



# IN THE MOOD

OCTOBER 2015

The Olney Big Band  
NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Number 1

Dear Readers:

This issue of *In the Mood* celebrates the life of Rip Rice, our former leader, chairman of the board, and heart of the band.

We thank Rip's family for giving us some of the photographs, which help to illustrate the wonderful life of this remarkable man.

As you read through this special issue, please join us in remembering and appreciating our "Ripper." To paraphrase him: "Thanks, Rip, you're a peach."

- ITM Editor



## Rip George Rice 1924 – 2015

Remembrance by Dr. Bob Tennyson,  
Music Director of the Olney Big Band

Rip and I first met in the late 1980s. His son, David, was a member of the Rockville Concert Band, which I directed at that time. Rip asked me if he could play saxophone with the band, explaining that his experience was almost exclusively with jazz organizations and that he was concerned about his music reading abilities.

I told him that I would be glad to have him join us, but that our sax section was full. Perhaps he could join us in the clarinet section; did he also play clarinet? Yes, he did, and Rip replied that that would be perfect -- he could join a concert group, improve his clarinet chops and expand his reading abilities, and also play with the group in which his son played.

Rip continued to play with the Rockville Band for some time. Although he did not play on the band's 1994 European tour, he and his wife accompanied David, who did play during the tour.

During the 17 years that I lived in Europe, Rip and I were not in touch very much, but our friendship endured. After I moved back to Maryland in 2011, Rip encouraged me to succeed him as director of the Olney Big Band.

I remember fondly the music talk and tales we shared over the years, and am proud to be able to carry on his dream with the Olney Big Band. □



"As long as the Good Lord keeps me in good health and of sound mind, and as long as wife Billie can tolerate me, I plan to continue doing what I have been doing."

- Rip Rice



# Dr. Rip Rice - The Story of A Life Well Lived

by DR. SUE VAZAKAS

**R**ip and Billie Rice moved to the Brooke Grove Retirement Community in Sandy Spring, MD, in October of 2004.

Soon after they had settled in, Rip set about writing an "orientation" booklet for new Brooke Grove Independent Living (IL) Residents, explaining some of the history of how the Brooke Grove Retirement Community began. He also wanted to create profiles of the IL residents who had decided to move to the community as of late 2004.

He began, of course, with himself. Here are some highlights of Rip's wonderful life (quotations are his own words).

## The Beginning

"Rip's father (George) was an only child, born in 1900, and raised essentially on a showboat (the Old Rip), owned and operated by his parents Captain Frank and Ruth Rice. The Old Rip traveled up and down the Mississippi River and garnered quite a name for itself. When George was five, and old enough to go to school, his father sold the showboat and bought a rooming house in New Orleans. Tenants in the Rice Rooming House were mostly comprised of showboat people, and little Georgie grew up being regaled with stories of showboat life, and of the "Old Rip" and other showboats operated by his parents."



Rip (right) and his father George in Ft. Worth, Texas ~ July 1944

When Rip was born in Manhattan, New York City, April 19, 1924, his father wanted to name him "Rip" after the "Old Rip." But Rip's maternal grandfather didn't like "Rip" for his first grandchild, and so his mother named him "Ripdon."

However, as Rip was growing up, "this name was the butt of so much ridicule by his playmates that he just started calling himself "Rip," and that was that."

## The Whisper of Jazz

"When Rip was 15, the family (now including sister Roxanne and brother Timothy) moved to Ft. Worth, TX. This is where Rip completed high school and attended his first two years of college. It was in his junior college (now the University of Texas at Arlington) that Rip started playing saxophone with a passion, and soon became Leader of the Stardust Melodiers, a dance band that played school functions."

## The War

World War II interrupted Rip's jazz pursuits and into the Army he went, winding up in the 104th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Terrence de la Mesa Allen (Terrible Terry Allen). As Rip tells it, he was at boot camp in Camp Carson, Colorado when the drill Sergeant asked "who knows the definition of the term pH?" Rip answered "Sir, pH, the potential of the hydrogen ion." Little did he know, that simple answer would not only place him in a support role of providing vital fresh water to hundreds of thousands of troops, it would result in a successful career as a world-renowned chemist.

The 104th Infantry Division landed in Normandy in 1944 (D+90 days) to help finish off the war in Europe. The Timberwolves fought

*continued on page 3*



continued from page 2

across Northwestern Europe and during the Battle of the Bulge, it defended its sector near Duren and Merken from 15 December, 1944 to 22 February, 1945. When presented with a previously Top Secret situation map detailing a snapshot of the Allied positions on December 25th, 1944, Rip was astounded that his unit was so close to the German lines. His regularly measured response was “huh, we had no idea.”

After Germany’s surrender, the 104th were slated to head to the Pacific for the inevitable invasion of Japan. Fortunately, Truman dropped the big one on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the war in the Pacific came to an end. Had that event not occurred, Rip’s story may have been completely different.

“During the War, Rip’s family moved to Washington, DC, where his dad now was working for the Navy Department and his mom at the Pentagon. Rip finished undergraduate work in Chemistry at George Washington University, then enrolled in the music school of Sisters’ College (part of the Catholic University), and was playing in the Harry Vincent Orchestra - (later to become the Music Makers) - a 10-piece big band, playing jobs around town on weekend nights. By this time

---

“... he had a blind date with one Billie Gean Womack and was smitten. Exactly 100 days later the two were married.”

---



Billie Gean Womack & Ripdon G. Rice  
Wedding Day June 26, 1948

Rip was Leader of this band. He was also knocking out straight A grades in music courses, but then, one fateful Sunday afternoon (March 17, 1948 to be specific), he had a blind date with one Billie Gean Womack and was smitten. Exactly 100 days later (June 26, 1948), the two were married.”



Rip in the Harry Vincent Orchestra, ca 1949. Rip is in front of the drums.

## Rip and Billie

“Rip and Billie” -- almost a single word. Who was this remarkable woman to whom Rip was so devoted throughout their lives?

Here is Rip’s description of some of the ways that Billie kept him on the path to continuing to learn, improve, and make a better life for himself and his family.

“Why did it take Rip 100 days? Because Billie was working at the FBI and Rip was “dawdling around” in music school while holding a B.S. in Chemistry. “You academic bum!” she said. “You have a college degree in chemistry, have no job, and are fiddling around in music school!! And you want to get married? Get off your duff and get a job!! Then we’ll talk about marriage!” Rip dutifully said “Yes ma’am,” and off he went to find a job as a chemist, which he did at the then National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology). After his first two paychecks came in, and Billie was fairly certain of his intentions, she acquiesced...”

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

In early 1949, the couple were blessed with a son, David Womack Rice, a red-headed (Rip's father and Billie's mother both had red hair) perfect baby in all respects."

Another of Billie's encouragements involved the GI Bill, which helped so many veterans receive educations:

"One Saturday morning in 1951 after breakfast, when David was two years old, Billie noted an item in the paper that alerted WW II veterans that they had to be enrolled in a college course by a date certain or lose the balance of their GI Bill of Rights college support. "Sweetheart," Billie said, "How much GI college time do you have left?" "Oh, about 18-20 months," was Rip's reply. "Well then, what are you doing sitting around here? Get off your duff and enroll in a graduate program. Go get a Ph.D.!"

