

Harrison marching band prepares for competition

The Harrison marching band will compete at the MCBA State Championships on Saturday, Nov. 4 at the Silverdome.

And, for the first time, the band steps out in national competition at the Bands of America National Championships Nov. 10-11 at the Hoosierdome in Indianapolis.

The 130 member Harrison marching band is under the direction of Mark Phillips. A graduate of Wayne State University, he is in his 16th year of teaching at Harrison. Harrison's music program features String and Symphony Orchestras, Concert and Symphony Bands, two full jazz bands plus numerous ensemble groups.

In its fifth competition season, Harrison entered Flight II competition this year, bringing fresh competition and challenges. Bands are placed in flights according to the size of the student body.

The Harrison Band won the MCBA Flight III State Championship in 1991, 1992 and 1993. In 1994, the band placed first at four MCBA competitions, second at the MCBA State Championship and eighth at the Bands of America Regionals at the University of Toledo.

In 1995 competition, the band won first place in Flight II at the Clarkston Invitational, with the highest score awarded in the competition. Harrison won caption awards for Winds, Percussion and Marching/Maneuvering. At the regionals in Toledo, the band took seventh place, competing with bands from six states.

On Saturday, Oct. 28, composer Robert Longfield joined the Harrison High Marching Band for the weekend. Longfield, a Michigan native, now living in Florida, composed "The Purple Twilight," the band's 1990 competitive piece.

"The Purple Twilight" was written as a tribute to the astronauts of the space shuttle "Challenger." Longfield had been a finalist in the "Teacher in Space" program, which selected teacher Christa McAuliffe for the Challenger. Longfield wrote the work for the symphony band as a tribute to the Challenger crew, not to mourn their tragic passing but to celebrate the spirit of adventure and romance which led them to reach for the stars.

The Harrison Band had a full rehearsal followed by pre-game and halftime shows for the Harrison home football Saturday game. The band then traveled to White Lake Lakeland High School for the Huron Valley Invitational Competition in the late afternoon and evening.

On Sunday, the band rehearsed and performed the pre-game and halftime shows for the Detroit Lions at the Silverdome.

Band members and personnel were excited about meeting Robert Longfield. He spent time with the band exchanging ideas, helping hone the music portion of the program, and seeing his composition performed.

Hills resident receives CMU award

Harry Semerjian of Farmington Hills, the vice president for corporate planning at Ameritech Michigan, received Central Michigan University's Alumni Association Award.

Semerjian is the Michigan Bell/Ameritech liaison to CMU and has played a critical role in securing funding for the university, including the Ameritech Teacher Excellence Award and a \$500,000 Governor's/Ameritech Partnership grant to establish Education Central, an electronic communications center for teachers.

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