



# The DCAT *Purr-spective*

The Newsletter of Drum Corps Alumni Toronto • November 2003

The Twentieth Annual G.A.S. Reunion will be held in Hamilton - April 30, May 1st & 2nd. This year it is hosted by the Hamilton Firefighters Drum Corps., The United Alumni Drum Corps. and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Bugle Band. The DCAT chorus will perform on Friday night. DCAT is booked into the Royal Connaught Howard Johnson Hotel located right next door to the host hotel the Ramada. The cost for the G.A.S. full ticket is \$130.00. This includes Friday night opening event, the Saturday day-time concert, the Saturday night banquet and the Sunday morning breakfast. This also includes \$10 to help offset the cost of a meeting/rehearsal room. Ann White has hotel payment information. Thanks to Ann White for doing the organizing.

There is an earlybird gathering at the Firefighters Hall on Thursday night for those eager to start partying.

Another Roy Thomson Hall performance is behind us. The city was recovering from the blackout and RTH was not totally powered up. The dressing room, in the bowels of the theatre, was hot as hell, but thankfully the lobby was air conditioned. We never seem to get our full allotment of performance time when we do a lobby show. The time it takes for the group before us to get off stage, the MC using our time to make announcements plus the time for us to get on, we've lost one of our numbers before we even start. We will have to give this gig some thought for next year. The gathering after the performance at Innocenti was a great success.

Annual General Meeting and Elections - positions up for election were: president, secretary and treasurer. All officers were stood for re-election and were returned. The executive consists of: president; Paul Kelly, vice-president: Dave Wood, secretary: Ellie Cameron, treasurer: Gord Irvine, business manager: John Jones, publicity: Dave Cook. Non-elected, past president: Ordy Beaumont, membership: Dan Moloney, social committee: Edna Allen, housing: Bruce Brackett.

Ordy Beaumont presented the document that he and Sheri Luloff are producing to apply for a grant from the Trillium Foundation. It is a fabulous document titled "DCAT on the move".

Dues for 2003-4 are set at \$55 for membership (chorus) and \$35 for associate membership. They are due now.

The chorus is ready for a new look. The black shirts and opera scarves have served us well and have given us a distinctive look. We need two uniforms, a formal uniform and a casual look for summer and secondary performances. Marg Gill has volunteered to come up with a new look for the chorus. She will be presenting concepts to the executive.

**The DCAT Annual Christmas Concert** will once again be held at Estonia House on Sunday, December 7th. The event is from 2 pm - 4 pm and the cost is \$15 per person. Mr. & Mrs. Claus will be there for the kiddies. Tickets will be available soon.

**Mason Widows Concert** Sunday, December 14th. at Rexdale Presbyterian Church, 2314 Islington Ave. Performance starts at 7 pm

The Social Committee is planning a Dinner Dance Fundraiser to be held April 17th, 2004. It will be held at Estonia House. Edna Allen will provide more details as they become available.

## D.C.A. Championships, Scranton, PA. August 30- September 1st. *(Ann Watson)*

We started out at 6.00 a.m. on Friday the 29th. We stopped at duty free to "stock up" and arrived at the Econo Motel, Scranton mid afternoon. We mellowed out that evening and were early to bed. Saturday morning Joe and I decided to check out the venues which were only a 10 minute drive away. The Lackawanna stadium is very typical of the U.S., large enough to hold Lindsay, Bobcaygeon and other small towns. The individuals and ensemble performances were to be held on Montage Mountain at the base of a ski slope!! When we drove up there who did we find? Part of the CADRE group Paul Kelly, Rick Hosie, Paul Mosley, and others practicing in the early morning fog (weather wise).

Prelim's started Saturday morning at 10.00 a.m. as did the rain. We waited till after lunch when the rain subsided and took in the last 5 corps which definitely "wet our appetite" for the finals on Sunday. All corps were putting out 100% plus. I found myself watching Gord Moffatt in Empire Statesmen moving about the field with great precision. Their music is so crowd pleasing. Knowing their founder Vince Bruni had died on the Friday evening after a long illness must have made it very difficult for them to even perform at all. The Caballeros blew everyone out of their seats with their power and style.

The casual atmosphere of the prelim's made it easy to re-acquaint with some GAS members. Rip Bernert and some of the Bon Bon girls, Bob and Joan Neuhof, Carole and Mike Delvecchio plus Tommy Swan (what can one say), holding court at the beer kiosk, his lady Althea taking in the show. They all sent love and regards to DCAT and mentioned they are looking forward to GAS '04 in Hamilton.

