



# Community Band celebrates 50 years

The Northport Community Band, under the direction of founder and Musical Director Robert Krueger and Associate Director Donald M. Sherman, is getting ready to celebrate a major milestone. On July 3, the 8:30 p.m. downbeat at the first of the group's summer series of five Thursday evening concerts will kick off the beginning of the group's 50th season of offering free concerts to Long Island music lovers at the Robert W. Krueger Bandstand overlooking beautiful Northport Harbor.

Shortly after Bob Krueger, Northport's very own Music Man, arrived in Northport to fill the newly created position of Director of Music Education, he learned that the village bandstand had not been in use since at least World War II, and he vowed to bring music back to the park. Created in 1959 as a performance outlet for Northport High School music students and alumni, the Northport Community Band was originally comprised of 17 students and 2 adults, but quickly grew to include other musicians from the Northport-East Northport area and the Long Island music community at large. Bob coordinated resources from local schools and community civic organizations, and presented a single, free concert of light classics, novelties, show tunes and marches at the local American Legion Hall. From its inception, the mission of the band has been to bring together all of the people of the area in a unifying musical endeavor.

The band and its concert series quickly outgrew the original venue and found a permanent home for five Thursdays in July at the bandstand (circa 1900) in Northport Village Park adjoining the picturesque harbor. In 1999, the Village of Northport saw fit to rededicate this structure as the Robert W. Krueger Bandstand in honor of 40 years of community service.

For 50 consecutive years Tuesday night rehearsals followed by Thursday night concerts throughout the month of July have been a cherished tradition and an eagerly anticipated musical event enjoyed by thousands in the area. In fact, many boaters, from Connecticut and beyond make it a point to drop anchor in Northport Harbor specifically to listen to the concerts performed by a fully instrumented band of 75-80 intensely dedicated players who volunteer their time to provide area residents with a relaxing and enjoyable way of passing balmy summer evenings in historic and picturesque Northport Village.

In 1998, the band added

a very special sixth concert to its summer season. In cooperation with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Northport, the group performs a Sunday afternoon concert for patients and staff at the hospital, which is specifically tailored to the veterans' preferences.

The most celebrated feature of the Northport Community Band season is the final concert, at which

Tchaikovsky's "1812" Overture is performed with cannons specifically designed and built for the band. Another audience favorite is the "Old Jack Daniel's Original Silver Cornet Band" - a 13-piece brass and percussion ensemble that plays original manuscripts from the Tennessee whiskey maker's own turn-of-the-century library in the center of the audience, and without amplification.

**TUNED UP FOR THURSDAYS:** Director Robert Krueger (left) and Associate Director Donald Sherman (right) at the monument that marks the bandstand in Northport Village Park as the home of the Northport Community Band. Mr. Krueger founded the band in 1959, and he will be conducting the 50th anniversary of Thursday night concerts in July in the park.



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