

Features

Cumpston trades rain for sun, teens for tots

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Imagine leaving your comfortable suburban life and moving your family to an economically unstable third world country for the next two years. Jeff Cumpston, band teacher, is pursuing a teaching opportunity as a kindergarten through fifth grade general music teacher in Zimbabwe.

"It was a very hard decision. I've had, in my opinion, the best high school band job you can have. We have great facilities, talented and passionate musicians, support from the community and support from the school. I've been here for 12 years, it was a tough choice to leave all of that," Cumpston said.

He and his wife, Terry, had planned on working for several more years and

to Cumpston and his family by Harare International School, showed photos of the campus, community, and the landscape and animals of the country. According to Cumpston, his kids are really excited about the animals.

Terry's friend, who was once a teacher at Lake

openings.

"You then research those schools, send them your stuff and wait for a response. Next, you attend a job fair (there are job fairs all over; we attended one in Seattle) where they will be interviewing, and while there, you try to interview

Aloha) and small ensembles at Oregon Episcopal School and at summer music camps.

Some of Cumpston's greatest memories have been seeing the WLHS music program grow, the success they experienced at festivals, the fun the community had at the Jazz Nights, and the lasting friendships he has with many students and parents. "I'll miss the people the most: rehearsals, the parents, the lunch time conversations with students...I won't miss the hours or the festivals. I'll miss the

preparation that we put in," he said.

Cumpston thinks that there will be less stress and pressure associated with his new job in Zimbabwe and that he will have more time to be with his family, a luxury that he doesn't have much of with his current job. For example, he directs several different ensembles that compete in festivals, as opposed to in Zimbabwe where he will be teaching a general music class.

Cumpston in Zimbabwe

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Oswego and has been a part of the international school system for 20 years and is currently teaching in Zurich, Switzerland, talked to Cumpston and his wife

with any school that has a position you think you could fill. We interviewed for several, narrowed it down to five by the end of the first day, then to two by the second, and then decided on Africa the third day. It was a pretty gut wrenching experience overall," Cumpston said.

Cumpston has been a band director for 24 years, 12 of those at West Linn. Here he has directed two concert bands, Symphonic Band, String Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Band, Jazz II, percussion ensembles, and conducted the musicals. Outside of West Linn, Cumpston directed the jazz studies program at University of Portland, two drumlines (Westview and

