

Harrison finishes 2nd in state marching event

BY DIANE HANSON
SPECIAL WRITER

"It was amazing! This was, by far, our best performance of the year," said an elated Joel Yoder, co-director of the Harrison High School Marching Band, after the final notes of their state championship performance finished reverberating in the Pontiac Silverdome on November 2.

The Flight III defending champions put on an impressive performance of their show "Gazebo Dances" at the Michigan Competing Band Association (MCBA) State Championships, where forty of the state's top bands, comprised of some 6,000 high-school performers, rocked the dome from early morning until late evening.

"They played so well and they looked great," said Co-Director Peggy Babcock. "They have been really focused all week and they wanted to make sure that everyone thought they deserved to be the defending champions - and that's just what they did."

Senior Joseph Marks, a baritone saxophone player, felt the same. "I think we did amazing," he said. "It really clicked tonight - just like a lock and a key."

While they didn't take first this year, it was still a day for honors and awards.

This year's performance netted the 82-member band the Flight III second-place trophy along with the caption award for Best Marching with a score of 79.2. Flights are determined by school enrollment, not size of the band, with the largest

schools in Flight I.

Harrison's major competitor this year was the 130-member Stevensville Lakeshore Marching Band that captured the Flight III state title with a score of 82.85.

Special honors went to Harrison senior Travis Cook, who received a \$1,000 scholarship from the MCBA. Scholarships were awarded to two seniors in each flight. The students had to write about their musical accomplishments and about what marching band means to them. University music scholars not associated with the MCBA selected the recipients.

Other area bands in the state competition included, in Flight III, Redford Thurston, fifth, 73.5; Crestwood, Dearborn Heights, eighth, 66.0; and Royal Oak Dondero, ninth, 65.5. In Flight I, Plymouth-Canton came in first with a 90.5; South Lyon, fifth, 79.45; Novi, sixth, 78.95; and Livonia Franklin, eighth, 78.25.

Heather Christensen, a sophomore, and Andrea Seency, a junior, both in color guard, said they felt very good about the performance.

"This was senior Dasol Kim's first year with the band. He had played soccer his other three years at Harrison, but decided to play in marching band this year."

"I just decided to try it out and I'm glad I did it," he said. "It was pretty amazing. It was like nothing I have ever experienced before and it is very rewarding."

The Harrison show "Gazebo Dances" musically and visually



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Norman Logan, vice president of the Michigan Competing Band Association and director of bands at Farmington High School, presents Harrison senior Travis Cook with a \$1,000 scholarship from the MCBA.

depicts the change of seasons. Many of the students' favorite part of the show throughout the season has been the second movement with the beautiful music of "October" by Eric Whitacre.

The caliber of marching band competition performances has changed dramatically over the years according to Mack Pittard, executive director of the MCBA for the past 10 years.

"They get more sophisticated and more complex every year," he said. "They aren't the same as when I went to school and made a big G for Grove's High School (in Birmingham) and were very happy in doing that."

He added that the students are basically the same in their desire to reach the expectations

of director and staff.

"The thing that is changing is that show designs are becoming more highbrow in terms of artistic endeavors and the music is a lot more unusual," said Pittard.

And the benefits of marching band, he added, range from teaching organizational and technical skills to learning life skills like how to handle disappointment and success.

This season has been a marked success for the Harrison marchers with a bevy of first-place trophies from all their local competitions.

The hometown band will be competing at the Bands of America Grand National Championships at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis November 14-16.



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Farmington Hills Recreation kicks off another exciting season of youth basketball games being played in the O.C.C. gym. The programs consists of a boys league and a girls league with all games played on Saturdays Jan. 18 through March 29.

Practices will be once a week at a school selected by the coach.

There are boys and girls divisions made up of fourth and fifth grades, sixth grade and seventh and eighth grade. League fee is \$65 per player and includes a team T-shirt. Deadline to register is Dec. 2. Coaches are also needed.

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