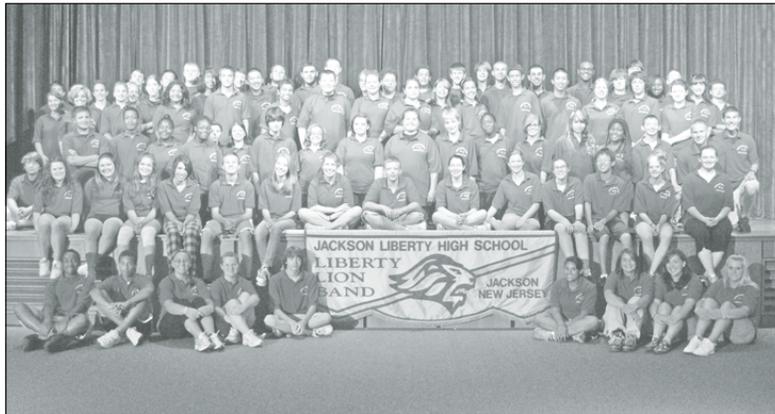




Jackson Liberty High School Band Kicks Off Season



This year's band is 93 members strong and will be the largest band since the school opened.

JACKSON - The Jackson Liberty Lion Band worked overtime this summer and has officially kicked off their 2010 competitive field show entitled "New World Symphony," to great reviews.

"The students were extremely excited to get started on the new show and all have high hopes for this marching band season, especially following our win at the state competition for jazz band a few months ago," said Director Scott Katona.

This year, the Liberty High School Marching Band will be hosting the All Shore Marching Band Festival on October 12 starting at 6 p.m. Katona said he hopes people come out to support both Liberty Lion Band and the Jackson Jaguar Band at the event, which also features many other bands from Monmouth and Ocean counties. The rain date is October 14.

This year, the Liberty Lion Band has a vigorous schedule, including 13 competitions, nine football games and a performance at the new Meadowlands Stadium.

"The students love the entire aspect of marching band including hanging out with their friends, meeting new people, traveling and eating on the road, performing and competing against other bands in their group,"

Katona said. "Even if they don't place first, they still have a good time."

Katona said after the competitions, the band analyzes the judge's comments and video tapes. This usually inspires a better practice with even more effort from the students for the next competition.

The band practiced at the school two days a week during July and in August, held an eight-day summer camp preparing for the upcoming competitive marching season.

"I'm really excited because the music and drill design is the best we've had in the four years I've been in the band," said Derrick Darby, a senior.

Sara Reed, a freshman who is new to the experience, said it's hard work, but worth the effort. "It's very difficult memorizing the music and spots on the field but at the same time I'm meeting new friends and having a good time."

Along with the music and marching is the band parent organization that takes care of the "behind the scenes" logistics, such as making sure everyone has their uniform, putting props onto the field, feeding the kids and much more. Vincent Della Donna, the band parent president for the organization, said the work is a labor of love. "It's the efforts of many great parent volunteers that makes the work fun and go quickly," Della Donna said. "The first time you watch the students perform in competition, hear the crowd cheer and see the expression on their faces, you know all your hard work is worth the effort."

This year's marching band is 93 members strong and will be the largest marching band since the opening of Liberty High School.

"Each year, the band grows bigger and it's mostly due to our feeder program at McAuliffe Middle School as well as the continued support from the Board of Education and administrators," he said. McAuliffe's band director, Michael Carattini, is also the assistant director for the high school marching band.

"Having both titles makes it an easier transition for the kids because they already feel comfortable knowing one of the directors," Katona said of Carattini.

