Written by CAROL POMEDAY
Wednesday, 29 June 2011 17:02

Five CG-B seniors win gig thanks to fan support at Brass Bell Battle of Bands

The Joe Schueller Band includes drummer Jonathan “Chubbs” Herzog, (back row, from left) bass guitarist Brandon Miles, vocalist Connor Novack, lead guitarist Joe Schueller and rhythm guitarist Jake Prinsen, who also plays keyboard and harmonica.
*Photo by Sam Arendt*Musicians often credit fans for their success, some sincerely, some not so sincerely.

For the Joe Schueller Band, it’s definitely true. Fans’ votes pushed the band from second to first place in the Brass Bell Music Battle of the Bands contest on May 25 at the Miramar Theatre in Milwaukee.

The prize was the opportunity to play at Milwaukee’s Summerfest.

The band will perform at noon Tuesday, July 5, on the M&I Classic Rock Stage.

That’s quite a jump from the largely teenage audience the five Cedar Grove-Belgium High School seniors have entertained at area festivals, school events and private parties.

Lead guitar player Joe Schueller, bass guitarist Brandon Miles, drummer Jonathan “Chubbs” Herzog, vocalist Connor Novack and Jake Prinsen, who plays rhythm guitar, keyboard and harmonica, are still in shock.

They submitted a 20-minute recording of original songs and were one of eight bands chosen to compete at the Miramar.

“We were just excited to make it to the top eight,” Novack said. “We didn’t think our demo was very good because we don’t have very good equipment.”

Schueller records the band on his computer, then makes CDs they send for auditions and possible gigs.

During the Battle of the Bands, the eight groups, which included bands from Chicago, Racine and the Milwaukee area, played for 20 minute each before four judges and a packed house of 150 to 200 people. The judges rated each band on a scale of 1 to 10.

After the judges made their decisions, the audience voted by dropping their wristbands into the jar for the band they liked best.

That’s when their friends lifted them to the winner’s spot.

“A lot of people were rooting for us,” Novack said. “We had a lot who rushed down from track practice to show up on time.”

All band members, except Herzog, are self-taught musicians.

Herzog’s early drumming prompted his parents to send him to lessons. He’s won numerous gold awards at state solo and ensemble competitions.

Schueller picked up the electric guitar when he was in sixth grade and surprised his friends when he played for their eighth-grade graduation.

“No one knew he was playing the guitar. I’ve known him all my life. We’re best friends and see each other almost every day and I didn’t know,” said Novack, who credits his vocal acumen to singing in the shower. He sang for another band before learning the group was seeking a lead singer.

Schueller’s quiet demeanor is how the band got its name, Novack said.

“Joe is really a quiet guy and you don’t expect him to be so alive and so good on the guitar,” he said. “We all had our ideas for names and couldn’t decide on one, so we just said the Joe Schueller Band because he was the most unlikely to play rock.”

Their original songs are a joint effort. The band composes the music and Novack writes the lyrics.

In addition to their songs, the band plays mostly classic rock from the 1960’s, ’70s, ’90s and today.

“We kind of skip the ’80s,” Novack said. “We don’t like the music from the ’80s.”

More information and music by the band are available on the Web site www.joeschuellerband.weebly.com.