

Harrison marchers perform in Toledo

BY DIANE HANSON
SPECIAL WRITER

The Farmington Harrison Marching Band was among 23 top bands from five states traveling to the University of Toledo on Sept. 28 for the Bands of America Regional Championships.

Michigan was well-represented with 14 bands at the competition that also included bands from New York, Indiana, Ohio and Illinois.

"This was our best run through," said a pleased Director Peggy Babcock, after the band's preliminary performance on the cool, bright fall morning. "The students have made tremendous strides this week - musically, visually, the whole thing. I'm very happy."

Those strides came after many hours of practice the 82-member band has put in since the first-place, award-winning performance of their show, "Gazebos Dances," at Novi two weeks prior to regionals.

"This show is really challenging for the band, but they pulled it off so well," said senior drum major Molly Cothery.

"This is, I think, one of the most artistically challenging shows we have done. I really like it a lot; it is probably going to be my favorite."

Her assistant drum major and trumpet player, junior Lisa Perry, agreed. "The drill is really challenging, especially the second movement," she said.

Although the Harrison band didn't make it into the finals, the marchers came home with some valuable experiences.

"Coming to regionals can be intimidating if you let it," said Perry. "Personally, I think it is the best thing ever. These competitions where we actually go to big stadiums to perform are my favorite ones."

The top ten high school

bands at the competition from first to tenth place were Centerville, Ohio; Prospect, Illinois; Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, Reeths-Puffer, and Jensen, all from Michigan; Lake Central, Indiana; Kettering Fairmont, Ohio; Milford and Durand Area, both from Michigan; and Waubesa Valley, Illinois.

GREAT LAKES SUCCESS

Harrison Marching Band continued its first-place sweep of Michigan competition. Flight III awards at the Great Lakes Invitational held at the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park in Canton on Oct. 12.

The 82-member band captured the Flight III first-place trophy and all three captions for Best Marching, Best Music and Best General Effect with a score of 66.95 for their delightful musical marching portrayal of "Gazebos Dances," show artistically depicting the change of seasons. Other Observer-area bands included Farmington, fifth in Flight II, 58.45; Livonia Franklin, fourth in Flight I, 68.00; and West Bloomfield, fifth in Flight I, 58.3. Plymouth-Canton played in exhibition as hosts of the event.

"It was a good performance," said Director Peggy Babcock. "Musically they're playing much better and they look much better. I think they're getting into the character of it more every week."

Assistant Director Joel Yoder agreed. "The kids did great," he said. "Their progress in the last two weeks was pretty amazing."

He said they have added decorations to the gazebo and finished painting the tarps. "It lets the audience know that we are going through the seasons. I think it is well received."

From the spectators' enthusiastic response on Saturday,



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Harrison High School's marching band participated in competition at the University of Toledo last month.

there appeared to be no doubt about that.

Drum major Molly Cothery, a Harrison senior, was among those helping with the prop painting. "I skipped art class one day and made the stencils for the snowflakes," she confessed with a smile. "Our GE (general effects) score was high before, but I think the finished props will put it even higher."

She said the morning practice session was a little shaky for the band. "Our tempos were kind of off and people weren't paying attention, but this afternoon the band did wonderfully - they locked in perfectly."

For Justin Brooks, a junior playing percussion for the third year, the band is like a close family. "I like the unity of it. We are on the small side this year, but as far as sound,

we have a very nice band and that unity helps us get more into the spirit of the show."

That's something Jason McIntyre, director of color guard design, has noticed.

"They are getting beyond the technical aspects of the show and more into the artistry. The theme is coming through now."

Senior color guard member Lauren Shafer said the show is a very enjoyable one, but is also more complicated. "I think this show is more challenging than the other years," she said. "We have a lot of new people too, but they are doing so well for having such difficult work."

The Harrison marchers will be competing at Jensen and Durand the next two weeks before the State Championships on Nov. 2 at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Marchers turn in 'yo diggity' performance

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The balmy fall day got some extra heat when the Farmington Falcon Marching Band took the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park's field at the Great Lakes Invitational in Canton on Oct. 12.

The Falcons' program, "Cuban Fire" by Johnny Richards, combined lively calypso music with bright costumes and tropical props to create a real audience-pleaser.

"I thought the band did really, really well today," said Director Norman Logan. "They should be happy with their performance. This is the first time we've had all the props on the field and they have worked out a lot of technical things. It is kind of like putting all the puzzle pieces together and really having them fit. And the field commanders did a really great job today in setting all the tempos and locking them in."

"The field commanders were equally pleased."

"I love this show," said junior drum major Caitie Leads. "I think it's awesome. It's the best program we've done so far. It is a lot of work - we put in a lot of practice time - but it's a lot of fun and definitely worth it."

Senior drum major Iden Baghdadchi summed up his band's performance. "It was totally awesome, yo. No diggity." Translated that means, "Very good, indeed!" he explained.

The band improved their score nearly two points from their first performance the previous week at Woodhaven, taking fifth place at Saturday's competition with a score of 58.45. The music is something that Assistant Director Michael Steel had been thinking for

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some time would make a great band show.

"I think it lends itself well to marching band," he said. "It is fun to listen to, it is exciting for the kids and it's a good time."

Outstanding solo performances were woven into the show by Drew DeOrio on alto saxophone, Scott DeOrio on trumpet and Thomas Waisanen on the trombone.

"We have been working on keeping the energy all the way through because there are a lot of notes and it is a physically demanding show," said Steel.

"The band did well today, staying with it all the way through." The next few weeks before the State Championships on Nov. 2 will be spent improving performance levels said Logan. They will be competing at John Glenn in on Oct. 19 and at the Huron Valley Invitational in White Lake on Oct. 26.

"It is a matter of refining now," he explained. "It takes a lot of physical hard work, a lot of repetitions. At this point it becomes like any sport in which you have to do your training to be able to get it so it looks effortless and sounds effortless. But it is definitely not effortless."

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