

# SHS student brings marching band competition to stadium

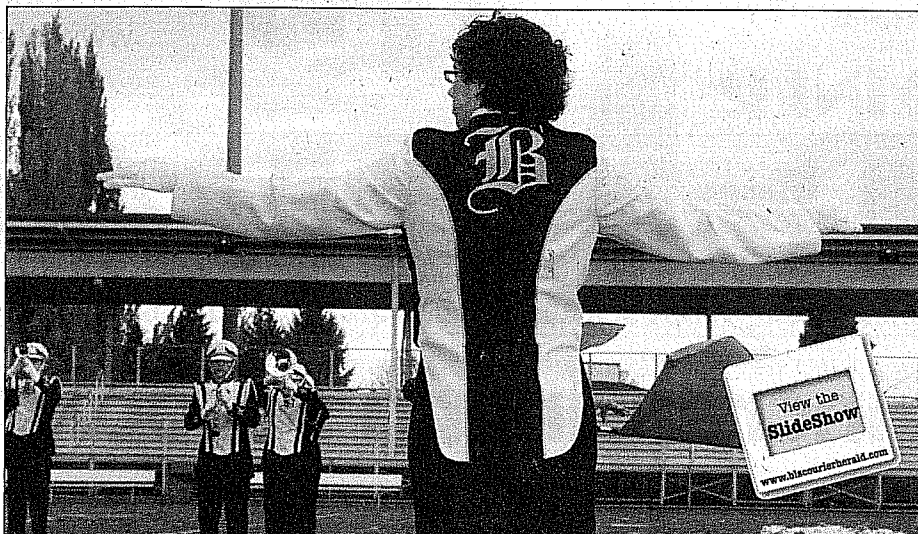
BY DANIEL NASH  
The Courier-Herald

Sumner High School hosted its first marching band competition at Sunset Chev on Halloween Saturday. The Sunset Festival of Bands was the culmination of a band member's senior project.

Mason Longnecker, a 17-year-old drummer in the SHS marching band, conceived the idea in December 2008, during his junior year.

"Every year we go to these competitions in Yakima, Auburn and other away schools," he said. "A lot of teachers mentioned around school that we should have our own competition, and that's when I got to thinking it could be a good project to pursue."

Longnecker checked with the Athletic Director Tim Thomsen, who agreed enthusiastically, the student said. Thomsen had discussed the possibility of a Sumner band competition



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**A Bainbridge Island's second conductor guides the school's marching band during Saturday's competition at Sunset Chev Stadium.**

with Band Director Joe Carl previously.

"When we put turf in here for the first time, I had talked to Joe and said 'Man, wouldn't it be great to have a competition here

in Sumner?'" Thomsen said. "We've discussed the possibility several times over the last 10 years."

With the necessary permission obtained, Longnecker set to work

contacting marching bands across the state. He estimates he sent 75 e-mails.

"The typical reply I got from the bands was that they didn't have the budget currently, but that they

would be interested if the event continued into the next year," he said.

In the end, four bands participated. Bonney Lake, Bainbridge Island, Auburn Mountainview and Eisenhower High School of Yakima performed against Sumner High School and each other.

In addition, Blue Thunder, the Seattle Seahawks' drumline, performed.

Many of the Blue Thunder members are Sumner alumni who were willing to participate in the event, Longnecker said.

Longnecker promoted the event in the community by visiting downtown businesses and asking them to keep flower arrangements that he designed in their window.

He spoke during Sumner High School morning announcements to raise awareness at school.

Longnecker is currently enrolled in the Running

Start program, taking courses in Clover Park Technical College's professional pilot program in addition to his high school work.

Upon graduation, he plans to complete the program and begin a career flying the skies.

Because the Sunset

Festival of Bands is Longnecker's senior project, he will present a report on the event toward the end of the school year, replete with journal entries showing his progress, problems and important lessons he encountered as the event took shape.

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