



The DCAT Purr-spective

DCAT (Drum Corps Alumni Toronto) 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.

The Newsletter of the Drum Corps Alumni of Toronto – June 2017

The event of the year, the 33rd GAS Reunion, is now just one more great memory, of which several photographers (Charlie Kammer, Dolly Fox and Bea Gustafson among them) have preserved images, and which DCAT member Ann Watson describes in her article below.

Prior to that, DCAT performed at Village of Humber Heights in January:



Also at Ballantrae Golf & Country Club in April.



That last event was also well received and became our “dress rehearsal” for GAS.

GAS 2017

REPETITION–RETENTION-REINFORCEMENT = RIPPIN’ IT AT GAS

This would sound familiar to the DCAT members. Wyatt’s instructions at the beginning of each practice!

Many DCAT members were not able to attend this year. Illness, previous commitments or other circumstances – YOU WERE ALL MISSED! Because our numbers were smaller this year, the bus was not an option. Car pools were arranged and we all arrived safely and in time for a 5 pm rehearsal at the hotel. We already had an audience to play to - the New Yorkers were next in line for the use of the hall and a favourable response from them let us know we were sounding good. Afterwards, a van took us to Cortese, an Italian/American restaurant suggested by Josh, our van driver. The food and service were excellent. A wonderful way to start our weekend.

The rest of the evening offered time to renew acquaintances with Canadian and American friends at the Double Tree Lounge and drop in on the hospitality suites. On May 5, the Skyliners, with a theme of the Mexican holiday “Cinco de Mayo”, decorated their suite accordingly. Food and drink was plentiful - pulled pork, meatballs, assorted cold meat, etc. The Bon Bons had a “sweets” table and fresh fruit. One wondered why we went out to eat! Many turned in early but there were hangers-on at the bar.

Friday’s 11 am rehearsal had us all rested and eager – fedoras and ties were adjusted - this would be the final touch to our uniform and we had a very good practice. The afternoon was filled with more visiting, rehearsals for those participating in other groups and sound checks.

The Opening Ceremonies and the National Anthems were played. In the Honour Guard which began the opening ceremonies, our John Parkinson (“Parky”) carried the Canadian flag.



– then, time for the entertainment!

Audubon Bon Bons Alumni Chorus, directed by John “Duke” Terreri, were first and sang many of their favourites with the addition of “I’d Rather be Blue”, a new “oldie”. Their voices are so pure and gentle – a pleasure to hear and Duke’s arrangements give them the perfect balance.

Skyliner Alumni Chorus, directed by Joe Jacobs, performed music from “The Best Little Whorehouse” in Texas, a story of a chicken farm – a front for a brothel - and the music tells the story of the trials and tribulations it deals with. Sky Chorus, as usual, dressed in costume suitable for the story line, sang and acted it out with lots of humour.

DCAT Chorus – small in number (18) but with great confidence and looking the part in a cool Frank Sinatra style outfit, strolled onto the floor. Joe Watson on his trumpet hit the opening intro for “Strangers in the Night” perfectly, the crowd cheered and we were on our way with (I believe) one of the best shows we have ever done. The next several minutes were a blur for me and next thing I realized, Joe hit the Skyliner intro and we really “cooked”, singing “New York, New York”. The closing number, “My Way”, complete with a ‘company front’, brought the crowd to their feet with a standing O and much cheering. We exited in a typical drum corps fashion, as Wyatt gave the command “corps, right turn, quick march”, fedoras on our sleeves, we paraded out to the lobby where high fives and lots of hugs were exchanged.

Wyatt’s decision to add the trumpet introduction to each number certainly gave our performance a polished sound and look. I must say Joe played extremely well!





It was party time now, we all had a chance to savour the evening and get down to serious dancing, visiting and sharing a cool beverage with our friends. Dancing styles are entertainment if you chose to be an observer – I saw a great imitation of the “Elaine Bennett style” (Seinfeld) from our own Sandy H.B. and the Jennings always outdo us all with their smooth foxtrot or quick step. The late night caught up with many, but the hospitality rooms were crowded, busy, sprinkled with much laughter and discussions, but most of the drum corps people were fast asleep to be ready for Saturday and the Talent Show.

Saturday – 9:55 am Assembly; 10 am Call to Colours; 10:05 am Canadian/American Anthems. More than 20 acts chose to perform and the talent was quite varied. Here is a list in no particular order or ability – just a cross section of what was done:

DCAT’s “The Purrfections” – 2 sets - “Blue Moon”/“Blue Skies”, “Top of the World”, “Count on Me”; Canada’s 150th anniversary: “For Lovin’ Me”, “Did He Mention my Name”, “Four Strong Winds”, “Canada”. For the Canada tribute the girls wore red shirts and red Western style hats showing maple leaves. The response from the crowd was great and I heard several comments saying what a refreshing change it was from “drums and horns”. Way to go, girls! And note: they have made it into the Drum Corps World Magazine.



