



IN BAND CLASS at Decatur Community High, Marci Matchett (above) ran through the scales on her flute as the group warmed up. Kelly Olson (below) sang with the Oberlin choir during practice under vocal teacher Susan Nelson.

Musicians get ready for festival

Oberlin Red Devil band and vocal students only have a few days left to prepare for the big competition on Saturday.

Around 65 students will compete at the Regional Music Festival at the high school, sponsored by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. The students will perform both solos and in ensembles, competing with students from 22 area schools.

Vocal teacher Susan Nelson said the competition Saturday is comparable to a regional sports tournament. Students receiving I ratings will qualify to go on to the state music festival in Concordia on Saturday, April 30.

Students have been preparing since after Christmas for the competition. Band teacher Deanne Spanier said the students chose their solos, she helped them work on the hard spots and then she sent them home

to practice.

Getting ready for the regional competition, she said, really improves their playing ability. The students, said Ms. Spanier, work hard on their solos and the competition motivates them to do the best they can do.

Mrs. Nelson said the high school students here have the advantage of free weekly lessons on the instrument of their choice before, during or after school.

Each of the soloist, she said, must prepare two pieces. In past years, a number of students competed in a vocal solo, a band instrument and then in at least one ensemble. They have practiced all of the pieces since January.

"The regional contest," said Mrs. Nelson, "is an excellent opportunity for students to improve technique, learn new literature and present themselves to an audience."



Photos and story by Kimberly Davis



WITH HER FRENCH HORN, Destry Jackson played with the Oberlin band during class with teacher Deanne Spanier.