

# Washington High School Performers of the Month

October 2011



## **CHOIR: Max Versteegh**

Max has been a dedicated worker this year, being involved in Concert Choir, Madrigal, Momentum and auditioning for the Iowa All-State Choir. "His hard work and daily commitment to excellence is a model for all students to follow. His leadership as a baritone and enthusiasm for singing is a joy to observe and infectious among his peers," boasts Choir Director Peter Westphalen. He adds, "Max displays tremendous respect for his fellow students and exhibits amazing character in and out of the classroom."

In addition to his involvement in many choral groups, Max is also a member of the Cross Country and Soccer teams at WHS. The past couple of summers he has worked at Camp Ewalu. This senior also enjoys playing video games with friends and declares, "I love Ultimate Frisbee; it's the best pickup-and-play game ever!"

"My best memory, far and away, was sophomore year at Kennedy for show choir," says Max. "Mo beat Urbandale at the night round performance, not to mention *Jai Ho*."

Max's family includes parents Ron Versteegh and Cheryl Wilms and brothers Will and Hal Versteegh. After graduation Max plans to attend a 4-year college or university and major in social studies education. He hopes to coach wherever he ends up teaching.

To younger performers, Max suggests staying involved. "You might end up liking things that weren't so fun in the beginning."



## **DRAMA: Kassie Kittredge**

Drama Director Carrie Tinkham says her selection is very deserving of Performer of the Month. “Kassie has shown an incredible work ethic through her props work for *Wizard of Oz*. Though she was faced with the daunting task of coming up with over 100 props for the play, she has worked countless hours finding and creating those props.” Additionally, she has also worked on a complete organizational overhaul in the costume room in her spare time. “Kassie is a dependable, hard-working student,” adds Tinkham.

At WHS, Kassie is involved in Orchestra, Speech, PARTS and the Gay/Straight Alliance. Outside of school she enjoys reading, writing, smiling, and listening to almost every genre of music. Her family includes parents Derin Sherman and Kathy Kittredge, and brother Cameron, who is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Kassie, a junior, discovers many unique moments through her involvement in drama. “I like watching people perform. I like performing. There is something in each and every performance that makes it special. The chemistry I see between people—on and off stage—when people feel excited, good about what they have done...those are golden moments.” Ironically, she gets nervous before getting onstage herself. “Every time I need to perform, I feel like my knees are going to give out. I’m always positive I’m going to forget a line. I’m nervous about how people will perceive me, both on and off the stage, and I’m constantly scared of being judged.”

After high school, she plans to attend college and perhaps major in herpetology, which is the study of reptiles and amphibians. She comments, “I want to DO something with my life.”

Kassie recommends younger performers observe how more experienced students do things to build a solid foundation. “Copy how they accomplish things—whether it’s acting, running lights, or sewing. Then you put your individual spin on it: do it a little differently!”



### **BAND: Paige Matthews**

“Paige has done a fantastic job in the Warrior Band as both a member of the color guard and wind symphony,” praises Band Director Jim Miller. “She is recognized as a leader in both groups by the constant example she sets as a tireless worker. Paige is extremely positive to all and a joy to have in the band.”

In addition to playing the flute in Band, Paige, a senior, is involved in Technical Theater at WHS. She has been an active Girl Scout and also enjoys drawing. Her family includes her mother Karen, and sister Abra, who attends UNI.

One special memory Paige shares was from her sophomore year. “It was amazing to hear how well we performed at IBA. No other group could come close to giving me that feeling.”

After graduation this spring, Paige plans to attend an out-of-state university to study civil engineering and environmental studies.

She encourages younger performers to get involved since it “pushes you to be so much better. Don’t worry about messing up; everyone does at some point. We’re all working to improve.”



### **ORCHESTRA: Jay Niblick**

“Jay is a strong violist and is doing a fantastic job leading his section this school year,” says Orchestra Director Natalie Brown. “He appreciates a wide variety of music and often offers input on music selections for the orchestra.”

At WHS, this senior is involved in Bowling, Golf and just finished up a run in the pit orchestra for *The Wizard of Oz*. Outside of class this budding paramedic stays busy “saving lives” and riding his motorcycle.

“Most people don’t know that I enjoy dirt biking and listening to a lot of classical music,” adds Jay.

One memorable time for Jay came when traveling to Carnegie Hall a few years back and the Orchestra busses stopped at a rest stop in West Virginia at 3:00 AM. “Everybody was concerned of what was in the pitch black hills behind the rest stop,” laughs Jay.

His family includes parents Kathy and Jeff and brother Tyler. After high school, Jay plans to attend college to become a paramedic.

Jay has sound advice for younger performers. “Practice and don’t give up. Just because a part is hard to play does not mean it is impossible. Slow it down, look it over, try writing in fingerings if you need to, and practice.”

## **TECHNICAL THEATER: Ted Welch**

“As one of the sound operators for *Little Shop of Horrors*, (along with Cooper Shields) Ted helped make the sound for the show nearly flawless,” says Technical Director Bill Lammers. Previously under the guidance of the late Dave Schmoldt for earlier musicals, Ted clearly remembered everything he was taught. “His sense of humor, maturity at production time, and ability with sound equipment made Ted an important part of the production team,” added Lammers.

In addition to his involvement in Technical Theater, Ted plays low brass (tuba and trombone) in band and jazz band. He spends his spare time working at the ever popular Cork ‘n Fork, hanging with friends and driving around. Ted’s favorite color is red.

A recent golden memory for Ted took place during the final production of *Little Shop*. “It was funny when the door to Mr. Mushnik’s Flower Shop was locked! Too bad no one ever admitted to doing it...” (Is that a confession??)

Ted’s family includes parents Steve and Carmen and four younger siblings ~ Elizabeth, Maria, Greg and Rob. This senior plans to join the United States Marine Corps once he graduates from WHS.

For younger performers, Ted advises, “Do your best, always listen, and learn as much as you can.”

## **DANCE: Katie Kigin**

Dance Team Director Megan Witte appreciates Katie for being a wonderful asset to the Dance Team. "Although Katie is a freshman on the dance team, she has shown great power and effort in her dance skill and technique. She always has a great smile on her face and a super positive attitude." Witte adds, "Katie is an athlete and seeing her strength behind her movements shows what a talented and versatile member she adds to the dance team! She takes constructive criticism well from her coach and peers and is always seeking to improve on her dance technique."

In addition to the Dance Team, Katie is a member of Vivace and will play soccer in the spring. Outside of school she enjoys reading. She also admits being obsessed with cats. Her family includes parents Dan and Betsy Kigin.

One special memory was when Katie was dancing competitively for NDA. "We won first place; it is so satisfying to know that all of your hard work paid off."

Katie says, "After high school I hope to attend a good college and become a pediatrician, because I love kids."

She suggests younger performers always smile, no matter what happens!