

## School Strange flocks of pink birds take over northwest Austin neighborhoods



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*The doorbell rings. You answer your door and find a pink bag sitting on your front porch, and a flock of eight pink birds perching in your front yard!*

*"My neighbors are going to think I am nuts!" you worry, but then you realize that you've been "flamingo-ed" by the Anderson High School Trojan Band. No one is in sight, but all it takes is a phone call from you, and they will quickly take the flock from your home to another resting place if only you will make a donation to the Anderson Band.*

For quite a few years now, Anderson Band members have kicked off the fall marching season with summer band camp and flamingo-ing. While many students are catching a few more rays, taking a last-minute vacation or simply hanging out and sleeping late, the Trojan Band is getting ready for halftime performances and the 2008 marching contest season.

Drum major Austin Moore adds, "Though our goals seem almost impossible when the camp starts, it's amazing how well everyone comes together to get them accomplished—and even though at the end of each day we come off the field tired and sweaty, the work is worth it when we pull off a great show."

All of this doesn't happen overnight, and there are many weeks of hard work, concentration and sweat between now and marching season. From teaching new freshmen to march and learning new music to getting nearly 200 people to think, move and play as one, there's also a lot of fun involved.

"Flamingo-ing" is two weeks of bonding, fun, team-building and craziness after all-day rehearsals. It's also the biggest fund-raiser of the year for the band, and sections compete to see who can flamingo the most houses, the most houses on one



Anderson band members Jordan Hatch, Rachel Evans and Evan Rowley check over the fundraising flock and prepare to spread the fun over Austin beginning Aug 4. Flamingo-ing is the band's biggest fundraiser each year.

street, who gets the largest single donation and which group raises the most money. The competition between sections is pretty stiff, all competing for the bragging rights that last until next year when it starts all over again.

Head Flamingo and Booster Club Fundraising Chairman Ken Rowley comments, "Not only is it a fun way to raise much-needed income to supplement Anderson's band program, it's been a great way for the kids to get to know their classmates and section members with the bonus of having a tightly knit group before school even starts. It takes this group that is 25 percent new every year and makes it a family."

These days, budget cuts are hitting the schools and the fine arts departments pretty hard, and it takes an effort like this and help from the community to make sure that our kids have everything they need to succeed. "The money we earn from this fundraiser is critical to our band program. It's surprising what it costs to keep our program running smoothly. Your donation goes towards the purchase of instruments and music, helps maintain our facilities, purchase uniforms, pays for trans-

portation costs, and allows us to bring in professional musicians from throughout our community to work with our students," says Anderson's band director Ryan Zysk.

"It takes a lot of time, especially after rehearsing all day long. But, it is fun, and we really look forward to it," says former band member Sara Beth Purdy.

Sarah Panico, a freshman last year, adds "Flamingo-ing is fun and is good for getting to know the people in your section. It's a great way for incoming band members to be involved and make friends within the band, and by the time school starts everyone is familiar with the way things go."

This year, the time known as "flamingo-ing" goes from Aug 4 until the 15, and if you would like to be flamingo-ed or want to send the flock to visit a friend, contact Ken Rowley at [Ken@Rowleyinsurance.com](mailto:Ken@Rowleyinsurance.com) or band director Ryan Zysk at [RZysk@austinisd.org](mailto:RZysk@austinisd.org) or 414-7957. They'll make sure to send a flock your way! Off-season, the flock is also available year-round to make 24-48 hour surprise visits (for a donation) to help celebrate local birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions.