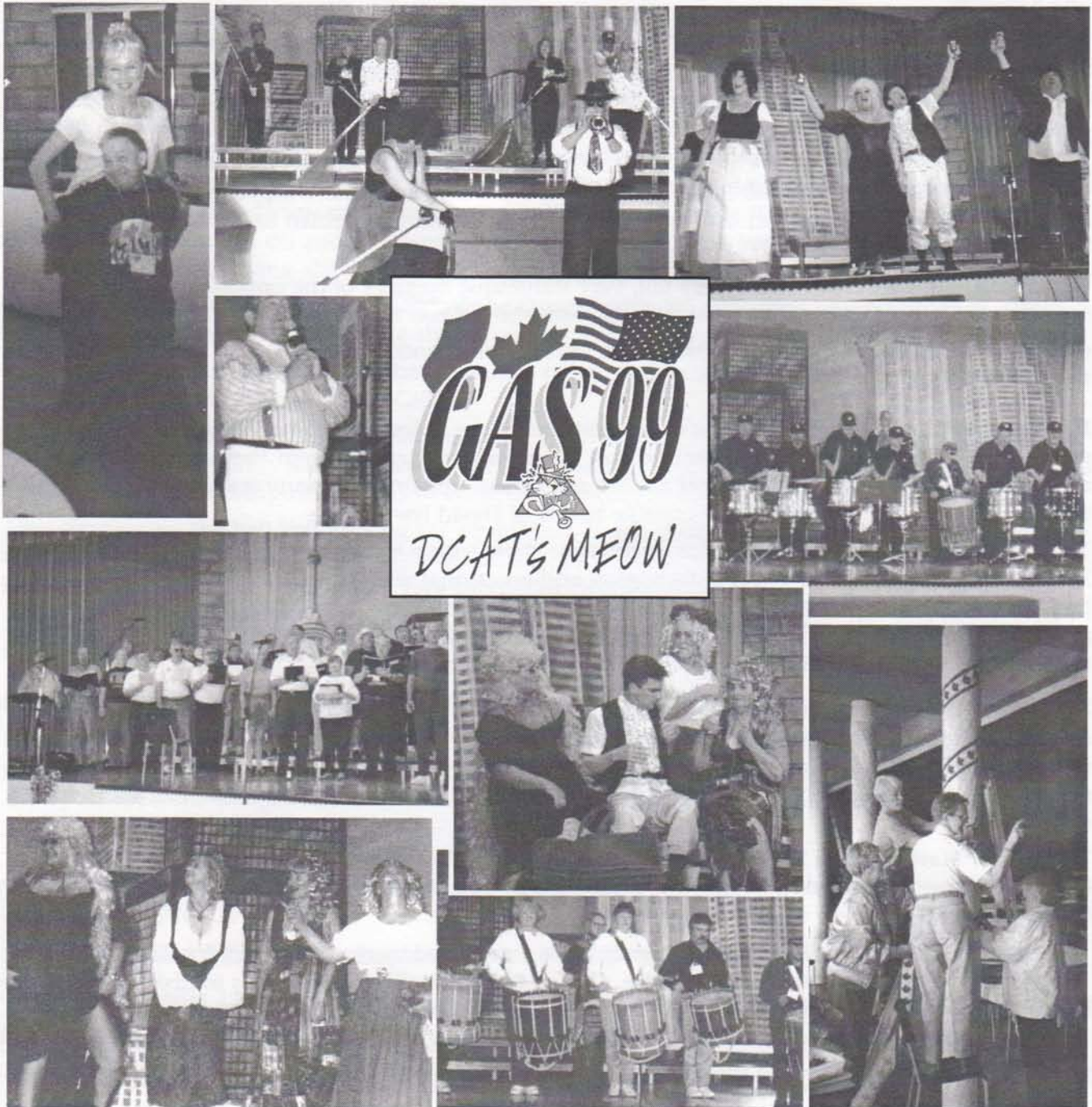




The DCAT Purr-spective

Newsletter of Drum Corps Alumni Toronto • 55 Barber Greene Road, North York, Ontario M3C 2A1 • May/99

DCAT is an organization dedicated to the preservation and joy of Drum & Bugle Corps camaraderie, bringing together past members, relatives, friends and associates in a social environment for the purpose of companionship and musical activities.



I must apologize for the infrequency of the newsletter. For the past few months I have been consumed by GAS. It has now passed and I feel much better.

Sober Reflections of GAS'99

It was hard to believe that GAS'99 was actually here after a long year of planning.

