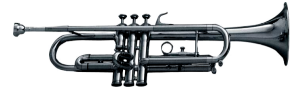


Fort Calhoun Pioneer Band



A Tradition of Quality, Class and Pride

[This letter will be posted online as well, so if you misplace this, you will still have access to this information. It will be in the “Course Information” section of our Sr High Band webpages.]

May 25, 2023

Dear Senior High Band Members: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Greetings! This is coming out a bit earlier than usual but that is probably a good thing! Hope you have transitioned into “summer schedule” and are enjoying yourselves. Recharging during the summer is a good thing!

This letter did not come out last year until after we got home from the Washington trip. As there was a lot of “carry over” energy from the trip, this is what I started out writing to the group:

Quote: “As always, the FIRST thing to grasp is this: The excitement, the quality, and the future of the Pioneer Band is now in YOUR HANDS. Continuing the outstanding legacy and long-standing tradition of the Band is now the PRIVILEGE and RESPONSIBILITY of a NEW SET of classes and a new set of LEADERS.

YOU will be creating the next chapter in the permanent history of the Band.I thought we had good energy in the group this past year. We still need to grow both numbers, and of course we always need to keep “growing” and developing our skills as musicians. We need section leaders demonstrating charisma and energy. Several good “musical” leaders from last year need to be replaced, and we continue to need strong “people” leaders. Again, every single one of you will be writing the next “chapter of history” of the band by your participation, by your attitude you display, and by your energy exuded. People who quietly “rode along” beneath the leadership of past graduates are going to need to STEP UP in a big way and become the new BIG PERSONALITIES in the Band. **YOU** need to become the new PERSONALITIES that younger students in the Band look up to; **YOU** need to become the new PERSONALITIES in the Band that help the younger students develop; **YOU** need to become the new PERSONALITIES that make it “FUN” to be in Band; **YOU** need to become the new PERSONALITIES that make it “cool” to be in Band. **There was somebody ahead of you that got YOU to the point you are now; where would you be if that person had not been there in the class and had not stepped up. NOW it is YOUR TURN to be that PERSONALITY for someone younger. Be responsible; STEP UP.** End Quote.

Overall, **you did a great job this past year** of tackling that challenge. What an outstanding year in terms of musical performance, and what a great job of maintaining through a challenging period. Well, again we lost some good leaders. However, many of our new leaders were relatively young and will be back to continue leading. SO... my challenge to everyone...from the returning experienced members to the new freshmen...is exactly the same. Reread the paragraphs again, and continue to do the same. **Continue to GROW, both as a musician and as a leader!**

The new season will begin on July 31, 2023, with three days of class instruction we call simply SESSION ONE. These dates have been published in the “Upcoming Events” lists in ALL the program notes for our concerts since the Winter Concert at the beginning of March.

This long letter is basically a form letter and contains the “nuts and bolts” of the fall program. Experienced members, READ FOR ANYTHING NEW; See pages 5 and 6. Newer members need to read carefully for important information about the start of our new season. ALSO... PLEASE BE LOOKING FOR **ALL STATE** information. **The audition recording due dates are now early...mid-September!!!!** READ...take note...and **mark your calendar** with the 1st semester performance dates. DO NOT plan anything else on performance days until you know the exact schedule for that day's event.

Our Mentor Program. This did not really get put back in operation last year, as we had hoped. We need to try again to get this helpful program functioning.

SESSION ONE is exactly what it implies—the time in which we do that first, absolutely necessary work required for the whole class to get a new season started. It is the first step toward building yet another championship season. It is the start of establishing and developing new leadership. Albeit an early date, **Session One is part of the regular season.** The first marching show is learned completely and performed, the first attendance records are kept, including tardies, and the first grades of the season are actually recorded during these first full and productive days. Work is begun on the field marching show for the season, and some pep band music for the season is introduced and put out for individual work. The session concludes with THE FIRST PERFORMANCE of the season, as the band presents to the public a sampler of their progress on the final evening. This makes for a busy three days requiring every bit of student leadership that can be mustered!

[Please note: Basically every quality band program I know of that is competitive at all has numerous rehearsals and sectionals throughout the summer. Some occupy partial days for three to four weeks of the summer; others basically go on all summer. We have kept our work time to a very, very condensed schedule. Consequently, in turn for not disrupting everyone's schedule all summer, it is very important that EVERYONE comply with the very brief time we have scheduled. There are approximately 21 hours and 45 minutes of instructional time during SESSION ONE; making it up later will take an individual about an hour after school every day for four weeks.]