---

**"Then was then. Now is now!! Now you have something to work for. You were just playing around then!"**

---

It did Rip no good to explain that after receiving his B.S. from GWU, he had tried graduate studies in chemistry at Catholic U, and had withdrawn before he would have flunked out. "Then was then. Now is now!! Now you have something to work for. You were just playing around then!"

And the rest -- as the saying goes -- is history. Rip kept working, kept playing music, but enrolled at the University of Maryland Graduate School nights and

weekends. Although it took longer than had he been able to attend full-time, nevertheless, seven years later, June 1957, Dr. Rip G. Rice emerged, a newly-crowned Terrapin Ph.D. (Organic Chemistry major), ready to take on the world."

### **Rip's Life at Brooke Grove Retirement Community**

Rip continued consulting in ozone technologies and traveling when necessary to attend ozone meetings and consult with clients.

"Although Rip's ozone career began with an emphasis on water and wastewater treatment with ozone, the potentials of ozone to provide benefits in many other applications developed, and that has led him to quickly become expert in those "new to ozone" applications. His latest two fields of concentration are ozone for commercial laundry systems -- about which he coauthored *The Ozone Laundry Handbook* (2011) -- and processing of foods with ozone, in which field he is one of four coeditors of the first textbook on the subject: *Ozone in Food Processing* (2012)."

### **Historian Activities at Brooke Grove**

Since he became a resident at Brooke Grove, Rip has become the ILRA (Independent Living Resident Association) Historian and Photographer.

"In mid- to late 2009, a local Sandy Spring native named Delmas Wood and Rip became close friends. Delmas is a Sandy Spring history buff who, among other accomplishments, is the gentleman who founded the Sandy Spring Museum. About a year later, Mr. Wood approached Rip with a proposal to feed Rip historical information about the Sandy Spring



Dr. Rip G. Rice, IOA International President, 1982-1983

Neighborhood (an imaginary geographical circle drawn as a 6-mile radius from the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting House). All villages and cross-roads of the past and present are included in this imaginary circle. Delmas Wood convinced Rip that such a history book is needed and that Rip is the man to write it.

And so it began that Rip added a third arrow to his quiver -- that of a writer of history." □



Rip swings the Brooke Grove residents at Olney Big Band concert - 2007



# The War Years

by DR. SUE VAZAKAS

In 1944, the 104th Infantry Division (<http://www.104infdiv.org/>) became Rip's temporary home. His war experience made a major and lasting impression on him, as it did for so many others.

As Rip describes it in the autobiography that he wrote for Brooke Grove in 2004:

"World War II interrupted Rip's life (and all other lives as well). Into the Army he went, winding up in the 104th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Terrence de la Mesa Allen (Terrible Terry Allen), who had commanded troops that had invaded North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy on D-Day. Then back to the States to assume command of the 104th and return to France in early September, 1944 (D+90 days) to help finish the war in Europe. Fortunately for the 104th Timberwolves, shortly after the atomic and plutonium bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, respectively, the Japanese war came to an end. Otherwise, the Timberwolves (and many other U.S. military divisions) were scheduled to invade the Japanese homeland."

## Water Points

In a 2008 e-mail to the band, Rip described the function of his unit in more detail:

"When I served in the 104th (April 1944 through most of 1945), I was just a 20-21-year-old kid. My unit was the Headquarters



Rip G. Rice as a young recruit - April 1944

and Services Company of the 329th Engineering Battalion. Within H&S Company were 5 units of 5 men each – called Water Points. Our job was to purify water in the field and provide it for the entire 104th Division as well as associated units.

In combat, these four water points were deployed in more or less a line starting from behind the "front" to in front of the rear echelon, one water point several miles behind the other. When the front moved ahead, then the water point farthest to the rear leap-frogged the other three and set up just behind the front."

## What Does "pH" Mean?

How did Rip get assigned to one of the water points? He described it in an interview:

"I was originally assigned to one of the line companies in the engineering battalion; B Company, I think it was.

"Well, I'd been in the Army long enough to know I shouldn't volunteer."

And one morning or afternoon, at some point the captain asked us to fall in, and we fell in, and he got us to attention, dress-right, dress and all that. And then he said, "At ease." And then he said, "Who knows the definition of the term pH?" Well, I'd been in the Army long enough to know I shouldn't volunteer. So, I didn't say a word, nobody else said a word. The captain said, "C'mon, somebody's got to know what the hell it means." So, something told me to put my hand up, so I did. "Sir, pH, the potential of the hydrogen ion." "Rice, fall out. Company dismissed. Rice, you're transferred to headquarters; they need a chemist on the water point." 'Wha? Wha? Wha? Okay.' So, there I was; that's how I got it."



Photo of Rice at a water point, in Delitsch, Germany 1945

*continued on page 6*



Rip and Teun Oostvogels at the museum at Cees Jacobs Electro in Achttmaal Holland - October 2002

### Nordhausen

The interview mentioned above was done in June 2008, as part of the University of South Florida's Holocaust & Genocide Studies Center Oral Histories. <http://tinyurl.com/pom3ste>. In this interview, we hear more detail about the experiences of Rip and his unit, and one understands better why our WWII veterans lived with their service memories for the rest of their lives. Rip describes reaching the camp known as Nordhausen, when he was one week shy of his 21st birthday.

### The Timberwolves

A deeply meaningful event concerning Rip and the Timberwolves again shows the lasting significance of the 104th to so many people. In October of 1944, Rip and the Timberwolves helped to liberate Nordhausen. And 58 years later, in October of 2002, Rip and Billie visited a museum in the Netherlands, created by two teenagers, dedicated to the Timberwolves. Here is the

story of how that visit came about, and photos from that day: <http://members.home.nl/oostvogels/visitor2.htm>.

Echoes of the Timberwolves continued. In September of 2007, the band played at the Gaithersburg Festival in Olde Town. A touching behind-the-scenes note about that day concerns two guests for this performance: to hear Rip and his band play, Sandra Eberhard, who is the web mistress for the National Timberwolf Association, and her sister drove all the way from Snellville, Georgia!

And about one year later, in August of 2008, the band was honored to play for the 63rd reunion of the Timberwolves, which was held in Washington, D.C. Here is the story of that event, in Rip's own words (July 8, 2008 e-mail):

### Special Favor To Ask of the Band

"As most of you know, during WWII, I served with the 104th Infantry Division (the Timberwolves) in Europe. We were the first convoy to

land directly in France (without going through England), 90 days after D-Day (September 1944). We went into combat in Holland a month later, and from there got to Germany and chased the enemy nearly to Berlin – May 6, 1945. Our division was longer in combat without relief than any other division, even though we missed North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and D-Day itself.

After the War, the 104th formed a Timberwolf Association. ...

As you know, WWII veterans are dying off at the rate of about 2,000 DAILY! Consequently, in recent years, attendance at all of the military association annual meetings has been getting fewer and fewer.

The Timberwolves have announced that after the 2008 National Convention (to be held the last week in August at the Capital Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC), there will be only one more – 2009 in Portland, OR.

During the week of the National meeting, there are many tours of local facilities. The program culminates on Saturday night (August 30) with a banquet and dance.

