New pep band provides extra spark

By Kate Rose
Staff Writer

The Rider University basketball team is playing for the championship game and at the end of a time out the fans shout their eyes. The coach is giving the play, a ball bounces on the wood and sneakers squeak as the players run to the court. The crowd is listening for more. They want music. They need a pep band.

The foundations of a Rider University pep band began to be built in spring 2002, according to Jeff Stump, a graduate student who during his under-graduate time at Rider felt the need to revive an old tradition. There had been a pep band in the late 80s as Midnight MAACness. The band also hopes to bring the pep band.

Problems arose with practice time, access to instruments and the fact that the band was not ready to show its stuff to athletics.

"The problem was that we had problems with holding rehearsals," said Stump. "Interest had waned.

Stump remained optimistic that the pep band would one day become a reality and upon graduating passed the torch to two fellow music lovers. Current shakers and movers of school spirit include Rider University Bronc Band (RUBB) President Mike Shea and Vice President/Treasurer, Amy Peroni, who picked up where Stump left off.

The new leaders have worked hard to increase band membership and awareness of RUBB. They even created the name to give the band a personality.

The band has increased in membership from five members last spring to approximately 25 this fall. Rehearsals have started and the members are optimistic that the band could once again fill the Bronze Zoo with music to encourage fans. "Practice began in a relatively timely manner. Everyone made it clear that they wanted to be there and we read through four songs!" Shea said of the RUBB's first practice. "This is all much more than I expected to achieve during our first rehearsal."

Shea and Peroni have done a lot to get the band off the ground, but acknowledge many people as supporters who have given their all.

Credit is given by both to Stump and the Alumni Association. Dean of Students Anthony Campbell created the initial link between the band and the Rider Alumni Board President Joe Casarella, who graduated from Rider with the class of '55.

"Over the years, when attending our games, there seemed to be something lacking, something to get our spirits in full gear," said Casarella. "That something is the pep band.

School spirit can be seen in full force at events such as Midnight MAACness. The band also hopes to bring out school pride at games and other school events. The athletic department is excited about the role RUBB could play at Rider but wants to ensure quality performances by requiring meetings and auditions prior to performing at events and games.

"It is our feeling that a quality pep band can add to an athletic event in terms of atmosphere, spirit and enthusiasm," said Karin Torchio on behalf of athletics at Rider. "The athletics department welcomes and encourages the involvement of students in its events."

Student involvement in RUBB and other organizations on campus can increase pride in oneself and Rider University. Stump, Shea and Peroni are three students who have worked hard to make their dream a reality.

No one person behind the creation of RUBB takes the workload, and then you have to be a real person in eight months."

Like Thornton, students feel as if they're prepared for the most part, but will still continue to wrestle with feelings of doubt about their workload and how they're managing their busy schedules. It's a lot of time management because with two jobs and my last semester with seventeen credits, it's pretty difficult," said senior Jennifer Kregeloh.

However, Kregeloh is on the right track by substitute teaching for the Edison School District and looking for her student teaching position. She has taken all her elementary education and communication classes and is well on her way.

Foulke said that he worked for Anheuser Busch Entertainment Corporation.

"I was a marketing assistant because I'm a marketing major," he said. "It was good. I made a lot of contacts and gained more confidence by talking to people in different positions."

"I'm ready to graduate, but in the meantime, the end of the school year will be here before we know it, and caps will be flying and soaring into the distance. It's just something that cannot be stopped or slowed down."

"Am I ready to graduate? wondered Thornton. "No—well, yes, but then again. I want to leave, but it's so scary!"