

Mr. Kelbaugh, Catonsville High School's own shooting star ☆☆☆

by Tracey Gavin

What were you doing in the summer of '92? If you knew how to play the fife, or even knew what a fife is, you could have been in a movie.

Ross Kelbaugh, a Catonsville Social Studies teacher, does know how to play the fife and participated in the filming of the movie *Gettysburg*, based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara.

The movie, directed by Robert Maxwell, will open October 4 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and will then be released at select theaters nationwide. This winter, the Turner network, which funded the movie, will also show the four hour plus film over three nights.

Gettysburg details the story of the battle of Gettysburg including the conflicts between General Robert E. Lee (Martin Sheen), Confederate general Longstreet (Tom Berenger) and Joshua Chamberlin (Jeff Daniels). C. Thomas Howell, who played Eliot in *ET*, stars as Chamberlin's younger brother.

"Amazingly, of all the famous battles, no one had ever made a movie about [the battle of] Gettysburg before . . . I think this



[movie] will stand as the visualization of this battle," Kelbaugh said.

While Kelbaugh did not have a starring role, his part in the movie does begin the show. As the movie credits begin, there is fife and drum music which then fades into a full orchestration, and one of those fifes was Kelbaugh's.

"I've been in a number of movies and if you're a musician . . . and you're paid, you usually end up be-

ing in the movie. But it's still a little [questionable]. With movies, half the stuff ends up on the floor," Kelbaugh explained.

In other scenes, Kelbaugh was part of the Fife and Drum Corps. "I'm a Yank in this movie," he said. "I didn't think I'd ever be a Yank."

For Kelbaugh, this movie was an extension of a hobby he has been involved with since high school — historical recreations.

"I got involved with it during the Civil War Centennial . . . My parents took me up to see the Battle of Antietam and I really enjoyed it and I thought I'd like to do that . . . I guess I was about 16," Kelbaugh said.

By 1963, Kelbaugh had a full Confederate uniform and had begun to learn the fife. "It was in college that I really got serious with it though," he said. He attended the University of Maryland at College Park where he met a group of students who were also interested in historical recreations. They chose to do a "recreation of this premier Maryland unit and by that time things were beginning to crank up for the Bicentennial [of the United States in 1976]. Twenty years later, we're still playing together," Kelbaugh said.

As the Second Maryland Regiment, they've played for presidents, the Today show, a Cadillac commercial, the Mall in Washington D.C., and the movie "George Washington: Forging of a Nation", as well as at various historical re-enactments and in *Gettysburg*.

"It's all in who you know . . . These movies'll hire historical consultants and I just happened to know the one working on *Gettysburg*. Bingo, I'm in a movie," he explained.

The movie was filmed in and

around Gettysburg. "The directors searched around for places that looked like Gettysburg and they'd ask the farmers if they could borrow their land to film to tape on. It kept costs down . . . The movie came in under 10 million dollars. When you think about movies like *Total Recall*, that's pretty good," Kelbaugh explained.

Before filming began on the movie, Kelbaugh's Corps, the Second Maryland Regiment, recorded their music. They then went to Gettysburg to be used in the scenes where the Fife and Drum Corps would be playing. The many other extras in the scenes were often volunteers who had been given a Tee shirt and hat with the promise of a medal and videotape for their work.

Currently, the Second Maryland Regiment is recording the movie soundtrack for *Gettysburg* which will be released after the movie premier.

For Kelbaugh, "this is kind of like the crowning achievement to turn out to be recording for a major motion picture."

"I believe this is the most authentic Civil War movie ever made . . . *Gettysburg* is a better example of a Civil War battle [than *Glory*]," Kelbaugh added "It was exciting to be involved."