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# BLAWENBURG BAND Est. 1890 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the home of The Blawenburg Band!

Editor: Linda Garvey



Proud member of the  
ASSOCIATION OF CONCERT BANDS  
The International Voice of Community Bands  
www.acbands.org



## From The Podium - Dr. Jerry Rife

Our 135<sup>th</sup> - Anniversary Concert on May 18, 2025 was a triumph deluxe. We played very well and presented a balanced ensemble that was in tune and very musical. Our audience enjoyed themselves and so did we.

I am really surprised by the celebration of my 40 years on the podium. Thank you to the board for planning the awards and getting the word out to local and national media. I will hold dear the honor and treasure the framed and signed photo, the NJ Senate Resolution and John Anastasio's composition dedication. The reception after the concert was the icing on the cake.

I'm not sure you were able to hear my remarks of gratitude that I gave just before intermission, and I thought I would include that in this newsletter.

*"When a band, choir or orchestra is successful, as this one is, usually it is the director that gets all the credit. But, if you think about it, the conductor is the only one NOT actually making music. Conductors are up here waving our arms about, while the sound - the sonic product - comes from the active musicians - the folks that are actually playing.*

Photos by Ephemra Photographics

*Sure, there are countless hours in rehearsals refining the music - playing together, getting in tune, and creating music with air, breath and mallet at the right dynamic level, at the right moment, and with the best tone. The rehearsal is where the conductor can inspire perfection and train the group to be a single ensemble rather than a group of individual musicians.*

*Thus, the concert really is the tip of the iceberg - the result of our collective work. This performance is a collaborative effort. Practicing the parts, learning how best to play together, and giving the astounding gift of time toward that end over many, many years is the path toward the best ensemble and the best possible performance.*

*It has been an honor and truly a defining experience of my life, and of Leslie's life, to be part of this band. In essence, The Blawenburg Band is our extended family. I thank each band member for what they have given to this band and to us, and I especially appreciate your kind words and thoughts during this celebration of my part in our joint success."*

Submitted By: Dr. Jerry Rife, Conductor



### Celebrating Jerry Rife's 40<sup>th</sup> Year Behind Baton

The band took the opportunity to not only celebrate their 135<sup>th</sup> concerts but paid tribute to Jerry Rife's 40 years as the conductor. Jerry was presented with a Senate Resolution, framed signed photo by all band members, glass plaque, a musical selection written especially for him and immediate reception following.



### Band Members - Who Like to Compose Music

Several band members enjoy composing musical selections then giving them to Jerry as an option to play.

For the May 18<sup>th</sup> concert, clarinetist, Skip Livingston composed a piece called "*Spread Your Wings*" that was on the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program.

Concert Master, John Anastasio, composed a special piece to commemorate Jerry's 40<sup>th</sup> year behind the baton with a piece called "*Blawenburg Band Forty*".



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**To our Band Ad Program Sponsors:**



**BIG THANKS** to the following sponsors for their generous support of the Blawenburg Band by taking advertisements in our 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert Program. Please consider utilizing their services:

- One 53
- Stilo Disposal
- WG Siding and Roofing
- NJM Insurance Group
- Dandelion Wishes
- Super Buy Rite Wine & Liquors
- Morgan Stanley Wealth Management - Steve Colli
- Ewing Diner
- Acupuntcure Holistic Center of NJ
- Russo Music
- T Seeland Sounds LLC Audio Services
- Cordas Music
- Amwell Valley Diner Restaurant
- Hunterdon Music
- Holcombe-Fisher Funeral Home
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- McCaffrey’s Food Markets
- Working Dog Winery
- The Tomato Factory
- Sheila Fernekes Design Studios
- Lyons-Archer Kitchen & Interior Design
- ACA Studio - A Cut Above Hair Studio

**Grants & Fundraising Committee Thank You!**

The Grants & Fundraising Committee consists of three band members - Bill Fernekes; Linda Garvey; David Klucsik. This committee was established after Covid to help raise awareness of the band to the public and raise funds for the band. This Committee has done a tremendous job of helping the band along financially with their bi-annual ad campaigns for our concert programs and establishing a calendar and processes for soliciting for donations.

Susan Knox has since stepped down from the committee, but she was instrumental in leading the team for Grant submission to Mercer County where the band did receive some funding for their 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program.

Sarah Danser was the bands team leader in coordinating our annual donation letter mailing campaign for distribution in April of 2025.

**Thank You to Sheila Fernekes**

Sheila is married to band member Bill in the trombone section. She generously donated her time and effort to create the beautiful full-color program we had for our 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert.

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**Association of Concert Bands (ACB) Journal Article - Band and Jerry Rife**

The Grants & Fundraising Committee worked with The Journal of The Association of Concert Bands (ACB) to write an article about the band's milestones – 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert and Jerry Rife's 40<sup>th</sup> year behind the baton – to have it published in their spring issue.