---

**"How long does the dance last? Beats me."**

---

Here is the favor I ask of the band – Would you be willing to come down to the Capital Hilton... play some "gathering music" 6:30-7:30 pm, followed by dinner (on the Timberwolves) and then be ready to play a dance starting about 9pm?

continued on page 7



continued from page 6

How long does the dance last? Beats me. My guess is that few will survive the first set, and we can probably leave about 11pm. But the event is formally scheduled to go until 11:30pm.

This is NOT a paying job. The attendees (the veterans) are all in their 80s – some in their 90s. Many veterans will have their offspring with them, and many of these are deeply involved in the Association activities. Timberwolf Pups, they are called.

One thing I CAN guarantee you is the pleasure of playing big band music of the 30s and 40s to a totally appreciative audience, and their kids.

---

“...Being able to...entertain these Timberwolves and their families...was a real contribution.”

---

And – you would honor me and these vets – by your presence, and by your act of total unselfishness. Besides -- I think you would enjoy this gig.”

And how did this historic occasion, in which the band had the honor and privilege of participating, turn out? Here again, in Rip's words (August 31, 2008 e-mail):

“Thank you. That's about all I can say. Thank you.

Thank you for the enthusiastic way in which each of you responded to my “asking a favor” memo – to play pro bono for the members of the national Timberwolf Association last night.

Thank you for stimulating our

entire audience last night. We really sounded great. I could sense the pleasure each one of you felt in playing for these so distinguished veterans of World War II and their families.

The setup was strange for us, being housed in a comparatively small room away from the “main events” of the larger dining room.

At the beginning, I was a bit disconcerted by the lack of seating around the dance floor. Back in the 1940s, when the elder Timberwolves were in their teens and early 20s, the lack of seating didn't bother anyone. We were all either dancing or standing around just listening to some good music.

But in our mid-to-late 80s, standing up for more than a few minutes can be quite challenging.

However – with typical American ingenuity, as soon as those in the “Main Events” room started listening to us, chairs were found and dragged into our room, and at one point, I estimated several hundred people were swinging with us – some dancing – most just seated and listening.

When I served in the 104th..., our job was to purify water in the field and provide it for the entire 104th Division as well as associated units. ...At that time and still today, I have jokingly said ‘I had the safest job in a WWII combat zone. Far enough back of the front not to be exposed to small arms and mortar fire, and not far enough to the rear to be in the rear echelon and be exposed to artillery fire, the German Luftwaffe, and buzz bombs. (Usually! There were a few times when that didn't hold so well.)

And all through my service time, I felt that the guys who did the REAL work, the guys who were at the front facing fire of all kinds, and hand-to-hand combat – these were the REAL heroes of the 104th Division.

So I came out of WWII disappointed that I hadn't done much to really help my Timberwolf buddies.

Thanks to your performance last night, members of the Olney Big Band, I am now convinced that being able to help entertain these Timberwolves and their families finally was a real contribution.

You all made me very proud of you. Even prouder than I always am. I had trouble keeping back the tears. Thank you gang!!” □



Photo of Rip Rice in a beret -- near Aachen, Germany 1945

# In Rip's Own Words

by DR. SUE VAZAKAS

Over the years, our band members received many lively, funny, newsy, and interesting e-mails from Rip. He also wrote many of the articles for the band's newsletter, *In the Mood*. These various writings illustrated Rip's philosophies about music, and about life.

You can almost hear him speaking when you read them, written in his warm, personal style.

**On Benny Goodman (from *In the Mood*, June 2009)**

Were Benny Goodman still with us..., he would have been 100 years old on Saturday, May 30, 2009. ...I recall what Benny meant throughout my life that began 15 years after Benny's started.

**"Momma I'd like to play an instrument ..."**

My earliest recollection of Benny Goodman was as a young boy in Schenectady, New York. The year was 1935, after the snows began, and I had begun hearing this new music called "swing." "Momma I'd like to play an instrument – I wanna play trombone." She took me to the only music store then in Schenectady. "My little Rippie wants to learn to play trombone. Do you have a trombone to rent?" "No," said the clerk, "but we have an alto saxophone." OK I said, and so began my musical career.

Then I started listening to records by saxophone players, but very soon there was this clarinet player named Benny Goodman that



Rip swings *When Sunny Gets Blue* at the Sandy Spring Firehouse - 2007

sounded like no other clarinet player I had ever heard. By the time of the famous Carnegie Hall concert (January 6, 1938) that promoted swing music into public acceptance, I was now living in a suburb of Buffalo, NY. I had seen a *Fox Movietone News* clip in a movie theater showing Benny on stage at the Paramount Theater with kids dancing in the aisles. WOW!! My hero! And his drummer (Gene Krupa) – what a performer!!

Through the years, I learned how hard it is to play the clarinet, and admired Benny even more. But there was no hope for me as a reed player – I could never perform the way Benny did. I started listening to Artie Shaw, who wasn't as fancy as Benny in his playing, but was melodically more creative. I could emulate that creativeness at times, but never Artie's angelic tone.

By 1963, I was now living in Silver Spring, MD. Benny had taken a much younger band to the Soviet Union in 1962. Following that trip, Benny brought that band to the

University of Maryland for a concert, and I took my 4-year old son David (a budding musician himself) to hear the King of Swing. Benny still was as good as ever. And then came the movie, *The Benny Goodman Story*. Ah memories!

Today, even though Benny no longer is with us, his memory lives on for me. And as Director of the Olney Big Band, I am fortunate to be able to listen to John Gottdiener play Benny's solos in such classics as *Bugle Call Rag*, *Stompin' At The Savoy*, *Don't Be That Way*, and of course, *Sing! Sing! Sing!* Each time I hear John doing one of these solos to perfection, I close my eyes and see Benny looking down and smiling, and I can hear his "Yeah, yeah!" clearly.

Happy 100th birthday, Benny! Thank you for starting the swing age on August 2, 1935 at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles. Benny has filled my life with sheer pleasure!"

*continued on page 9*



### **Important Things Learned from Being a Musician (from *In the Mood*, July 2013)**

“...I was impressed by big band dance and jazz music at an early age, and set about learning to play reed instruments. But just being able to play a horn for oneself, for “kicks,” was not enough. I quickly found out that playing in a band required teamwork, and I enjoyed being a part of a team. Sure, it was nice to stand up and solo from time to time, but the bigger satisfaction to me by far was the teamwork aspect of a big band. Whenever I became distracted while playing in a band (i.e., when a really nice looking girl danced by), I lost my place and stopped playing for a moment -- at which point, the band was missing my part and the overall sound was not the same.

So one of the major truths that music taught me was concentration. If I was going to be a part of a team, I was expected to play every note so that the resulting chords would be full and as written by the arranger.

---

“Just those three basic, elemental, facts of societal life that I learned as a musician – how to be part of a team, how to concentrate, and how to commit -- paved the way for my career as a scientist, and even to my basic character when I met and married the only woman for me 65 years ago.”

---

Such concentration led to taking responsibility for my part in a band, which also led me to learn about commitment -- to the team; to ANY team -- and being part of teams from time to time is what life is all about.

Just those three basic, elemental, facts of societal life that I learned as a musician – how to be part of a team, how to concentrate, and how to commit -- paved the way for my career as a scientist, and even to my basic character when I met and married the only woman for me 65 years ago.”

