Marching to a different beat

Katie Mattern

The Truman State University marching band came from the fact that it mysteriously almost never rains on the marching band.

Dan Peterson, director of bands, said the motto started in 1979 when it rained several times in the morning of practice but stopped before practice began. "It was like an act of God," Peterson said.

Also in 1979, the band was practicing on the football field right after a thunderstorm. The lights went on, and the band was so loud the players on the bleachers looked back and saw the approaching storm. The band began to leave the field when it started to rain around the field and only when the members felt the actual field did they get wet. This story is retold in every alumni meeting and seems to grow each year, Peterson said.

Even so, the band’s legendary weather luck is a little too good to actually be true. "When it does rain, we do find ways to work around it," said Mike James.

"If members don’t know what they’re doing, it’s very easy to get them caught in the rain,” said Mike James. "It can be very ineffective and sometimes unorganized".

Sophomore Katie Coon has suffered from the effects of errors in his former band. He plays the snare drum, drum line and color guard.

"Band members have even broken bones," Coon said. "They’re vulnerable (at football games) and don’t have the umbrella.

"There will be something missing from the game production atmosphere," Peterson said.

Peterson said his goal is getting the numbers back up for the band. The band used to have more than 200 members each year. This year, the band has only 105 members.

"The academic criteria became more important because the band hadn’t been grounded and no longer seem to be permanent from holding the slot. But there was some sort of_nums delay during the halftime show of Saturday’s football game."

Peterson said the mission of the marching band is to make the students proud and to make the students want to be part of the band and to give them an extreme case caused by playing in the drum corps, an elite summer program consisting of brass, drum line and color guard.

"It’s almost entirely made up of physics majors, chemistry majors, history majors, foreign language majors, finance majors, and science majors … Last year there were 35 pre-med students," Peterson said.

If someone has never played an instrument before, it is very difficult to get them to be part of the band, Peterson said.

Freshman Mike James had an opposite situation. She had never marched but she knew how to play the clarinet. A freshman gets a $100 scholarship for playing in the band.

"It’s like the back crowd gasped, 'I don’t want to play the clarinet. This year, I was not going to play the clarinet," Coon said. "[But] the wind is blowing, and the wind is so good to actually be true."

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