

The beat goes on for NCF band competition

By SARAH CHUBY

Record-Eagle staff writer

Follow the beating drums and the wailing trumpets, the Midwest and Canada's best bands are coming back for another round.

The Cherryland Electric Band Classic will host the Mid-American Competing Band Directors Association for the final note-to-note competition of the season at 6:30 p.m. Friday, July 12, at Thirlby Field/Harry Running Stadium.

Cherry Festival Administrative Director Mandy Baker said nine bands from Canada, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan are contending.

"They compete in a bunch of different categories," Baker said, "such as drum major, auxiliary, which is the design and creativity of their whole programs, percussion and execution, marching and maneuvering."

She said the bands are rated in

each category and the wins are combined to place the overall winner.

"Bands in the MACBDA compete all summer long and this is their championship," Baker said. "The association gives out awards and trophies."

Judges, who are on the field and in the stadium box, rate bands on marching, colorguard and music, she said.

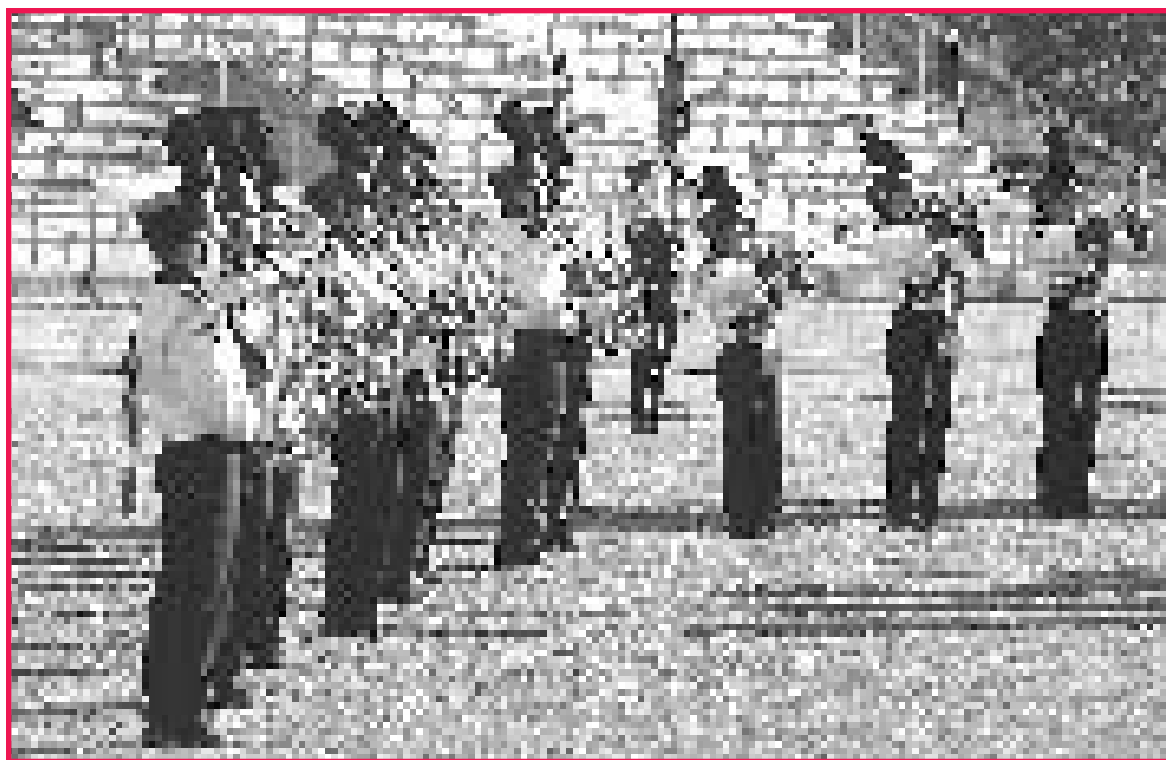
"The association's head judge chooses five judges. They come from all over the Midwest," Baker said. "That way there is variety and these bands are new to them."

After a day of hard work, the bands can relax at a place provided free of charge.

"They can stay in federal housing, which is the elementary school," she said. "Many do stay in federal housing, but if they want to stay in a hotel, they have to pay."

Tickets for the event range in price from \$6 to \$12.

Tickets are on sale at the



The Cherryland Electric Band Classic, always a crowd-pleaser, takes place Friday, July 12, at 6:30 p.m. at Traverse City's Thirlby Field/Harry Running Stadium.

Cherry pit spit contest is always a hit

By KIMBERLY WARREN

Record-Eagle staff writer

It's all fun and games for adults at the National Cherry Festival.

With events like the cherry pit spit competition and the cherry pie eating contest, grown-ups shouldn't have any problems finding something to do.

"It's a fun time," said Lee Torrey about the pit spit competition. "It's just a hoot."

Torrey is the chairman for the Cherry Pit Spit Competition, which is geared toward adults.

"I encourage adults to come compete," said Torrey. "Kids' events take place at F & M Park, where they have activities just for them. This is something for the adults."

Though pit spitting is reserved for kids at heart, children are encouraged to attend the event.

"Kids get a hoot out of their parents spitting," Torrey said. "Even though it's an adult thing, it's a family thing, too."

Torrey said they get all sorts of people competing for the title — sometimes between 40 and 50 a night.

"We have couples come, singles, anyone," he said. "The world champion cherry pit spitter from Australia has been here several times."

With all those entrants, Torrey said the competition is stiff.

"People are quite competitive about pit spitting," he said. "We often have people come back and try again if they only won third, fourth, fifth place."

At 6 p.m. on Saturday, July 6, Monday, July 8, Wednesday, July 10 and Friday, July 12, entrants will compete for their chance to spit the big one at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, July 13. The first and second place winners each night will go on to compete for the grand prize.

WKHQ is a co-sponsor for the event, and Torrey said one of the station's DJs will

help judge the spits and announce the event.

Don't think about cheating, though, Torrey said: "We do have rules, it can't just be a haphazard spit."

Torrey said the cherry pit spit is one of his favorite events: "It's more reserved than the pie eating contest."

For those more daring souls who care to try pie eating for themselves, the Cherry Pie Eating contest, sponsored by Sara Lee, will be from 4-5 p.m. on Sunday, July 7, or — if it wasn't enough the first go-round — 8-9 p.m. Tuesday, July 9, at the Open Space.

National Cherry Festival office, 108 W. Grandview Parkway. For more information, call 947-4230.



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