---

### **Comments about Performances**

At performances, the musicians are paying attention to playing, and the director is the person who gets the comments from audience members, the requests for tunes at dances, and the other feedback at our performances.

Rip faithfully relayed all of these comments to the band, filling us in on what else was going on and giving us a fuller picture about how the event had gone and what the crowd had been thinking.

For example, his comments from our March 2010 gig at the Elks Club in Fairfax included these gems:

“At each break, I received many compliments. Great band! Good dancing mix! Vocalists are excellent! The Hostess...was constantly giving me pats on the back: ‘You were fine last time but you are so MUCH better this time!’

The elderly gent in the light blue jacket sitting just to the right of the band likes us (ebullient after the 1st set), then (after the 2nd set) said “we like more Latin numbers, especially cha-chas and merengues.”

At the 2nd break a middle-aged gent came up and said ‘I grew up with rock and roll. I didn’t know anything about big band music. But I really LIKE what you are playing. Maybe my folks weren’t as stuck in the mud as I had always thought. I can’t wait to hear you play again. Sorry I have to leave now.’”

---

### **Sunday Brunch at the Firehouse**

In March of 2006, we had played a Second Sunday Brunch at the Sandy Spring Firehouse Ballroom. These brunches were our big break, and were catered by our friend Barry Schwartz, the former owner of the much-loved B.J. Pumpernickel’s restaurant in Olney.

After that gig, Rip reported to us that “Barry Schwartz was very pleased today. He has said many times that, even though the food is good, it is the music that draws the crowd. He said that we were very tight today, and Barry is very happy with us.”

---

### **Rehearsal Notes**

Quite early on, Rip asked the band whether or not we would find it helpful to get his comments about particular numbers that we had rehearsed each week. We said yes, indeed, we would find that helpful.

So over the years, we were privileged to read pointers about how to do particular things better in specific numbers.

These notes did prove helpful to us, but possibly even more helpful to Rip, as he churned over each number in his mind to crystallize his own thoughts about it. We also

# The Life of Rip Rice April 19, 1924 - June 3, 2015

**April 19, 1924** – Ripdon (Rip)  
George Rice is born in  
Manhattan in New York City, NY

**1924-35** – Rip's family moves to Long Island and back to Manhattan, then Long Island, then Manhattan and finally end up in Schenectady, NY

**1935** – Rip discovers swing music and falls in love with the Benny Goodman sound

**1937** – Rip's family moves to Kenmore, a suburb of Buffalo, NY

**1935** – Rip picks up the Alto Sax and his musical journey begins

**June 1939** – Rip and his family move to Fort Worth, TX

**April 1944** – Rip enlists in the U.S. Army and is sent to Camp Carson, Colorado as a member of the 104th Infantry Division (Timberwolves)

**Sept 7, 1944** –  
The 104th  
Infantry Division  
lands in France

**June 26, 1948** – Rip and Billie are married

**February 1949** – Son David is born

**June 1947** – Rip graduates with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from George Washington University in Washington, DC

1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

**June 1957** – Rip graduates from University of Maryland with a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry

**1962** – The Rice family moves to Ashton, MD, for Rip's new position at W.R. Grace & Co.

**1967** – Rip has the unusual good fortune of meeting George Braude, the German underground member who single-handedly saved an untold number of Timberwolves' lives during the siege of Halle, Germany

**1974** – Rip forms the International Ozone Association

**May 1975** – The Second International Symposium on Ozone Technology is held; Rip edits the proceedings and it is published

**December 1973** – The First International Symposium on Ozone for Water and Wastewater Treatment is held; Rip edits the proceedings and it is published

**1982** – Rip starts his own business, becoming the president and CEO of RICE International Consulting Enterprises

1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

**1980s and Beyond** – Rip, also known as “The Pope of Ozone,” writes, presents, and edits the most influential treatises on the ozone industry. His influence was noted in this recent tribute: “Ripper was the single most influential driving force behind the ozone industry, ever. Whether it was representing Ozone to the federal bureaucracy, contributing to a technical book, or writing a white paper, Ripper could do it all with a smile and humble nature. No one has had the impact on an industry to the level Dr. Rice had. I hate to think what it’s going to be like without Rip to help us demystify this wonderful little molecule we all feel so passionately about. RIP buddy.”

– Cameron Tapp, President of ClearWater Tech

**1994** – David Rice convinces Rip to get back into music; Rip joins the Rockville Concert Band (on clarinet), Columbia Concert Band (on tenor sax), and the Columbia Jazz Ensemble (on tenor sax)

**1998** – Rip founds the Rockville Dixie Rascals to play at the dedication of Reagan National Airport.

**September 2003** – Rip becomes the Director of the Olney Jazz Troupe

**October 2004** – Rip and Billie move into Brooke Grove

**2006** – The Olney Jazz Troupe becomes the Olney Big Band (OBB)

**2007** – The OBB releases its first CD, *Generations*

**2010** – The OBB and the Olney Theatre Center present the first annual *Swing!, Swing!, Swing!* Concert, a celebration of the music of the Big Band Era

**2008** – The OBB plays Blues Alley in D.C. and Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland

**2009** – Rip, Delmas Wood and Leonard Becraft begin work on a history book entitled *A History of the Sandy Spring Neighborhood*

**2007** – The OBB receives the inaugural “Ambassadors of Big Band Music” award from the Sally Bennet Big Band Hall of Fame

**June 3, 2015** –  
Our Ripper  
leaves us to join  
Heaven's  
Big Band

1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------



got specific reminders about charts that would be played on upcoming gigs. As one of these missives started out:

“Hey Band – The constantly working mind of your indefatigable leader has come up with another wrinkle...”

Rip also learned from the audience’s comments – both complimentary and otherwise – and relayed them to us so that we would have a better idea about how we were being received.

A musician who attended our January 2006 Sunday brunch gig at the Sandy Spring Firehouse told Rip that we “sounded very impressive,” but that initially, the sax section tuning was off. In his follow-up note to us, Rip advised:

“As I have pointed out many times before, saxes can tune up perfectly before the gig starts. But the trick is to PLAY in tune thereafter.

We all (myself included) have the tendency to tune with a tight embouchure. However, as soon as the music starts and we relax our embouchures a bit, bingo! We are out of tune.

---

“Hate to be a nag – but I’m only trying to help you sound better than you do already”

---

So whether we play with tight embouchures all the way, or we tune with relaxed embouchures, OR we tune with tight embouchures, then after the first number, push in the mouthpieces just a hair to adjust...– dicey, but

that’s what I do most of the time.

Take any approach you wish, but [on the first number], ...concentrate on...playing quietly with no vibrato, trying to sound like one horn, making sure your intonation is identical with the other horns – and THAT will help you adjust the mouthpiece so that you will PLAYING in tune.

Hate to be a nag – but I’m only trying to help you sound better than you do already.”

---

### Stories from the History of Jazz

Often, the long, conversational notes that the band would receive included tales about jazz. Here was one of them, related to us in January of 2006, while Rip was in the process of transferring his vinyl record collection to CDs and reading all of the album covers as he went along:

“This has NOTHING to do with rehearsals or gigs, just some ramblings of the Ripper...

