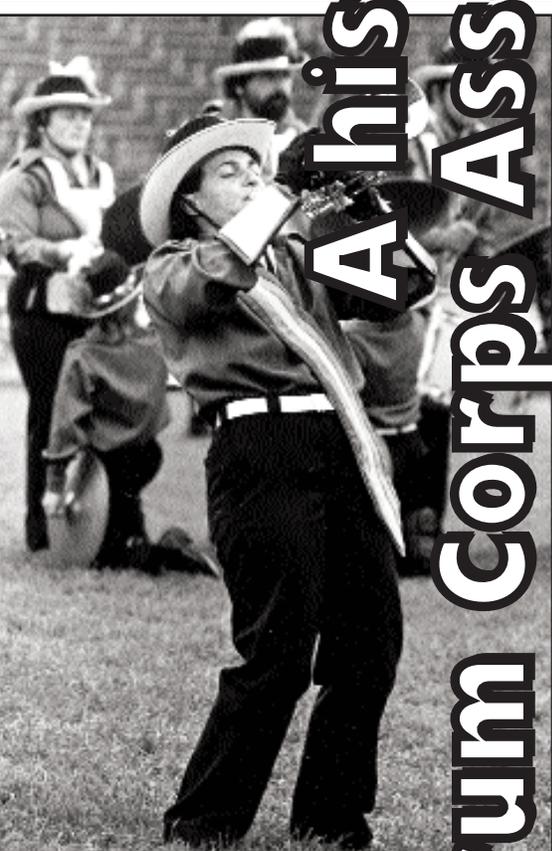

A History of Drum Corps Associates



(Top to bottom) The crowd at the first DCA Championships at Jonathan Law High School in Milford, CT (photo by Moe Knox); Maine Ambassadors, 1987 (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World); Reading Buccaneers with the championship flag from the first DCA title event (photo by Moe Knox).



Chapter 3 by Tom Peashey

One of the oldest and most successful circuits in the drum corps arena is Drum Corps Associates. Prior to the establishment of DCA, senior corps competed in loosely knit geographic areas dominated by strong contest sponsors and the only thing close to an "establishment" was the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With these three elements constantly tugging at one another, there were conflicting rules to perform by, inconsistent judging procedures and something that was close to chaos.

A sponsor could dramatically affect the outcome of a contest by controlling who he hired to judge the performances. Incompetent judging was a way of life. The entire process was totally political. Who you knew was far more important than your ability when it came to getting judging assignments. Huge point swings from night to night were common.

By the early 1960s, the sponsors became more of a factor by careful control of prize money. To fully appreciate the formation of DCA and for the benefit of younger readers, you have to realize that senior corps during the wild growth period in what we now refer to as the "golden age" of drum corps (defined more accurately as the period when there were corps in every neighborhood) were the dominant entity in the activity.

The DCI-era corps enthusiast often thinks that all-age senior corps was the result of junior corps performers wanting to continue in the activity. The reality is that senior corps begat junior corps. Drum corps as we know it, was formed by veterans returning from both World Wars. These were senior corps. The formation of junior corps was a logical progression and generally happened under the guidance of senior corps people.

It was normal for senior corps to encourage the formation of junior corps to provide future well-trained members for the senior organizations. From corps to corps, it was normal to see these corps being founded, managed and instructed by senior corps people.

Knowing this, you can now see the formation of DCA was only the harbinger of things to come in the drum corps arena. Indeed, it was the success of DCA that prompted the founding fathers of the "Combine" -- later to be called Drum Corps International -- to organize and take control of their own destiny. It was only logical that this should happen as many of the founders of DCI had their roots in senior drum corps.

Many drum corps moguls like Don Angelica of Caballeros and Cadets fame and Bill Howard from the Madison Scouts (a former member of the Rochester Crusaders) crossed seamlessly between senior

and junior corps, both as performers and instructors, and once they had seen the senior drum corps seizing control of their own destiny, it was only a few short years before they followed that example.

Even Wayne Downey, responsible for so many DCI powerhouse corps with Concord Blue Devils, got his start in the Long Island Sunrisers.

DCA -- the beginning

How did it all really begin? Ironically, one of the chief early motivators was not a corps person, but rather, a show sponsor and a major player in the American Legion. He was Dr. Almo Sebastianelli, sponsor of the annual "Parade of Champions" in Scranton, PA, and still active in DCA to this day.