The
PURRRR-
fections!



St. Joe’s mini-ensemble and, later, the brass ensemble, made a fine showing for their first time at GAS under the direction of Frank Panepento. At the conclusion of their set, Frank asked all those who had served in the military to stand with them and he then proceeded to shake everyone’s hand and thanked them for their service – a lovely touch.

As always Scout House was a huge hit as was Yankee Rebels, Archer-Epler, St. Lucy’s.

The Class Brass with only 5 rehearsals and under the direction of Rick Dixon and a few add-ins from

the States presented themselves very well. Both Rich Seager and Rick Dixon did a great job putting this together in a short period of time.

St. Lucy's "Golden Girls" presented themselves as the 1920 synchronized swim team. Marching in with the Olympic Theme playing and proceeded to perform a routine in the pretend water behind a plastic screen – you had to see it to appreciate how funny it was, with their arms and legs flaying about. Very clever!

There were drum and trumpet solos and duets and a Sky Chorus "play on words" of the song "There Once was a Lady....."

The afternoon concluded with the combined horns under direction of Phil Gentile and Rick Dixon playing the Drum Corps Anthem – "You'll Never Walk Alone" – always a special moment. Time to relax – have a cold one and clean up for the banquet in the evening.

6 pm - Cocktail Hour – more visiting and picture taking.

7 pm - The singing of "The Lord's Prayer" by Bon Bons and DCAT was followed by the Tribute to Deceased Members (always a time to reflect). Our Jim Allen's picture was the first shown.

Dinner time - Platters of cabbage rolls - always so delicious – no leftovers! Followed by fish, chicken or beef and the usual banquet fare.



Videos of past GAS' (30) years were shown; there was a 50/50 draw – won by Dottie from Bon Bons; then the Parade of Uniforms – this year 28, a new record. Closing remarks by Mark Fulcomer who commented on the hard work of all volunteers and staff and the smooth running of the entire weekend. The reunion will again be held in Binghamton, N.Y. May 2018.

Dancing, visiting and enjoying the last few hours of a remarkable weekend. The Double Tree Lounge was busy in late evening and the mandatory sing-a-long took place, with Wyatt making up for his lack of attendance the night before. A stop in at the hospitality suites revealed a more subdued group - is this an age thing?

Sunday - Goodbyes at the breakfast are always somewhat sad and perhaps spoil the bacon and eggs.

Interesting Happenings –

Gord O'Halloran doing a "header" before he even left his driveway- tripped on garment bag which produced the appearance of him being in a losing fight; Joe getting "carded" in Wegman's for purchasing 6 Coors Light; Laura Moffatt having everyone in the auditorium singing her Happy Birthday on the Saturday (she went very red). Our director not making it to the Friday night party/dance but elected to go to bed after expending all his energy on our performance.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, those DCAT members who were not able to be there, were very much missed. This amazing time that we share with our drum corps family is special. And we'll be RIPPIN' it up again next year.

Many thanks to Wyatt, Rick, and all those who worked to organize this for DCAT!

Annie in the Tundra May 2017

In our series about the various "jobs" undertaken by Chorus members we want to present a very important person: our Business Manager. For many years, in three time periods (1997 – 2000, 2006 – 2012 and 2013 – 2016) this position has been held by **John Fox**. He became one of the original DCAT members in 1994, commuting from Orillia (sometimes twice a week) to rehearsals and performances. Before that, he served on the Social Committee for six years. Since he decided to "retire" last year, this position is now held by **Pat Ison**, who is already experienced in finding us 'gigs'.



The Chorus has many expenses to cover, rental of rehearsal studio, honorariums to the conductor and his assistant, music arrangements and printing, etc. and, since we are trying to keep our membership fees at a minimum, we need income from other sources, namely performances. These are also, of course, the great part of why we join: to entertain others! It is the Business Managers job to find and keep in touch with people and places who will engage the Chorus to sing for an audience. It requires enthusiasm, knowledge about venues and audiences, plus a good helping of persuasion skills in case they don't know what we can do. Once they have heard and seen us, we are invited back, of course.

John has now handed over his wide network of contacts to Pat, who is adding her own knowledge and skills to the job. And from the looks of it, we will continue to be gainfully employed.

Since GAS, we have had one more performance: a requested second appearance at Lakeside Long Term Care! Upcoming performances will take place at Sunnybrook Hospital, Veterans' wing, on June 25, and our annual 2-hour event at Scarborough Civic Centre on July 9.

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