



The DCAT Purr-spective

The Newsletter of Drum Corps Alumni Toronto • September 2002

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.

We were all deeply saddened by the passing of John Connell on Friday, August 9th. The funeral was held on Tuesday, August 13th at All Saints Anglican Church. The family requested that the DCAT chorus sing "Amazing Grace" at the funeral. The chorus sang with 48 voices from the choir loft of the church. There were also three trumpeters and a drummer from the Queen's Own Rifles who played "The Last Post". After the funeral everyone was invited to The Legion for a wake. A fitting send off for our friend John.

On a happier note, Joe Watson (formerly called Radar, now called Hawkeye) had surgery performed on his eyes to remove cataracts and float in new lenses. He discovered that Ann is actually 6 ft. tall and likes to wear leather..

June Beaumont also had surgery to replace her well worn knee. Thank god for replacement parts. She performed in a wheelchair at the RTH lobby show and is now coming to rehearsal with just a cane. Great to have her back.

Shirley Douglas is at home recuperating from hip surgery. Looking forward to Shirley and Dick returning to the chorus.

Business stuff... The executive has set the the dues for the 2003 fiscal year They are \$50 for full members and \$35 for associate members due October 1st.

The cost for G.A.S. 2003 is set at \$340 per person.

Upcoming Events

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION will be held on Wednesday, October 23rd at 7:30 p.m. at Estonian House. Executive positions up for election are vice president, business manager and publicity. The nominating committee is Ellie Cameron, Sheri Luloff and Dan Moloney.

The DCAT Christmas Concert is November 24th., 2:00 p.m. at Estonian House. It will be held in the main hall which holds around 400 people depending on the seating configuration. Details to follow.

In previous years the Christmas Concert has been held at the Thornhill Golf and Country Club, organized and generously sponsored by Dave and Ellie Cameron. DCAT owes Dave and Ellie a debt of gratitude for providing the chorus with a wonderful venue for their Christmas Concerts for the past 7 years. **Thank you very, very much.**

Chorus performance December 7th - Masonic senior's residence on Islington Ave. north of the 401. 7 p.m.

(maybe I can get the sweater back that I left there last year)

The Jennings pool party... we were blessed with perfect weather for the annual splash-o-rama. About 50 of us gathered in and around the pool. There was the floating volleyball game with its vague rules and dubious officiating. Tom was sporting his new aerodynamic hair style. Thanks to Barb & Jim for hosting this annual event.



Visit the DCAT Website www.dcatchorus.ca

Remembering John Connell

John Connell - one man, one kit - an American flag on his music stand - zoo keeper on the bus - are we there yet?
David my boy how are you? Good J.C. how're you doing?

John was working in Ottawa for some months (1960-62), not often coming home to Evelyn. During this time, Ambassadors got a show in Hull PQ, and typically we left Toronto on a Friday evening from the Skyline Hotel, but only after closing the Pub there and after singing tons of drum corps songs!

We arrived in Ottawa feeling no pain, and Fred Johnson got the idea "lets go over to Hull and visit John"! Fred, myself, Don Gill, and I think Ron McCormick all staggered over to John's hotel, got his room number, and took the elevator up to see him. The time was approx. 3:30 a.m. We hammered on his door, John yelled "who the hell is it and what do you want?" We told John who we were and he opened the door. We all piled in to find Evelyn in the bed with the sheets up to her neck. We clowned around, had a couple of beers, unknowingly terrifying Evelyn (as she didn't know all of us), with, as I remember, Don getting under the sheets with Evelyn and joking around! We all thought it was great fun and I still recall the look on John and Evelyn's faces, as we all staggered around the room with beers in our hands. After approx. an hour, after convincing John to join us for a couple of beers, we left. Some weeks later, we joked and talked to John about it often and found the reason Evelyn was so nervous was she was totally naked in bed after her conjugal visit after not seeing John for weeks, and thought if we discovered this, she would have been taken advantage of. What great memories we have of our long friendship!

- John Fox

On the GAS trip to Boston, I remember John's famous vodka jello shots in ice cube trays. He used to call me kiddo all the time and occasionally sneak a cigarette from me at break when he was trying to quit. He made me laugh!

