



# Reflector Spotlight

## BRETT BAWCUM

*In August, 1992, Brett Bawcum joined the University of Georgia Redcoat Band as a mere Freshman. Thirteen seasons later, Brett leaves Athens and the Redcoat Band to pursue another avenue in music. These are some of his parting thoughts ...*



Dear Alumni Redcoats,

*As you have probably already heard, I stepped down from my position as Assistant Director of Bands at UGA as of June 30, 2005. Many of you may know of the songwriting bug that bit me at age 17. The effects never really went away, and in spite of my love for my alma mater, and specifically the Redcoats, the time had finally come to move to Nashville and take care of business.*

*I have been asked to offer a few of my favorite memories from my thirteen-year trip from rank code I-2 to past-director. I can think of hundreds, but will have to choose for the sake of space.*

*I don't think any wind or percussion player ever forgets their "firsts." My jaw dropped just as low as anyone's did the first time we gathered in the old Fine Arts Auditorium and played the first note. For the record, that feeling never went away as each year's first rehearsal rolled around. The first time entering Sanford Stadium was also awfully special. No one forgets the way the dark of the Northwest Tunnel gives way to that vision of the sun-drenched mother church of Dawgdom (excuse me while I clear this lump from my throat) with the Chant echoing in perfect accompaniment. I also remember being speechless on our first road trip, exiting onto a cloverleaf and seeing the other eight of nine buses barreling toward the game site. I was on bus six.*

*Seems as though there were some football games in there somewhere. I remember Georgia sitting on the ball in 1992 at Auburn and the "what just happened" loss to Vandy in '94. I remember pure joy as the Dawgs came back to take the lead late in the '95 Peach, only to watch the Cavaliers run the kick-off back. I remember my body shaking worse with each passing overtime against Auburn in '96. I remember stopping LSU in 1998 down there, and laughing with the Derbies on the bus as we listened to the Tiger Network radio call-in show on the way back to the hotel. I remember the comeback at the Outback in 2000, and I will never forget the Angel Tag after the game. I remember Tennessee in 2001. I asked someone with a radio on their ears what Munson was saying moments after Haynes caught that pass. "He said something about a 'hob-nailed boot'" Now I know what that is. I remember eleven losses to Florida, and one very sweet victory (I wasn't in Florida in '97.).*

*There were also those idiosyncrasies, the "no way that just happened" moments that resulted from the uniqueness of my fellow Redcoats and the unique circumstances under which we found ourselves. I remember Mark Bullock's interpretive reading of a Harlequin Romance novel over the speaker system on bus 6. I haven't laughed that hard since. I remember working successfully with then-Props Chief Jim Cox to convince a Redcoat (who shall remain nameless) that Williams-Brice Stadium was "portable," and that Gamecock fans helped erect the stadium at the beginning of the season and take it apart at the end. She figured it out by the third quarter. I remember the time at Auburn that a car had parked directly behind the properties truck in such a way that the crew couldn't load the truck. We didn't call the cops because the car had a UGA donor sticker on it. The swagger of the participating Redcoats walking back into Jordan-Hare was priceless as they told me, "We moved it." They did... by hand.*

*Most important, though, were the people. I won't name any specific names, as about 2000 Redcoats entered and left the program while I was there. I remember the smiles at the rehearsals before we left for St. Augustine. I remember the tears after Tech in a few non-bowl years. I remember the stupid jokes that are very funny years after they were told. I remember break-ups between perfect couples, and engagements between the unlikeliest of soul mates. I remember my Redcoat friends saying, "If you ever need anything, call me," and I remember learning that they meant what they said.*

*As I write you now from Twangtown, the Redcoats are preparing for tomorrow's first full band rehearsal of the 2005 season. I know that many of you join me in raising my juice-box in a toast to many more memories, for many more current and future Redcoats, for many more years. May they have as much to remember fondly as we do.*

*Most of the friends I will know until I'm gone were made through the Redcoat Band. Every time I hear from one, it reminds me of how blessed I was to be a part of something so singularly wonderful. And then I remember that old phrase, and remind myself that I will always be blessed to be a part of it.*

*"Once a Dawg, always a Dawg. How sweet it is!" As I told the band in my farewell letter, it really, really is.*

See you at Homecoming,

Brett