1. Note: everyone should be at **ALL** “SESSION ONE” activities.
2. Here's how it all works....

First of all...WELCOME to our incoming Ninth graders. We urgently **NEED EACH AND EVERY MEMBER** that we have spent the last four years training and we look forward to having you in Senior High. As we tell each new class at this point: We have long held a tradition of high and exacting standards in our organization and we expect no different in the future. As you join us now, we trust that you are ready, able, and willing to help us maintain this outstanding quality level. But... Please!... **Do NOT be worried about your ability to perform.** You **WILL BE TAUGHT** what you need to know and **OTHERS WILL HELP YOU** get it all down. **Everyone is apprehensive at first. You will feel much more comfortable by the end of SESSION ONE.** We will have entirely learned our State Fair Show by the end of camp as well. (“Learned” doesn't mean “perfected.” There will be a lot of mistakes in the first performance!)

We also absolutely **MUST HAVE** experienced Juniors and Seniors “**GIVING BACK**” to the program—being there now to provide leadership, mentorship, and encouragement for the young 9th and 10th graders coming up. You are needed to make sure that the program continues to run at the same high levels of performance expectation that have made the Band a championship program for your first two years of high school and the many years prior to that. **[THIS IS AGAIN ONE OF THE MOST VITALLY IMPORTANT PARAGRAPHS IN THE LETTER.]**

SESSION ONE REHEARSALS. SESSION ONE will follow a format similar to past years, beginning the preparations for our fall performances. It is important that we make sure our **fundamentals** are as solid as possible. We will be discussing the essential elements of POSITIVE LEADERSHIP and how we **all** can have a role in it. Positive leadership is of prime importance if we are to be a strong and successful group. We will continually be working on ideas to help us all take more responsibility and ownership in the overall project.

During SESSION ONE we will work on a variety of activities to: a) review playing fundamentals, b) try to revive rusty embouchures, c) learn and review correct marching fundamentals, d) introduce and work on new music, and e) review some of our standards. We will be alternating activities frequently, spending time both indoors and out--so dress accordingly in cool, comfortable clothes and good marching shoes, being sure you have whatever you need to be out in the sun (hats, sunglasses, sun screen, etc.) **ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WEAR SANDALS OR FLIP FLOPS.** To be the most successful we can be, everyone must come in with an attitude of wanting to do the very best you can in every rehearsal. You CANNOT march successfully in sandals. WEAR LACE-UP TENNIS SHOES. In consideration of proper attitude and leadership, **section leaders wearing inappropriate footwear are subject to losing their position.**

You know the dates from our spring concert programs and school publications. Here is the TENTATIVE outline of the schedule, subject to minor modification:

Monday, July 31	--	8:45 to 12:00	Part ONE
		12:00 to 12:55	Lunch--Sack lunch
		1:00 to 4:30	Part TWO
Tuesday, August 1	--	8:45 to 12:00	Part THREE
		12:00 to 12:55	Lunch--Sack lunch
		1:00 to 4:30	Part FOUR and Business meeting
TUESDAY EVENING	--	7:30 p.m.	BAND PARENT’S MEETING
(All persons interested in the future of the Fort Calhoun Band program are invited to attend.)			
Wednesday, August 2	--	9:15 to 12:30	Part FIVE
		12:30 to 1:25	Lunch--Sack lunch

1:30 to end Part SIX, election
of officers,
(6:05 ish) Performance at the
City Park, followed by
evening meal, and.....

SWIM PARTY/SOCIAL TIME for all members...

buses return by 11:15 - 11:30 p.m.

PLAN ACCORDINGLY

This is again the tentative schedule. YOU HAVE ADEQUATE TIME TO PLAN WORK, ETC. *The SOCIAL TIME, as referenced earlier, is a critically important element. I don't have time/space here to try to explain all of the psychology of it, but* the social time together with everyone is very valuable for **team building**; it is important for the group to get acquainted and to share some recreational interaction time after three hard days of work. (There are reasons for ALL requirements--whether you understand them or not. You may not think you need to get to know someone better, but **YOU** may be the role model SOMEONE ELSE needs to get to know.)

