



PHOTOS BY DAVE BENJAMIN

The Jackson Liberty High School Jazz Ensemble, including saxophone soloist Gary Basko (below), entertains the audience at the Four Seasons Metedeconk Lakes adult community in Jackson.

Jazz ensemble is a hit at Metedeconk Lakes

BY DAVE BENJAMIN
Staff Writer

The Jackson Liberty High School Jazz Ensemble has been putting audiences "In the Mood" at every one of their concerts.

A recent performance at the Four Seasons Metedeconk Lakes adult community was no different, as the audience gave the members of the jazz ensemble several standing ovations and calls for encores.

"This was one of the best concerts we've ever had at Metedeconk Lakes," said Men's Club President Hal Wohl. "Scott Katona is an excellent director for the jazz ensemble."

The free concert was held in the main ballroom of the Four Seasons clubhouse on April 25.

Four Seasons resident Edith Bailey said, "I loved them last year, but I didn't have any of my relatives in it. Lo and behold [this year] my grandson, John Wall, began his freshman year at Jackson Liberty High School and he's playing the trombone. Being a musician myself, I am so happy to hear him play."

Bailey said she hopes to hear her grandson play with the ensemble for the next three years.

"And maybe he'll be doing lots of solos," she added.

The 20-member jazz ensemble played swing and jazz favorites including "In the Mood," "Groovin' Hard," "Little Brown

Jug," "American Patrol," "Critic's Choice," "Satin Doll," "Since I Fell for You," "Sidewinder," "Blue Skies" and "El Macho Muchacho."

Featured solos were performed by Justin Gonzalez, Gary Basko, Paul Maier, Jeff Bannor, Zane Decker, Harvey Spinks, Chris Hidalgo, Brian Catri and Christian DellaDonna.

The jazz ensemble also played at Four Seasons South Knolls, and on May 7 the ensemble will be at the Westlake adult community for its final performance of the season.

Katona thanked the community for its continued support of the Jackson School District's music program.

Trombonist Paul Maier said he felt great that the ensemble has progressed so much during the past year.

"We're winning awards," said Maier. "It's really great because the jazz ensemble is excellent. It's one of the best in the state, and it is awesome to be a part of it."

During the past two years the Jackson Liberty Jazz Ensemble has won awards for the best trumpet section, trombone section and rhythm section. The ensemble has received best soloist awards for alto saxophone, drum set, vocalist, trombone and bass guitar.

The jazz ensemble came in first place at the Princeton Jazz Festival and opened for Wade Preston from the Broadway musical "Movin' Out" when Preston recently performed in Jackson.

