

Eight musicians, 4 from the MS Band and 4 from the HS Band, were selected to participate in the John Philip Sousa Music Festival, held in Gorham, Maine, over April vacation. The Sousa Music Festival seeks to promote opportunities for talented, young musicians from the six New England states to come together for three days, play in an eighty piece ensemble with a full compliment of instrumentation, rehearse with a nationally known conductor, and perform in a culminating concert for family, friends, and the Gorham, Maine community.

Clinton High School musicians selected for the Senior Honors Band were Miriam Mendez on flute, Jennifer Doyle on flute, Kristopher Vazquez on oboe and Syasia Williams on clarinet. Kristopher Vazquez who has been the only oboe in the Clinton band for as long as he can remember played in a section with 2 other oboes. When asked what he was most impressed with, he said, "just to listen to the sound of a big band with all the instruments compared to our small band." Kristopher had never experienced hearing 2 bassoons or 4 french horns behind him. Kris also said, "This is a higher level of music. It took me a little more work than I would normally do."

Laurie-Anne Matos on flute, Alexander Mojica on trumpet, Mickael Jeanne-Rose on French horn and Nilda Deleon on percussion performed in the Junior Honors Band. Ms Pamela Potter, a nationally known conductor, from Quincy Illinois, worked with the younger musicians. The students rehearsed and prepared five selections. All agreed that the music was a level higher than what they are use to playing. The only French horn in the entire Clinton school system, Mickael Jeanne-Rose experienced the camaraderie and the power of being one of three in his section. With a percussion section of seven, Nilda gained experience on triangle, tambourine, high-hat cymbal, crash cymbals, and a large, suspended concert bass drum. Laurie-Anne said, "Hearing other talented people, it helps you to become a better player. We really can pull off a concert in three days!"

In addition to rehearsing with the full ensemble, there was time built into the day for sectional rehearsals. Sectionals were taught by the various music teacher chaperones who had accompanied their musicians. This was another opportunity for students to work with an unfamiliar musician/teacher/band director with a specialty on that particular instrument. Band Director, Robin Quist taught both the junior and senior flute sectionals. The conductors gave each sectional leader measure numbers for the particular areas of each piece that the conductor wanted extra instruction on. With no preparation time, no score to work with and a ninety minute window the musical competence of each Band Director was put to the test! Returning to the full ensemble after sectionals, the students were amazed at the progress they had made. Many students gained a new appreciation for the musical abilities that Band Directors possess.

The Sousa Festival is an opportunity to make friends with other people who share the same passion for music. For Miriam Mendez who had participated in The New England Sousa Festival in Harvard, MA two years ago and the Sousa Festival three week European Tour last summer, it was a time to reconnect with friends. Jennifer Doyle had also participated in the Sousa Festival two years ago as a commuter student. With the

festival was held in Gorham, Maine this year, Jen looked forward to the added experience of staying in a hotel.

A special feature this year was a concert for the students by the Casco Bay Concert Band, a non-profit organization of 75 adult musicians from all walks of life. The musicians range in age from twenty-five to eighty-five. The band performed, "First Suite in Eb for Military Band" which is a staple in wind band repertoire. The Clinton High musicians were particularly impressed with that piece of music literature. The Casco Bay Band's mission is to demonstrate that music is a lifelong pursuit and an opportunity for enjoyment. The study and performance on a musical instrument need not end with an individual's graduation from high school.