

# At the Half...

## Major Y's background varied

By **KIMBERLY L. MARION**  
Special to the DTH

For 16 years, he led the U.S. Air Force Band before royalty and heads of state. He served all the presidents from Roosevelt through Nixon and played before Queen Elizabeth, King Saud of Arabia, and Premier Nikita Khrushchev, secretaries of state and various other dignitaries.

But for the last 18 years, Major John F. Yesulaitis has been the creative force behind the UNC bands.

"The Major has seen everything and done everything in life and still has a great capacity for living," said Allen Reep, assistant director for the UNC bands.

The 66-year-old "Major Y," as he is called on campus, agreed that he has had a varied career that has taught him many lessons — the most important, how to live each day with enthusiasm, excitement and laughter.

"You have to learn how to laugh," Yesulaitis said. "Sometimes people are too serious. They take life too seriously, and if you don't know how to laugh, life can be very, very drab."

Yesulaitis began his military career in 1936 as a French hornist with the U.S. Army Band in Washington.

In 1947, he became the associate conductor of the U.S. Air Force Band and the Symphony Orchestra in Washington, entertaining White House families and their guests.

Although he was accustomed to seeing royalty and dignitaries, he said he once embarrassed himself while playing for the Queen (now the Queen Mother) and King George. When he shook the Queen's hand, he removed his hat, which is part of the military uniform that is not to be removed.

During his reign as associate conductor of the Air Force Band, he also had the opportunity to travel to Europe, Africa, Iceland, Scandinavia, China, Haiti, Bermuda, Mexico, Canada, and the Philippines. He lived in Japan and Korea for a year each.

He said his musical highlight was during one of these many trips when he conducted a band in Berlin Olympic Stadium before an audience of 125,000 — his largest ever.

Shortly before his military career ended, Yesulaitis was married. In 1964, he and his wife, Patricia, moved to North Carolina, where he took a stationary job as the band director at UNC.

Before Yesulaitis came to UNC, the band was called the "Meandering Tar Heels," Reep said. Band membership has almost tripled since Yesulaitis' arrival.

One reason for the increase is Yesulaitis' ability to stay calm in stressful situations. He said that conductors, like actors, must develop a "who cares?" attitude so they can keep from being embarrassed or frustrated much of the time.

"The Major never gets uptight about perfor-

mances," said band member Alyson Reid.

Eleni Bacas added, "He's not like a real major, 'hupt-two.' He is extremely patient and understanding."

When asked about his patience, Yesulaitis responded, "I am sure there are times when I portray that image. I try to stay calm, but there are times when I get excited. However, if I show stress, it creates a big problem (with the band), so I have to keep my wits about me."

Yet to many people, including Reep, Yesulaitis is an "ultimate father figure."

"He really cares about people. He is forever calling us (the band) his family," Reep added.

Yesulaitis agreed that he has a big family. "All of my people in the band know that any time they have a problem, they can come to see me and I'll listen to them. I don't know if I can help, but I'll listen."

The family feeling contributes pride to the band organization, creating a little extra effort by the members because they are working as one unit, Yesulaitis said.