#### *How George Shearing Found His ‘Sound’*

George was born blind in a London slum in 1920. At 17, he attended a meeting of London’s “No. 1 Rhythm Club’ and broke up the place, not only at the piano, but also playing swing according.

During the next decade, George recorded regularly with large and small groups, wrote arrangements for the top British bands (I guess if a blind man can play golf, he can write musical arrangements), and won England’s Melody Maker poll six times as the country’s best pianist.

Shearing emigrated to New York in 1947, but nobody knew him and he essentially had to start from square one. He landed a gig in 52nd Street’s

Three Deuces in a trio, and with other small groups of similar caliber, George made enormous strides.

The birth of the Shearing Quintet (and his ‘sound’) was an accident. George had been working on Broadway with a quartet of piano, clarinet (Buddy DeFranco), bass, and drums. The Quartet was great and landed a recording contract with MGM Records. It looked as if Shearing was finally going to be launched in the States.

But – Buddy DeFranco had just signed his own recording contract with Capitol Records and could not appear with Shearing on MGM. Disaster!!

Shearing’s friend and noted jazz critic, Leonard Feather, suggested that George might experiment with vibes and guitar as a replacement for the clarinet. He contacted Chuck Wayne (guitar) and Margie Hyams (vibes). An immediate rapport was achieved, and the recording date was kept, with the new ‘sound’ that is now a Shearing trademark. One of the numbers recorded at that first session was *September in the Rain*, which became a best seller almost immediately.

---

### Constant Praise and Encouragement

Throughout his many newsy, marvelously written e-mails to us over the decade or so that he was with us, Rip constantly praised our dedication to the band, our playing, and most of all, how much he enjoyed listening to us.

After our January 2006 performance at Leisure World’s Crystal Ballroom, we received these comments:

continued from page 12

"You made this old tenor man VERY proud last night. Without any doubt, this was our best gig. A pinnacle. A mountaintop experience.

Right from the start, there was magic in the air. [Everyone] was in tune. The balance was there as well. When I listened to '*S Wonderful*' from a distance, the saxes sounded like one horn. THAT is achievement.

The trumpets were at their VERY best (opening of *PA6-5000* sounded like Miller for the 1st time), and the bones, bless their hearts, came through in Tony's absence like the Troupers they are.

...*SWAY* – I almost had tears of joy in my eyes. Not only did we finally get it, but a couple came up right after that to congratulate us. The lady said that she and her hubby met in 1954, danced to *SWAY* for their first dance and fell in love on the spot. Ever since they moved into Leisure World, she has been requesting *SWAY*, but none of the orchestras has ever even heard of it. They thanked me profusely for having played it."

### Swinging Praise

By 2011, Rip was not conducting the band, but never missed a performance. He and Billie and their guests attended "Swing!, Swing!, Swing!" III at the Olney Theatre Center on August 15, 2011:

"Guys and Dolls, Saturday night and all day today, I spent basking in what I am certain was one of the most wonderful musical events I have EVER attended.

My personal thanks go out to each and every one of you -- not just

the band players, but also those who helped make this event the absolute best.

At the third to last rehearsal, I had the feeling that we were headed for greatness, and that is exactly what happened last Saturday.

...There is no way I can express the great pride I had while listening to each number. Pride to be associated with this group of people. Pride and happiness that the good Lord above has allowed me to be here and still be functional.

Most of all, I am so proud of the total team effort that I witnessed and participated in. EVERYbody shined. EVERYbody put the band's interests before their own.

...I just want you ALL to know that each of you has a very special place in my heart, and you always will. I am SOOOOooooo proud to be associated with you.

...One spot will live in my heart for a very long time. And that came right after we finished *IN THE MOOD*. I watched this band playing that -- with all the joy and happiness of people truly dedicated to that number and making it sound like they LIVED to play it. It was at that moment that I realized what the difference was between Glenn Miller's band and many of the others -- especially Benny Goodman's band..., and now the Olney Big Band -- we play for the audiences, not for ourselves. When we know the audience is enjoying us -- THAT is when we get our kicks. And it makes no difference WHAT we are playing when those moments of realization occur. Love and respect for our audiences is returned by them to us.

It is most pleasurable for this old geezer to be a part of this

organization. Thank you all for allowing me to be a part of your lives. ... Keep on swinging, guys and dolls!"

### What a Trouper!

The word "trouper" is defined as "a member of a troupe," or "a person who deals with and persists through difficulty or hardship without complaint." In earlier times, it referred to "a reliable, uncomplaining person; a staunch supporter or colleague."

Rip was a trouper indeed, as he demonstrated yet again before a gig in September of 2009:

"Hey gang!! I'm back. Got home from Japan Tuesday night about 10:30 pm. Did a little work, went to bed at midnight, up at 8:30 the next morning and was seemingly on my way. But last night I didn't get to bed until 1:30am, then got up at 3:30am. Back to bed at 2pm, and still washed out. BUT -- the show must go on!"

Finally: let's never forget to continue doing what Rip said at the end of many of his notes to the band: "Onward and upward!" □



Rip at the Big Band Bash to Benefit SEEC, VisArts Center - May, 2010



# Remembering Rip Rice



I first met Rip when I joined the Olney Big Band in high school. Playing in the OBB with Rip during my teenage years has helped shape who I am today. Rip was always an invaluable source of wisdom and guidance. His musical knowledge was encyclopedic, but even more impressive were the insights he had into how to live a long and fulfilling life. The lessons I've learned from Rip have helped guide me for the past decade and will continue to do so. He was one heck of a man and he will live on in all of our hearts.

*Alexander Leishman*  
*Stanford University graduate student*

Warmth, humor, a passion for the music that he loved, and above all kindness: these are the qualities that immediately come to mind when I think of Rip Rice. When I first met Rip, I had recently returned to playing saxophone and woodwind doubles and decided to join the Olney Big Band (then called the Olney Jazz Troupe). Rip had been selected to be the band's director. The band that Rip acquired was -- how can I put this? -- terrible. Most of the members were concert band musicians who had little experience playing jazz. However, with patience and compassion, Rip began to teach the

band how to swing and play with an authentic feeling.

Rip was Old School. In directing the OBB, he drew upon his own experience as a tenor sax player, band leader, and a life-long fan of classic big band music. Our first gig was an outdoor concert -- Rip was nervous about the band's readiness and secretly hoped that it would rain. But, we got through it and no one threw tomatoes.

One of the things that I remember the most about how Rip worked with the band was the historical information and stories that he told us about each arrangement. Perhaps a younger director may have had a more technical method for rehearsing a band, but Rip conveyed the authentic spirit of the music. So even though the band had some rough edges, we all had a sense of having a personal connection with the WWII-era bands and the music.

I played in the OBB for 6 years and saw how the band developed from its humble beginnings. Those years have many memories of Rip and my band buddies that I'll treasure all my life.

Rip also played a role in how I decided to leave the band in 2008 to focus on writing new music. He was deeply passionate about the music that inspired him, and similarly, I realized that I had to express my passion for the kind of music that inspires me. After I left the band, I continued to be in touch with Rip and told him about my projects.

Music is a great way for people to connect with others. However, when musicians can transcend music to see the defining qualities in another, it's very special. Chatting with Rip

at Dempsey's Restaurant, during what turned out to be the last time I saw him, it was easy to again feel his humor, warmth, and kindness. Those qualities are what I will remember the most about Rip.