Given the **right attitude**, hard work really CAN be FUN. Making progress is fun. Achieving excellence is fun. Winning is FUN. Therefore, I DO expect to have some FUN along with getting a lot of work done. Some of our goals for the three days include:

1. A careful start on tone production/embouchure training for the new season.
2. To review good playing fundamental—the good old basics.
3. To know and be able to execute properly, consistently and uniformly the marching fundamentals--again the basics. The BASICS are it—they are A MUST!
4. To review and shape up parade marching.
5. To learn our State Fair show COMPLETELY.
6. To start learning music for our fall field performances.
7. If time, to start on our field performance choreography.
8. To learn our parade marching music.
9. To meet, get to know, and make welcome our incoming 9th grade class and any other new members of our ensemble.

AS ALWAYS we have some paperwork in the form of 1) Uniform Fees, 2) Uniform Contracts, and 3) Permission Forms to be turned in as we start the season. According to our Uniform Contract the payment at this point is technically already PAST DUE. The Uniform Rental Fee is 30.00 for the year. A minimum of \$15.00 deposit is due at uniform check-out time, with the balance due by the **end of the third quarter**. You will NOT receive a uniform until your deposit is paid--BRING IT TO SESSION ONE. New students will also need to order shoes during this time.

Without Session One it would be nearly impossible to be ready for our first performances. Realize that we have only a handful of regular school days before we have to present two major performances! A successful kickoff in SESSION ONE produces a smoother, easier, and less frustrating season after school starts, and hopefully, with less practice.

Also enclosed is the schedule of major fall performances. **Please take note of them.** A complete schedule for the entire school year will be available when school starts. **BE RESPONSIBLE**—inform your employers (and your families!) at the appropriate time--it will make life more pleasant for everyone. **FAILURE TO BE AWARE OF THE SCHEDULE causes more problems than any other factor in the entire program.** We may have to make some performance decisions again; we might possibly discuss replacing the LINKS festival with a different festival on that weekend (??)

Woodwind players, **if your horn has not been in the shop during the past year**, you should take it in NOW to have it checked over before the season starts. Brass players, if anything is wrong with your horn, get it into the shop--now. You should also have the inside of your horn cleaned out at least every other year!!! Be sure not to let your slides and valves freeze up! **TAKE THEM OUT AND GREASE THEM—TODAY. DO NOT BRING BRASS HORNS WITH STUCK SLIDES!!!**

ENJOY your summer vacation--don't work too hard! Try to relax a bit. This is also one of the longest summer breaks we've had, so.... **PLEASE START TRYING TO GET BACK IN SHAPE A LITTLE** by the end of July. (Buy some music you know and like; then, play it. Try learning your scales—its very advantageous to know them!)

PLEASE NOTE THE ANNUAL BAND PARENTS MEETING that is scheduled during Band Camp. Help pass the word around to parents! These meetings are few in number, but significant policy matters are discussed. A discussion of your scheduled trip to Orlando, Fl, will be among the agenda topics. Jr High Band parents and anyone else just interested in the future of the Band Program at Fort Calhoun are urged to attend. You students are also welcome to attend and provide input.

At ANY point in the season...If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch with me, your mentor, or any responsible upperclassman. As always, 1) ASK questions—don't wander around in a fog or get yourself in a bind by being too bashful to ask; and 2) COMMUNICATE—with your section, your section leader, and with me. (E-mail works well. I can get it from anywhere in the world I happen to be. mjones@ftcpioneers.org) (Summer responses might not be real snappy!)

We have discussed YOUR taking ownership in the band. We have discussed our instrumentation and personnel needs, how it affects all of us, and how you can play a part. These situations are different from year to year, but **as always**, from this point on, **how the new year actually turns out is very much up to each of you—its in your hands.** And, like always, it all starts....now.

*In closing, I—as always—want to issue this annual challenge to all of you. **Put into action** every bit of potential energy, potential leadership, and potential talent you have. Remember, **nothing was ever accomplished with “potential.”** Then, combine those assets with hard work... and create an outstanding final product that may be even greater than anything you can imagine on your own!!*

FULLY EXPECTING OUTSTANDING RESULTS,

I LOOK FORWARD TO YET ANOTHER(#47!) GREAT SEASON—

And to seeing all of you on July 31....