Off to the ski lift... the individual and ensemble performances started at 6.00 p.m., it was cool and damp but a huge crowd was assembled. There were performances going on everywhere inside and outside. CADRE did themselves proud in the group and individual competitions. As it became dark it became increasingly difficult to see as the only lighting was from the ski slopes. Three mini chorus' performed inside the ski chalet. One of the groups was the CorpsVets from Atlanta who, if you remember gave DCAT a standing "O" when we sang Alexander's Ragtime Band in Syracuse a few years ago. They said we had inspired them to start a small singing group. They won singing a Doo-Wop number which was just sensational and had everyone singing along.

Sunday dawned with clear blue skies, thank God. The Alumni show started at 10.00 a.m. a crowd of approximately 3000 were on hand for the National Anthems and people steadily streamed in throughout the entire show, some looking a little worse for partying the night before. We did none of that over the weekend as yours truly was "with cold and no voice" (a bonus for Joe).

Ten corps performed starting with the USAF Alumni from Colorado Springs. Of course seeing Joe marching with the Skyliners was the highlight for me. He did himself and DCAT proud, looking as though he had marched with them forever. Obviously the months of practice paid off. Hawthorne Alumni was marvelous, Carole Delvecchio marching honor guard and Mike playing his "Cherry Pink" solo clean as a whistle.

The D.C.A. finals started at 6.00 p.m. with 12 corps (10 competing and 2 exhibition), we knew it was going to be a long night. Kingston Grenadiers, the only Canadian entry, made it into the competition by beating Skyliners and Hurricanes and finished 10th. Bushwackers (6th) did a tribute to the U.S. space program, Buccaneers (5th) had a pirate theme and also performed the Naval Hymn (remember our attempt?) I loved the look of Minnesota Brass (7th), blue/black/brassy and shiney. The CorpsVets in only their 2nd year in open class did themselves proud playing a jazz, blues style of music. The corps that took most people by surprise was the San Francisco Renegades, founded in 1996 and first competing in open class in '02 as the first west coast unit. They were incredibly unique, big (72 horns), bold looking, all dressed as though they were a commercial for the MATRIX, especially the females in the pit crew, in leather, boots etc., you get the picture. The female drum major who looked about 6 feet tall all in shiney leather. Their music was quite modern. They finished 4th and no doubt will be a force to deal with in the coming years. Of course the top three, Cab's (1st), Syracuse (2nd) and Statesmen (3rd) put on remarkable, very professional shows. It was the last performance for Jim Russo as drum major of Cab's and quite emotional for him. Of course the Statesmen's drum major Dave Bruni had a very difficult and brave time and they played obviously for their fallen leader. I believe most of the crowd were on their feet for the last three corps, an amazingly entertaining evening.

A large tail gate party was organized at one of the hotels afterwards but because of the sick party pooper we did not go. I understand it went on forever. What else is new. All in all, a great weekend of excellent talent, great music, comradeship and fun.

*Regards, Annie in the tundra.*

#### **DRUM CORPS AND OTHER NEWS** *from Annie in the tundra*

**Sad News** – As you are aware – **Vince Bruni** passed away on the Friday preceding Labour Day and the start of DCA championships. Vince founded the Empire Statesman in 1983 and emphasized high entertainment values each year in their show. They won DCA world championships in 1991,94,97 and 1998. Vince's funeral was attended by over 600 people and the Statesmen, at Vince's request played "My Way" at the cemetery followed by David Martin playing TAPS. A true drum corps send off for a great man.

**Mickey Petrone** who was President of DCA for the past 3 decades was honored with a testimonial held September 21st in New Jersey. Mickey had become involved with drum corps at the close of World War II. Over the years he taught and wrote for dozens of corps across the nation. Unfortunately after the celebration he returned to his home and some time during the following night he passed away.

Both of these men will be greatly missed.

**On a Happier Note** – **Jim Russo**, who has fronted Caballeros for many years has been hired by the Orlando Magic Jr. Drum Corps as its new director. Jim will commute to Florida twice a month for now and in the new year will move with his wife Dale to the Orlando area.

**CAN GAS** – Hamilton – started rehearsals September 7th and meets alternate Sundays at the Fire Fighters Hall. They are starting to work on new music for next years GAS reunion in Hamilton.

We understand wedding bells will be ringing in the Fox household in November with the marriage of their daughter April. We wish John, Dolly and the bride and groom to be, all the best!

A little bird has told us that Gord and Doris Broadbridge are to be grandparents in a while – Oh, the patter of little feet. Edna Kingsley is once again a grandmother.

*If you have any interesting tidbits of drum corps or other news to share with DCAT, let Dave Cook or myself know and we will include it in this section.*

## York Lions Drum Corps: The Reunion

It started with a funeral and ended with, after almost forty-years, a joyous day and a half reunion of 40 plus ex members of York Lions Drum Corps, their spouses, assorted friends, ex competitors and Drum Corps nuts.