Thank you to the band board for approving the purchase of 80 copies so each band member can have a copy to commemorate this special band event!

**Other publications on Jerry Rife**

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) interviewed Jerry Rife, John Anastasio and Bill Ferenkes for their May Issue which discusses the band and specifically about John as an alumnus.

Here is the link:

[https://issuu.com/tcnjsignal/docs/spring\\_25\\_issue\\_no\\_040e164b4a6cdc?fr=xKAE9\\_zU1NQ](https://issuu.com/tcnjsignal/docs/spring_25_issue_no_040e164b4a6cdc?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ)

**NEW Blawenburg Band Website Launched**

The band launched its new and improved website to great success, check it out ---

<https://blawenburgband.org/>

**Thank you Band Sections for Your Ads!**

On half of the Grants & Fundraising Committee, thank you to all those band sections that took out a special ad in our 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program to pay tribute to Jerry as their conductor for 40 years.



**The Flute and Bassoon sections congratulate Dr. Jerry Rife on 40 years of conducting the Blawenburg Band**

*Here are a few of our favorite memories and stories...*

*"It has been such a pleasure joining the band this year and working with Jerry. He picks incredible pieces for the band to play, keeps rehearsals fun, and despite a long drive, I really look forward to Mondays every week!" - Jill*

*"At this point I've been in the band for more than half my life, and besides being a place to make music, the band has become a second family to me... Jerry has made the band a warm and welcoming place that has become an integral part of my life." - Susan D.*

*"I think my favorite composer story has to be about Steven Spielberg and John Williams. After watching Schindler's List, Williams told Spielberg he needed a better composer. Spielberg replied 'I know, but all the better ones are dead!'." - Daniel*

*"I loved performing at Longwood Gardens in 2011 on the same stage that John Philip Sousa conducted on almost 100 years before." - Susan K.*

*"Playing in the Blawenburg flute section has been a masterclass in band history through stories... and the joy of the Boy Scout Strawberry Festivals year after year. This was our first job with the band made memorable by the generous servings of strawberries, ice cream and cake. Thanks for this music!" - Leslie*





**CONGRATULATIONS JERRY!**

**The Horn Section**

THE HORN SECTION IS HONORED TO BE UNDER YOUR BATON! HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT!




**We would like to congratulate you, Dr. Jerry Rife on your 40 years of making music with the Blawenburg Band. It has been our pleasure being under your direction!**

**The Clarinet & Saxophone Sections**

**Best Wishes, Jerry on 40 Years with the Band!**  
"Congratulations to Jerry from the best section in the band!"

**The Trombone Section**





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### Thank You to Emphera Photographics

Big THANK YOU to Edward Anastasio, Professional Photographer, Owner of **Ephemra Photographics** for his time and talent to take photos of the band at our 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert! Here are some highlights of our sections that he took.





**How you can make a difference.  
Thank You!**

We are grateful to the individuals, small businesses, and corporations who donated to the Blawenburg Band in 2024. Your donations have been crucial in the continuous operations of the band.

Your support, whether big or small, will have a profound impact on the Band's capacity to enrich the cultural life of our community and beyond.

Consider a "Legacy Gift" to the band -- for more details, please contact band treasurer, Bruce Levinson, at [brucelevinson11@aol.com](mailto:brucelevinson11@aol.com).

<https://blawenburgband.org/support-donate/>

**Check out the Blawenburg Band Performance Schedule!**

Don't miss out on the latest and future performances of the band. Please visit our website at:

<https://blawenburgband.org/performance-schedule>



THE BLAWENBURG BAND  
2025 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES  
AT THE HOPEWELL TRAIN STATION




Please join the band as we return to the Hopewell Train Station to play some musical selections for you. Bring your chairs, picnic basket and friends along to enjoy the evening.

HOPEWELL STATION  
2 RAILROAD PLACE, HOPEWELL, NJ 08525  
ADA COMPLIANT; RESTROOMS AVAILABLE

MONDAY, JUNE 30 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.  
MONDAY, JULY 14 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.  
MONDAY, JULY 28 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.  
RAIN DATES TBD

Hopewell Train Station  
Established 1876

FREE Concert - Donations Welcome

**Holiday Program - Save the Date!!!**

The band is pleased to announce the date for their annual Holiday Program. Sunday, December 7th, 2025 at 3:00 PM --- The College of New Jersey!

SAVE THE DATE  
TIS THE SEASON  
*To Celebrate with Music!*



Join the Blawenburg Band for their  
Annual Holiday Program  
Sunday, December 7, 2025 - 3:00 PM  
The College of New Jersey  
Kendall Hall  
2000 Pennington Road  
Ewing Township, NJ 08618

Free - ADA Compliant - Donations Appreciated  
[www.BlawenburgBand.org](http://www.BlawenburgBand.org)

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