

# CENTRAL SENIORS BAND

**1985-2010**

## HISTORY OF THE SENIORS BAND



## SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO:

- Grace Lewis
- Margaret Lochhead

## THE CENTRAL SENIORS BAND

In 1979, when Rev. Florence Hunter was Associate Minister at Central United Church on Ouellette Avenue in Windsor, she was also coordinating activities in the new Cencourse Building. I, Grace Lewis, was still teaching instrumental music to Grad 7 & 8 students, primarily in the West Side Schools in Windsor. Miss Hunter was resolute in her desire to have a band program in the new building and in 1979 I agreed to start the program.

Miss Hunter had learned of the New Federal Horizon's Program, headed by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Monique Begin, and she approached the Windsor representative, Mark Pfaff, to learn about the program, the main purpose of which was to tap the under-used talents of retirees and seniors. It was felt that these people could provide entertainment to the community. Grants would be given to groups which could qualify. The Central Seniors' Band was set up and applied for a grant for Band Instruments. Music Firms were approached to submit estimates, and Waterloo Music was the only one to quote prices. In 1981 a grant for \$11,112.00 was received to purchase 27 instruments and equipment, to provide an honorarium for the conductor and insurance coverage.

The group was required to have a Board of Directors, and officers, to retain records of all transactions, and to keep records for 6 years. An assured rehearsal hall was important and the newly built Cencourse Building agreed to house the program in perpetuity. As most of the participants could not read music, Central United Church provided money to purchase Recorders and study books, so that much of this learning could take place while we waited for our order to be filled.

The Band Executive was elected:

President: Harold Courtney

Secretary: Mildred Francis

Treasurer: Louise Maberly

A report to the Regional Officer was required every 3 months.

Central's Ministers, Don Wilson and Don Hull were very supportive of our project. The Band Members were anxious to have uniforms and I donated an embroidered afghan to be raffled to help raise funds. Freeds of Windsor was selected to be the provider of the uniforms. In 1983, a new group of beginners was started, and a second grant was requested from New Horizons.



We were reminded that our instruments were owned by the Seniors Group, and that they could not sell or donate any equipment without contacting the Regional Office. A cheque for \$5,202.00 was received to fund the purchase.

A hand bell choir was also started at Central, and a grant of \$8845 was received to purchase 1 4 octave set of Malmark Bells.

Over the years, until the time of writing this [2010] the Band and Bells Groups have held 2 concerts a year in Friendship Hall of the Cencourse Building, at Christmas time and in June. A lunch is provided. These concerts are well attended, and serve as a main source of revenue.

As well, the band has performed at many nursing and retirement homes and in schools in the city and county. For over 20 years the Health Units "Living Longer, Living Better", has requested a concert at Christmas, and Huron Lodge has featured the Band in June and the Bells at Christmas.

In May 2003, the band played for Central United's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the grounds in front of the church. This anniversary was planned by a committee that tried to involve as many church members old and new as possible. Rev. Paul Wilson of the Toronto Theological College was the guest speaker on Sunday, and Dr. Anne Squire, former Moderator, came from Ottawa to read the Scripture.

On the Saturday at the outdoor service the Rev. Kirby Breithaupt, played the part of the Circuit Rider, Nathan Bangs, who travelled through Ontario to establish mission churches. Marguerite Turnbull led in his horse [a costume with 2 bell ringers inside] A time capsule beautifully crafted by Mark Radvanyi, was dedicated by Rev. Craig Drummond and buried at the front of the church. The Junior Choir, dressed in period costumes, was led by Sandra Radvanyi. The band played for the procession of dignitaries, and for the hymns. At one time Windsor's Fire Trucks, accompanied the band as they drove by on Ouellette Avenue.

Interesting venues for the band, have been at the Mayor's Riverwalk, on the stage of the Festival Theatre on the riverfront, at the Navy Yard Park in Amherstburg, and in front of an apartment building, Caldwell Tower North, as well as in many Public and Separate Schools. Also worthy of mention is Centrals' annual picnic and worship service, which has taken place at GessTwood Camp, Memorial Park, Cencourse's second floor patio, and on the Radvanyi's home grounds. In 2010 the band played for a worship service and picnic in Memorial park, with over 200 from 4 churches in attendance.

The investment by the New Horizons Program and the persistence of the Rev. Florence Hunter, had led to 29 years [as of 2010], of involvement by many hundreds of retirees and seniors.

Respectfully submitted

Grace Lewis