- Chris Watson

While practising for a show in Kingston, ON in the early 90's with Sigs, we were told to start at the opposite end of the field to what we normally did. John kept saying it wouldn't work, they would have to rewrite the drill etc. - instead of marching out and turning left, we were told to turn right. We start-

ed out at the appointed time, everybody turned right, except John, he went left marching to his own drummer. We finally got John on the right track and the performance that evening was perfectly backwards.

- Joe Watson

I have very fond memories of John. When I first joined DCAT, he made me feel welcome. I stood beside him so he had free rein to give advice to the Rookie. I appreciated his help a lot. He copied all of the music for me and told me not to lose it. When I was wandering around Communicorp he always came up and showed me the way. In fact, he took time to show me the secret routes only he knew. He always took the time to ask how I was doing. He called me "kid" - that made me smile. What I really liked about John was if he didn't like the way things were going, he said so. If he thought I could improve something, he took me aside and told me. He was pretty direct. He made me laugh. I got good advice from him. He helped me fit into the group. I enjoyed his stories. I will miss him.

- John Jones

I remember watching John and Lyn on the dance floor. They were smooth and you could see that they had danced together for many years. Lyn would say she would pay big time the next day, they had such fun. For a long time I wondered why John wore that tall felt stars and stripes hat and was always promoting the the U.S.A. When I asked him about it he said, putting his hands on my shoulders "Because sweetheart, I am an American. Who knew? I didn't.

- Ann Watson



Roy Thomson Hall (RTH)

The Royal Bank Jubilee was the first event in the refurbished RTH. The chorus performed the stage show on Tuesday, August 6th and a lobby show on Wednesday, August 7th.

Tuesday was a long day. We arriving at 9:30 a.m., rehearsed mid morning, had lunch, went on stage at 2:45 p.m. Most of us went into the audience to watch the second half.

The Square Dancing Group that we were sharing the room with were a little taken aback when we turned it into a co-ed change room.

Party time... Pat (*Bear*) and Gillian (*The Queen*) Maloney had arranged for the party room at their condo, steps from RTH. They arranged for large quantities of pizza and a keg-o-beer to be waiting for us. We ate, we sang. We remembered John Connell, raised a glass and sang a few of his favourite tunes. There was also a birthday cake to celebrate Dave Cameron's 60th.

Claire was questioning the French content of our party songs. Apparently "Allons aux mes amis, allons" isn't enough. Maybe we could learn a French pub song to keep her happy...or not.

At the lobby show on Wednesday while standing in the wings waiting for the polka band to finish, dancing broke out, sort of a mini-polka on the spot. After the performance, I had to get back to work before they missed me, in my haste I forgot my pants (my DCAT uniform pants). They ended up in Orillia.

You Can't Get there from here even if you can there is no place to park - *John Jones*

When Dave asked me to write an article about our performance at Roy Thomson Hall, I readily agreed. I really enjoy this performance on a huge stage with a large audience. Last year DCAT did a wonderful job so I was looking forward to the gig with great anticipation.

Dave had asked me to write about this day. However, did you ever have one of those days when everything goes right? Well the day of our performance was not one of those days for me. When I explained that I had a day from hell, he asked me to write about that. A true editor. He sees a possible story in every situation.

My first thought was that my problems that day could be viewed as negative. There is enough negativity in the world so I didn't think that I needed to share mine with everyone else. However, in retrospect, I thought that all of us involved in our activity have had days when the Gods seem to want to challenge us. I have heard many war stories surrounding events on the way to a performance. Most make my day seem a piece of cake in comparison. However, since Dave asked me to write the piece, I get the advantage of having a forum in which to air mine.

I should have known that something was not right when my boss called me a couple of days before the event. He told me that he had to switch a meeting with an important client. My client. Of course, the day of the meeting was the same day as Roy Thomson Hall. Therefore, instead of a holiday, I had to come in for a meeting. I was overjoyed.

Not so bad, I thought. Think positive. The schedule for the meeting would still give me time to get from the office down to Roy Thomson although I would have to miss the morning rehearsal. I mapped out the route and the times and felt reasonably comfortable that I would not have any problems. The best laid plans.....

