

# VENTURING MAGAZINE

Crew of the Year by Carol Wiker

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Not many youth members want to sit through an evening of adult leadership recognition I can assure you, and our youth members are no different than any others. But when they announced the winner of the Pioneer District Crew of the Year as Crossroads of America Scout Band, Crew 559—well, let's just say it got their attention. The Cool Crew Jazz Band portion of the Crossroads of America Scout Band had been requested to perform background music for the Recognition Dinner so there were several youth members present for the event. Boredom paid off!

What in the world is "Crew of the Year"? It's our most desired and sought-after award. It's not an award given by BSA but an incentive award given by our district to the units—one is given to the most outstanding Pack and Troop as well as the most outstanding Crew within Pioneer District, Crossroads of America Council (i.e., east-central Indianapolis). It is awarded annually during the District Leaders' Recognition Award Dinner. What are the requirements? Nobody seems to know for sure so it's not something that can be earned by working through a checklist of events. The unit just keeps "doing its thing" with a good program and the results pay off at the end of the year with happy youth.



The Crossroads of America Scout Band is a very unique unit using the Venturing Program as a means to allow female youth members to enjoy the service of music. Most of the male members are also members of Boy Scout Troops. Our focal point is music—we leave the camping, canoeing, backpacking, etc., to the Troops. Actually, we don't have time for these other activities.

In 2015, our youth members had 101 activities to choose from including rehearsals and performances. Additionally, those over 16 years of age had 15 opportunities to work our Concession Stand at the Lucas Oil Stadium, that's where the Colts football team plays. We logged 3,788 hours of service to others. And all this in addition to school marching band practices and performances, school band performances, football games, church outings, family vacations, scout camp, family obligations and dating(!?). Yes, these youth members are usually too busy to get into too much trouble. And don't forget the homework—that comes first, of course. We also have a roadway



median we maintain. It is located just outside the local camp (Camp Belzer) and is one of the longest medians in the area.

Some of our neighboring districts conduct Merit Badge Universities when Scouts work on merit badges all day. We were invited to provide musical entertainment during lunch breaks for two of our districts. Some of our Scouts were also participating in the "University."



May is racing month in Indianapolis but it is not limited to race cars. It has expanded to Marathon racing, also. Running for several miles apparently becomes a bit mundane and entertainment sections have been added to

the course to encourage the runners. We played for the Carmel and Indianapolis Marathons.



The Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall Memorial came to Indianapolis. The Veterans committee responsible for the ceremonies experienced difficulty obtaining a group to provide appropriate music. One of the committee members, a veteran and a Scouter, thought of us and sent a message while we were in the middle of one of our planning conferences. Talk about perfect

timing! We were honored.

Once again we participated in the Indy 500 Race by marching with Purdue University in their annual Parade of Bands Pre-Race Entertainment. The fans are arriving; the pit crews are buzzing, people scurrying everywhere with last minute preparations. The most exciting part of all—we get to see the race.



While we were on Tour we performed several concerts in areas where we stopped. One was the Gettysburg Battleground Tourist Center. They say the grounds are haunted along with several other sites in the area. No, I didn't see any paranormal activity. Yes, we played for Lincoln—yes, he was there—yes, statues do count! Performing at the World War II Veterans Memorial was like performing on hallowed ground as most of us grew up with parents or grandparents who had served in this war. This was the most important one of the year—what we had practiced and practiced for— it had to be



perfect. We weren't just playing for ourselves and our audience, we were playing for those who had served and perished, those who had served and returned with horrible memories, those who served by staying at home and continuing the workforce of those who had been called into service.



Due to all the obligations of high school band competitions, we don't get much of an opportunity to parade any more but we were accepted into the National Independence Day Parade. Parading up Constitution Avenue was a sight-seeing trip all its own. And what a finale for our trip. Don't think we could have walked another mile. All of this is good fun and fun for good. The youth experience things they've only

heard about in books and we were able to add something special to the experiences of other tourists.



The Indiana State Fair has an area called the Scout Legacy where Scouting skills are demonstrated and Scouting fun is experienced. We accept this responsibility one day for this area each year. We perform concerts and provide a "petting zoo" of instruments for the visitors to experience. Our youth also have fun with the skills.



also joined us. We had an extra-large band that day.

A local Troop (133) was celebrating their 75th Anniversary. They not only asked us to play at their dinner but their musicians



Participating in a Presidential Ceremony is one of the most honored events we could ever accept. Every year, close to his birthday, the incumbent President of the United States presents a wreath of flowers to President Benjamin H. Harrison's grave site. It is a small ceremony at the oldest and biggest cemetery in Indianapolis attended by



Generals and other representatives of the Presidential Staff. The Daughters of the American Revolution, Civil War Re-enactors, and Crown Hill History all participate in the event.



There are few places large enough to house a full band but the St. Lawrence Catholic School and Church welcomed us with open arms. They requested our participation in their annual outdoor Fall Festival and we gratefully accepted.

It was a fun day playing under "The Big Top."

Each year we provide a Christmas Concert in the main lobby of the Indiana State Museum. Afterwards, we met at the church for—guess what—a Magic and pizza party! Fun times for all.

So, in a nutshell, this is how we earned Crew of the Year—we think! Awarded or not, the members had an unforgettable year!

