

# Milwaukee Police Band - The Beat Goes On

by Richard Regent

The **Milwaukee Police Band** is America's oldest police department band, continuously performing musical programs since 1898.

Before March 24, 2004, the band was a sponsored unit of the Milwaukee Police Department. Afterwards it exists in a voluntary capacity. The band is not disbanding, but will continue, and any band-member officer who works during a performance will not be excused from work. The issue is to get more police officers on the street to answer calls for service, and not play their horns for school children. Under political and budget pressures, police management had to make this responsible, but tough decision.

The new regulation makes scheduling more difficult for **Karen M. Dubis**, the Band Director and police detective, because officers are on three different shifts, including working weekends and holidays. To get a group together at any given day or time is a challenge, not only due to the complex schedules that officers have, but also because officers are so often called upon to handle court witnessing, have duty extensions and increasing workloads. One result is that the Milwaukee Police Band might need to cut some of its annual 60 plus performances.

Detective Karen Dubis loves music. Even her home e-mail address includes the catchy phrase *swing of pearls*. She says, "Music is truly the universal language". Most people agree that live band music should be made available to our children as a positive influence. Hopefully, *America's Oldest Police Band* can continue this task of performing a variety of music for the youngtimers in our community. Most musicians in the Milwaukee Police Band are police officers. A few ordinary citizens make up the remainder and are given a uniform and cap to wear for the concerts, parades and school programs. At times jazz style music is played. The Police Department's web site is at <http://www.milwaukeekeepolice.org/policeband.htm> and has the band schedule.

On April 2, 2003, the Milwaukee Police Band, accompanied by Police Chief **Arthur Jones**, performed at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The tour included a concert at the Tomorrowland Stage in the Magic Kingdom, and participation in the *Share a Dream Come True Parade*. America's oldest police band made a fine representation of the Milwaukee Police Department, the City of Milwaukee, and the State of Wisconsin. The members of the Milwaukee Police Band continue in their quest as *goodwill ambassadors* to the citizens of Milwaukee, and they cherish the opportunity to do their part in improving the quality of life of this fine city as the beat goes on.