

Volume 5, Number 17 • 40 Pages

AUGUST 8, 2002

704-872-1200 • ads@iredellcitizen.com
Published Weekly in the Crossroads of the Carolinas

Statesville, NC 28677 • 50¢

JIM CALABRESE:

"Do it my way!"

Neil Furr
IRDELL CITIZEN

James D. Calabrese's affectionate Doberman Pinscher stuck her head in the open car door to get a scratch between her pointy ears. "Maddy!" Calabrese commanded, "get out of there." Maddy began running circles around the car with Calabrese close behind barking orders.

The tone was familiar. Any out-of-step Greyhound Grenadier or West Iredell Warrior would have recognized it instantly. That voice could easily be understood above 4,000 fans at Greyhound Hollow, or from a quarter-mile away on Warrior Drive at West Iredell High School. It meant, "Get it together."

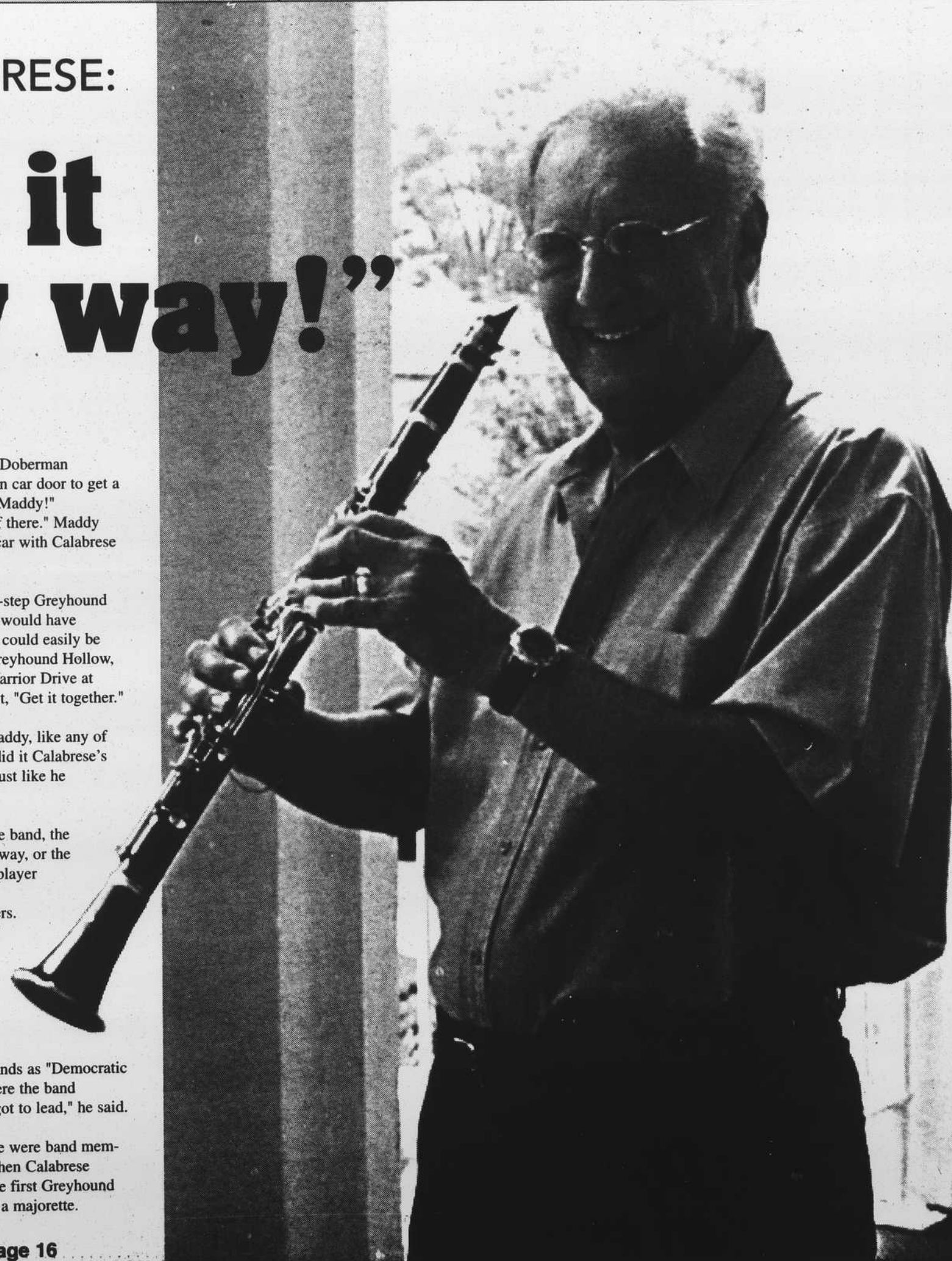
It also meant, "Do it my way!" Maddy, like any of his former band students, finally did it Calabrese's way and she ran into the garage, just like he commanded.

One thing was clear in a Calabrese band, the director was in charge. It was his way, or the highway. Mac Lackey, a trumpet player during Calabrese's first year at Statesville High School, remembers. "Jim was hard on us," he said. "If you came in late, you were out. But," Lackey added, "Jim would usually find a way to let you come back." The highway had two lanes.

Calabrese admits operating his bands as "Democratic Dictatorships." Final decisions were the band director's province. "Someone's got to lead," he said.

Alan Eisele and Gail Lackey Pope were band members at Statesville High School when Calabrese arrived in 1961. Eisele became the first Greyhound Grenadier drum majors and Pope a majorette.

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