



Things that could only
happen to Peck.

College Band Scholarship

I went to a Cleveland Mississippi High School, and I played a Cornet in the high school band. The band director, Ted Ammon, was a very good friend to several of us students. He took us waterskiing at the local lake, and he was also a Boy Scout camp counselor during the summers. One day he and I were in his office and he asked me if I had planned to go to college. I said that I would like to, but my parents will probably not be able to afford college. Then, Mr. Ammon asked, "How about getting a band scholarship to college?"

I told him that would be GREAT, but I didn't think I was that good. Crushing my ego, he actually said, "You are NOT that good, but I can tell you how you can get a scholarship to ANY school." He said, "Switch to a Tuba!" Now, I'm thinking, "Only the bigger guys carry those huge brass tubas, and I wasn't very big."

Nevertheless, I took his advice and during my senior year in the high school band I played the Tuba. During marching season, especially in early fall when the temperature could still reach 90 degrees, I learned that my original misgivings were well founded: that Tuba was heavy, and it was torture!!

When I graduated, I went to three different Mississippi colleges and all of the band directors gave me the same response, "We only give band scholarships to music majors." I had not planned to be a music major, but I told each one that my high school band director said I could get a scholarship. The college directors asked, "What Instrument do you play?" When I told them I played a Tuba, each one flashed a wide grin, and said, "OK we will give you a scholarship." I asked, "Would you like to hear me play?" Their reply, "NO not today."

I found out the reason that I got a scholarship was because every band director wants to have as many Tuba's as they can get on the back row of the band. If you will look at the million-dollar college bands now, there are more than 20 Tuba's on the back rows, and I guarantee that they all have scholarships. I attended three different Mississippi Colleges sporadically and received scholarships at two of them. The other one did not have a drill team or a marching band.

Since then, whenever I meet high school band members, I will tell them my story and leave them with a solid piece of advice, "Switch to the Tuba!"