*Roger Aldridge*  
*Musician and composer*

In the mid-1990's, I started playing trombone again and joined the Columbia Concert Band in Columbia, MD. It was there that I first met Rip Rice. He was a jovial soul with a great smile and wry sense of humor. He welcomed me to the group and we developed a friendship right away. We talked a lot about music, playing styles, and history, and Rip was simply fascinating to listen to. His burning passion for music was obvious and contagious.

He invited me to meet his son, Davey, who was also in the band; Dave's wife, Kathy; and Rip's beautiful wife, Billie. They welcomed me like I was one of the family. Rip soon enticed me to join the Columbia Jazz Band and I quickly discovered that I really liked big band swing. Before I knew it, I was also playing with him in the Rockville Concert Band, and then in the fledgling Rock-N-Ville Jazz Ensemble. And would I like to play in the Starvation Army Band (a small jazz combo) and the Rockville Dixie Rascals (a dixieland group)? He and I also subbed from time to time in other groups, played in parades on the backs of flat-bed trucks, and played a few on-call recording sessions. For a while, I was playing regularly or

*continued on page 15*

continued from page 14

subbing in as many as 10 bands, on most nights of the week, and nearly all of them with or because of Rip Rice! He helped me rekindle my love of band music, and was directly responsible for my continuing to play concert band music and big band music to this day.

Rip's love of all types of music was transcendental, spiritual. He played very well, but I don't think he was every truly satisfied with his own playing, and at times certainly not with mine! He used to tell me, "Don't over-reach!" This was usually after I had attempted an improvisational solo and it either fell apart or simply wasn't very good. But as we progressed, and when I did play something that I thought sounded pretty good, I'd look over at Rip and see that wry smile. He was very tough to please!!

We both absolutely loved playing dixieland music and that was when we really seemed to click. There were times during a Dixie Rascals rehearsal or performance that he would play, then I would play, and when I caught his eye, there was that wry smile and a chuckle under his breath, "eh, eh, eh." On those rare occasions, it was thrilling and absolutely UNFORGETTABLE!

There are so many stories from the 15 or so years we played together, like the time we played for the First Night celebration in Silver Spring and were supposed to be in a heated tent. Instead we were put on a windy outdoor stage in 25-degree weather. Davey's trumpet valves froze, Merle Biggins' tuba valves froze, and my F-attachment froze. But Rip was able to play, and so we all soldiered through it like professionals; we sure earned our money that night.

Even after we both cut back on our playing, and I retired and moved to Tennessee, we remained steadfast friends until the very end. I spoke with Rip on the phone not long before he passed. When he answered the phone that day with his usual "This is Rice," it was just like we had always been.

Rip was my mentor, friend, father figure. Rip Rice was and always will be an inspiration to us all. The tears are flowing as I finish this. Fair Winds and Following Seas, my friend! We will see you again soon!

*John L. McVey  
Jackson, TN Symphonic Winds community band (1st trombone); Jackson Area  
Community Bands, Inc. (president)*

In 2010, I got a phone call from Rip, asking if I could play the clarinet solos for Swing!, Swing!, Swing!,

which was a tribute to the music of Benny Goodman that the Olney Big Band was putting together. As a lifelong devotee of Benny -- both his jazz and his classical performances -- I of course was delighted to participate in the first of what was to become an annual event. An excellent swing saxophonist, Rip was a true scholar of this great American musical form, and a marvelous teacher. I also played in Rip's traditional jazz group, the Dixie Rascals, and was treated to his fantastic sense of musical humor when he performed his iconic version of "The Coney Island Washboard Blues," accompanying himself on washboard and cowbell. He always made a show of tuning the washboard -- which he insisted was in the key of Bb -- which got great laughs from the audience.

I have been impressed with Rip's lifelong courage: in overcoming a difficult childhood, in defending our country as a combat soldier in WWII, and in confronting his many severe health challenges. I do recall one gig with Dixie Rascals when Rip seemed to be quite out of breath. Changing hats from band member to my main gig as a cardiologist, I prodded him to tell me what was wrong and to take it a little easier on that performance, which he insisted on doing even though it was clear that he was in heart failure. I and some colleagues got him a procedure which was at that time experimental, and Rip, who was trained as a scientist, was fascinated.

I never heard Rip complain, and despite whatever difficulties he had, he never held back from giving his all. Rip was a true Renais-



continued on page 16



sance man -- soldier, scientist, musician, and mentor. He is missed, but his presence will always be felt every time the members of his band lift their instruments to play.

*Dr. John Gottdiener  
OBB Tenor Sax, Clarinet, Flute*

I will always remember (and regret) that Rip had to miss our trip to Montreux, Switzerland, and the subsequent tour with the Columbia Jazz Band, due to a last minute health problem. I will always remember the Sunday brunches at the Sandy Spring firehouse ballroom. And who could forget Rip's very interesting introductions to some of our tunes based on his knowledge of jazz history? I think that audiences kept coming back to hear Rip talk more than to hear our playing ;-)

*Walt Frasier  
Trombone, OBB and Dixie Rascals*

I will always remember Rip for his love of country and of Big Band music. His historical knowledge of the era was remarkable and it was always a treasured experience to hear him talk about it. I only had the privilege to talk to Rip alone one time. We talked briefly about his WWII experience and after-

wards I thanked him for his service. Without their service, we would not have the freedom to have the Olney Big Band as well as many other freedoms we sometimes take for granted.

*Dave Cannon, Trombone  
Associate Conductor of OBB, and Associate Conductor of Band, Albert Einstein High School, Kensington, MD*

Mind you, I hardly knew him. I first heard about him from my dad, [former band member and trump player] Bob Redding, when he told me about this lovely lunch he had with a very kind and encouraging band leader. My father, in his mid-eighties at the time, was naturally looking for something new in his life-long enjoyment of music. And he found it right from the beginning in Rip's encouraging invitation to come along and play with the [at that time] Olney Jazz Troupe.

Around that same time (2005), I had just moved to Germany. I was living in a small town called Remscheid, not far from Cologne. My first contact with Rip (was it by e-mail?) unearthed the amazing fact that as a U.S. soldier, he had been in Remscheid, travelling east toward Berlin. Sadly, we never did have an extensive discussion about his experiences, but as an American living in Germany, I am very mindful of the complicated



history between our two countries.

Rip was the kind of guy who always had time to send a lovely kind e-mail, even to someone (me) whom he hardly knew!! When my husband and I were in the States, we had a lovely visit with him and Billie at Dave Schumer's house for dinner. Sadly, he didn't make it to Montreux on the band's big jazz trip!

When my dad died, Rip came to the funeral home. The photo is of the two of us just being together in sadness. Rip was someone who felt deeply and really cared. Even from so far away, I really miss him....

*Rose Redding Mersky*

When I showed up to audition for the Olney Big Band, I had no idea what to expect. I had heard great things about the band, but really had to be there to get a sense of the dynamic of the group. I had a wonderful experience that night, and was thrilled to be asked to join. Thinking back on it, I realize that one of the main reasons I had such a good feeling that night was because of Rip. He welcomed me, and also [former band member] Liz, who was auditioning that night to be our new bass player, very warmly. It was clear that he was passionate about the band, its many successes, and what the future held in store.