In August 1963, Sebastianelli approached the New York Skyliners' manager, Henry "Lefty" Mayer, about various problems that were affecting both the sponsors and the corps. On August 25, 1963, a meeting occurred at the Jermyn Hotel in Scranton. In attendance, along with Sebastianelli and Mayer, were Carman Cirlincione of the Archer-Epler Musketeers from Upper Darby, PA; Randy Roy of the Reading, PA, Buccaneers; and George Bull of the Baltimore, MD, Yankee Rebels.

At that meeting, they were able to identify five common areas that seemed to be the focus of all controversy:

- To secure contest dates not in conflict with previously established contests.
- To establish set prize money.
- To secure improved and consistent judging.
- To generally improve contests.
- To promote better relationships among the competing corps.

They were able to schedule a second meeting in September 1963 and opened it to other corps. The meeting was held at the Archer-Epler American Legion Post in Upper Darby, PA. It was at this meeting that the name Drum Corps Associates was chosen. Bylaws were adopted and the first election of officers was held. Mayer was elected as the first president, George Bull was made vice president, Randy Roy became the treasurer and Peter Burns was elected to be the secretary.

Seven corps were designated charter

members: the Reading Buccaneers, Connecticut Hurricanes, Interstatesmen, Archer-Epler Musketeers, Pittsburgh Rockets, Yankee Rebels and New York Skyliners.



Interstatesmen, Albany, NY, September 11, 1965 at the first DCA Championship (photo by Moe Knox).

Noticeably absent were the perennial champion Hawthorne Caballeros, Long Island Sunrisers and both of the Upstate New York powerhouses: Syracuse Brigadiers and Rochester Crusaders. Without the full support of all of the major corps, DCA had many trying times during its early months.

They were not able to hold a true championship until September 11, 1965, in Milford, CT. The first champion of DCA was the Reading Buccaneers.

That weekend in Milford, Sebastianelli pulled off one of the most ironic coups of all time. Through the auspices of American Legion National Commander Daniel Foley, he

with the compromise that brought the Rochester Crusaders into the fold for the 1967 season and soon saw their corps director, Vince Bruni, elected president of DCA, forming a coalition with Mayer as business manager.

By the 1967 championship in Bridgeport, CT, DCA was clearly recognized as the controlling organization in senior corps. Basically, they became the "Major League" of drum corps. With the Buccaneers and Hurricanes each winning two championships and the Skyliners one, there was no clear early domination in the DCA of the 1960s. The circuit was balanced and very competitive.

By the end of that decade, DCA had clearly spelled out its identity as the entertainers of drum corps and had set the stage for the next 20 years. Huge crowds for the championships at Aquinas Stadium in Rochester, NY, brought financial success and created a sound foundation for growth and stability.

The following statement from the DCA philosophy explains the criteria that had been established to guarantee the success of the weekend warriors of drum corps:

"The primary function of DCA is to provide an organization of senior drum and bugle corps with rules and regulations, which provide for continuous progress and growth for senior corps.

"Using entertainment as a primary goal, DCA performances are unique and represent 'state of the art' in mass appeal drum and bugle corps.

"DCA strives to provide performers with stimulating and rewarding social experiences, to provide a competitive outlet for performers and to entertain and excite the audience.

"It is DCA's objective that member corps should be entertaining, unique, emotional, diverse, vibrant, spirited and energetic, without sacrificing the high level of quality.

"To achieve this objective, the DCA philosophy is to encourage each and all corps to choose and perfect the vehicles that entertain audiences and satisfy membership. Audiences should expect and receive varied programs performed

with the highest level of proficiency within the structure of the activity.

"The evaluations of the performances are to be based upon the DCA environment. All adjudication will use DCA standards as outlined in the 'DCA Rule Book' and 'DCA Clinics.' Use of and reference to the standards of any other

organizations in the adjudication process are totally unacceptable. Competition outcomes MUST reflect audience appreciation and provide participant gratification.

"DCA's audience has the right to receive excellence. Our corps have the challenge, the responsibility and the commitment to deliver it!"

The 1970s

From 1955 until 1965, no corps had dominated drum corps like the Hawthorne Caballeros. Their entrance into the DCA arena in 1966 did not mean immediate dominance. It was not until 1970 that they won their first DCA World Championship at the Mecca of senior corps at the time, Aquinas/Hollerer Stadium in Rochester, NY, but they went on to win five of the next 10 championships and never finished out of the top three spots. They were, indeed, the "Corps of the 1970s Decade" in DCA.

The late 1970s saw the emergence of the Long Island Sunrisers as a true champion in 1977 and 1978, a couple more championships for the New York Skyliners and a lead into the decade of the 1980s with Reading Buccaneers winning again in 1979 and 1980.

