

## **Rod Pauls: “I Just Love to Teach”**

Currently directing Green Band, Rod Pauls is one of the founders of Westwinds, along with Dennis Orr and Peter and Ildi Paulson. Rod was actually Dennis’ student teacher in the late 1970s.

Realizing the need for a community adult band for amateur musicians, the founders met in the summer of 1988 and hatched the idea of Westwinds. It was decided that everyone who joined the group that first year would be a “rank beginner” on their instrument. Some members had musical experience on other instruments, but switched to new ones. Everyone “graduated” out of Green Band. The following year they moved to the next band, and another group of beginners was started at the Green level. As the organization grew, more groups were added.

Rod has worked with all levels of the concert bands, but enjoys Green Band the most because he feels that this group shares a particular closeness: “It is like a family.” There were barbecues and gatherings at the homes of Green Band members. Also, “I like to see the faces when people do something they couldn’t do before.” He has always maintained that he is a teacher, not a performer. “I want to work with people; I just love to teach.”

Some of Rod’s favourite memories of Westwinds are the road trips, band workshops and exchanges with other bands – “the fun things” that help build camaraderie within the band. Rod appreciates the importance of having a break during rehearsals to socialize, gather around and develop the friendships that are such a special part of Westwinds. On one occasion, hearing that Rod was a diehard Yankees fan, the band chipped in to order a baseball jacket from Yankee Stadium to show their appreciation for the work that he had done with them. Another example of the close relationship between band and director is the bottle of *Dad’s Root Beer* – a favourite drink of Rod’s – that would mysteriously appear on the podium before every concert. These gestures reinforced his feeling that Westwinds was more than just being part of a band. “I feel truly blessed to have worked with these very kind, thoughtful people.”

Rod is very happy to be celebrating Westwinds 20<sup>th</sup> year. “I was always hoping it would be around long after [the founders] were gone.” At the end of each season, he thinks, “How do we make it better?”