

one lump or two

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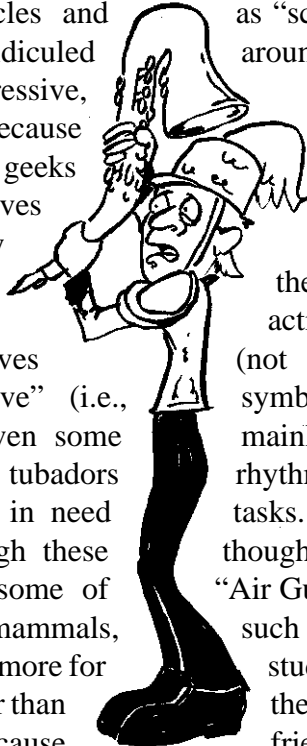
Your Coffee Break Companion

Friday, March 12, 2004

ON SCHOOL BANDS

(Excerpt from the unwritten book *On Things* by Trevor Hodgkins and Jason Salas)

Getting your child into band can be one of the best things you could ever do for him or her. It's good for a person to learn a musical instrument and if that person is a school kid, they also get to interact with other kids learning musical instruments. There are two drawbacks to this decision, though. One is that your child may choose to play a musical instrument that is quite costly to purchase or rent. Another is that your child may develop into what is known as a "bandgeek". It is not unusual for a bandgeek to perceive that he/she is better than everyone else. Unfortunately, most bandgeeks have small, underdeveloped muscles and are prone to being ridiculed by larger, more aggressive, non-band students. Because of this, some band geeks take it upon themselves to use their costly instrument as a sort of club in which to defend themselves and their "band cave" (i.e., the band room). Even some of the more robust, tubadors may find themselves in need of protection. Though these individuals may be some of Earth's larger land mammals, their muscles are used more for hoisting the tuba rather than wielding it. It is because



of this that tuba players develop a venomous wit that can strike at any given jock when agitated.

Band can serve as a sort of social club for the child. The child who participates in band may find others who share their desire to express themselves musically. It is at this time in your child's life in which he or she may begin to develop lifelong friendships. If you happen to have a child who is socially inept or maybe just all-around inept, band may be a good place for him/her. Please note that the socially inept tend to excel with musical instruments while the all-around inept tend to struggle with various musical concepts such as "scale" and "note". Most all-around inept band students have a penchant for banging items either together or against other things and/or people. Naturally, this would seem to mark them as a shoe-in for such activities such as drum line (not drumlin) or cymbals (not symbols), yet these students mainly lack the dexterity and rhythm to complete such intricate tasks. Do not be discouraged, though. Many schools offer an "Air Guitar" program that caters to such students. All-around inept students who play air guitar in the school band usually make friends with other air guitar-

playing students. The advantage of having a child who plays air guitar in the school band is that the instrument is generally low in price to purchase and/or rent. The disadvantage is that the child cannot use the air guitar to fend off the aforementioned larger, more aggressive, non-band students.

Marching band can be a wonderful experience for your child as well. Marching couples the music experience with the marching experience. If your child doesn't want to participate in both (let alone at the same time), ask your school if they have a program for students who simply want to march around the football field. Some schools will let your child march around the football field during "post-post game" shows or even "day-after-the-game-when-no-teams-are-present" shows. Though audiences for such events are scant, the work the child does may still prove to be rewarding if, in fact, the child is participating in said event for fun and not for notoriety.

Though this writer has never participated in band, this writer has seen the group of people who are known as the school band at football games. This writer has also seen motion pictures with school bands in them. This writer also had small, underdeveloped muscles at one time in his life as well.



BITTER BEAN BLEND: THIS IS RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

Written by Jason Salas

It always amuses me to hear television shows tout that their stories are "Ripped from the headlines". I don't really think that's anything to brag about. When they say, "ripped from the headlines", I hear "basically, we used some poor sap's story and put our characters in it and you're going to like it". This is mainly because the shows that advertise such gripping drama take the stories involving the unfortunate. What's even more unfortunate is that it usually makes for a pretty good episode of whatever cop drama is doing the ripping.

I guess another reason why this phrase irks me is that I know it's going to deal with some type of horrendous criminal act. If it didn't, they would simply state that this particular episode was, "Based

on actual events" [cue the soft piano in A minor]. Still, these aren't exclusive. I guess the 'tween shall meet here and there but I'd rather not here the phrase, "ripped from the headlines".

You know what I'd like to see? I'd like to see more "ripped from the funny pages" or "ripped from the wedding announcements" or even "ripped from those really bad classified ads in the back of sub-par magazines". I guess in this case, I can say, "ripped from the irony". Yes, that makes everything OK.

GET OVER YOURSELF HELP

Written by Uncle Anonymous

"Some of you kids may not know this, but not so long ago, people actually talked to their neighbors. Some of the folks in my generation still do. However, I really can't blame people for not visiting with their neighbors. Sometimes you don't know if your neighbor's some type of weirdo or psycho. Other times neighbors just want to be left alone to watch their television sets. Still other times your neighbor might be avoiding you because he broke your lawnmower and doesn't want to fess up to it. If this is the case, I just want to say that I'm not mad at you, Carl."

poem percolator

UNDERGROUND LAIR

If I had an underground lair,
I'd spend a good amount of time in thair.
Yes, a nicely furnished room within the terra,
I do believe you'd find me in therra.

Perk at Work

