

Mr. Chapman:

As a MHS alumni, I ordered and received the latest edition of the MHS Alumni Directory and the accompanying CD. In checking out some of the features of the CD, I discovered the website for the MHS Band. All I can say is "WOW!"

All that leads up to say to you that I am a former member of the band when Mr. Claude Dahmer was the Band Master. That was in 1948 & 1949. He was a great, but strict and a no nonsense director, conducting the band in somewhat of a military style. He insisted that one practice hard and attend all band practices and performances or otherwise, you did not play in the band. Band practices were all business and no "monkey business." He was extremely fond of John Phillip Sousa's marches. We played them so much, we all knew them by heart and did not use music when marching at ball games or in Mardi Gras. The website shows the band marching on Carlen St. I can remember us doing that also. That was many, many years ago. I'm now almost 77 years old and live in Birmingham,

I was First Trumpet (or Cornet), First Chair in 1949. Incidentally, all five of us first row guys were trumpet players. Four of the five are still living. In 1948, we went to the State Band contest at Tuscaloosa, and in 1949, several other members and myself went to Tuscaloosa to try our for the All-State Band. I placed First Trumpet, First Chair in that contest. I also played First Trumpet in our orchestra. I bought my new Olds Super trumpet from a music store on Dauphin St. in the summer of 1948 and it is still in good shape.

At our Senior Year Spring concert, and we always had an annual Spring concert, we played a composition by Mr. John Morrissey entitled "Caribbean Fantasy". As you probably know, Mr. Morrissey was the Music Director at Tulane University for many years and apparently, composed a number of tunes with a Latin beat. I had the Trumpet solo in the piece of music. Mr. Dahmer had it recorded on an LP 78 disc, but unfortunately, over the years, my copy was lost.

About a year ago, I called Mr. Barry Spanier, Music Director at Tulane University, and for a nominal price, he was kind enough to send me a CD by the Tulane Marching Band playing "Caribbean Fantasy" and many other compositions of Mr. Morrissey. He also emailed me a copy of the actual music for the piece.

Although I continued playing my trumpet for many years through college and military service and into my 40's, but put it up, much to my sorrow. In listening to the Tulane Band play Caribbean Fantasy", I am amazed I could play the trumpet solo in it. I sure can't do it now. Hitting a "High A" sure it not as easy now as it was when I was in Murphy's Band. I have started back playing my trumpet or at least, trying to play it. The tone is a bit fuzzy and not so crisp as it was when I was younger, but, it is still fun to play it.

It does this old man's heart good to see that you still send band members to State competition, and make many national and international trips.

Out of curiosity, what is the size of the band now. As I recall, we had about ninety (90) members in the band who actually played instruments, plus the majorettes.

My apologies for being so long winded.

Kindest Regards