

## Lost in the Music

I love hiking and camping, and achieved the “Orienteering” merit badge when I was in Scouts. I still have some good(?) memories of being utterly and bewilderingly lost. But this is not a trail story. It is a story about being lost in music. Earning the Music merit badge didn’t help me here, either.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade I decided that I wanted to be in the band. I loved music, and wanted to play the trumpet. But the Junior High bandleader, Mr. Baird, needed a French Horn player. I agreed to try it. He was new to this instrument, too, and first had me playing an octave too high. After I told him that I simply could not reach the notes as they were scored in the music books, he recalibrated me and I had a better time of it.

I remember the first concert we had at the school. My parents were there, and afterwards, of course, they tried to be very encouraging. But I admitted to my folks that I was “faking it”. You must realize that the French Horn is very rarely the lead instrument (like the trumpet), and many times we played very boring whole notes or an insanely repetitive “dut da-dut da-dut da-dut...” So it was very easy to lose count of the measures and get totally off track.

That was just my first memory – I have been lost many times throughout the years. When I was in high school, I did some better, but I remember one outstanding time when it was very obvious that I was lost. I was part of a community band that was put together for a special performance, and we were practicing during the weekend in a neighboring town 11 miles away. As I was getting ready, I looked into my music folder and could not find my music. I panicked and got someone to let me into our school band room to hunt for it. I ended up going to the practice without finding it.

I remember distinctly the feeling of horror when the director asked me to play the “A” that was in my music because I wasn’t playing it properly. It was pretty embarrassing – if he had only known that I didn’t even have the music before me (though my folder was open so it would look normal). The funny thing was that I found the music later – it was in my music folder the entire time. I had put it in backwards so that the back side (which was white) was out – I just never saw it.

More recently, I was trying to sing along with some music that a friend had suggested we sing. I tried to follow along with a recording of the music playing and looking at sheet music that was not an exact arrangement, but I kept getting lost. I practiced one phrase over and over and kept finishing up on the wrong note. I struggled to get in sync and blend in with the harmony. I played it over and over, without result, living the actual definition of insanity.

An image came to me that the musical notes were like the trees in a forest that I was totally lost in. There I was, crashing around, but not able to find my way. The trees all looked so much alike. In my image I tried to climb one of the tallest to get my bearings. But the image ended without resolution.

Knowing where we are at all times in life is difficult, but it is essential that we find the right path. Being lost in the music is being without the right relationship with the other notes and players around us. I am writing this because it is easy to get lost in all kinds of things, especially in ourselves. The parallel is in trying to find out where we stand in life, with respect to God and others.