

School Bands Perform at Expo

By Jennifer Bol

At 7:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13th, an airplane took off from Pearson International airport in Toronto heading for Vancouver, B.C. On the plane were several school groups including 44 West Elgin members and 9 chaperones who were on their way to Expo '86 as part of the Canadian Music Festival.

The festival is a combination of the Canadian stage band, concert band and vocal jazz festivals. It involved 8,000 students from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Nanaimo, B.C., and even some from Whitehorse in the Yukon.

At any time from Tuesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at least one group was performing on one of Expo's four stages, giving a total of 950 performances throughout the week.

Wednesday, our first day, was highlighted by WESS' Intermediate stage bands' excellent performance in the non-competitive festival and an evening concert featuring Gary Burton on vibes and Makoto Ozone on piano.

The local senior concert band competed at Douglas College, Thursday at 4 p.m. As well, students took in some excellent clinics and performances by other schools' bands. We also got to work with an adjudicator for 45 minutes, after which we rode on the new Skytrain to the Expo site.

The concert Thursday evening featured Phil Mattson and the D.M. singers, a jazz vocal choir much like Manhattan Transfer. They were fantastic; a perfect ending for the day and for myself the highlight of the entire week.

Friday morning we awoke to rain, which stayed with us for most of the remainder of our stay. At 1:30 p.m. the concert band gave

a 30 minute on-site performance in the pouring rain. Fortunately the stage had a roof.

The concert Friday was particularly interesting to the flute and percussion players as it featured the Edmonton Wind Sinfonia and guest soloists Jim Walker on flute and Steve Houghton on drums.

Saturday was our only full day at Expo and it was enjoyed by all. Some pavilion favorites were the United Nations, Australia, British Columbia, the U.S.S.R., Ontario and Canada Place.

The 3-D movies were big hits, especially since we could sit down and rest our sore feet.

The concert Saturday featured the jazz group Quazz with soloists Al Vizutti on trumpet and Jim Walker on flute.

Sunday the group didn't arrive at Expo until well after lunch because of an unfortunate bus mix-up. This didn't please most people, especially when they were already grouchy.

We were averaging four to five hours of sleep each night plus miles of walking every day. Our singing on the bus was no longer entertaining to sleepier members in the back!

Sunday evening's concert by Doug and the Slugs didn't start until 10 p.m.

First, all 8,000 students and their teachers assembled for the awards ceremony. It started with speeches by such personalities as the president of the Canadian Stage Band Festival and the president of Yamaha, Canada. Then we were treated to a few tunes by last year's Rising Star.

The award is given to the one person who shows the most promise. Gold, silver and bronze awards were also given in each category. Finally, honour bands were

picked. The adjudicators selected the best musicians to make up a concert band, a junior and senior stage band, a combo and a jazz choir.

It is quite an honour to be picked out of 8,000 kids as one of the best and West Elgin is proud to say one of its members was chosen for the Honour Concert Band.

Cindy Walker is a grade 13 student who plays trombone in the band. Next year she's planning on studying music at university. Congratulations Cindy!

Dragging ourselves out of bed Monday we packed our instruments and suitcases in a truck and began a short tour which ended up in the Capilano area, where we visited the salmon hatchery and the Capilano Suspension Bridge. The rest of the day was enjoyed at Stanley Park.

Luckily it was very nice, out until 6 p.m. when the park closed. Then we had a couple of hours to eat supper after which we went shopping in the pouring rain. By the time we got to the airport we must have been quite a sight. We looked like a cross between a bunch of drowned rats and a bunch of zombies! Even though we were tired and ready to go home I know everyone had a good time and learned a lot too.

I'd like to say a few thank-you's. Firstly, thank-you to all the members of the community who supported our trip. We couldn't have done it without you. Secondly, thank-you to Ruth Ferguson, the president of the Senior Stage Band, who spent countless hours with pizza accounts, cheques and money problems. Finally, a huge thank-you to the world's greatest guy — our music teacher Dave Cunningham.



THE CONCERT BAND PLAYING IN forms — at Douglas College. national competition — and in their uni- Picture courtesy of Susan Quinton



WESS' CONCERT BAND PLAYING IN pavilion. the rain on the stage of Washington State's Picture courtesy of Phyllis Tait



WESS' GRADE 10 STAGE BAND PLAYING in national competition at Douglas College, music teacher Dave Cunningham conducts at left. Picture courtesy of Ruth Ferguson



GRADE 10 STAGE BAND AT EXPO IN the front row are: Director Dave Cunningham, Laura Ballantine, Susan Fisher and Karen Pickering. Middle row: Jennifer Bol, Michelle Miller, Lisa Wagner, Sherry Fodor, Catherine Jobson, and Cory Kenter.

Back row: Jeff Hamilton, Shawn Cunningham, George Preiksaitis, John Harrison, Andrew Mooser, Jeremy Okolisan and Blair Szusz.

Picture courtesy Susan Quinton



CHAPERONES ACCOMPANYING WESS' band to Expo in the front row were: Carol Woolner, Bonnie Fisher, Sandy Holdaway and Joan Miller. In the back row: Barbara Bijker, Dagmar Jobson and Janet Quinton. Picture courtesy Susan Quinton.