At the funeral for an old corps member, Mr. Bob Nelson, a small group of ex-York Lions members and friends started reminiscing about the great times they had as teenagers traveling and competing in the Drum Corps circuit of the mid 60's. A lot of laughs and tears later, we decided that instead of meeting at funerals, a reunion with old corps mates was a great idea. With Tom Stelling and John Dickinson (the group's heart and soul) leading the way, a number of ex-members gathered together to form the York Lions Alumni Committee and we set about bringing together as many past members, supporters and friends of the York Lions Drum Corps as we could find.

This was not an easy undertaking, the York Lions Drum Corps existed for only 5 years from 1961 and 1966. During that time the corps had only about 140 young men pass through the group.

Fourteen months and many meetings later, a web site had been set up. Phone calls and emails by the hundreds had tracked down over 95 ex-members, and a lot of corps memorabilia. Reunion "T" shirts and pins were designed and produced, catering arranged, the hall and restaurant reserved, accommodations booked, entertainment finalized, money and food donated, head table invited and the dates set (*whew!*).

**The Reunion took place in Toronto on Sept. 19th & 20th of 2003.** It started with a Friday night get together for a few beers at Innocenti on King Street, followed by a Saturday afternoon BBQ and mini Drum Corps show at the The Royal Canadian Legion on the Lakeshore and an evening banquet and dance at the same premises.

### The Memories:

**Friday:** This casual evening get-together kicked off a thirty hour wave of memories, stories, and laughs. My face was wonderfully sore for over a week. Good food, good drink, long lost friends and a lot of laughter. What more could one ask for.

**The BBQ:** The idea for the BBQ was to have a fun afternoon event for members, friends and supporters of the corps. Someone thought it would be neat to maybe invite a Drum Corp to play for us. It amazes me that the strength of the incredible camaraderie formed in the 60's and 70's allowed me to get The Toronto Optimists, The Firefighters Drum Corps of Hamilton, The Cadre Drum Line and The DCAT chorus to donate their time to our event with only one phone call to each group. Cadre gave us an exhibition of traditional Drum Corps and Rope Drum drumming that set the hall reverberating and the crowd asking for more. Optimists, though only together for about six months, gave us a wonderful taste of the music that we both feared and loved during the days when they were the Corps to beat in the 60's. All I can say about the Firefighters is that they were the class act of the afternoon. Excellent music selection, a wonderfully balanced horn and drum line and a terrific flag team and colour guard.

**The Banquet:** This was a class event. There were wonderful tributes for the head table, which was comprised of the "Adults" who ran the Drum Corps or their children as well as a

representative of the Lions Club of York Township our sponsors. This was followed by a minute of silence for our 13 departed friends and concluded with a very moving pipers lament and the playing of Taps on solo horn. The balance of the evening was a blur of stories, fabulous food, much mingling, a little drinking, lots of laughter and dancing into the wee hours. By all accounts, the highlight of the evening was the performance of the DCAT choir. I heard nothing but superlative comments about the chorus. "The Old Songs" brought tears of joy to quite a few. The "Queen" had them laughing like fools and the rest of the show just blew them away. I have never been so proud to be a member of DCAT as I was that evening.

### Recap:

It was incredible to sit down with guys you knew for just a short few years when you were young and start conversing with them like it was just yesterday. As I think back on the York Lions years I think this amazing bond of trust can be explained by the fact we shared so much of ourselves freely during long hours of travel, practices, parades and competitions. We learned teamwork, the thrill of competition and a love of music together. Most of us were from working middle class families with not a lot of money. The Lions Club took us to conventions in New York City, Los Angeles and Miami Beach. We shared the highs of winning and lows of defeat. We did all this during the formative years of our teens. We did this with the complete commitment our hearts and beings to each other unencumbered by a lot of adult social skills we were to learn later in life. No wonder we feel so comfortable together. Wow, what a wonderful time, EH!! . . . . . the bear (AKA Pat Maloney)

<http://www.yorklionsdrumcorps.org/>

### The Maloney BBQ - Come See Our Alpaca Doo October 4th

The weather was very cool, it rained on and off and the sun appeared occasionally. By early evening the weather cooperated with a rainbow (*we tried to sing it - we were out of tune*). There was a good turn out, it was a beautiful setting and the alpacas were cute and huggable. Everyone came suitably dressed in "country chick".

There was a huge fire pit which everyone gathered closely around. Lots of chatter and "remember when" talk.

