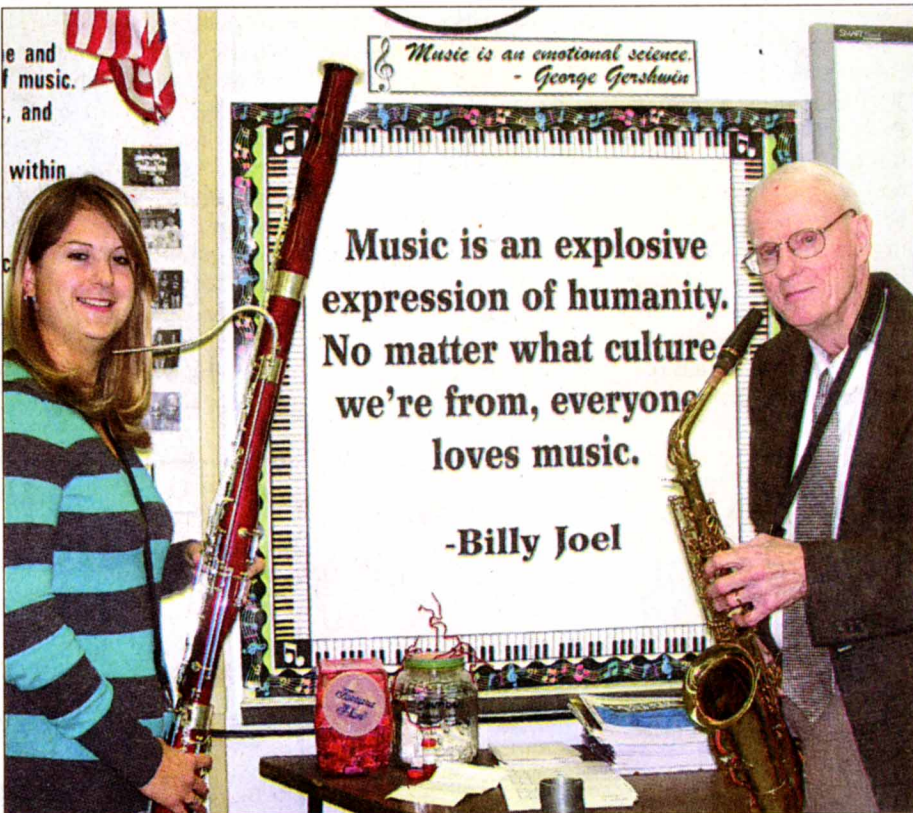


Bob Lyon's lifetime love for music a true gift to the community

By Jennifer Kneuss
of The Bargain Hunter

It is a gift to be musically inclined, but it is an even greater gift to share that love of music and music abilities with others. Bob Lyon is a true example of a person who shares his musical gifts with others.

Lyon, 79, of Strasburg, is a well-known and much beloved area musician and educator. By age 11, he had fallen in love with music, and a lifetime passion began. A sixth-grade student in a Pennsylvania grade school at the time, he begged his father to buy him his first instrument - a clarinet. "In movies then, they had music...there was Benny Goodman...Woody Herman...Artie Shaw...and they all played clarinet, and I just thought that was the greatest thing in the world. So my dad went out...on my birthday, which was August 5, to a hockshop, and for maybe \$15, he bought me a metal clarinet. And that's how I got started. He lined me up with a teacher that I couldn't understand too well...he



Bob Lyon, longtime area musician and educator, visits with former student, Mia Trustdorf, now a Dover High senior. Lyon taught Trustdorf to play the bassoon while she was in middle school, and she continues to do so in the Dover High Concert Band.

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was Italian and had a little store in his house."

Lyon was hooked. He took advantage of every opportunity to play, and he

and friends started a small band they called The Downbeats. Eventually, he graduated from playing for classmates' events to play-

ing out in the community, and earned what was a grand sum to him then, \$5 per night.

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After high school, Lyon earned a music degree from Westminster College in Pennsylvania. He auditioned for the U.S. Army band, and played there before moving on to teaching. During the summers, he attended the University of Colorado to earn his master's degree in music. Someone recommended that he teach in Tuscarawas

County, and he went to work in the Strasburg schools. Lyon taught there for 20 years before accepting a position with the Dover school district's music department.

Fred Delphia is a retired Dover High band director who taught with Lyon for 16 years and currently directs the Dominic Greco Band, in which Lyon continues to participate. He was delighted to bring Lyon on board. "I've always been amazed with

him, how he could pick up literally any instrument while he was working with them, and play it amazingly well. He could demonstrate it so well," said Delphia.

He also told of Lyon's special way with his students. "I know this - the kids really worked hard for him. He had a great relationship with all the students. They respected him, they responded, and that's why he always had good results. He was so enthusiastic about it; the students

got caught up in it, too. When he came to Dover, he brought all that enthusiasm with him."

Lyon continued to teach at Dover until his retirement in 1990, when current middle school band director Joan Wenzel took the helm. He continued to teach private lessons throughout the county, and the Dover music department asked him to continue on with helping the students with lessons and small ensembles. Wenzel

considers Lyon's work with the students for several hours each day, Monday through Thursday, to be an invaluable asset to the program.

"You can't replace him. I have learned more in the last 20 years about music from Bob than I did in college. He's my hero. He's amazing...a treasure," she exclaimed, with heartfelt sincerity. "He won't tell you this, but he's even in the Ohio Band Directors Hall of Fame." She is grateful for the many generations of students he has

taught and influenced in his almost 55 years as a Tuscarawas County music educator.

Besides investing in the lives of his students and playing with the Greco Band, Lyon has also served as a marching band, solo and ensemble, and concert band judge with the Ohio Music Educators Association, and continues to play in the locally well-known big band group Recollections. He has been married to his wife, Nancy, for more than 56 years.

What does Lyon like

most about working with the students? "They make me forget my problems...my health problems, other problems. I work with them. I love working with the woodwinds, mostly. Today's biggest challenge is practice. They are so used to just pushing a button. These kids are very bright, though. They learn very fast. That's the fun of it, they keep me on my toes!"

His advice to other seniors is simple: "If you just sit around, you're asking for it!"