

## Taking flight

### Harrison marchers capture top honors in Pontiac

BY DIANE HANSON  
SPECIAL WRITER

Culminating a stellar Michigan competition season, the Harrison High School Marching Band captured the Flight III first-place trophy and Flight III caption awards for Best Marching and Best General Effect at the Michigan Competing Band Association State Championship Contest in the Pontiac Silverdome on Nov. 3.

More than 14,000 spectators packed the east side of the dome to watch the nearly 5,000 musical marchers in the top 42 bands from across the state perform during the 16-hour day.

"They played very, very well," said a pleased Peggy Babcock, director of the 90-member band. "It has been really exciting in the last couple of weeks in par-

ticular. They have been so focused and so intense. Today they were just all moving in the right direction."

The Harrison marchers secured the top spot with a score of 81.95 out of a possible 100 points for their delightful program, "A Day in the Life," a musical marching portrayal of a day in the nine-to-five world of a corporate office worker. Second-place Stevensville Lakeshore scored a 78.7, taking the Best Music caption.

"It has been amazing to see the progress of the show over time," said Joel Yoder, Harrison assistant director. "From the beginning of the year to now, it's almost like a different show. The kids have come such a long way in their understanding of the show and their ability to perform it. It is exciting to watch

something like this develop into the climax of today."

It was certainly exciting for freshman trumpeter Matthew Stofanski, who is experiencing his first year with the band. "I think this is great," he said. "I feel proud to be part of a band that is this good."

Kathryn Kuehl, a sophomore piccolo player, was impressed with how the show turned out. "I think the props added a lot," she said.

This was the first year the band used props in their performance and they included everything from an office clock to desks, even a park bench and a desk which sophomore Alex Springer used effectively and humorously to convey the theme of the show.

"This is the best year of the four I've been in marching

band," said senior Jefferey Ziemba, who plays the baritone horn. "We were more prepared for this show than any of the other three shows that I remember."

And energy levels remained high as they moved toward the Bands of American Grand National Championships, held Nov. 8-10 at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis.

"We have a great staff that have really energized the kids," said Vicky Barnett, a member of the Harrison Music Boosters. "The kids have put in many hours of practice, but they say it goes by quickly for them. That's a testimony to the directors that go over and over this, but keep it fresh and exciting for these kids who want to come back for more."

Other bands taking first-place in their flights - which are

determined by the school's enrollment, not band size - were Flight I, Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, 80.6; Flight II, Jensen, 87.95; and Flight IV, Durand Area 82.30.

Of the 80-some bands participating in the MCBA, only the top 10 highest-scoring bands of the approximately 20 in each flight, qualify for the finals competition. Two bands were added to this year's list, one because of standstill performances during the extremely wet fall and the other due to a technical error.

Other local bands at the state competition included Novi, second, 80.35 and West Bloomfield seventh, 66.2, both in Flight I. In Flight II, Farmington placed 10th with a score of 70.35 and in Flight IV, Dearborn Heights Annapolis placed third with a 72.55.

### 'Watch out' for Falcon marching band at local events

BY DIANE MOREY HANSON  
SPECIAL WRITER

It was a squeaker, but the Farmington Falcon Marching Band hit the high notes and scored among the top 10 bands in Flight II during their competition season, earning them a place in the Michigan Competing Band Association State Championship Contest at the Pontiac Silverdome on Nov. 3.

"This was their performance of a lifetime," said a proud Norman Logan, director of the Farmington band after their championship performance. "They just had a lot of energy and we're really proud of them today for going the whole distance."

The Farmington performers took 10th place at the state contest with a score of 70.35.

"Everything sounded great and looked great, said Associate Director Mike Steele. "We were very pleased and there was great senior leadership that got every-

thing going."

The band's second-place finish at the Huron Valley Invitational at Lakeland High School in White Lake on Oct. 27 clinched their spot in the state championship lineup.

"That was a do-or-die situation because we were in 12th place and they only take 10 bands," said Logan, "so either you do your absolute best - and actually you have to do better than your best - or you buy a ticket. They were able to overcome weather and rain and cold and everything else, besides doing their show, which was hard enough to do. They have really come a long way."

Drum major Iden Baghdadchi, a junior, agreed. "It came very close at the end," he said. "We thought there was absolutely no chance."

But the extra effort the 109 marchers poured into their show paid off. "The feeling of perform-

ing at state finals is unrivaled," said Baghdadchi.

Junior trumpet player Lauren Allmayer concurred. "It is very satisfying coming to states," she said. "You put in all that hard work and if you don't get in it is just a sigh of relief."

The Falcon's show, "A Holiday Spectacular," has been a crowd-pleaser. The Christmas medley of familiar tunes, holiday costumes for the percussionists and color guard, not to mention Santa's appearance, brought thousands of smiles and rounds of enthusiastic applause.

"This show is really fun to do," said Jenna Range, junior alto of the band. "I love our props and all we did with them. I thought I would be sick of Christmas music, but I'm not."

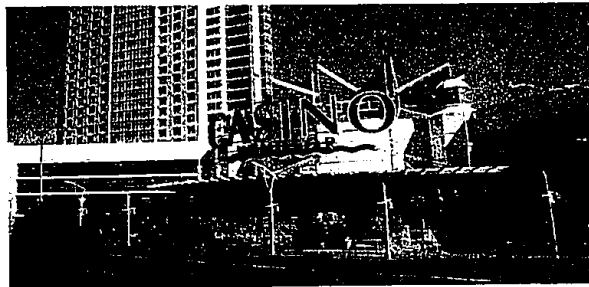
The Christmas theme of the show was chosen partially because of a planned trip to England and Scotland this month,

which was cancelled due to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. But the band has found other ways to put their award-winning performance to use.

"The advantage of programming this kind of music is that we can extend the season a little bit," said Steele. The marching Christmas revelers performed at the Band-O-Rama extravaganza

at the high school on Nov. 9, along with the orchestra and choral groups.

They will also play for other local events, including the Farmington Hills tree-lighting ceremony. So the Farmington communities had better watch out and better not cry, "because," laughed Logan, "we're coming to town!"



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