From that night on, he always

*continued on page 17*



continued from page 16

seemed to make a special effort to say hello, compliment my playing, and beam with joy about what OBB had become. He somehow found a way to do that with most or all members of the band after gigs that he was able to attend. During the short time that Rip was the conductor after I joined, I learned a great deal from him, and came to appreciate the historical significance of some of the music we were playing. I will remember him fondly and only hope that the many people of all ages he touched with his playing -- not to mention his warmth and charisma -- will pass along Rip's excitement about big band music to their children and grandchildren, so that his legacy and the legacy of his generation lives on forever.

*Bill Klein*  
*OBB Alto Saxophone Player*

### My Friend Rip Rice

When I became director of the Columbia Jazz Band, in 2001 or 2002, Rip was already a member of the band, and was instantly someone I was drawn to. His love and passion for music and specifically big band jazz was very apparent, and he was bursting with information about the music and his desire to play. I often said to Rip, "When I grow up, I want to be like you." Meaning, just to love playing the saxophone and sitting in a big band to do it. He always laughed, but I really meant it!

We had many a conversation either in person or on the phone about arrangements, players, saxophones, and all things big band. Rip always had a smile on his face, always wanting to play his best and always being a model for others. A fine

man and someone I greatly respected. I miss him.

*Pete BarenBregge*  
*Musical Director, Columbia Jazz Band;*  
*Professional musician; voting member*  
*of the National Academy of Recording*  
*Arts and Sciences (Grammy Awards)*

There are so many wonderful things to say about Rip, I don't know where to begin. His knowledge of swing music and learning from him was a wonderful experience. I liked the music but didn't know much about it, but with his help, I did learn a great deal. We also spent many hours discussing the history of the "Sandy Spring neighborhood." He gathered enough history of the area to write two books, and I hope someone will pick it up and complete his work. Rip was truly an asset to the community. He was one of a kind and will be truly missed.

*Halsey Smith, U.S. Marine Corps*  
*Reserve (Ret.), Former member of the*  
*Marine Corps Heritage Foundation*  
*board of directors,*  
*Sandy Spring Lions Club*

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our dear friend, Dr. Rip Rice. He was an innovative scientist, prolific writer, and consummate gentleman. Rip achieved one of his lifelong dreams to play music in a band with his son, David, when he joined the Rockville Concert Band where Dave was playing the euphonium. During his time with the band, a request was received to provide a small ensemble to perform at the opening of the newly renovated (formerly known as) National Airport.

The Rockville Concert Band did not have such an ensemble at that time, so Rip organized the Rockville Dixie Rascals to do this gig. The Dixie Rascals continued to perform at various venues for a number of years. On



another occasion, a member of the Olney Concert Band decided it would be a good idea to create a big band. Subsequently, Rip assumed the position of director, and under his tutelage, the Olney Big Band became one of the area's most popular bands for promoting music of the 1930s and '40's. In introducing each piece, Rip made his audience aware of the composer and the meaning of the piece. Rip was an accomplished musician who loved everything music.

He adored his wife Billie, son Dave, and his daughter-in-law Kathy. He loved to share his story, and whether in front of an audience or among friends, he understood the warmth of being together. Rest in peace, Ripper.

*Merle and Nancy Biggin, Former*  
*member of (Merle) and friends of the*  
*Olney Big Band*

In the fall of 2000, after some 40 years away from my woodwinds, I started playing alto sax with the Olney Community Band (now "Olney Concert Band"). In 2002, tuba player Tommy Harwick approached several people in that group and asked if we would be interested in forming a big band. I for one jumped at the opportunity,

*continued on page 18*



as I had always enjoyed playing in jazz ensembles both in high school and college and loved that type of music.

However, this fledgling band did not start out well -- we had a tuba player playing bass, another tuba player on piano, and a flutist who was self-taught on alto saxophone playing an out-of-tune vintage sax. The band was really awful, to put it mildly, and moreover, nobody cared for the appointed director. As a result we floundered for a year, even quit for a while, until Tommy recruited and introduced a chap named Rip Rice to direct and lead the band.

Rip was a gift. As soon as he introduced himself and started talking about big band music, I knew we were in good hands. The first thing he did was hold a meeting at his home to discuss how we would proceed. We had no business manager and Rip said we would need one. Somehow my hand went up and I accepted the job.

From the very beginning, Rip and I worked very closely and grew to be great and loving friends. A friend who was a teacher, mentor, and a father figure rolled into one. The first thing Rip did to help the band understand swing was to produce two CDs containing big band numbers that he loved and many which we finally were able to perform without embarrassment. In the beginning, he held sax sectionals at my home and his where we learned the nuances of and history of many of the numbers we were rehearsing. He grew the band and spent hours and hours reproducing music and taping them together for us. And once we were incorporated as a separate non-profit

entity, he was elected president and chaired the band's board of directors until his passing. His love for big band music and the people in the band made us what we are today.

As the years passed our families socialized often and even took some cruises together. I will never forget how he broke down and cried when I informed him October 2013 that my wife had terminal cancer. Rip, you were and are "a peach," and we all love you and hope that you will be enjoying us from above when we perform *Swing! Swing! Swing! VII*.

David B. Schumer  
Baritone Saxophone  
Olney Big Band

Business Manager and Treasurer

Today the world had to say goodbye to one of the few remaining members of the greatest generation. My uncle Dr. Rip G. Rice passed away. He was a veteran of WWII, a member of the 104th Infantry Division, part of the Engineering Battalion.

...He single-handedly influenced my personal wanderlust and interest in travel both home and abroad. On our trip to Germany and Austria, I learned of his love of beer. Needless to say, I learned a lot about German beer and wine from a man with a PhD in Chemistry. He also helped fuel my fire for science. My trips to Maryland typically involved at least one trip to the Aquarium and many a museum, where many of his engineered purification technologies are still in use. He also took me to my first NHL hockey game and for that I am forever thankful.

The world lost a man who contributed in ways that, had I not known him, I would have never understood. Many of the scientific papers, books and technologies he either created, edited, or reviewed are still standards

or in use today. While putting these remarks together, ...I found an interview he did about his time during WWII, touching on the liberation of Nordhausen Slave Labor Camp. This interview reflects a lot of my uncle's personality and his perspective about the war.

My only regret is he never got to meet my son David. David is named for my grandfather David Eshleman and my cousin David Rice, who was my Uncle Rip's son. Rest in peace Uncle Rip, you lived an amazing life. Thank you for being an inspiration to me in so many ways.

Bryan Young, Rip's Great-nephew

On the day after Rip's first evening with the band in 2003, he wrote us an e-mail to say how much he enjoyed being with us (this was very gracious because we were awful back then), telling a few stories about some of the characters of the Swing era, and apologizing for the length of his e-mail. He did indeed write long notes, because he had so much to say.

So I sent him back a note to say that we enjoyed working with him, too, and that his e-mail wasn't really too long at all. He immediately replied, saying that back in the 1950s, he had spent two weeks working with a young chemist in Philadelphia who had my last name; did I know that man? After getting back up off of the floor, I told Rip that apparently he had worked with my father, a chemistry professor at Temple who had to find other ways to support himself during summers because there were no classes. He had taken a job in a lab

continued on page 19

continued from page 18

doing something that required training, and Rip had been the guy sent by the government (sadly I don't remember which agency) to do that. Rip and my father both remembered one another, from a two-week acquaintance, and after almost 50 years – because they were both “unforgettable.”