The gathering spot was the sun-drenched patio of the pub at the Holiday Inn on Thursday evening, April 29. The patio was perfectly situated to greet arriving DCAT members. Among the greeters was the greatly missed Reta Morrison (luv ya Reta).

Bon-Bons and Archie were arriving later in the evening and DCAT was invited over to their hospitality suite. Some members went, but the sensible ones chilled out and saved themselves for Friday and Saturday.

Friday morning we got access to the hall for decorating and set up. It was a veritable beehive of activity; setting up the risers and the cityscape background, decorating the pillars and preparing the table decorations. At the same time David Beaumont, (*son of Ordy and June*) was setting up his amazing sound, light and projection equipment.

It was a very busy day. One o'clock was DCAT's chorus rehearsal, two o'clock was our rehearsal with Bon-Bon (*Rip Burnert in his Philadelphia Flyers T-shirt, in your dreams Rip*) and three o'clock was an opening ceremony rehearsal. At four thirty, back to the hotel to return to the hall for 6 o'clock. The day was a blurrrr.

Gary Stone made a new friend. A very tall, very statuesque member of the opposite sex. Gary figured she was worth the climb. (*Much nicer than last year when he had that Caballero guy blowing in his ear.*)

O.K. who set off the fire alarm? Apparently a sign fell on it and triggered it. The firemen were really thrilled about the false alarm.

Friday Evening. Under the floor & stage direction of the ubiquitous Karen Kerr, Friday evening was, without a doubt, the most organized and 'performance friendly' event that we have ever experienced at a GAS reunion. The trumpet fanfare and official opening ceremony really set the mood for the evening. The MC job was in the capable hands of David Jewell.

The New York Skyliner Alumni Chorus opened the show with a spirited performance. The Princeman Alumni Chorus performance was entertaining and emotional with the addition of the ladies who had been invited to join to ensure the future of the chorus. DCAT joined Bon Bons for their final number "All the Things You Are". After tidying up the hall, it was back to our hospitality suite at the hotel for a bit of socializing and rehashing the evenings events.

Saturday Afternoon. (*Karen went shopping*) Dan Moloney (Saturday afternoon coordinator) did a excellent job planning this event with an ever changing list of participants. Don Gill had his hands full making changes and special announcements on the fly (*ie; the neighbours are complaining, the noise police say that we can't do horns and drums out side, an American hostage release had just been negotiated, etc.*)

The DCAT "Master of The House" skit was a riot. All those lusty women flouncing around the stage, letting it (*them*) all hang out. Actually, it wasn't much different than a DCAT Chorus rehearsal. Rick Robinson was the perfect master of the house.

The nostalgic, historical colour guard presentation accompanied by the trumpet of Joe "Cool" Watson and words by Edna Kingsley was well done. One of Lois Nicholl's jobs in life is to distract Joe while he's trying to play his trumpet. All this with a background of crisp flag work.

The C.A.D.R.E. drum club gave an impressive demonstration. There was the usual mix of horn and drum individual and ensemble presentations.

The Scout House colour guard performed their always crowd pleasing drill. A special performance was given by the newly formed Scout House Alumni Corps. What a treat it was to hear the "Fanfare" bringing back memories of Scout House Spring Shows at the Kitchener Arena. "Wayward Wind", "Waltzing Matilda", how great was that? Having played in Scout House it was really great to see the group reunited.

Saturday Night. The opening ceremonies began with a trumpet fanfare to call the guests to dinner followed by the national anthems. The reading of the list of fallen comrades followed by the Lord's Prayer was a grabber as always. I was talking to a member of the Princemen and he said that during the Lord's Prayer he saw the tall bald guy in the front row of DCAT tearing up (*wonder who that was*), that caused him to lose it he started to cry. I'm sure he was not alone.

There were two chorus performances this evening; the Hawthorne Alumni chorus and the DCAT Alumni chorus.

Ted Key, DCAT's musical director was pumped and so was the chorus. Our new entrance was very effective. You had to have been comatose not to have not to have been roused by DCAT's Star Spangled Banner/Maple Leaf Forever combo. The Star Spangled Banner with the banner unfurling, the drums and brass brought our American friends to their feet. When the American flag was paraded on stage, they went bananas applauding and cheering. (*As Wyatt would say drop your pant and throw the baby in the air*). Before the audience could catch their breath Ted led the chorus into The Maple Leaf Forever, more drums and brass and the provincial flags. By the time we hit the O'Canada part everybody was on their feet applauding and hollering. The big ending with the Canadian flag parading on and the percussion build up... WOW!!!. We brought the roof down. I get goose bumps just thinking about it!