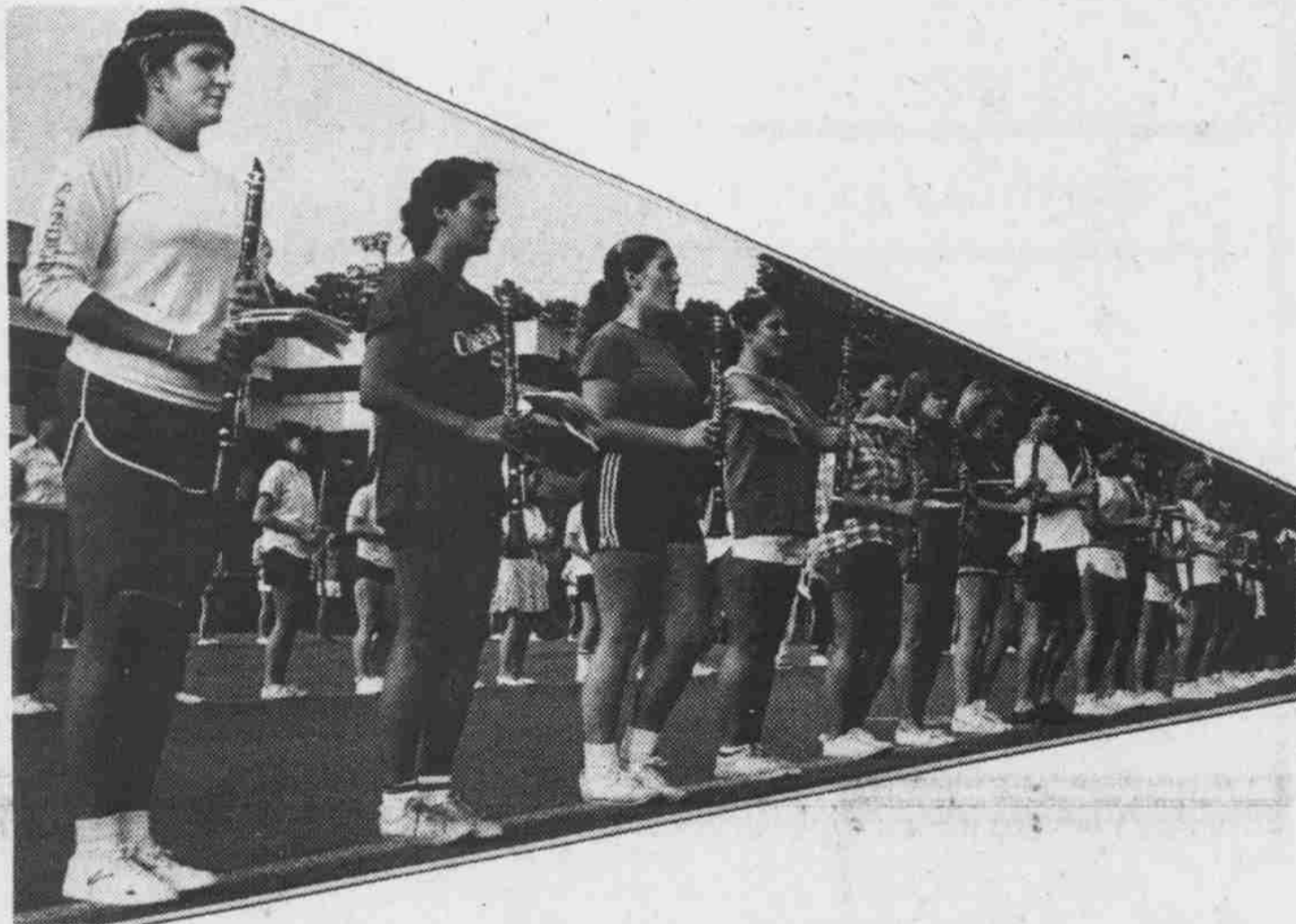
In addition to being a "father figure" for the band, he is also supportive of the University and its athletic teams. On his office bulletin board, he has posted the schedules for almost every UNC athletic event.

"He's the teams' best cheerleader," Reep said. "You can't find anyone in the University community who hasn't been touched by the Major. Everybody knows him. He's our best am-



DTH/Jeff Neuville

John Yesulaitis (above), "Major Y," traveled the world with the Air Force Band before settling down in Blue Heaven. Yesulaitis has been the director of UNC's Marching Tar Heels (shown left at practice) since 1964.



DTH/Jeff Neuville

bassador."

During the marching band season, Yesulaitis is in charge of choosing the music for and designing and charting the halftime shows, which take about eight hours a week to prepare.

Yesulaitis also conducts the playing rehearsals, which take about 12 hours a week.

After football season, he conducts two pep bands and a concert band.

