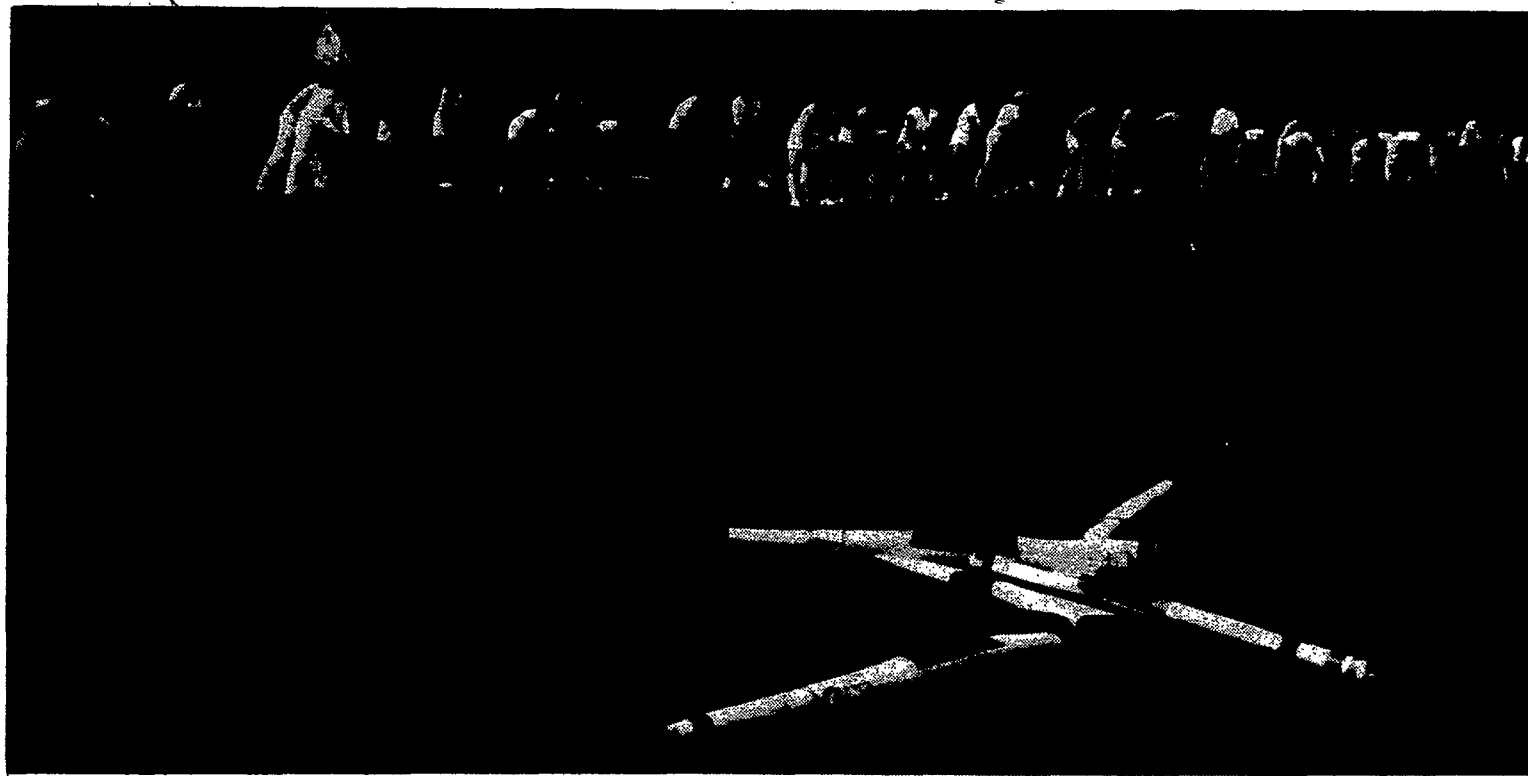


Aquinas marches to the beat



At the beginning of the long day at band camp, Aquinas students warm up with calisthenics.

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal



Dick Stenzel uses his free time to rehearse the percussion section of the band while other members practice formations out on the field.



Jennifer Lewis, a junior, watches intently for her cue during percussion rehearsal.



After warming up, students gather to review the day's planned formation instructions.

Band camp: preparing for a new challenge

A strong band with a good attitude is what Band Director Brian Coughlin found at the Aquinas Institute's annual band camp, August 19-30. Both qualities will be tested as the band moves to Class A field competition this year after taking the novice class state championship last season.

A time for intensive practice of the year's new drill and music, camp is particularly important to orient freshmen and new upperclassmen who turn out. This year attendance was up from 70 to 90 students.

Operating from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the school, camp also helps minimize pressure during the first days of school and relaxes members for class practices, Coughlin said.

It can be a trying experience for everyone — band members and staff. Putting the drill together demands patience from students as they wait under the late-summer sun and staff members work to organize one section after another. Coughlin called this year's squad a well-disciplined group and added that he is very excited about his five-member staff. Typical of their dedication is Dick Stenzel, percussion instructor, who works all night and comes to band practice before going home to sleep.

Some of this season's highlights will include a trip to Walt Disney World, a Columbus Day show in Canandaigua on October 14, and the state competition at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse on November 3. The season gets underway on Saturday, September 28, in Medina.

Classes in the New York State Field Conference are determined by school population. The novice class includes bands relatively new to field competition, a less regimental style of performance. Although Aquinas' band is nearly as old as the school, members had very little experience with field competition when Coughlin arrived two years ago.

This year the school marks its 60th anniversary, so the band's show has a celebration theme. "Any other surprises will have to wait till the first performance," Coughlin said.

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