

# Kearney color guard set to defend world crown

## Unit competes in Ohio April 7-10

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Being on top of the world is more than just a feeling for this group of teens.

It's been one year since the Bishop Kearney High School color guard and dance ensemble won its first-ever world championships. And, by next week, BK may very well have additional world titles within its possession.

The 25-member unit comprises female students in grades 7-12 who attend Bishop Kearney High School and Northeastern Catholic Junior High School. The group's competitive season began in January and will conclude with the World Guard International championships, to be held April 7-10 in Dayton, Ohio.

In winning last year's breakthrough championship, BK bested 35 of the top high-school color guards from the United States, Canada and Europe.

Color-guard competition involves a carefully choreographed show — lasting approximately six minutes — in which team members handle flags, sabers and rifles. According to BK moderator Ann O'Connell, teams are judged on movement, equipment, vocabulary and general effect.

This year, Bishop Kearney is performing a haunting number titled "Koyaanisqatsi" — an Indian word meaning "Life Is Out of Balance."

Twelve of BK's color-guard performers also compete in these tournaments as a dance ensemble unit. BK is defending world champ in this division as well.

Team members acknowledged that the designation of world champion is gratifying, but not without its pressures.

"We know everyone expects us to be good," said BK junior Melissa Maloney.

"This season, by far, has been the most difficult," added Coach Vincent Monacelli. "No matter who it is, people expect things."

Yet as the world championships approach, the color guard appears to be performing at peak level. Kearney has won every competition it has entered thus far this season, including the state championship on March 26 at Gates-Chili High School.

As Kearney prepares to make its triumphant return to the Dayton Arena, the color guard will be buoyed by fond memories of last year's world title. The BK guard upended local favorite Miamisburg High School of Ohio, which had been defending champion.

"They were marvelous and spotless."



Lauren McFalls/Photo intern

(At left) Amie Miller (center) and other members of the Bishop Kearney Color Guard performed during the Northeast Color Guard Circuit state championships at Gates-Chili High School March 26. (Above) Melinda Martinez demonstrates the dance element during the color guard program. Kearney is defending its world title in Dayton, Ohio, this weekend.

The whole arena gave them a standing ovation," recalled O'Connell, who also teaches at Kearney. She and Monacelli, a teacher at Le Roy Central High School, have been with the color guard program for 11 years.

O'Connell added that the Dayton Arena, which seats in excess of 15,000 people, is traditionally filled to capacity for these world championships.

Junior Ke'ri Hall said team members are very supportive of each other — especially in the nerve-racking moments just prior to their performances.

"We talk to each other and get each other psyched up — and say our prayers," remarked Hall with a laugh.

"A couple of times," added junior Jennifer Herrmann.

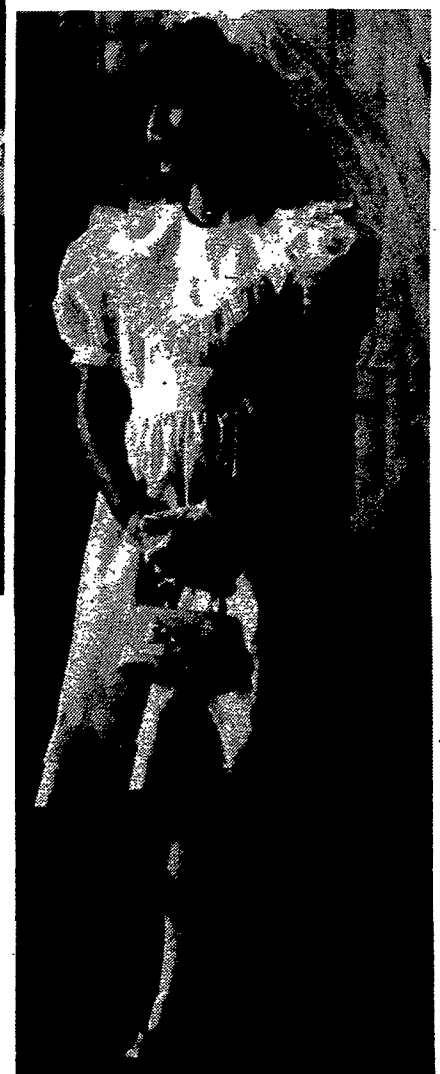
Monacelli said members' ongoing dedication to the color guard program also helps the group excel under pressure.

"In most activities, kids aren't as committed as they are to something like this," the coach said.

"It's a lot of discipline which pays off," Herrmann concluded.



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