Rip was incredibly funny, absolutely devoted to Big Band music, and extremely serious about doing all that he could for our band. He and Judge Bob Redding (whom we lost in 2011, aged 93) were the band's “idea men” – let's make a CD, let's start a newsletter, let's play at Blues Alley, let's take an overseas tour! We can do it!

And watching Rip in front of an audience was magic. He could speak to a crowd of any size and make them feel like he was their best friend and that they were chatting in his living room. He related marvelous tales about the Swing Era's larger-than-life band leaders, sidemen, arrangers, and singers, educating the audience while making them laugh. By the second or third song, they were in the palms of his hands, loving the music but also waiting to hear what he would tell them next.

I'm a worrier. I would send him notes when I was worried about this or that, and he would send kind, humorous replies that would calm me down. He always pushed me to take more musical risks, and although I'll never be a dare-devil, I certainly improved in that realm, thanks to Rip.

Rip was also quite stubborn; he certainly wasn't perfect. But what a spirit, what a joyous spirit the man had! He loved his Billie, he loved

the music, and he loved our band. I will miss him forever.

*Dr. Sue Vazakas, OBB Tenor Sax,  
Charter Member of OBB*

I first encountered Rip during a Sunday Brunch at the new Sandy Spring firehouse. My wife, Alison, had talked me into attending so she could put out fliers announcing the swing dance classes at her studio in the old Sandy Spring firehouse. I had reluctantly agreed to tag along, but soon became completely enamored with the Olney Jazz Troupe and how much fun they were having. Especially Rip, who was such a warm engaging fellow it just brought a smile to my face.

Alison saw how impressed I was and wanted me to approach Rip about singing with the band, but I refused fervently. Luckily, she wouldn't take no for an answer and phoned Rip to finagle an audition for me. Rip would later joke about their conversation and chuckle whenever he got to the part about her telling him that I did most of my singing in the shower. He often made it a point to tell people who asked where I came from that he found me “in the shower!” No one could ever accuse Rip of NOT having a sense of humor.

I tried out for the Olney Jazz Troupe back when they were rehearsing in a trailer outside the Sandy Spring Friend's School. I was pretty nervous, but Rip's patient and calm demeanor soon put me at ease. Rip either read the chart I was trying, or stood with closed eyes and a grin on his face. I hadn't learned what that specific Rip “look” meant, so I was surprised and ecstatic when he called with the band's formal invitation. As the years passed I came to know and love that look. It was the look of Rip processing the music as it flowed through

his ears to every fiber of his being. He wore that look more and more as the years passed and the band progressed, finally reaching a point where it was on his face from the first note of a concert to the last. I'm sure that look was noted by the entire band, and equally appreciated.

Like many who came to know and love Rip, he was a brother, an uncle, a father and a friend. I can honestly say I've never met anyone like him. When Rip had the misfortune to be convalescing during the holidays, I'd surprise him with a Living Christmas Card Variety Show. Nothing extravagant, just news from home, a few humorous observations, and a Mel Tormé medley or some swinging Christmas carols as the big finish. Rip would sit there fully engaged as if listening to an old radio show or sitting in the front row at the local theatre. He'd close his eyes, put that grin on his face, and take it all in. When my show ended he'd sit there motionless for a bit, still holding that look while I anxiously awaited his response. “S'Wonderful, just S'Wonderful!”

Man, I really miss Rip and that look; I think about him every day.

*Brad Barwek  
former “Boy” Singer OBB*





## Board of Directors

Barry Fell, Chairman  
Dr. Bob Tennyson, Music Director  
David Schumer, Business Manager  
Todd Sahlroot, Secretary  
Paul Freirich, Sound Engineer  
Dr. Sue Vazakas, Historian/Archivist  
Dr. John Gottdiener  
Dr. Chris Koepke  
Bruce Morris  
Halsey Smith  
Rich Sonnenschein



## In The Mood -Special Issue-

Editor: Dr. Sue Vazakas  
Designer: Brad Bawek

## Friends of the OBB

The Friends of the Olney Big Band support the efforts of the Band by encouraging volunteerism, and by donating, soliciting, and receiving gifts, bequests, and endowments for the Band. If you are interested in becoming a *Friend of the Olney Big Band*, go to the OBB website and click *Friends of the OBB* for details.

- Brooke Grove Retirement Village, Sandy Spring Friends School
- American Legion Norman Price Post 68, Dr. Charles C. Chen, Globetrotter Travel Services of Olney, Graeves Auto and Appliance, Helen Kinney, Medstar Montgomery, Rose Redding Mersky, Alan Rich/Nova Label Co., Sandy Spring Lions Club, Halsey W. Smith, Studio of Ballet Arts
- Carpet and Vacuum Expo, El Andariego Restaurant, Christopher's Hardware, Barry and Ali Fell, Deb and Paul Fitzer, Fletcher's Service Center of Olney, Greater Olney Civic Association, L&L Music-Wind Shop, Crystal U. Lee, Moss Chiropractic, Music & Arts, Olney Theatre Center, Sole D'Italia, Sandy Spring Bank, Turf Center Inc.

### Honorary Friends:

- Joe Karam & Robert Redding (in memoriam), Barry Schwartz



"Thank you all for allowing me to be a part of your lives.  
... Keep on swinging guys and dolls!" - Dr. Rip Rice

## OBB Events Schedule

**Saturday, November 7, 2015 -**

### **Swing! Swing! Swing! VII**

Olney Theatre Centre, Olney, MD 1:30pm.  
The band returns to this historic stage for their 7th annual concert and fundraiser, featuring the great big bands of the Swing era. This concert is dedicated to our founding director, Dr. Rip G. Rice, who passed away earlier this year. Rip's love of big band music grew our band into what it is today. Tickets for RESERVED seating can be purchased at the Olney Theatre Box Office and on their website. Adults \$25, Seniors 62+ \$23, Active Duty Military \$20, Children 12 and Under \$15. For groups of 15 or more call Weldon at 301.924.4485, ext. 121, for special pricing.

**Saturday, December 26, 2015 -**

### **Festival of Lights Holiday and Jazz**

**Concert.** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 9900 Stoneybrook Drive, Kensington, MD 20895

The band will play two evening shows on the auditorium stage at the Washington, D.C. Temple Visitor's Center. All activities are FREE and open to the public.

"I can't tell you how thrilling it was for me to sit on the stage and listen to the best music ever, played by the best band ever. Thank you all for your dedication, for your musicianship, and for your ability to play so that the audience KNOWS you all are having fun entertaining them."

- Dr. Rip Rice (to the band, 2012)

Don't forget to visit us on Facebook  
<http://tinyurl/qarzpnx>

### For Band Information Contact

Dr. Bob Tennyson – Music Director  
202-279-1968  
Nickelplateroad38@yahoo.com

### For Booking Information Check our Website or Contact

David B. Schumer - Manager:  
301-598-2107  
theolneybigband@gmail.com

[www.olneybigband.org](http://www.olneybigband.org)