

# for your Information

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## LAPD Band

by Christina Challey

From Olympic medalists to NCAA champs, LAPD Band member Steve Garberson, or "Garbo," as he's affectionately known, has helped propel USC athletes to these amazing feats, both as a coach and as a sports massage therapist.

Growing up in Clovis, Calif., surrounded by 30 "fantastic" acres of



At the Olympic trials.

almond and orange trees, Steve's activities included driving tractors and shooting at jackrabbits (shooting at, but not actually hitting them) in order to keep them from eating the bark off the young trees, which would kill them.

Although his father was a classically trained pianist, Steve said it was his mother who introduced him to music as "she plucked away on the huge piano in our living room." Steve said, "This 'beast' was 4-by-8 and had journeyed around the Horn to eventually land in our living room."

But piano was not to be Steve's musical instrument of choice. That honor went to the trumpet. Steve knew he wanted to play the trumpet at age 7 and he studied for 11 years until his teeth became, as he said, "rearranged in a collegiate water polo game." This injury was to end his goal of becoming a principal trumpet player.

After this injury, Steve said he wandered through college searching for a major. He changed his major four times, from music, to math, to economics, to business administration. In his eighth semester in college, his coach asked him



Garbo in an LAPD prison bus.

if he ever intended to graduate. That's when his coach mentioned considering a major in physical education. "A huge lightbulb went on inside my head," Steve said. "PE? You can major in PE?" With two more years of study, Steve graduated from Fresno State and went on for another year to get a teaching credential.

For 30 years, Steve taught high school math and computer programming. During this time, he coached swimmers and water polo players. Then he went on to coach for 10 years at the University of Southern California, during which the men's swimming team won four consecutive NCAA championships. Then in 1997, he was a volunteer coach for the USC women's NCAA champions.

In 2000, Steve began sports massage. At USC, he worked with the swim team, the men's basketball team, and with the men's and women's water polo teams. Those years included NCAA championships in men's water polo (2008-2013 and 2018) and women's water polo (2010, 2013, 2016 and 2018). He also worked with the USA women's water polo team from 2010 through 2016 watching the

ladies win two Olympic gold medals. Steve said the highlight of his massaging career came in the 2012 Olympics when his athletes took home 35 medals—18 gold, 10 silver and seven bronze.

After 40 years of not playing music, Steve decided to make music a part of his retirement years. He began playing the trumpet again. He finally regained the range he had in college, but the bands in which he was playing had a multitude of trumpets. What they really lacked was horns. So he began his journey with the French horn, and 15 years later, he is still playing.

Married for 45 years to his wife, Linda ("the smartest thing I've ever done"), he has two daughters, enjoys reading, playing with his two golden doodles and looking forward to visits from his granddaughters, ages 4 and 7, who live in Saskatchewan.

For more information about the Band, see our website at [www.lasown.com](http://www.lasown.com), and contact Jim Starr, executive director, at [sngcop@aol.com](mailto:sngcop@aol.com). For greatly appreciated donations, please go to [www.lapolicefoundation.org](http://www.lapolicefoundation.org), and under "comments," put "for the Band." ♦



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