



History of the Prime Time (50+ Dream) Band

Part II: Years 2000 - 2004ⁱ

By Lou Dartanner



THE PRIME TIME BAND
(Photo © by Kirk S. Irwin)ⁱⁱ

During this second five-year period the Prime Time Band was in hitting its stride – in its prime time!

2000: Performing for the Public

The year 2000 was a busy one for the Prime Time Band members, sharing their music with community residents.

The Band played for children at El Rancho School in Goleta, the Santa Barbara Retired Teachers at the First Methodist Church, nearly filled the stage at the Santa Barbara Women's Club and performed at La Colina Junior High's Open House and 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Prime Time Band members decorated a trolley in patriotic colors for the Santa Barbara 4th of July Parade and later in the month they played at Girsh Park in Goleta and at Senior Summer School at Francisco Torres in Isla Vista. About 700 people enjoyed the

annual Stow House concert in August. In October the Band played at the Santa Barbara Airport's Kids Day at the Airport.

On June 21st, the Prime Time Band held its Summer Concert at La Colina Junior High School. The Silver Band played a few of their pieces before the concert. The Band held its Winter Concert on Wednesday, December 6th to a near-capacity audience. The Band ended the year with a performance at First Night Santa Barbara on December 31st.

The 25 members of the Silver Band (formerly the Beginning Band) performed at the Goleta Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Pre-School, St. Rafael's Sociable Seniors, the Discovery Learning Center, St. Mark's Methodist Seniors, the Page Youth Center, Samarkand Retirement Community, Vieja Valley Elementary School, and El Rancho School.

In September the Silver Band held its own concert at La Colina Junior High School.

Their program included 13 songs, including several “sing-alongs” that were popular with the audience of family and friends.

The Brass Quintet played at the YMCA’s Senior Party on Valentine’s Day, the First Presbyterian Church’s Palm Sunday services, the Music Academy May Madness and the Samarkand Memorial Day observance.

Three clinics were held during the year to help the Band members fine-tune their skills. Emil Richards held a percussion clinic (he played xylophone for 62 years, 41 of them in the film industry). A clarinet clinic was presented by Jim Murphy of Yamaha (he played in the US Air Force Band in Washington, DC). Mike Ray of Mike’s Drum Shop held a clinic for the drummers.

On February 29th, the Prime Time Band presented a Proclamation to Norm Stevens for donating his time and expertise in assisting band members by adjusting, tightening, and improving the members’ clarinets, flutes, and oboes. The award was given to him on his 80th birthday.

In February, Judy Dague, Van Vander Ark, and Bob Young were interviewed on the City Library lawn by Bonnie Elliott of KEY-T television for a ½ hour program.

The Band was presented with \$150 for participating in the Concerts in the Park, playing at Girsh Park.

In November, the Band was awarded a \$7,869 grant by the Santa Barbara Foundation for a sound system and stage risers.

2001: PTB On The Marquee

The Band received a very exciting opportunity when they were invited to perform with Harold Clementz, organist on the Arlington Theater Pipe Organ, in a benefit concert at the Arlington Theater. Tickets were \$5 each and about 1400 attended the performance. Funds remaining after expenses were divided between the Santa Barbara Theater Organ Society and the Prime Time Band. The Band donated \$200 to the Santa Barbara Symphony for use of their stage setup. The Band netted a profit of \$503.51.



Arlington Organ (Photo © by Kirk S. Irwin)

Both Bands continue to perform for the community.

The Prime Time Band played for the Santa Barbara Teachers, the Santa Barbara Women’s Club, Monte Vista School, and at Girsh Park, Stow House, and Chase Palm Park as well as from the trolley in the Santa Barbara 4th of July parade.

The Band held its Summer Pops Concert on June 20th, playing to a full house at La Colina. Their Winter Concert was on December 19th, and refreshments were again served after the performances.

In March, the Band held an Ensemble Night featuring the Women’s Clarinet Choir, Euphonium Trio, Wednesday Woodwinds, Brass Quintet, Percussioners, and the Dixieland Band. Band ensembles played 68 performances during the year, featuring the Baritone Trio, Basin Street Buddies, Brass Quintet, Clarinet Choir, Dixie Daddies, Moonlighters, Saxophone Quintet, and Wednesday Woodwinds.

