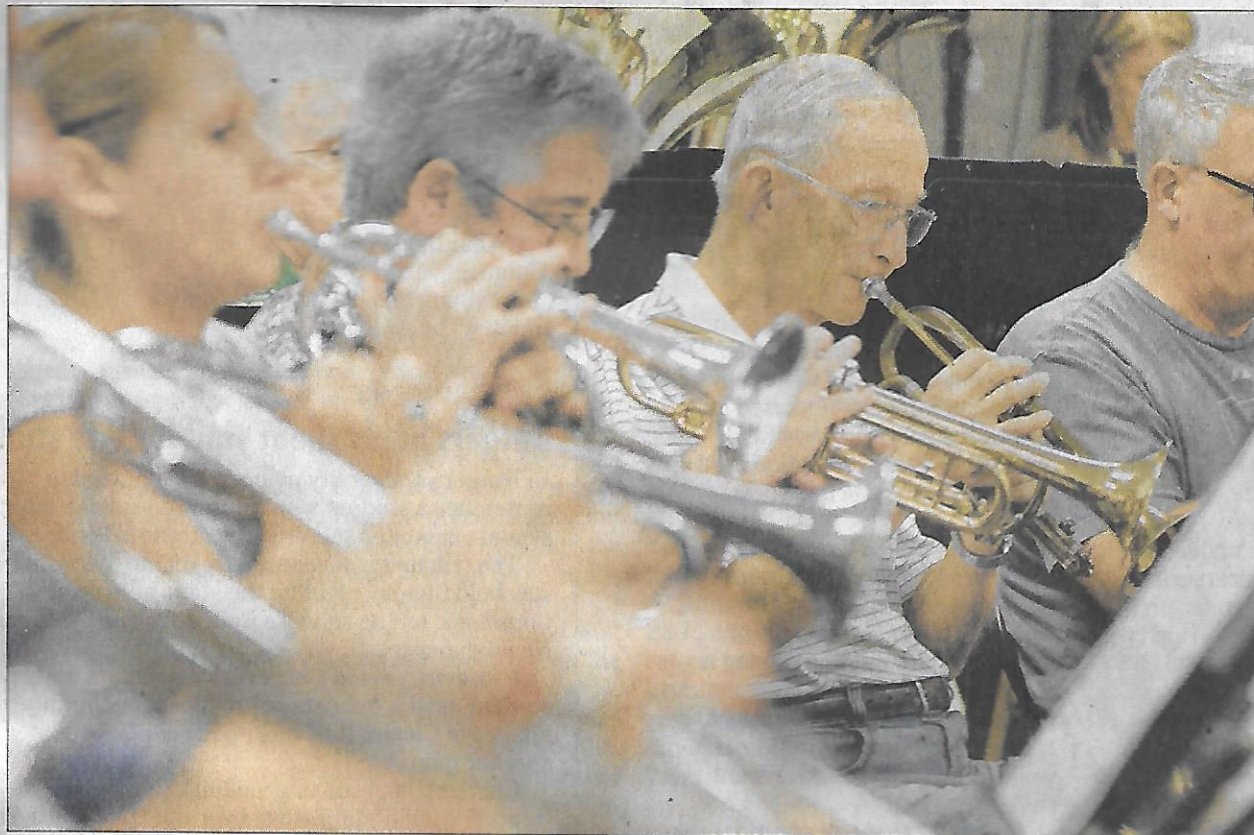


# 'A great family'



Photos by NICK TOMECEK | Daily News

Darrell Biddle plays the cornet during a recent Emerald Coast Community Band practice at Playground Music.

## The Emerald Coast Community Band is going strong

By KARI C. BARLOW

Northwest Florida Daily News  
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### FORT WALTON BEACH —

Strains of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" swelled to a crescendo inside the main practice room

Son, where a horn or woodwind went awry, and Nancy Thiele dropped her baton and grimaced.

"Oh, oh, oh!" Thiele groaned, not bothering to hide her laughter. "Is anybody hurt?"

The musicians answered with smart-alecky remarks of their own, but quickly settled down, instruments up and ready to play.

Such are the Tuesday night rehearsals of the Emerald Coast Community Band.

More than 50 members strong, the band is a unique blend of ages and backgrounds united for one reason — music for music's sake.

### CHECK IT OUT

The Emerald Coast Community Band holds open rehearsals from 7 to 8:30 p.m. every Tuesday at

Meigs Middle School Band Room

For more information, call Nancy Thiele at 865-8902.

"We're band nerds," laughed Thiele, who directed bands at Bruner Junior High School and Choctawhatchee High School for 30 years before retiring in 1995. "We're here because we love music."

And this gig is nothing like teaching school, she said.

"For one thing, my drummer is 87-years-old," Thiele said of Dan Vickers, whose daughter accompanies him on percussion. "We've got military members. We've got engi-



Nancy Thiele, director of the Emerald Coast Community Band, leads the musicians during a recent practice.

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