Although Yesulaitis does delegate some responsibilities to the band officers and Reep, he usually operates the band himself.

And during his years at UNC, he has done more than just create a name for the band — he has made history himself.

In 1973, Yesulaitis was named one of the top 10 most outstanding musical directors in the United States and Canada by *The School Musician Directors and Teacher* magazine.

In 1976, Yesulaitis became president of the American Bandmasters Association, which in Reep's opinion is the most prestigious group in the world. After a four-year term, he became a member of the board of directors.

When conducting doesn't occupy Yesulaitis time, he enjoys relaxing at his mountain home and visiting people.

"Relationships are important to me and the band. If I can do something for someone, I will go out of my way to do it as a matter of friendship more than anything else," he said.

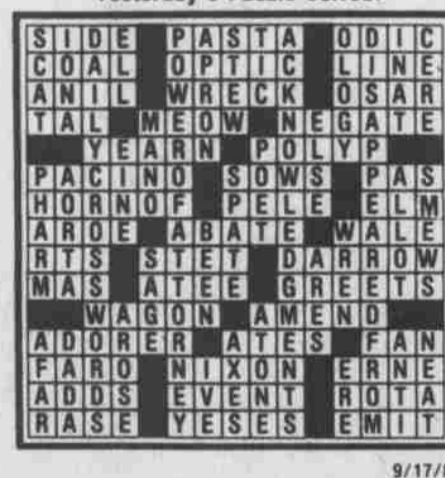
While Yesulaitis said he has accomplished and seen almost everything he cares to see, he does not plan to retire any time soon.

"My goal is to be happy in what I am doing, as long as I can do something," he said. "I don't care to burn up the world or anything like that."

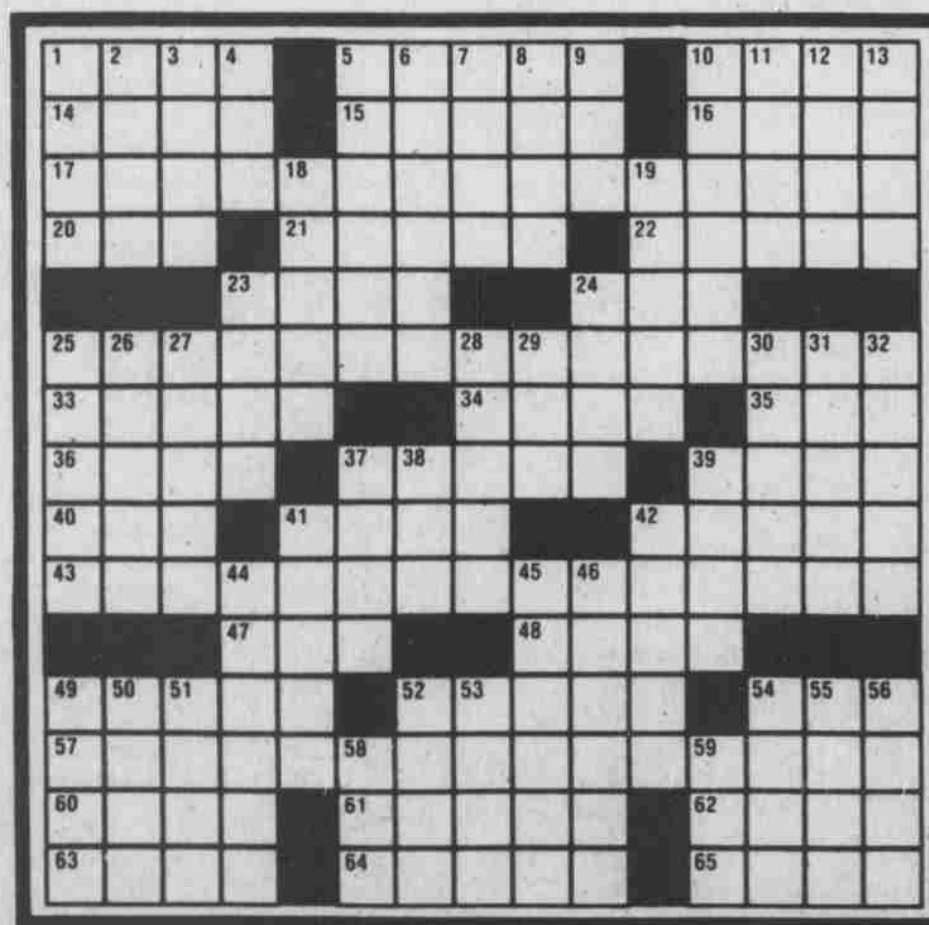
### THE Daily Crossword By Avery P. Bromfield