The Silver Band (now numbering 33), played at Peabody School, Trinity Baptist Church, Valle Verde Retirement Community, Ellwood School, Page Youth Center, Solvang senior center, Garden Court seniors, and Villa Santa Barbara senior center. They also held a formal concert at La Colina, playing a variety of music, including two sing-alongs. Home-baked cookies and lemonade were served after the performance.

Six clinics helped members of both bands hone their skills for the public appearances. In January, a trumpet clinic was conducted by George Stone, Cuesta College Director of Jazz Studies. Later that month, a trombone clinic was held by Ira Nepus, USC Master in Jazz Studies.

In February, a saxophone clinic was conducted by Roger Stemen, musical director and lead alto with the US Air Force Show Band. Two clinics were held in May: horn by Gregg Hutchinson, and flute by Adrian Spencer (flautist for Camarada Pacifica). Mike Odello, Santa Barbara Junior High music director, gave a tuba/euphonium clinic in July.

The Band's board of directors voted in March to spend \$250 for a cart for the sound system. In December they donated \$250 to La Colina Performing Arts in appreciation for use of the school facilities.

The Band also received donations. The Santa Barbara Women's Club gave \$400 and the Band received \$200 for participating in Concerts in the Park at Girsh. The Santa Barbara Foundation granted \$15,000 to be used toward purchase of a \$24,000 acoustic band shell, which would be stored and used at San Marcos High School.

2002: Strike Up The Bands!

The New Horizons Bands Institute (the Prime Time Band was the 13th band chartered by the organization) holds 5-day long band camps during the year, hosted by local New Horizons Bands.

In June of 1996, eight Prime Time Band members attended their first band camp at Snow Mass, Colorado. In February 1997, 18 members attended the camp at Palm Springs, California. Several Band members attended the band camp in Chautaugua, New York, that fall.

All members who attended the camps were excited about meeting musicians from other bands, learning new music, fine-tuning their skills with their instruments, and ending the week with a concert for the community. Van Vander Ark, Band conductor, and a few other members wondered "Could we hold a band camp in Santa Barbara?"

The possibility of a Santa Barbara Band Camp was discussed. Van checked out local venues, but they were too expensive or impractical. Dr. Ernst suggested having the Band Camp outside of Santa Barbara. After a weekend mini-vacation at Cambria Pines

Lodge in 2000, Van and Lorraine looked around and thought "This location would be perfect!" After speaking to the manager about the details, they took the idea to the Band's board of directors, who enthusiastically endorsed the idea. It took the Vander Arks, Jim and Kathleen Bartkowiak, and Nick Rail about two years to work out the details.

On March 17th, 125 musicians from around the country arrived at Cambria, including 50 from Santa Barbara. With the help of Nick Rail, instructors were found to lead each sectional: flute, double reeds, clarinet and saxophone, trumpet, horn, low brass, and percussion. The four directors were James Kalyn, North Carolina; Ron Phillips, Arizona; Roy Ernst (New Horizons founder), New York; and our own J.B. Vander Ark, who provided a wide variety of music to practice.



Rehearsal at Cambria Band Camp

In addition to Van and Lorraine Vander Ark, Prime Time Band members "instrumental" in bringing all the details together to put this first band camp together and to make our visitors from around the country welcome were Kathy and Jim Bartkowiak, Marty Davis, Judy Freeman, Mary MacDonald, Carol Anderson, Jeane Johnson, Wilma Seelye, Ron Kronenberg, John DuBois, and Dick Cousineau and his Band Aides.

This year the Prime Time Band played for the Retired Teachers, the Sand Barbara Women's Club, at Alameda Park, Girsh Park, Stow House, and Chase Palm Park. They also participated in the Santa Barbara 4th of July parade, and at the Olympic Torch ceremonies.



