

## Dorsey Orchestra Features Popular Vocalist Walt Andrus



DRIFT BACKWARD in time to the big band era when the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra with trombonist Buddy Morrow appears April 18 at the BCC's Odell Williamson Auditorium. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Walt Andrus will be the featured vocalist when Buddy Morrow and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra bring the sound of the big bands to the Odell Williamson Auditorium at Brunswick Community College on Monday, April 18.

Andrus joined the orchestra in 1988 after a stint with The Pied Pipers.

While he likes and listens to all types of music, he prefers to perform music of the great singers of the '30s, '40s and '50s, or new material that fits his style and range. The orchestra's song list includes vocals like "Marie," "Once in a While," "Swanee River" and "I'll Never Smile Again."

As conductor of the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, trombonist Buddy Morrow insists the band retain the authentic sound and style of the late Dorsey, while still having the flexibility to meet the demands of a variety of engagements.

Morrow, a well-known trombonist, played with both the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra before touring with a band of his own.

He also conducted for the Jimmy Rogers Television Show and was on staff at NBC as a featured player on the Tonight Show. Morrow is an active brass clinician and guest soloist.

According to a news release, Morrow "is one of the rare Big Band band leaders of today; a man whose skill on his horn is both an inspiration to his band and a thrill to audiences wherever he appears."

Curtain time for the April 18 show is 8 p.m. General admission will be \$10, and for students and senior citizens, \$8. Tickets are available in advance by calling the auditorium at 910-754-3133 or 754-3134. Several major credit cards can be used to make reservations by telephone, said Manager Michael Sapp. Tickets may be claimed at the box office.



VOCALIST WALT ANDRUS has a style reminiscent of "the young Frank Sinatra."

## Guardians Ad Litem: Standing Up For Abused, Neglected Children

BY LYNN CARLSON

Abused and neglected children can't vote, don't have money, and almost always carry the heavy emotional baggage of shame and powerlessness. And though they have done nothing wrong, they need someone to represent them in court—someone willing to make this pledge:

*"I shall serve faithfully until the children I shall be appointed to represent are returned to the full custody of their Parents or Guardians, or until they are adopted, so help me God."*

If it sounds like a big job, it is.

If it sounds like something that might be depressing, it can be.

If it sounds like the kind of work someone does for the money, it's not.

It's the last sentence of the oath taken by guardians ad litem—the dedicated volunteers who represent Brunswick County children who've been removed from their homes because a judge has determined they aren't safe there.

When children end up in a courtroom because of abuse or neglect, it's up to judges to decide their future. To protect those children's rights, North Carolina established the Guardian Ad Litem Program (loosely translated from the Latin: "guardian for this case"), based on adult volunteers committed to making sure children's basic human rights and best interests are represented in court.

A guardian ad litem is a child's voice in court, making sure his or her needs are met. The volunteer's responsibilities are broad, but they do not include serving as a foster parent. His or her power is considerable, including access to usually closed files such as medical records. Working with an attorney advocate, the guardian ad litem's duties include:

- investigating and determining the facts, the child's needs and the resources available to meet those needs, and to present that information at court hearings;
- helping, when appropriate, to settle disputed issues;
- collecting and presenting to the court all available reports, evaluations and other information regarding the child and appearing on the child's behalf at all court hearings;
- serving the child and the court by protecting and promoting the child's best interests;
- conducting follow-up investigations, reporting to the court when the needs of the child are not being met, and ensuring that court orders are properly executed;
- petitioning to terminate the parental rights of the child's parents, if it appears that there is no alternative.

Jane Cassidy, who coordinates Brunswick County's program, is looking for a few more good men and women willing to take on a job like that—people who'll be as thorough and care as much as Gale and Bettye Wolny.



GALE AND BETTYE WOLNY (left), guardians ad litem, with Jane Cassidy, coordinator of the local program. The Wolnys first became advocates when they lived in Wake County and now represent abused and neglected Brunswick County children in the court system.

Gale and Bettye moved to Brunswick County from Raleigh, where they first became guardians ad litem. It is difficult to imagine better cheerleaders—or role models—for the program.

"My daughter was a criminal justice major concentrating in the field of child abuse," Bettye explained. "She said to me one day, 'You need to volunteer. You have the time and the means.'"

"But I've volunteered all my life," Bettye countered. "You'd be good at being a guardian ad litem," her daughter replied.

At the time, Bettye had never heard of the program. She and Gale went through Wake County's intensive training program together and began volunteering as a guardian ad litem team.

When they moved to Brunswick County, they joined the 15 or so volunteers working under the direction of Jane Cassidy in the Brunswick County program.

"We were pleasantly surprised to find that the program in Brunswick County was every bit as good as the one in Wake," Gale said. "The judges in both the big city and this small county all respect the guardians ad litem, and the departments of social services were wonderful to work with both places."

They've dealt with families from all walks of life; if there's a common thread they've seen among households where there is child abuse or neglect, it's substance abuse, Bettye says, when a parent or guardian is "so into addiction, they have no desire to help themselves."

Their work has taken them far from the boundaries of their own neighborhood and given them a look at all the faces of Brunswick County, at the local geographic and socioeconomic diversity most retirees here never experience first-hand.

That's part of the attraction, they say. "Gale and I are

the type that if we see a road we've never been on, we're just going to take it," Bettye explained.

Since child abuse and neglect know no class boundaries, the Wolnys believe it's important to present themselves to their clients as nothing more or less than caring advocates—for that reason, they think it's important not to say, to a reporter or to the children they serve, where they live or what their background is. Suffice it to say that they live in the South Brunswick Islands area, that Gale is retired from a large corporation and that they have a "blended family" of seven grown children.

While they take their work as guardians ad litem very seriously—they're currently working on three cases—Gale and Bettye say this type of volunteer work affords them the flexibility to pursue the lifestyle retirees have worked so hard to earn. "We still have time to go out of town, to have company, to play golf, and to devote the time we need to doing our investigations, preparing our reports for the program," Gale added. "The only time that's really structured is when you have to appear in court."

Cassidy says one advantage of having a husband-and-wife team of guardians ad litem is that they are able to discuss cases with each other. Guardians working singly are bound by oath to keep all information about their cases confidential. Still, the program's structure and purpose appeal to all types of prospective volunteers.

"We're seeing more men become volunteers," Cassidy said. "This kind of volunteer work frequently is attractive to men, because they can approach the investigations, the interviews, the reporting to the court, almost as if it were a business."

Cassidy, who's met most of the 500 volunteer guardians in the program statewide, said she's seen all kinds of good volunteers—from college students to businessmen to couples to...you name it.

"But with all the retirees in Brunswick County, I'd like to see us have more people. We should have a bigger pool of volunteers to call on."

Her pride in the program, locally and throughout North Carolina, is obvious. "North Carolina is so berated," she said. "You always read that we're 47th at this and 48th at that. Well, we're in the top three states in the whole U.S. with the Guardian Ad Litem Program."

While everyone agrees they wish there were no need for guardians ad litem, Bettye and Gale Wolny are happy to be of service, whether they're knocking on the door of a drug-addicted neglectful parent or poring through a beaten child's medical charts.

"There's a real feeling of citizenship," says Gale. "You really are making a difference," adds Bettye.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in North Carolina. If you are interested in becoming a guardian ad litem, call Jane Cassidy at the Brunswick County Government Complex, 253-4060.

SAY I SAW IT IN *Island Living*

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