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neers. We've got doctors. We've got vet techs."

The band, which plays everything from Broadway to Dixieland, even boasts snowbirds in the winter.

"They bring their horns from Canada and Wisconsin and every place else," Thiele said.

The group largely is a collection of former band students, many of whom have played their instruments for decades.

There's Les Matheson, 56, who has played the trumpet since the fourth grade, and Bob Rockwell, who plays his grandfather's cornet.

John Hennion, a 28-year-old clarinet player, had Thiele as his band director at Choctaw.

"It's really about the same," he said with a laugh. "It's actually a lot of fun. We clarinet players cause all kinds of trouble."

Darrell Biddle, who played the cornet in high school and college, hadn't picked up his instrument in 50 years when he joined the community band.

"It came back after awhile, but I still practice every day," said the 74-year-old. "(Nancy) really puts the thumb on us."

Thiele agreed.

"It's hard to keep them corralled sometimes," she said. "It's a good thing I'm not having to give them

ON THE NET

See a video and photo gallery of the Emerald Coast Community Band at nwfdailynews.com.

grades."

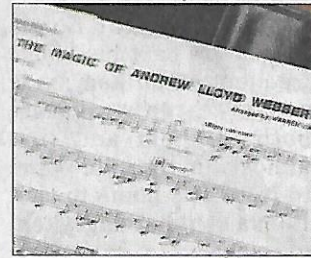
The band, which is strictly voluntary and does not hold tryouts, plays a variety of shows throughout the year.

In the next few weeks,

Thiele will break out the Christmas music and start preparing for the band's holiday performances.

She said she always is on the lookout for new members.

"It's a great family," she said. "We want anyone, no matter how rusty they are, to come join us and sit in."



NICK TOMECEK | Daily News

A piece of sheet music rests on a stand at a recent practice.