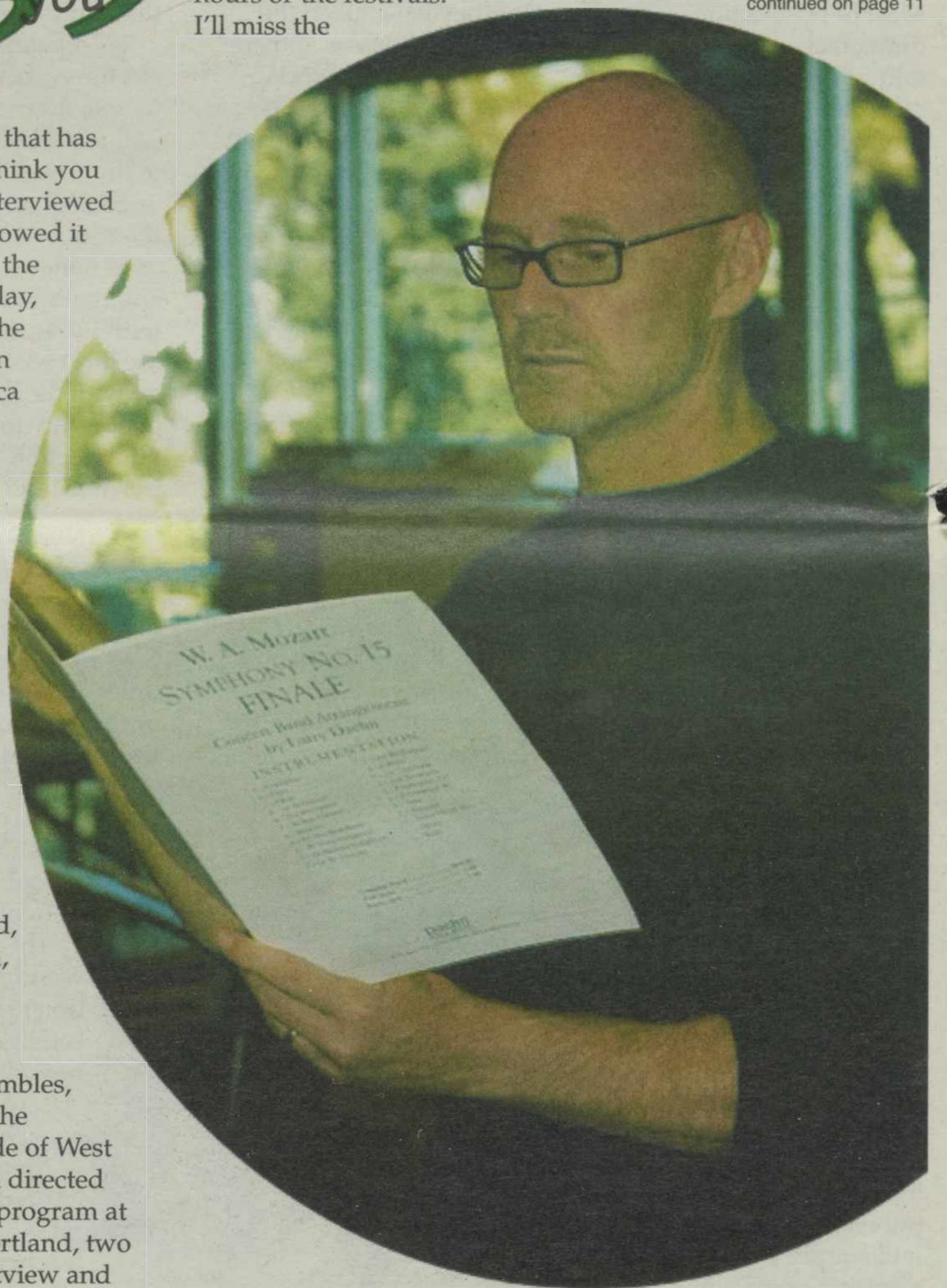


Jeff Cumpston, band teacher, directs the Jazz Band at the Bellevue Jazz Festival. Along with his wife and two children, Cumpston will move to Zimbabwe.

then retiring early to pursue teaching overseas, but when this opportunity presented itself, they decided the timing was right. "We figured that this would be a good time since our kids aren't in middle school yet. The older they get the harder it would be for them. When they (Mary, 10, and Bryce, 8) saw the Powerpoint they got really excited," Cumpston said. The Powerpoint, sent

Photo submitted by Phillip Brooks about what kinds of things to expect, how to prepare, and what the experience might be like for them.

"She told us what we needed to do to apply; go to the Council of International Schools (COIS) website and create an account, submit resumes, cover letters, teaching philosophy essays, letters of recommendation, etc. Then you search the site for schools that have posted



America to Zimbabwe

Jeff Cumpston, band teacher, will be moving with his family to Africa to assume a teaching position as a general music instructor for elementary students.



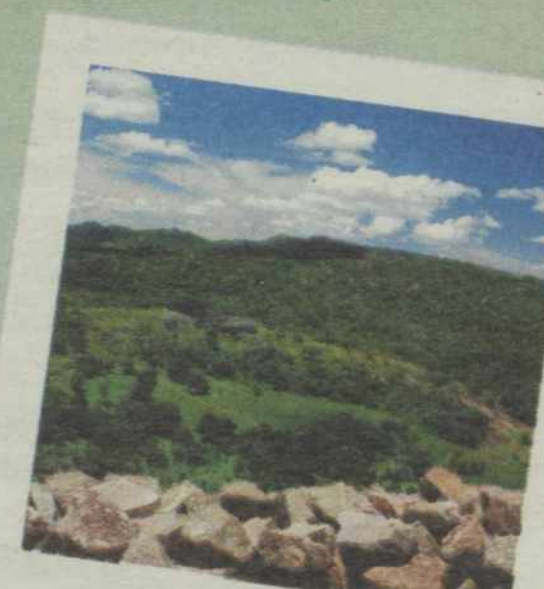
Music Building



Wildlife



Teacher Lounge



Zimbabwe