

Darlene Davies: Music on a Dare

I joined Westwinds Green Band in 1998 on a dare. I always wanted to play the B flat Clarinet because it has a nice rich sound but never had the opportunity to learn. All three of my children had played in bands in high school. Early in 1998, I received an unexpected gift – a clarinet study book – along with a dare from my daughter Laurie to learn to play. I went to a Westwinds open house, liked the music and the friendly atmosphere and decided to surprise Laurie by joining. It wasn't until I rented a clarinet that I found out the instrument came in pieces! Volunteers at Green Band and the very patient directors, Jim Finkbeiner and Mike Gardiner, showed me how to put the clarinet together and play. That December, Laurie got a big surprise when she saw her mother walk on the stage at the Westwinds Christmas concert. Now I play in both Bronze Concert Band and the Silver Band – slowly improving and loving the people and the music. I will also be “on tour” in the summer with the Westwinds Europe trip.

In Westwinds 20th Anniversary year, my daughter Laurie and I are joyfully playing together in Bronze Band. Laurie, an accomplished flute player, is slowly recovering from a serious illness and hasn't been able to play flute for several years. Playing flute again is a major step forward in her recovery. We love the fact that Westwinds is a community band that accepts adult musicians of all ages at any level of playing ability. Soon another generation will be joining Westwinds. Granddaughter Erin, who is 16, says she can't wait to be 18 so she can join Westwinds with her mother and grandmother because “they are having so much fun”.