



Dive In



Local band gets ready for the blossoms

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Herndon High School one of select few to perform in annual downtown parade.



Photo courtesy of Aimee Eliason

By Josh Weiner

As the [National Cherry Blossom Festival](#) approaches, spectators in Northern Virginia may wish to take note: The [Herndon High School Marching Band](#) is one of just 14 bands selected from a nationwide pool of applicants to perform in the [April 16 parade](#). This event is one of the primary attractions of the festival, which draws [around 1.5 million spectators](#) every year—nearly a thousand of them for each of the [1,700 Yoshino cherry trees](#) along the Tidal Basin, which will begin to bloom this time of year.

[Kathleen Jacoby](#), director of the marching band, is excited for her 150 student musicians to bring energy and passion to the parade.

“We are absolutely the heart and soul of the environment,” she says. “We have a lot of control over getting the audience pumped up and excited to be involved in the event, not just passive spectators.”

A native of Northern Virginia, Jacoby is in her eighth year at [Herndon High School](#). During her tenure, the band has performed at several noteworthy events, including the [Main Street Electrical Parade](#) at Disney World’s Magic Kingdom and at the [Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade](#) in Waikiki. The band was able to submit a highlight portfolio from these performances to the organizers of the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade, and their application proved to be successful.

Although the students took a break from practicing marching after the football season ended, mainly so as to prepare for its state Marching Band Assessment, training for the parade resumed last month and has grown particularly intense as of late. Jacoby is convinced that the extra effort will be worth it.

“I’m actually most excited about my students’ experience,” she says. “They get to be alongside nationally renowned performing groups. Also, just the idea of going to downtown D.C. and to see the Capitol and the sites as they’re marching ... I think that’s going to be an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience for those kids.”

Simon Fogleson, a senior at Herndon High School and captain of the band’s brass section, says that his bandmates will be busy rehearsing a special medley of patriotic music they have not yet performed publicly in preparation for the parade. He is very excited for the big day to arrive.

“Being in a parade is always a great feeling,” he says. “It’s amazing to know that the music that you’re creating is being enjoyed by so many people all at once. It’s just a good feeling to have.”
