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The Maquoketa Community High School Cardinal Marching Band received a warm southern welcome in both the Krewe of Terreanians and Krewe of Houmas Mardi Gras parades in Houma, La. Mardi Gras celebrated MCHS style

By KELLY GERLACH

Two cultures, fantastic unto themselves, collided in 2004. Five years passed but two cultures embraced like they'd never been apart.

The southern hospitality exhibited by Houma, La. residents welcomed the Maquoketa Community High School Marching Band. Members said they had the time of their lives there this year.

For the second time in five years, the 88-member marching band made the 18 1/2 hour drive to celebrate Mardi Gras in Houma, La., a city

ranked second only to New Orleans in the famous annual celebration. MCHS marched in two parades there, watched a third and enjoyed a special Cajun festival in their honor.

The relationship between Maquoketa and Houma began in 2004 when the Krewe of Hycinthians invited Maquoketa to participate in Mardi Gras activities. Kay (Banowetz) Kilburg, MCHS math teacher and Houma native, facilitated that first experience along with her parents (her father Don is a MCHS graduate) who still live in Houma.

"Our relationship with Houma strengthened even more after Hurricane Katrina. At first we wanted to go down and help but we figured everything was so torn up there," explained

instrumental director Kent Crawford.

MCHS and the community instead sent a motor home and trailer filled with supplies and monetary donations to help Houma. A group of students and staff also organized a mission trip to help rebuild homes in a neighboring community.

Houma returned that favor last October when the Krewe of Houma invited the MCHS band to march in its parade. The numerous krewes each hold their own parade, which in many cases last for hours on end.

Maquoketa's plans slowly took shape until Crawford received a call from the Krewe of

> **■ MARDI GRAS.** Please turn to page 26

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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King cake greeted MCHS revelers during the Cajun festival held in their honor prior to Mardi Gras. No one could pass up the traditional dessert, going back for seconds and sometimes thirds.



Sousaphones hold quite a few strands of colorful beads, leis, and stuffed animals that the Maquoketa marchers picked up along their parade route in Houma.

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