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DESPITE THE RAIN, “MUSIC OF THE KNIGHT” DECLARED A SUCCESS

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RAIN! That has been the common theme for this fall's marching band competition season, and it was no different during the Southington High School Marching Band's 13th Annual “**Music of the Knight**”. For the first time since it's inception, the Blue Knight's home show was moved indoors, forcing bands to perform only the musical portion of their programs.

Marching bands from five different classes and three states performed or competed. Each band ranged in size from 60 to over 130 members, and each had 15 minutes to complete their performance. In order to coordinate all of this activity, almost every inch of Southington High's 340,000 square feet were utilized. Six different staging areas were established, which allowed each band time to warm up before being escorted by senior SHS Band and Color Guard members to their performance location in the West Gym. The school's kitchen was utilized for food preparation, and the cafeteria was set aside for food and merchandize sales, as well as a place for band members and spectators to relax.

Despite the weather, the evening kicked-off on schedule by the show's announcer, Alan Camp, Program Director and host of the Morning Show at WRCH Lite 100.5. The Presentation of Colors, by the First Company Governor's Foot Guard, was followed by the National Anthem performed by the Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School band under the Direction of Manny Lopes. The John F. Kennedy Middle School Band under the Direction of Tim Johnson also performed.

Other performing bands included Boston University's Terrier Marching Band, as well as the SHS Marching Band. Under the Direction of Jeff Shaw, the award-winning Blue Knights performed an exhibition of their 2005 Repertoire, "Da Vinci's Dream, A History of Flight." As hosts of the event, Southington did not compete for awards. They were scored just the same however, and Mr. Shaw was pleased with the results. "We raised our total score again this week, so the kids continue their steady improvement. At this point of the season, we're into the minutiae. The kids know what they need to do - now it's just getting them all to do everything the same way; 'precision' is what we are striving for," said Jeff.

In keeping with tradition, SHS Band Alumni lead the Blue Knights onto the field for their performance, and in a special moment, senior members of the band and color guard were presented with flowers by parents and family members.

Kathy McGrath, Southington High School Principal, and Dave Germano, Southington High School Assistant Principal, presented the awards including placement trophies in each class, along with Best Color Guard, Best Percussion, and Best Music trophies. East Haven, East Lyme, Waterford, Cheshire, and Bunnell High Schools all earned first place in their classes. Cheshire High School earned "Grand Champion" with the highest score of all the competing bands. A crowd favorite was East Ramapo High School from Spring Valley, NY ... their high-energy, high-stepping show brought the spectators to their feet.

Music of the Knight is designated a "Gold Event" by the USSBA (United States Scholastic Band Association) and is one of the largest and well-attended High School Band Competitions in New England. Despite the weather, Joe Proud, the show coordinator for the Southington Band Backers, declared the event a success. "The success of the event however was a direct result of the efforts of the over 130 volunteers who rolled-up their sleeves (or donned rain coats) and did what needed to be done to ensure every band member and spectator had the best experience possible," said Mr. Proud.

Band Backer President Tom Jacob wanted to thank everyone who played a part in making the event such an overwhelming success. "I hesitate to point out individual contributors for fear that I might forget someone, but I cannot go without recognizing the extraordinary efforts of our show coordinator," said Mr. Jacob. "I must have had fifty people come up to me to tell me what a great job Southington did under such difficult circumstances. Joe Proud's outstanding organizational abilities and leadership skills made us look good!"

The Blue Knights' upcoming schedule includes their final three competitions of the season ... Bunnell High School in Stratford, CT (Oct. 28), the USSBA New England Championships in

New London (Oct. 29), and the USSBA All States Championships at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ (Nov. 5). You can also see them perform the half-time show during Southington High School's remaining home football games.

For more information, visit the Blue Knights Marching Band Website at www.shsbands.com, or contact the Southington High School music department at (860) 628-3229 ext. 250.

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