradually during the past 30 years, makes it possible for a large group of musicians with varying degrees of ability to quickly



Staging a Comeback

The SU Alumni Band has had a rather sporadic existence over the past decade, but it made a solid comeback last year. After a few years with no alumni band at Homecoming, 45 alumni returned to campus last year with their instruments in tow. For this year's Homecoming football game against Miami on November 18, Professor Bradley Ethington, director of the Pride of the Orange, hopes to see at least 100 alumni marching. If the enthusiasm of the alumni committee is any indication, that goal should be reached. "To be honest, I missed playing," says Dan Baldinger '53, a veteran of the United States Marching Band, the SUMB, and past incarnations of the SU Alumni Band, which he now co-chairs. "We are in the building stage now, still testing the waters."

Erin Horner '90, G'92, chair of the Alumni Band Association, says current membership includes alumni from a wide range of classes. "We bring a variety of band experiences to the mix, but we all have a desire to share and a passion for tradition," she says.

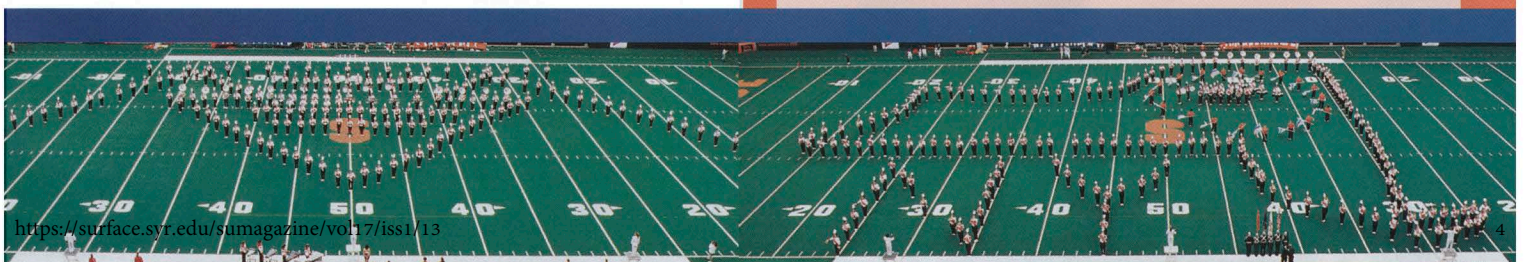
The Alumni Band has also given musicians who didn't march as students an opportunity to do so as alumni. Frank Mastroleo '49 played clarinet in the concert band as a student and says the Alumni Band is a good way to maintain his connection with the University. "I do it because I love to play, and I love Syracuse University," he says.

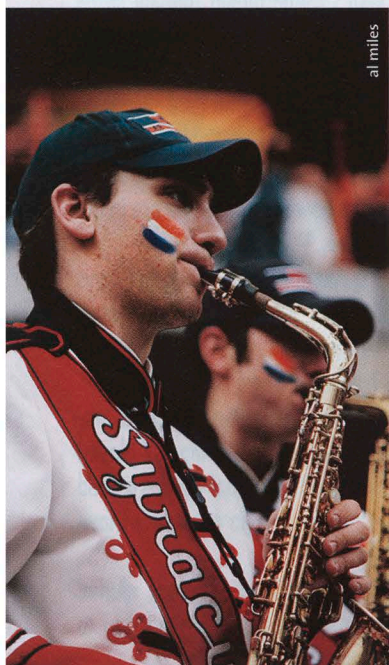
Baldinger hopes to recruit fresh faces this year, getting young alumni involved with the band so they can stay connected to SU. "They are key to our continuation," he says. "We need that enthusiasm."

Future Alumni Band members will be hard-pressed to match the dedication of George Wainwright '28. For many years, Wainwright donned his trademark bow tie and played tuba at the Homecoming game. Deb Lombard '81, an original organizer of the Alumni Band, says his vitality was inspiring, and his involvement kept several older members coming back each year.

Horner is confident the Alumni Band can make a strong impression on fans and students for years to come. "So many band people come back each year for Homecoming," she says. "Now we just have to get them back on the field—not just this year—but year after year."

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form a cohesive unit. "The drum majors and section leaders really take charge and motivate everyone to do what they have to, which makes for a positive environment for rookies," she says. "Some come in with no marching experience at all. The leaders teach them everything they need to know."

For Jim Picolla '92, being a section leader helped further his career goals. A former SUMB assistant drum major, he's now a band director for the New Berlin, New York, school district. Picolla says the relationship between section leaders and other band members is important for the support it provides. "For the most part, we were all friends and comrades," Picolla says. "The section leaders were considered older

siblings more than anything else. They set a tone for how band members interact with each other."

Like Picolla, Ron '81 and Deb Lombard '81 found that their time in marching band helped prepare them for life after college. "I was a section leader for the trombones," Ron Lombard says. "Today I manage a television news department of 50 people. Those leadership skills really started developing during my band days."

For Deb Lombard, the performance was the thing. "I now run a children's party planning service," she says. "I host parties and keep kids entertained for two to three hours. Back in flag corps, we had to put on a good show. You can't be shy on the field in front of 50,000 people."