- |                            |                             |                                |                               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ACROSS                     | 35 Gershwin                 | 57 Space station               | 24 Hebrew stringed instrument |
| 1 Space age spin-off       | 36 River of Germany         | 60 Word with shoppe            | 25 Pumps or Oxfords           |
| 5 Wingeat                  | 37 Big cat                  | 61 Weasel's kin                | 26 City of Italy              |
| 10 Brim                    | 39 Chart of a piece of land | 62 Level                       | 27 Vigilant                   |
| 14 Mountain range in USSR  | 40 Continent: abbr.         | 63 Equipment                   | 28 Lawful                     |
| 15 Mansion                 | 41 Muslim judge             | 64 Students                    | 29 Before                     |
| 16 Evening: Fr.            | 42 Penned                   | 65 Mariner mission destination | 30 Steer                      |
| 17 Armstrong and Aldrin    | 43 Out-of-this-world shots  | DOWN                           | 32 Cloys                      |
| 20 Wapiti                  | 47 Perfect formation        | 1 Sand                         | 37 Chat                       |
| 21 Cars                    | 48 Fibbed                   | 2 USSR sea                     | 38 — Amin                     |
| 22 Passageway              | 49 Polaris and Vega         | 3 Stint                        | 39 Poke                       |
| 23 Hostilities             | 52 Yawning                  | 4 In the manner of             | 41 Near                       |
| 24 Purpose                 | 54 Astronaut, at times      | 5 Quantity                     | 42 Primitive invention        |
| 25 They probe the universe |                             | 6 Chinese philosopher          | 44 Achiever                   |
| 33 Draggd                  |                             | 7 — Domini                     | 45 Joyful                     |
| 34 Amor                    |                             | 8 Drags                        | 46 Musicians, sort of         |
|                            |                             | 9 Epoch                        | 49 Weather condition          |
|                            |                             | 10 Arctic native               | 50 Story                      |
|                            |                             | 11 Accomplishes                | 51 Forever — day              |
|                            |                             | 12 Maiden                      | 52 In re                      |
|                            |                             | 13 Irish                       | 53 Paid admissions            |
|                            |                             | 18 Hairy, sort of              | 54 Hurrah!                    |
|                            |                             | 19 Secular people              | 55 Roman road                 |
|                            |                             | 23 Bakery worker               | 56 Piggeries                  |
|                            |                             |                                | 58 Friend of Snow White       |
|                            |                             |                                | 59 Vehicle for 17A            |

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



9/17/83



© 1983 Tribune Company Syndicate, Inc. All Rights Reserved. 9/17/83

## PIZZA PIZZAZZ

Compare Our Incredibly Low Prices!  
Try our medium 12" Pizza with 1 topping  
only **3.95**  
FREE DELIVERY

at The Delivery Depot

929-0321

HOURS  
M-Th 4 pm-1 am  
F & Sat 4 pm-2 am

## Sharpe's Workout

combining dance exercise with muscle toning & conditioning providing the most complete workout in the area for women and men.

Present this ad for  
**15% Off**  
your first months' membership.

University Mall • Chapel Hill 942-7545  
South Square Mall • Durham 489-3012



### BLOOM COUNTY by Berke Breathed

