

*A new band formation is designed with toy soldiers by Assistant Director Haug; the exact movements for each bandsman are diagrammed and mimeographed; and then it's produced on the football field*

## Six Minutes

**Back of That Colorful Band Spectacle Between Halves Is a Story of Hard Work**

By CLARENCE FROST



*Barbara Ann Payne is the band queen this year, contributing a small amount of glamour to band appearances. On the right is William R. Wehrend, band director*

**T**HE score is tied... One minute left to play in the first half... The Sooners have the ball on the 10-yard line... First and goal to go...

As a loyal Sooner alumnus you are standing on your seat, whipping your neighbor over the head with your hat, begging in hysterical screams for Jacobs to take it across.

You and the 25,000-odd other persons there aren't interested in anything at the moment but those eleven boys out there in the red suits. Unless you are an observing sort, you hadn't even noticed the 153 gaudily attired members of the University of Oklahoma band massed behind the end zone. You won't notice them until the shot ends the first half. Then you sit back wearily and just dare anything to try and entertain you after the excitement of the last few minutes.

But that's where Director William R. Wehrend and his Sooner marching band come in. That's their job—to keep you amused while you impatiently await the return of the teams to the field for the second half of the game.

That is, that's a part of the purpose of this crack organization—the "Pride of Oklahoma." The purpose of this article is to give you some of the background for that six-and-a-half-minute performance.

Yes, that's how long the Sooner band generally performs during the half intermission at football games. The figure might vary a few seconds either way,

depending upon circumstances—for instance, if the visiting band takes a little more than its share of the time. But the performance has been timed, almost to the second. And, you ask, how? Well, here's how. With grinding, hammering work. Drill. Drill. Drill. And for what? Just the fun of doing it!

More than twenty hours of intensive practice and drill are behind that brief intermission's playing and marching. Multiplying that figure by the number of members in the band—that's more than 3,000 man hours of labor behind that stunt you compliment by smiling and slapping your hands together a few times.

And that figure is conservative. It takes into consideration only the time spent by the group in playing over and over the tunes to be used and fitting them to the intricate maneuvers you describe (while you watch) as "cute."

The time spent by sections of the band in "woodshed" sessions; the hours on end spent by Leonard Haug, assistant director, in working out the maneuvers in detail, diagramming them and putting them on mimeographed sheets; the time involved in fitting the stunts to the occasion and the time, and the years of experience behind the band's intermission show—they are not considered in that time estimate.

So we'll take you for a peek behind the scenes at this highly complicated but smoothly functioning extra-curricular activity—the University of Oklahoma band.

It has already been said that those connected with the band work at it. That is understatement. As is the case with any successful group, the members talk it, eat it, sleep it—in short they live it. That is true of the band. Go to Professor Wehrend's office. There he sits with instruments stacked around him, not unlike the drummer in a symphony orchestra. He's busy. Always busy—even while he talks to you. Tuning an oboe reed. Jotting down a note. Whistling under his breath.

The same is true of Instructor Haug. He finishes with an individual student. Gets up and places his miniature football field on the backs of half a dozen chairs. The board is about 15 feet long, marked off with "five-yard" lines and inside these lines in "paces."

He places his 153 little tin soldiers (bought at the dime store) and maneuvers each into the giant letters "J-O-E"—a greeting to the University's new president. The direction of each member of the band is charted. Then it is mimeographed and the sheet is a necessary part of the folio of music to be carried on Saturday afternoon.

But Saturday afternoon doesn't come that quickly. First the band will be given instructions. The music to be used will be practiced and practiced and practiced. Then, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the group goes to its own "football field" south of the Biology building to

(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 31)

## Six Minutes

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

put into practice what Haug has diagrammed on the paper.

Two hours every afternoon the band works out. And for what? For the fun of doing it. No credit. No money. Few privileges, beyond getting into games free and marching between halves, and playing *Boomer Sooner* each time the Oklahoma team scores.

But there must be plenty of reward in the satisfaction gained from being a member of the Sooner band. High school youths over the state are buying battered cornets and sagging snare drums with the view to "making" the Sooner band when they go to school. And the competition for the best clarinet players is not unlike that for the all-state halfbacks.

The Band Clinic and the Drum Majors' Short Course and similar activities have done much to stimulate this interest. The standards of school band organizations have been raised and embellished. As in the case of athletes and scholars, the preparatory schools of the state are contributing material already well versed in the fundamentals.

For instance, take this year's co-drum majors—the importance of whom cannot be exaggerated. They are freshmen—something of which the class of 1945 can be justly proud. Bob Elliott, Perry, and Kenneth English, of Guthrie, are directing the destiny of the marching band. How well, you saw on Saturday afternoons. Incidentally, the drum majors, including the "flash men," their assistants and the tricksters who prance around the columns during maneuvers, meet every Monday night to study the technique and rehearse plans for the next performance.

The "Pride of Oklahoma" is so uniformly excellent in its between-halves entertainment that Sooner fans sometimes fail to appreciate its real worth until they have a chance to compare it with bands of other major universities.

The secret of that consistently outstanding record is simply work, work, work. So when you get a thrill down your spine as the O. U. Band splashes the gridiron with an intricate and flowing pattern of color, with spirited music floating down the crisp autumn wind—give a thought to the many hours of work that made this spectacle possible.

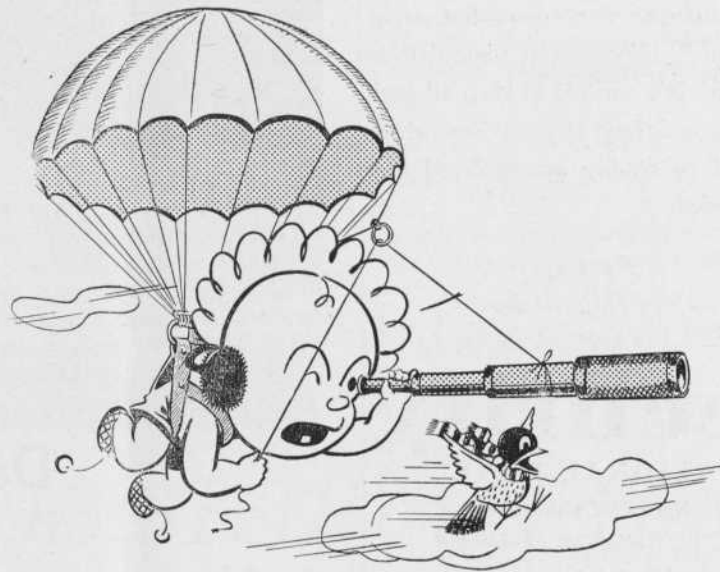
▲ ▲ ▲

### Counsel for GRDA

Quince B. Boydston, '19law, eastern Oklahoma attorney whose home is in Fort Gibson, has been appointed acting general counsel for the Grand River Dam Authority. He has been an assistant of the GRDA legal staff.

He was a member of Pi Alpha Delta honorary legal fraternity at the University.

# LOOKING BACK---



## on 50 years of progress!

And judging future progress from past accomplishments, we see a glorious future for Oklahoma University under the guidance of President Brandt. Likewise progressing with Oklahoma University and other important Oklahoma institutions, the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company will continue to contribute its share in building for a greater future by serving you well.

**OKLAHOMA NATURAL**  
*Gas Company*