First the meeting. A customer who decided that today was the day that they were going to display their need for presentation skills training. I remember. Thinking behavior modification therapy. The clock ticking minute by minute up to and past my time of departure. My feeling that I was in a time warp. My desire to choke the presenter if they repeated the same point one more time. My boss's look when I left him with the customer. Running out of the meeting to the car.

Now I'm on the way. Hitting every red light. Traffic jam at the bottom of the Gardiner. I remember. Sitting in traffic wishing I was driving a tank. Then I could just ride over the cars in front of me. Didn't all these people know that I had a performance? Why are they on the road at this time of day? They should be working!

Turn off the Gardiner and get into the City. Now I'm clear. A little late but still time to get there. Turn the corner and meet a cement truck face to face. What is he doing there? More importantly, why is he blocking the whole street? Most important, "why is he blocking me". Some guy holding up a stop sign and talking to his buddies while I'm waiting. Thinking, "well there's room on the other side of the truck." Getting yelled at by the cop on the other side who really shouldn't be there either. Driving by. He really doesn't want me to stop. Hoping I don't hear a siren.

Now I'm at Roy Thomson. Turn the corner. Parking lot "FULL". Circling the block. Pedestrians who I now want to damage walking all over the street. I want to make a citizens arrest for jaywalking. Smiling and laughing as they walk. This is not the time to talk. Certainly not to laugh. You can't be happy. I'm late.

Turn the corner again and go down the ramp into the underground parking. Who is this guy beckoning me to stop? "Sorry Sir the Parking lot is full". "It can't be full I say". I know someone is leaving." Sorry Sir, the lot is full". Now I'm thinking about graft. Common in all parking lot attendants. Wondering if I should try to bribe this guy. Then I realize. I forgot to go the Bank. Five bucks are not going to get me two feet inside let alone a parking space. Maybe I won't get out either? "OK", I say, "I will just go in and turn around".

Once inside, "he'll never find me"! I drive around inside the parking lot. I take a tour of the parking lot as I pass the Flutes, Violins, Cellos, Sousaphones, Tambourines and Triangles. Maybe the lot is full? Then, I see a car pull out. Like a bird of prey, I move to the spot oblivious of the other car waiting. He's not too big. I shove my car into a spot that is way too small for my car. I hope that the person parked next to me can get into his car when he returns. Not really sure that I care. I grab my uniform and rush to the elevator.

At the elevator, I meet a group of very nice senior citizens. All of them have walkers and/or canes and are walking at the speed of a snail on

a relaxed crawl. They all smile at me. Our audience. Very nice people. Slow, slower and slowest. I think, one day I will be just like them. Not the nice part either. Now I'm suffering from acute depression.

I get out of the elevator and see a sign that says "TO REHEARSAL HALLS". It doesn't say you have to be a card-carrying member of the Toronto Symphony to go through. I think, "Well I can pretend I play with them." I hear a deep voice "No one goes through here!" I turn. The female security guard looks like Attila the Hun. Not someone I could just tie up and gag if they don't let me through. So I run around the building. More people smiling, laughing and walking slow. Now I hate them. They know it and block my way on purpose.

I get to stairs and look down at the entrance door. No one from DCAT standing there talking. Now I'm really late. Run into the building. Now I have to use the facilities and realize that I really should not have had all that coffee at the meeting. I walk through the door into

the DCAT change room. I see everyone dressed and ready to go. I see myself running down the corridor pulling on my pants.

I hear, "Where's the pitch pipe? The one I left in the car. I'm thinking - well I won't say what I'm thinking in a family oriented publication. Needless to say, you would never be able to find the pitch pipe nor want to play it for sure. I calm down. Get dressed and march out with DCAT. Now I'm proud. I'm here and we're good. Makes it worthwhile.

By the way, we still had to stand around and wait to go on. Another reality of our activity. However, that's the stuff for another story.

In retrospect, everyone has had these types of days. They are sent to make us better people. They make us appreciate the smaller things in life. I now appreciate the ameba in all of its forms. I know I will get my reward when I reach heaven. Since I'm a better person. That's as long as that parking lot guy isn't at the gates.

Waiting at Roy Thomson Hall & Partying at Blue Jay Way