Gillian proudly showed off their beautiful home, suitable for Architectural Digest. Jim Allen looked quite fetching in his chef's hat preparing hamburgers, hot dogs and fresh corn.

*OH NO*, we ran out of wine - we are in wine country, how convenient - off to the store! We ended up doing what we always do, singing of course. What wonderful fellowship and laughter. How lucky we are.

A huge thank you to Gillian and Pat for their hospitality, sharing their beautiful home and garden with us. Special thanks to Edna, Jim and the social committee for all their work.

## Sergeant Agnes Miller (*Lead Drummer*)



My history with drum corps began with a Sea Ranger group called HMCS St. Laurent. At that time I was only about 14 years old. Our skipper thought we should start a band and she handed me a drum. Well, we all tried very hard to get that band going but with no 'real' help what-so-ever we were quite pathetic.

One night we were playing at a fair in Withrow Park when the leader of Parkdale approached a group of us and asked if we would like to come down to Parkdale to look their band over and perhaps join. We all lived in the east end but got together and took the old red rocket down to King and Jameson to have a listen. Everyone joined that night. I was always very slow to learn anything new and ended up being the last one to get a drum. They made me march behind the band swinging my sticks. That never bothered me though because I knew one day soon I would make it and I did. It

was not very long until I was really hooked on drumming. Every night after work I used to practice on my little red practice pad until it was time to sleep. I even spent hours exercising my wrists to keep them strong. I used to sleep, eat and breathe drumming!

In Parkdale I met one of my best friends, Joan English, (a great trumpeter) who honoured me by being one of my bridesmaids. I had five attendants and four of them came from the band. Now years later, singing with the chorus, it is just like looking back at my past. Jimmy Bartholomew., (who I met over 50 years ago while in Sea Rangers) was an usher at my wedding and Dave Wood was the best man. Even Don Gill got into the act by being a guest at the reception. I had only just met another good friend, Dianne Yaneff, while working for the Metro Police and she came to the Church to watch the service. Years later I was thrilled to be Dianne's maid of honour. Ann White was also a friend of mine in the band.

As I approach my 70th year on this earth I think of all the friends I made along the drum corps way and now singing with our wonderful DCAT Chorus... well life doesn't get much better! I think we are very lucky to be reliving those great days. Not many get that chance. Thanks to all of you for your friendships.

# P A R K D A L E L I O N S

## Lieutenant Joan English (*Lead Trumpeter*)



Parkdale Lions Girls Band - That name brings back so many fond memories. I remember going to my first practice (age 14) at Queen Elizabeth School (somewhere around King and Dunn Ave. I was nervous when I walked in and heard all the racket of girls playing their instruments. I nearly turned around and walked away but I saw a girl playing with drumsticks on the stage floor and went over to her - it was Agnes Miller. Because of her I stayed and stayed and stayed. I think I was around 20 when I finally packed it in.

I thought I look so great in my navy blue serge jacket, skirt, black stockings and shoes and a cute little hat. What I loved the best was the cape - when you threw it back over your shoulders the red satin showed. Around 18 or so I realized how tacky the uniform was.

One year we were going to Waterloo to compete but you had to have your parents' permission and my Dad wouldn't give it. The corps director called him and explained how we would be under close supervision at all times so he finally agreed. That was my first experience with wild boys and beer! My Dad never found out. I was entered into a trumpet solo contest and had practiced and practiced - well, half way through the piece my mind went blank (just like it does now!!) I brought my trumpet down and walked off the stage humiliated.

I met my first steady boyfriend Gary Titmarsh from 2nd Sigs. He was so hot and all the girls would tell me how lucky I was. So between Parkdale and Sigs I had a lot of fun for a lot of years. I remember Barry Bell coming to help with the trumpeters and quite a few other band guys as well helping. I remember going to Dufferin Race Track for contests and the marching in the Warriors Day Parade. Our leader was Jean Wannamaker (Penman) and I was lead trumpeter. I would march through the ranks and up to her, she would tell me 3 marches and I would march through the girls shouting out the pieces to play. My how times have changed!!!

When we reached around 20 and 2 of our girls were married and pregnant we decided it was time to pack it in. We formed a club and decided we would meet once a month at each other's houses so we would keep our friendship alive. We have now been meeting for 47 years.

I am so glad that Agnes asked me to join DCAT and am thrilled to be among fellow band members again and making lots of new friends.

DCAT is well  
represented  
in  
2nd Signals  
Band



Marg Gill, Gord O'Halloran, John Moffatt, Ellie Cameron, Gord Broadbridge, Doug Johns, Dave Cameron, Brian Anderson, June Beaumont, John Parkinson, Al Biggs, Ann White, Ordy Beaumont, Sheri Luloff