



## **Springs Valley Blackhawk Brigade**

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### **Valley Alum loyal to the Band**

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By: Roger Moon (Bedford Times-Mail)

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Talk about perfect attendance.

Jermaine Williams had it.

By his calculation, the former Springs Valley High School marching band drum major never missed a band competition from 1996 until about three years ago. And I don't really think the contests he has missed since then ought to count against him. That's because when Jermaine can't physically be at a Springs Valley marching contest, he's there in spirit.

Miles and years have separated Jermaine from Springs Valley marching band's seasons, but the high-tech age we're living in makes it easier to

Jermaine to feel as though he's present at a contest. "All the kids have my cell phone number. The staff has my cell phone number," Jermaine said. "So, even though I'm not there, I'm getting the minute-by-minute update."

Jermaine, 25, now serves as Webmaster for the Springs Valley Blackhawk Brigade and is responsible for media relations for the band. It's a role he takes seriously. Just this week, he provided this newspaper and others with a detailed rundown of what to expect at tonight's Festival of Marching Bands in French Lick.

Talking to me from the office where he works as the athletics events coordinator for Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colo., Jermaine described how his association with his hometown band endured even through his years of higher education at Greenville College in Illinois and through a couple of years of working as assistant to the athletic director at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash. (even farther from home than his current Colorado residence).

To go back to Jermaine's beginnings with the band, he became a "helper" when he was in sixth grade, too young to march but old enough to travel with the band and perform such tasks as grabbing flags from the field and moving props. To the rhythm of 'Harch!

Harch! Harch!' he began to march in 1997 as a seventh-grader. "For two years, I marched trumpet," he said, "and then, my freshman year, I started marching baritone. I marched baritone for two years and my junior and senior years I was drum major."

Then came Greenville College, but Jermaine never missed a Springs Valley competition during all the years he was at Greenville. "It was a 400-mile round trip each weekend every fall for five years," he said. He assisted the band during those years as a pit instructor.

Then came his job in Tacoma, forcing him to miss his first contest since 1996. "I sat in my room, and I'm like, 'Gosh darn it, it's time for band contests,'" he said.

He did manage to get home to follow Springs Valley to the state finals during those years and already has it on his schedule to come back this year if the Blackhawk Brigade qualifies for the state competition.

Jermaine's disappointment for missing the regular-season contests has intensified now that his sister Francesca, an eighth-grader, is a member of the color guard.

I asked Jermaine who at Springs Valley had helped shape his life and, not surprisingly, the list included SVHS band director Luke Aylsworth, former director John Aylsworth, and Justin Wininger, a band staff member. Jermaine also mentioned former SVHS administrator and coach Rob Haworth.

Rob now resides in Missouri, but I asked him to share a thought or two about what Jermaine brings to an endeavor.

Rob wrote in an e-mail, "Jermaine has always been as promised. If Jermaine said he would do it, then declare it done."

It takes great loyalty and resolve for Jermaine to maintain the level of commitment he has to his hometown marching band. But, he told me, "I want to help and assist the kids ... and my community any way I can. If it's being 1500 miles away and coming back for one contest and running a Web site and writing all the news articles, then that's what I want to do."

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