

## SCHOOLS

# And the Bands Played On

Two local high schools reach finals.

By MICHAEL MCMORROW  
THE CONNECTION

“I can’t say enough about how proud I am of the students’ efforts throughout the day. It was by far the coldest, windiest, and rainiest day they have had to perform in all year,” said Brian Bersh, band director of Yorktown High School in Arlington.

“I was absolutely thrilled with [my students’] efforts” in “very difficult conditions for a marching band,” said Band Director Adam Foreman of **Thomas Jefferson High School** for Science and Technology in Alexandria.

USBands is an independent scholastic service organization that manages a competitive circuit for high school bands coast-to-coast. On a given weekend, the firm oversees 125 events in 25 states involving 700 bands with 70,000 student musicians.

On the first of this month, a northeast

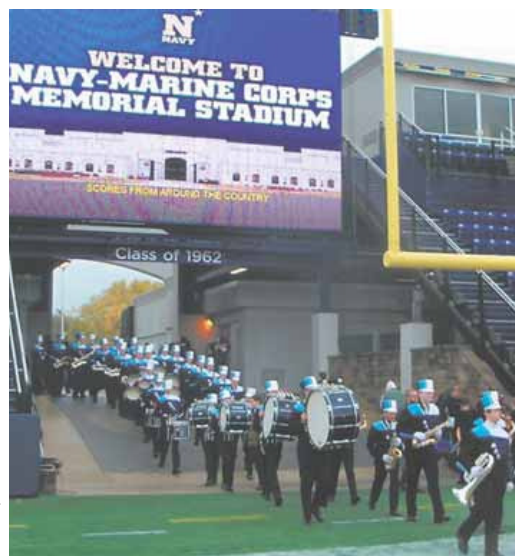


Band directors Adam Foreman of TJ (left) and Brian Bersh of Yorktown.

regional competition was held in the Navy-Marine Stadium at Annapolis. A glance at license plates in the parking area reflected wide-spread interest from CN, DC, MD, NC, NJ, NY, PA, WV and VA.

Standing in the miserable weather and hearing of a “wind warning” on the nearby Bay Bridge, any first-time observer would question whether the competition would go forward. Justin Heimbecker, USBands director, saw no reason not to proceed. Hours

Yorktown band enters the arena.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL MCMORROW/THE CONNECTION



From left, Michael Morrison (father of band member Michaela), Anne Wittenberg (mother of band member Andrew) and Benny Neilsen (Yorktown junior class percussionist) fixing a drum.

later under the still gray skies during the break before finals began, he opined that “overall the event has been fantastic” and “as for the band members, they are all champions.”

Heimbecker explained the popularity of band competitions. “Yes; challenging other bands is exciting. However, the more important element involves each student competing against himself or herself.” It is this latter part, he went on, that generates personal satisfaction derived from doing the best you can, striving to do better each time and contributing to the band and your other band members. Having students from a wide geographic area isn’t a particular problem for TJ’s 95 band members. “They choose to attend the school. If any problem arises, it is usually solved by the parents who are very supportive of the band,” Foreman said. As an example, he said “a big carpool system is in place.”

A certain group can be found hovering around each band. They scurry about lifting and pushing whatever needs a lift or a push. Band directors are able to focus on

music and marching only because of this cadre called “band moms” and “band dads.” Barb Males of McLean, whose daughter attends TJ, said: “Billie is very committed to her music. That is why I am here.” While speaking, she covered large musical instruments with towels to shelter them from the rain.

Once the event concluded, Bersh of Yorktown ventured a thought with respect to his band members. Memory of the day should be that “they performed their best show of the year despite the weather,” and without any misplaced “regret they didn’t perform well because of the weather.”

## And the Winners Are ...

The preliminaries involved 32 bands. Only 16 were invited to the Platinum Regional Finals and both representatives of Northern Virginia were included.

Arlington’s Yorktown High School (“Marching Patriots”) finished in 10<sup>th</sup> place.

**Thomas Jefferson High School** for Science and Technology (“Marching Colonials”), located in Alexandria but drawing many students from nearby districts, wound up in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and also won the award for music.

## SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to [arlington@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:arlington@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

**Marymount University** was awarded a \$144,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to conduct research that will help create the next generation of the Internet, which will make it easier for computers to search and discover scientific data.

Dr. Tom Narock, an assistant professor of information technology at Marymount, will lead Marymount’s efforts working with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Falmouth, Mass.; Columbia University; the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; the University of California, Santa Barbara; Wright State University; and the Consortium for Ocean Leadership.

Woods Hole is the world’s largest private, non-profit oceanographic re-

search institution and a leader in the study and exploration of the ocean. Last year Marymount worked with it to create a prototype search engine called OceanLink. The work at Marymount will involve both graduate and undergraduate students.

**Elizabeth M. Bryan** enrolled at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, this fall. A graduate of University of Edinburgh, Bryan is the daughter of John Bryan and Nancy White of Arlington.

**Amanda Ellison** participated in a four-week study abroad program this past summer in which students developed multimedia content documenting the people and places of Urbino, Italy, and the surrounding Marche Region. Ellison, a senior media arts and design major at JMU, was one of 28 JMU students to participate in the annual study abroad trip, known as the Urbino Project.

Their work is featured at [2014.inurbino.net/](http://2014.inurbino.net/).

**Sarah Lundgren** graduated from Walsh College, in Troy, Mich., with a Master of Business Administration degree.

**Diptina Tikhatri** is among Southeast Missouri State University’s summer 2014 graduates.

Tikhatri graduated with a Bachelor of Science with a major in health management: health promotion option.

**Amber Roberts**, of Arlington, is one of eight students from the University of Virginia School of Law who will take part in the university’s Tri-Sector Leadership Fellows program, a leadership program aimed at giving students a new approach to addressing pressing societal challenges.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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Davis Highway. The theme of this year’s brunch is “Sisters Called to Serve: Honoring Youth Who Serve in Our Communities.” This signature event provides scholarships for graduating seniors in the Northern Virginia area and subsidizes programs for the community. \$65. Visit [www.nvdec.org](http://www.nvdec.org) for more.

### SUNDAY/NOV. 9

**Jewish Genealogy.** 5 p.m. Volunteer Room, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. Rabbi Leila Gal Berner will be co-teaching with genealogist Julian Preisler. Email [admin@kolaminvrc.org](mailto:admin@kolaminvrc.org) for more.

### MONDAY/NOV. 10

**Seminar.** 10-11 a.m. at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., Vienna. The Alzheimer’s Association will host a workshop titled, “Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters.” This free workshop is for

anyone who would like to know more about Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Call 800-272-3900

**Cold War Lecture.** 3-4:30 p.m. Arlington Central Library, 1015 Quincy St., Arlington. Part of Encore Learning’s fall lecture series “Meet the Speaker.” Gary Powers Jr. will speak on various Cold War events, including the 1960 U-2 incident involving his father. Powers will detail his family’s efforts to set the record straight and will discuss efforts to preserve Cold War history. A book signing will follow the presentation. Call 703-228-2144.

### TUESDAY/NOV. 11

**Operation Christmas Child Collection.** Chick-fil-A Crystal City, 2200 Crystal Drive and Ballston Commons Mall, 4238 Wilson Blvd. A special collection day with participating Arlington area Chick-fil-A’s and Operation Christmas Child, a project that sends millions of gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children

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