STUDENT LIFE
Louisiana Stars prepares for second season

By Kailey Broussard
kaileybrous@gmail.com

This year’s musical selections include arrangements by Beethoven; the first competition is on June 8 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

With new uniforms, new members and new rehearsal techniques, the students, faculty and staff of The Louisiana Stars Drum and Bugle Corps prepare for a second — and longer — tour with their performance ensemble “family.”

“I feel like the (veterans) and also the new people are working really hard,” said Aimee Perry, a Stars baritone player and agricultural science major at McNeese State University. “We’re getting a lot of things done a whole lot faster, and the quality that we’re at is a lot better.”

After holding exhibitions in Lafayette, Thibodaux and West Monroe, the Stars will return to the Midwest and compete in their first competition in Fort Wayne, Indiana for Drum Corps International Ft. Wayne. Their tour ends on July 20 at Cajun Field in Drums Across Cajun Field. The 15-day tour is more than a week longer than the corps’ inaugural tour. Stars director Neil Simon said the exhibitions are extra practice for the larger events.

“We want our students to be in front of an audience before July 8 and have that experience,” he said.

The Louisiana Stars is part of DCI, an organization that defines itself as “marching music’s major league.” Corps are comprised of percussion, color guard and brass. While corps mainly use trumpets, mellophones, baritones, euphoniums and flugelhorns, a change in DCI regulations recently permitted the use of all brass instruments to add more variations to sound.

According to the DCI website, more than 8,000 students from around the country participate. Each corps has a different sound, style and set of traditions, and students can audition for any organization. Members are high school and college students under the cutoff age of 21.

Corps such as the Stars fall into Open Class, while corps with more members fall into the World Class category. A corps competes within its respective category and receives scores based on brass, percussion and the show’s “general effect,” which includes visuals, use of props and color guard.

“I’m looking to going on tour this season and affecting people and showing them what we’re about,” said Zachary High School senior and drum major LeeAnn Law. “I feel like this family is just going to rub off on everyone this season because we’re so close and a really strong group, so I hope other people can see that.”

Growing from 72 members during its inaugural year to 112, the Stars spent the second half of June at Cajun Field from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. learning music, coordinates and the accompanying choreography. According to William Joiner, a West Monroe High School senior and trumpet player, the process can be both mentally and physically draining.

“You wake up in the morning and everything below your waist is in extreme pain, and you just... have to try not to hit a wall and just keep on going,” he said.

In drum corps, “hitting a wall” occurs when a member feels pushed to his or her individual limits — either physically or other individual limits — either physically

LA STARS
continued on page 6

BATMAN
continued on page 6

Would you like to be The Batman?

By Dan Boudreaux
danboudreaux7779@gmail.com

In 2009, Rocksteady Studios Limited redefined the superhero game genre with the groundbreaking game “Batman: Arkham Asylum.” Two years later, it improved on near perfection and created the open world Game of the Year winner “Batman: Arkham City.” Now, made for next gen consoles, Rocksteady has done it again with the final entry in their Arkham trilogy, “Batman: Arkham Knight.”

Taking the open-world formula of Arkham City and cranking it up to 11, Arkham Knight boasts a game world five times larger than its predecessor and so chock full of sidequests that it adds hours upon hours of extra game time.

In order to traverse this massive metropolis, they’ve finally added in Batman’s iconic vehicle, the Batmobile, so you can feel even more like the Caped Crusader and speed around Gotham City. And you need all the help you can get as you take on the forces of Batman’s rogues gallery including Scarecrow, Two-Face, Riddler, Penguin and his newest, most deadly foe yet: an evil Batman out to kill the Dark Knight at all costs — the Arkham Knight.

Even main characters aren’t safe. The tension is high from the very beginning, as the game starts out with the line, “Let me tell you about the day the Batman died.”

The story pulls no punches, throwing Batman right into the middle of a war in the streets of Gotham with Scarecrow threatening to consume Gotham in his new, deadly formula of fear gas. Meanwhile, the Arkham Knight leads an army of mercenaries and tank drones trained to kill Batman. With all these odds stacked against Batman, the Batmobile is necessary not just for travel, but for defeating the bad guys as well.

This is where Arkham Knight’s greatest strengths and weaknesses arise. The Batmobile is an amazing addition to the gameplay and franchise at first; barreling through Gotham at high speeds to the next crime you have to stop feels