Our final number was the unique "Lord of the Dance" with it's expanded dance sequence, always a crowd pleaser. All in all, one hell of a show!

DCAT was joined on stage by the other members of the super chorus and sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", conducted by Wyatt Gill.

The closing ceremonies saw the GAS banner turned over to next year's hosts Archer Epler and the Bon Bons. In his remarks Mark Fulcumer, Archies President said "we have a Y2K problem and it has nothing to do with computers, it has to do with following what DCAT has done this year".

After cleaning up the hall and packing the equipment, it was off to the hospitality suite. There was the usual mix of characters except... the cigar chomping, grass skirted, Hawaiian Princess Cumonawanalaya. It was a good way to unwind after a very successful GAS Reunion.

Sunday Farewell Breakfast. So long until next year. Thanks for the memories and thank God I don't have to get on a bus.

DCAT's success is the sum of it's parts.

The success of GAS'99 can be attributed to the team work of DCAT members and friends who volunteered their time, resources and expertise over the past 18 months. All of us should congratulate ourselves for an incredible job well done.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Monday, May 31st, 1999 - Rameses Shrine Temple Past Presidents Night.**
- **Saturday, June 12th, 1999 - Town of Ajax Home Week Celebration (parade & concert).**
- **July 10th, 1999 - Orillia Weekend - Birchmere Lodge and Legion performances.**
- **August 16th to 20th 1999 - Roy Thompson Hall. (lobby show and stage show)**

The "Jolly Jesters" Story

It was spring 1955 and the trumpet band of the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps was looking forward to a busy summer.

One engagement was an invitation to be part of a contest held at Varsity stadium, home at that time of the Toronto Argonaut football club. The proposal was that at four consecutive home games, one of four invited trumpet bands would perform as the half time show. Each band would be judged on their afternoon and a trophy awarded at the completion of the tournament. It was hoped this would be an annual event. Several Ontario trumpet bands along with ourselves had adopted the American style M&M show which was ideal as half time entertainment. I believe the other bands involved were 2nd Division Signals, Guelph and perhaps Militaires. We would be replacing various military brass bands who traditionally filled these jobs. Their members were unionized but because Varsity stadium was part of University of Toronto, this did not present a problem.

Soon however, the proverbial hit the fan. Under pressure from the musician's union, the army issued an order forbidding the RCASC trumpet band from participating. After the initial disappointment, we tried to plan a way to participate as a band other than the RCASC. We had an offer of a loan of instruments, but uniforms presented a problem. Costume houses were contacted with the hope of renting cadet style or military uniforms. The only thing in the required numbers were clown costumes. So as they say, any port in a storm. There we were in 60 or so clown costumes, every piece different, one size fits all, with Ted Reilly as drum major in a tramp costume.

Game day came, and as we waited in the dressing room, Major Thompson, our band officer, and a very likable individual, asked to speak to the group and made a last minute appeal for us not to go on. After he left the room, a quick show of hands confirmed what we all knew. Nothing was going to keep us off the field that afternoon.

It was showtime. A runner rushed down from the announcer's booth and asked us how we wanted to be introduced. Everybody looked over at Reilly who was really the heart of our outfit. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. Ted grinned and said, "Say we're The Jesters, The Jolly Jesters."

In August we had been invited as an exhibition corps, to a show in Albany New York, hosted by the Empire State Grenadiers and featuring top American drum corps. We had been rather well received by the crowd at Varsity, so Reilly, who was a showman, suggested we try the "clowns" on an American audience. So we made another trip to Malabars costume house, Ted added a few sight gags and we headed south of the border.

At the end of the season we took stock of our situation. As far as our position with the military was concerned, the hand writing was on the wall. After a warm reception in the States, Reilly wanted to expand on the Jester idea. This was not an easy sell. Many of us enjoyed the military style music and drill. Finally it was agreed we would have one costume for our shows, but maintain a military uniform to be worn when more appropriate.

Over the winter, a new red and white clown costume was designed. Eventually, blue tunics gave way to blue satin shirts, pith helmets to peaked caps. New music and drill were written to complement the Jester theme, and the little tramp drum major turned into a court jester.

Our break with the militia did not happen overnight but eventually we parted company. We rented our own facilities on Bertie street and practiced our drill on a smelly field on the east Lakeshore.

For half a dozen years, the Jolly Jesters Drum and Bugle Corps was one of the most unique competitors on the drum corps scene.

That was all a long time ago, but that's how I remember it anyway.

..... **DAVE WOOD**



1st time out as the "Jolly Jesters", Albany N.Y., 1955



"Jesters" drum line, 1960

*That's it for now!
Cheers, Dave Cook*