—*Mr. Jones*

~~ **IMPORTANT FIRST SEMESTER DATES** ~~

July 31 – August 2 — SESSION ONE: Sr Hi Band Starts
August 1 — Annual Band Parents Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
August 30 — Fort Calhoun Band at the NE State Fairgrounds
September 4 — SEPTEMBERFEST PARADE in Omaha
September 23 — Papillion South Marching Invitational
[September 13-23 — All State Band Audition Recording Window]
October 7 — Either Links Invitational Marching Festival, Lincoln High OR
Bennington Marching Invitational (most likely, Links Festival)
October 14 — O.P.S. Invitational Marching Festival at Burke High
October 21 — N.S.B.A. State Marching Festival at Seacrest Field, Lincoln
[Nov 16-18 --All State Honor Band/NMEA Convention in Lincoln]
December 17 — Christmas Concert (3:00 p.m.)

**A REMINDER TO THOSE OF YOU INTERESTED
IN ALL-STATE:** It is time (past time) to start preparing.
Email me for help getting started, as I will have to send you some
music. The “recording window” is REALLY EARLY now. You should get
started! Several of you have the potential.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

EXCELLENCE: Many Times The Difference Between Failure and Success Is Doing
Something Nearly Right . . .Or **Doing It Exactly Right.**

QUALITY: The race for Quality has no finish line!

SOME “PROACTIVE” WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE STARTED IMMEDIATELY...

Our first activities of the year are STREET MARCHING events.

We need three units of auxiliary personnel to supplemental our main Instrumental
Block Band: The Banner Unit, the Pom unit, and the Flag unit. The ideal would be for
these people to start learning the ropes and then be ready for the Fair, the Septemberfest
Parade, and then hopefully continue on with us for the Florida trip.

It will be to their and our benefit if they are present for some of the fundamental marching
training in Band Camp. The idea really has always been for them to have their State Fair
routines well underway and have their initial performance with us at the park on
Wednesday evening. Please communicate with these people (part of being LEADERS), as
they are NOT on our bulk mailing list. (You can also help them find this information online.)

Also keep in mind...these groups have to be COMPETENT. Everything they do, every step they take, is part of the JUDGING for our marching band.

*BANNER Unit (minimum 6 people)

2 people for the Banner itself

2 people for the American and State Flag

2 people (minimum) for the Orange/Black "School Color" Flags

(3 or even 4 would be great and a nice bonus, but not necessary)

*POM POM Unit (should have SIX people—more is fine)

Once upon a time and for many years, this was the domain of the Dance Team. However, that has not really been the case the last dozen years or so, but they are certainly welcome. The Cheerleaders did a great job of filling in here last year. (If there is no cohesive unit involved, UNIFORMS can become an issue.)

*FLAG UNIT (should have SIX people—more would be fine, but we don't currently have more actual flags.)

This has traditionally been the domain of the Cheerleaders.

These 18 people in these 3 units are critical to the structure and look of the marching band on the street.

AND LET'S BE FRANK HERE IN TERMS OF OUR BAND ITSELF...

WE are *still* very short of numbers in our main band as well. We are *still* short of personnel in almost every instrument category right now. We *still* need MORE of EVERYTHING.

We *still and always* need every person that was making things work so well last year in both the Junior High Band and the Senior High Band.

We need more of anybody we can get, including, yes, even beginners in high school. It can be done. (Thank you, Eddie! Thanks for jumping back in, Cooper! ...and Anna for switching!)

We need more of the people walking the halls...that already know how to play...back sitting in their seats.

AS A GROUP, AS LEADERS, PLEASE GET TO WORK ON EVERY POSITION DISCUSSED ON THIS PAGE. PLEASE GET STARTED NOW. EVERYONE CAN HELP WITH THE PROCESS. YOU NEED TO BE POSITIVE AS WELL AS "PATIENTLY and PLEASANTLY PERSISTENT." (You may not get an instant "yes" response, but let them have a little time. Don't take it personally if they say "no" at first.)

AS FAR A WORKING ON ACTUAL "playing" BAND MEMBERS, BE POSITIVE. BE AGGRESSIVE ABOUT WORKING ON THE "RECRUITING" PROCESS, BUT BE LAID BACK AND POSITIVE WHEN TALKING TO PEOPLE. BE PERSISTENT, BUT HAVE SOME PATIENCE. (You may not get an instant "yes" response, but let them have a little time. Don't take it personally if they say "no" at first.)