## entertainment

## Spontaneity earmarks Straw Hat Band

The Birmingham Straw Hat Band doesn't take itself very seriously. Dressed in straw hats and red vests, the smaller band that comes out of the larger Birmingham Community Band can be found around the area playing its versions of happy, toe-tapping mu-

sic at nursing homes, hospitals, schools and convalescent centers.

It does take seriously the cause that keeps it going. Its project is raising money to provide seven half-schölarships each year to outstanding musicians from Birmingham schools to attend the Interfoche Arts Academy,
Conductor Dave Falvay is always

happy to take time out from his insurance business to talk about the band that has been organized for two years. When he gets wound up about the band, his enthusiasm becomes contagious. "It's corn, you know," he said in his office recently, "but it's fun. Everyone is in the band because they love to play and make people happy."

and make people nappy:

FALVAY RECOUNTED one time a
few weeks ago when several band
members were lemings a tape of
"They had to get out their instruments and play along. If you could
have seen that. Her's were several people around a little tape recorder playing with the music and tapping their
feet." He laughed at the image. The
Straw Hat Band, he went on to say, has
spontaneity which he considers to be
important.

'It's corny, you know, but it's fun. Everyone is in the band because they love to play and make people happy."

- Conductor Dave Falvay

hospital, happy. The secondary reason is to award musical scholarships to deserving Birmingham students." I feel blessed that we can help kids and also play music," Falway said.
Falway is modest about his own contribution as conductor and trombone player. "I start 'em and stop 'em, but I don't consider myself a great conductor."

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Falvay, however, is a musically ac-complished man, who despite his reti-cence to talk about himself has won awards for his proficiency on the trom-bone. For 25 years led his own dance band. He worked his way through the University of Michigan as a musician in dance bands. The Birmingham Com-munity Band, of which he is a trom-

bone player, and his leadership of the Straw Hat Band are means of fullfil-

Straw Hat Band are means of futuri-ment in his life.

"I wanted to go to Interlochen when I was a young kid, but never had a chance. Now the little band is part of my fullfilment as I can help send other kids to Interlochen. It's a love of mak-

ing others happy," he said. Falvay, a Bloomfield Township resi-Falvay, a Bioomfield Township resident, is serious and sincere when it comes to raising moneh for the Interlochen Music Foundation. That seriousness, he says, is echoed by the other 15 band members who range in age from 17 to 65. In the dozen or so concerts the band plays free every year. If they hope for donations to put back into the Spholarship Fund.

EVERY FEBRUARY auditions are held and seven young people are picked to receive the half scholarships. With the help of Seaholm High School Band director Robert Kutscher, other area high school band directors are picked to serve as judges to make the difficult selections of students.

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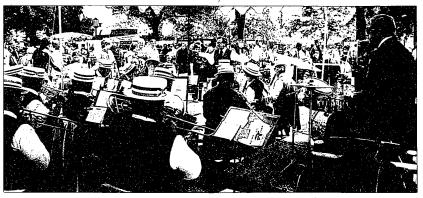
A recent performance by the band was at the Bortz Green Lake Rest Haven in Orchard Lake. The band's renditions of "The Entertainer," "Way Down Vonder in New Orcheas," "If You Knew Susie" or "Pack Up Your Troubles" are designed for two purposes. One is to make the people living in the rest home happy and maybe tap their feet for a couple of hours, but the other reason can best be summed up by goal-directed and smilling music-maker Falvay.

"We low to receive calls from pen-

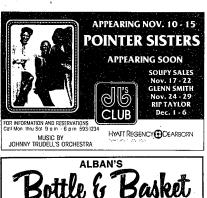
"We love to receive calls from peo-ple who want us to play. But, have you checkbook open for Interlochen wher you call." With his broad smile and enormous enthusiasm, how could any one refuse?



Dave Falvey plays trombone with the Birmingham Community Band and also is conductor of the Birmingham Straw Hat Band. (Pho-to by Tom Treuter)



The Straw Hat Band played at the annual Art-in-the-Park in late September in Birmingham's Shain Park. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)



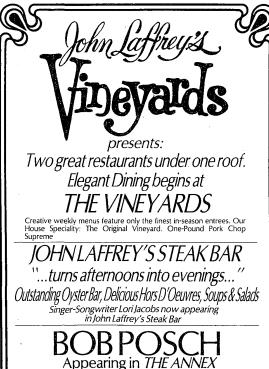












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