Van Conducts at Olympic Torch Run Ceremonies

They held two formal concerts, one on Wednesday, June 19th at La Colina Junior High (this was the last evening performance). On Sunday, December 15th, they held their winter concert on Sunday at San Marcos High School at 3 p.m. This was the first concert on a Sunday, in the afternoon, and using the new band shell (which arrived in September), and new microphones and recorder. About 800 were in the audience.

A group of volunteers was established to provide extra services at concerts, such as ushering, preparing and serving refreshments, etc. Called the Prime Time Band Aides, and led by Dick Cousineau, they debuted at the June concert.

The Silver Band played at Goleta Valley Seniors Valentine's Day, St. Mark's Methodist Church, Santa Barbara Senior Fair & Expo at Page Youth Center, St. Rafael's Church dinner, Aliso School in Carpinteria, Solvang Park, Monroe School Halloween Party, and the YMCA Wednesday senior group. They also held a formal Spring concert in April before a full house at La Colina. The program included sing-along pieces. Jeff Peterson was appointed conductor of the Silver Band in August after Olga Weddle moved out of town.

In addition to the new band shell, the Band received a \$3,000 grant from the Santa Barbara Foundation for percussion equipment. The Board approved spending some of the Cambria Band Camp profits to purchase light blue long sleeve poplin shirts with the band's logo.

The Board recognized Dick Curtis for his work in securing grants and Mary MacDonald for her work on developing the Band's web site. Also recognized were Dick

Nielsen and Bob Phillips for their outstanding work. The Santa Barbara City Council recognized the Prime Time Band as a "Santa Barbara Treasure" and the presentation was aired on KEY-T television.

2003: Playin' in the Rain!

The Band was excited to accept an invitation to again perform with organist Harold Clementz at the Arlington Theater. The concert was to benefit the Santa Barbara Public Education Foundation and City Schools Music Program. However, an El Nino "March Miracle" deluge limited the audience to about 500. Several busloads of potential attendees had to return to Santa Maria when road conditions became unsafe. But the show went on and virtually every Band member answered the call. Those members of the audience who braved the elements were rewarded with an afternoon of organ and band music. Unfortunately, the net proceeds were only \$526.38. Mr. Clementz donated \$500 and band members contributed another \$500 to fulfill the promise to the school programs.



Arlington Performance (Photo © by Kirk S. Irwin)

A Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition was presented to the Prime Time Band on May 6th by Congresswoman Lois Capps "in recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community."

The Band received other recognition, too. Van Vander Ark was interviewed by the *US News & World Report*; the Silver Band was promoted in the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, which also ran an article in the *Scene Setting* "5 Questions with JB Vander Ark."

Dick Nielsen is the new editor of the Prime Time Band *Bugle* newsletter after Bob Young retired on January 1st.

The Band held its two public concerts but had to hold them on two consecutive days, Saturday and Sunday, to accommodate the standing room only audiences. The June concert was held at La Colina Junior High School but the December concert was held at Goleta Valley Junior High School, due to renovations being done at La Colina.

The August performance at Stow House in August and the Chase Palm Park in September had beautiful weather and appreciative audiences.

2004: Band Camp & Retirement

The New Horizons Band Camp sponsored by the Prime Time Band in 2002 was so successful, they held another at Cambria Pines March 14-19.

Conductors for the camp were J.B. Van Vander Ark (host director); Roy Ernst, Rochester, NY (New Horizons founder); Ron Phillips, Carefree, AZ; and James Kallyn, Winston-Salem, NC.

A rehearsal of the full band was held after breakfast and dinner, and sectionals were held in the afternoon. There were even a couple of classes for non-playing spouses.

The target number of players in the band camps was 18 flute, 2 oboe, 2 bassoon, 20 clarinet, 4 bass clarinet, 6 to 7 alto saxophones, 3 or 4 tenor saxophones, 2 baritone saxophones, 9 trumpets, 6 to 9 horns, 9 trombones, 6 euphonium, 6 tubas, 2 string bass, and 7 percussion.