Friends for Life

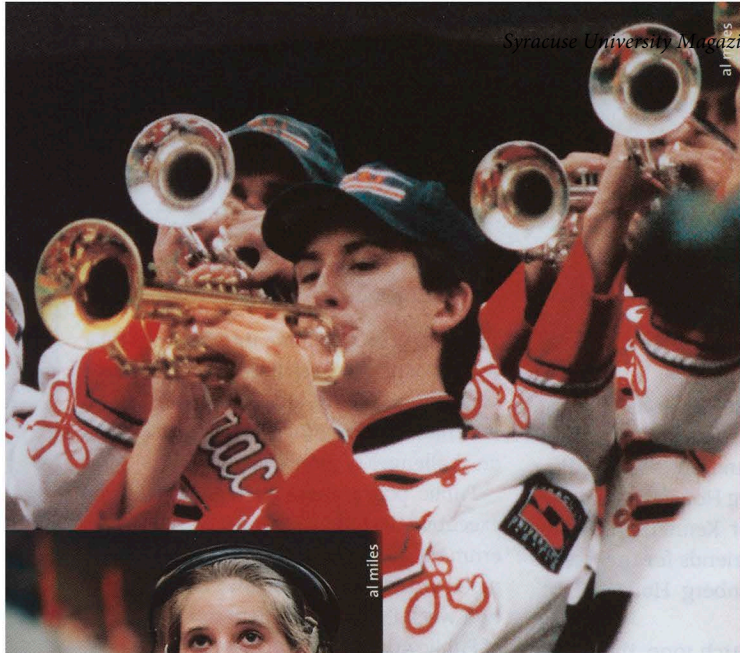
From band camp onward, Pride of the Orange members spend a lot of time together and make lifelong friendships. Ron Lombard played trombone in his high school concert band in Solvay, New York. But his motivation for joining the SUMB was more social than musical. "It instantly got me involved in a large and diverse group of fellow students of all ages, all majors," he says. "When you practice, perform, and travel together, you become close friends."

Some of Deb Lombard's fondest college memories stem from her time in the band. "We always hung out together," she recalls. "We'd go to the Varsity on Friday nights and there would be a sea of orange marching band jackets. Other students would take one look inside and say, 'We're not going in there. The band has taken over.'"

Erin Horner '90, G'92 formed SUMB friendships that remain at the center of her life to this day. "Band gives you this instant family because it is such an intense experience," she says.

For at least two dozen couples, those friendships eventually blossomed into romance and, later, marriage. Jim Picolla met his wife, Tammy '92, in the band. "We started dating when I was assistant drum major and she was color guard captain," he says. "Before we knew it, we were in love."

The Lombards began their journey together during a chance meeting at the Varsity. Kathleen Sacks also met her hus-



band, Stuart '83, in band. For Marc and Pam Perlowitz '87, love bloomed during a 1985 road trip to the Cherry Bowl.

"The band holds an important place in our lives and it's fun to share that," Pam Perlowitz says.

Energizing the Crowd

As constant as SUMB traditions have been, the University is a very different place from what it was in 1900, and the atmosphere at football games has changed since the band first officially played at one in 1925. In decades past, students happily sang along as the SUMB played the Syracuse University fight song, "Down the Field," and they knew the alma mater. Today, fans hear taped music between plays, and the fight song's only appearance may be on T-shirts sold by vendors. Still, the band's role at football games remains essentially the same. "Every time we play, we do our best to get the crowd going," Ethington says.

Jen Ricciardo '01, president of the SU chapter of Tau Beta Sigma, the national honor band sorority, says it's important for the band to be open to change. "People would really miss new routines and songs if they weren't there," she says. "I think the band will continue to evolve as the years go by—and that's good."

Current band members seem poised to carry on the band's history and pride into this new century. "The marching band is an amazing group of people who still want to get together, put on a polyester uniform and uncomfortable shoes, and march around on a football field every Saturday," Wasko says. "It takes a certain kind of person to do that. I'm still amazed that more than 200 people on this campus are all working for the same thing. We're a dedicated bunch, and we produce great things when we all work together. I'm very proud to be a part of it."

Adding Pep to SU Basketball Games

About 30 years ago, Jim Boeheim '66, G'73 served as an advisor to a small group of musicians who served as the pep band at SU basketball games. From humble beginnings, a great band was formed. Just ask the current advisor. "The Sour Citrus Society is the finest student-run band in the country—bar none," says College of Visual and Performing Arts professor John Laverty, SU director of bands.

The pep band's 180 members provide entertainment at all home men's and women's basketball games, except during holiday breaks. Citrus also plays at the Comstock Kidsfest, the annual Coaches vs. Cancer Basket-Ball, the annual Make-A-Wish Foundation auction, and at Syracuse elementary schools. For away games, 30 members travel with the team.

There are plenty of differences between the Sour Citrus Society and the Pride of the Orange. For starters, Citrus doesn't march, and since the basketball season is considerably longer, the band must be prepared to play any one of up to 30 pieces of music at a given time. "They learn on the job," Laverty says. "They don't have the time to rehearse three nights a week the way the marching band does. Citrus will sometimes hand out music in the stands. That can be stressful for new members, but it's a great way to find out if they can deliver the goods."

Members of the student-run Citrus elect representatives to the organization's executive board. "I want section leaders making decisions," says Laverty, who provides behind-the-scenes support. "I want student conductors making decisions. They get real leadership experience with this organization."

Justin Mertz '01 was elected one of two student directors of Citrus for the past two years. "We are responsible for conducting the band, but more importantly, we communicate with arena officials via headset to ensure that all support and spirit organizations [cheerleaders, the dance team, and Citrus] are coordinated and ready to perform at the appropriate times," he says. "It's been my single most rewarding experience at SU."

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