

Spencer Lepley:

His huge efforts advanced his character and gave him high hopes for the future

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Spencer Lepley had a whirlwind senior year at Bingham High School.

It probably started the previous April when, at the Bingham band's end-of-the-year banquet, he was named to be the Marching Band's Drum Major.

That meant long days of practice, often arriving 45 minutes before and staying 45 minutes after most everyone else. He also had to know the music better than anyone and was involved in instructing others to keep the proper tempo.

"I thought it would be more fun," he said. "It was definitely more challenging. Probably the most challenging of anything I've ever done."

That's saying a lot because one of the prerequisites to hold the band's most-highlighted position is that smiling is not allowed, even while accepting a trophy following a performance.

Lepley also did it all while carrying the burden of trying to be accepted into the Merchant Marine Academy. His schedule also included volunteer work at the Veterans Administration Hospital and he had off-campus studies to earn a pilot's license.

And, oh yes, he had his Bingham High classes.

But of all those activities, he wouldn't trade his band experience for anything.

"It was a lot of hard work and, overall, the season was a success. We only came up in the 5A class a couple of years ago and we got third in state. We just kept progressing. We were all thrilled at how it ended, especially the seniors because it was their last year. It felt great to accomplish something."

There was some drama along the way.

Midway through the season, he and his good friend Anders Evensen, the Senior Drum Major, switched



positions on the field. Lepley, however, admitted the move actually helped the band and the way he handled the move impressed a lot of people.

"Spencer knew his job solid. The night we moved him, he was not feeling well," said band director Darin Graber. "I told him to go take a break and we made a change.

"Spencer was still in charge. It was his band," Graber added. "He accepted it and they both did a great job when we needed them."

"Anders had a better tempo than I did," Lepley explained. "The music is the biggest part of our score and we really noticed it during practice run throughs. It wasn't the greatest thing to happen to me, but it didn't kill me. I still had the same amount of responsibility. It just meant I wasn't on the biggest ladder."

Continued on next page

BINGHAM MARCHING BAND: Drum major



ABOVE: Holly Bennett, Spencer Lepley and Anders Evensen salute the crowd.
LEFT: Lepley guides the Bingham band during a practice session.



Continued from previous page

Perhaps more importantly, he became a bigger person.

Lepley is the oldest of three children. He joined the marching band in ninth grade, with experience playing the bari sax. He and Evensen were selected to be junior Drum Majors last year. His sister, McKenzie, is also part of the band. After the marching band season ended, he was part of the pep band and jazz band. He also continued his volunteer efforts.

"I help transport patients," he said. "Some of them are in gurneys or beds. Initially, I got involved because it looked good on college applications, but I really have a lot of fun. Some of those guys are veterans and they'll tell me stories about Vietnam and Korea (wars)."

At press time, Lepley said he still had a lot of work to do to reach his goal of attending the Merchant Marine Academy in Long Island, N.Y. He still must write an essay and pass a physical fitness test that included running, throwing a basketball (for distance) while on his knees, pushups, chin-ups and more. After that, he hopes to go into flight school.

And all that he has learned as the Bingham Marching Band's top man should help.