



When I last visited this space, I described how joining the Lowcountry Community Concert Band led me to a reunion with a college band friend I'd not seen in 45 years. Here's another LCCB short story. During one of our Tuesday-night rehearsals, which are held at May River High School, I was chatting up a fellow tuba player, Lee Wiggins.

Somehow we got to talking about how he started a small community band in a village deep in farming country in western Illinois. Raritan, Illinois. Raritan intrigued me, for two reasons: First, it had a real, honest-to-goodness bandstand. And two, there was something distinctly New-Jerseyish about the place, which I'll get to in a moment. Raritan's bandstand no longer exists, but many bandstands are lovingly preserved in town parks to this day. Wherever I see one, I want to jump up there and start playing my horn.

Lee was teaching high-school band and chorus in nearby Biggsville, in the early 1980s. A few miles up the road in the village of Raritan, Lee was asked by some school parents to form a town band there. Eventually this group grew to about three dozen adult and student members. You don't have to be Professor Harold Hill to get folks fired up about playing in a brass band. Once you've started on an instrument, it stays with you, one way or another. Lee spoke of one local woman who pulled her old alto saxophone out of a closet and was playing it again for the first time in 40 years. Lee's Raritan band played concerts in their bandstand, which stood next to the Opera House, a frame structure which was built circa 1902 and is reportedly still in use.

Secondly, about Raritan itself. I'm from New Jersey, and went to college on "the banks of the old Raritan," as the Rutgers University school song says. I found that the village of Raritan, Illinois was settled in 1856 by folks from (wait for it) Raritan, New Jersey. Many street names sounded familiar: Princeton Street, Trenton Street, Newark Street, and of course, Jersey Street. I'm greatly chagrined to report there is no Rutgers Street.

Anyway, if you attended any of the LCCB’s recent concerts, you’ll certainly enjoy these, which are guaranteed to lift your Christmas holiday spirits. Bring a friend, or several. This year’s concert theme is “Around the World in a Sleigh.” Both of these concerts are free. Locations and times are as follows:

Sunday, December 9, at 5 pm, at St. John’s Lutheran Church, 157 Lady’s Island Drive, Beaufort; and Tuesday, December 11, at 6:30 pm, at May River High School, 601 New Riverside Drive, Bluffton.

The LCCB’s program includes *The Sussex Mummers’ Christmas Carol*, by Percy Grainger; *Min or Alterations (“Christmas Through the Looking Glass”)* by David Lovrien;
A Hanukkah Festival (Sevivon – Maoz Tzur – Hanukkah), traditional songs arranged by Chris Bernotus;
O Magnum Mysterium, a band arrangement of an inspiring choral work by Morten Lauridsen;
A Christmas Festival, by Leroy Anderson;
Greensleeves, a band arrangement by Alfred Reed of a traditional British folk tune;
Sleigh Ride, by Leroy Anderson; and
Christmas “Pop” Sing-a Along, a medley arranged by James Ployhar. This program will be narrated by master of ceremonies Bob McCloskey

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In addition to the LCCB, you’ll also get to enjoy additional selections by two more instrumental groups, the Lowcountry Flutes and the Lowcountry Brass Quintet.

The LCCB performs under the baton of Conductor/Artistic Director David Carbone (above), who has over 30 years of experience in music education and the marching arts as a performer, conductor, educator, arranger, and adjudicator, including a 23-year career as a band director and music educator at the high school and collegiate levels in Florida, Ohio, and Texas. David Hershey, our Associate Conductor, is a former U.S. Army musician who retired after 24 years of service as a Trumpeter and Music Production Specialist. During this time he served as Soloist

on national and international tours, as well as Principal Player, Section Leader, Group Leader, and Music Support Division Chief. Dave graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and has had numerous musical experiences and projects with many of America’s well-known band leaders. A member of LCCB for several years, Dave is also Music Director of the Lowcountry Jazz Band and performs with the Evolution Big Band.

The LCCB is sponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of South Carolina - Beaufort. The Institute provides intellectually stimulating, non-credit programs geared for adults of the Lowcountry. The LCCB provides an opportunity for musicians of all ages and abilities to play instrumental music together for enjoyment as well as to perform for the community. Any OLLI member is welcome to join. Students and adults of any age can also join the band. Students are exempt from paying the OLLI membership fee that is required for participating in the band.

The LCCB is 100% self-sustaining, and receives no state or local funding. Donations are welcome, and are used for buying new music and equipment, repairing instruments, and paying for transporting equipment to concert venues. For additional information, contact Pete Johnson at (267) 884-6805 or Rick Eckstein at (843) 707-7813. Please visit our LCCB website at www.ollilccb.com

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JEFFY, I’VE ASKED HIM TO SEND THESE PICS AS SEPARATE FILES. DON’T HAVE THEM YET, BUT HOPE TO SOON!

Conductor/Artistic Director David Carbone

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