During the summer months, La Colina Junior High School was being renovated, requiring the band to move its rehearsals to the Wake Center. All equipment was moved to Wake and the Silver Band rehearsed from 5:20 to 7:00 p.m., and the Prime Time Band from 7:30 to 9 p.m. The July Pops Concert was held at Wake Center on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

In addition to the two major concerts, the Band performed at the Santa Barbara Women's Club and the Stow House. Members also participated in the 4th of July Pa-

rade and won first place for their decorations on the trolley. Barney Braningham gave the group his accolades in his *Santa Barbara News-Press* column for their parade performance.



The Silver Band played at Vista del Monte retirement community and Solvang Lutheran. In February the Silver Band and Goleta Valley Junior High Advanced Band joined forces to trek to Goleta Union Elementary Schools. They visited seven Goleta elementary schools to interact with the students with a goal toward interesting them in the junior high school music programs.

Each fall semester, docents of the Santa Barbara Symphony Music Van visit public and private school third grade classes in Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez Valley with audio and visual aids and a van full of instruments provided by Nick Rail Music. Members of the Prime Time Band are some of the docents.

The December concert was back at San Marcos High School. This was Van's last concert, as he was retiring at the end of the year. Jeff Peterson was appointed by the Board of Directors as the Prime Time Band conductor and Jocelyn Tipple will take Jeff's place as the Silver Band conductor.

Van was featured in an article with photos in the December 8th issue of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* "J.B. Vander Ark's Greatest Hits." The article ends:

"When Mr. Vander Ark was asked what song best represents his time with the Prime Time Band, he didn't hesitate.

"It's a song we can't even play in our last concert because it would be too emotional," he said.

"'Friends.'"

Thanks for the Memory
(Stan Jeffries)

Thanks for the memory
You taught us how to play,
We practice every day
We always bring our pencils
And we just can't stay away
We thank you so much.

Thanks for the memory
Of concerts in the mall
The birds way up on high
The gift the seagulls left for you
That hit you in the eye
We thank you so much.

We played the concerts in the winter
And also played again in summertime
The Irish songs that made you swoon
The drummer's funny hats
The saxes out of tune, so

Thanks for the memory
Your jokes were so sublime
You usually scored a nine
But now it's time to cry because
It's time to say goodbye
We thank you so much (*molto retard*)



Thanks for the Memory
(Lou Dartanner)

Thanks for the memory
For starting up the band – best one in the land
Such a hit you made it two with a wave of your hand
How lovely it was!

Thanks for the memory
For music that was new, classics mixed in, too
The handy tips, our burning lips, scales galore to do
How lovely it was!

And thanks for the memory
Of concerts in the park, Cambria in March
Potlucks where we grazed 'til it was nearly dark
Thank you so much.

Thanks for the memory
Clinics by the best, ensembles adding zest
4th of July, Olympic train, Arlington and the rest
How lovely it was!

So thanks for the memory
Our very best to you in all you want to do
Thanks for all your dreams that really did come true
Aw'fully glad we met you, cheerio, and toodle-oo
And thank you so much.



There is Nothing Like Our Band
(Author Unknown)

Chorus: There is nothing like our band,
Nothing in the world.
There is nothing that's so grand
As Van's 50 Plus Prime Time Band

We've got saxophones and tubas,
We have French horns by the score.
We have trumpets tooting Sousa
And there's clarinets galore.
We have flutes and there's an oboe,
Plus a big euphonium
What do we need?
MORE BASS DRUM!

We have props with our percussion
Plus a brand new timpani
Spandex shirts need more discussion
BRING ON S.B. SYMPHONY!
There's one bassoon and string bass,
Trombones sound like "Music Man"
What won't we have?
WE WON'T HAVE VAN!



Amazing Van
(Author Unknown)

Amazing Van! How sweet the sound
You've brought to them and me,
I once was flat but now I've found
A perfect Middle C.

What you have done these past ten years
Is wondrous to proclaim,
You've brought us up from Level One
To Level Five acclaim.

Now as you leave us to move on –
Tra-vels, softball, family,
You've left us rich in repertoire
And camaraderie.

We'll miss your jokes, your grace, your faith,
Your patience never ceased!
Farewell, Godspeed – and may you find
A life of joy and peace.



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