The late 1970s also saw a major change in DCA management. Bruni's retirement from the Rochester Crusaders saw him step down as president of DCA and turn the reigns of leadership over to DCA's third president, Michael "Mickey" Petrone.

Petrone was one of the most popular individuals in drum corps. As a drill designer and judge, he dominated the 1950s. As a corps director, he led his St. Vincent's Cadets to many national championships. As a contest sponsor, his "National Dream" contest was the most prestigious event other than the championship.

He was a logical choice to guide DCA. He remains as the head of DCA to this day, after 25 years as president.

There were three other historic events in the 1970s. In 1972, the New York Skyliners were the odds-on favorite to win another championship. At the only New Jersey championship held in well-known Roosevelt

Connecticut Yankees, Stratford, CT (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Criteria, Newburgh, NY (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

arranged for Harold Dillon, chairman of the American Legion Contest Supervisory Committee, to attend the first DCA World Championships and to have the American Legion moderate a meeting between DCA President Mayer and Caballeros business manager Dick Quigley.

The result was that the Hawthorne Caballeros, led by probably the most powerful man in drum corps at the time, Jim Costello, joined DCA for the 1966 season. Sunrisers and Brigadiers followed suit.

How ironic is it that an association formed in large part because of the veteran's organizations' inability to agree on rules and sometimes strong-handed management techniques, was primarily responsible for bringing the factions in senior corps together and cementing the future of DCA?

(The preceding information was provided by Dr. Almo Sebastianelli, with excerpts from Drum Corps World articles by David Greiner. All other information is from DCA historical records and interviews with those who participated.)

The final piece of the puzzle fell in place

Stadium in Jersey City, the Caballeros caught the Skyliners in the preliminary competition. Following a spirited championship performance, they had apparently gone back on top a tenth or two above Caballeros. However, a minor timing penalty was assessed and they fell to second position.

After going inactive in 1972, the Syracuse Brigadiers attempted a comeback in 1973 and missed finals by a mere five one-hundredths of a point. To make things worse, a size-of-flag violation had been assessed which knocked them out of finals. This was, indeed, a major controversy and the corps was not able to recover. Syracuse was then absent from the ranks of senior corps for almost 20 years.

Another historic event occurred in 1975. A group of former Crusaders and Brigadiers formed a second corps in Rochester called Phoenix. The ranks of DCA had been pretty much the domain of the existing corps of the time. Corps like Hamburg Kingsmen, Canadian Commanders and others came and went, but these corps had pre-dated DCA.

Phoenix burst on the scene like a giant. With the musical and program genius of Al "Corky" Fabrizio, they not only became the first brand-new corps to make the finals, they went all the way into the top five in their first appearance. This sudden success sent shockwaves through DCA and set the precedent that a new corps, if good enough, could break the ranks.

They paved the way for the Bushwackers, Empire Statesmen and others to present a fresh new look to DCA in the coming years.

The 1980s

As Reading Buccaneers led DCA into the 1980s, the Hurricanes posted another win in 1981, followed by Long Island Sunrisers in 1982 and 1983, Caballeros again in 1984 and 1985, and then the most improbable and surprising event in DCA history to date occurred at the 1986 championship in Allentown, PA.

The Harrison, NJ, Bushwackers made their first appearance in 1982. From its surprising eight-place finish in 1982 until the fall of 1986, Bush gradually became a force to reckon with in DCA.

They were often near the top, but were never quite able to win. They were always close, but from 1982 until the last show in 1986, they never finished first in any contest.

In the 1986 prelims, they finished third behind the tied Hawthorne Caballeros and Pittsburgh's



Pittsburgh Rockets, September 11, 1965 at the first DCA Finals (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Steel City Ambassadors, but when the dust had settled that night, Bushwackers had not only won their first DCA World Championship, they had won their first drum and bugle corps contest EVER!

They went on to win a total of six world championships. However, with two more wins in 1987 and 1988 (1988 was a tie with Bush), it was the Long Island Sunrisers who were clearly the strongest overall corps of the 1980s.

The 1990s

Throughout the closing years of the century, DCA continued to grow and prosper. Overall, corps got larger and better. The Bushwackers' dominance was broken in 1991 with the first world championship for Bruni's Empire Statesmen, the self-proclaimed "showmen of the world."

With Bush storming back in 1992 and 1993, Empire won again in 1994. The mid-1990s saw a powerful Hawthorne corps win in 1995, only to be nipped in 1996 by the Westshoremens.

The 1992 season had seen the re-entry of the Syracuse Brigadiers. Their steady growth culminated in 1997 with a "share" of the title with the Empire Statesmen. Empire was able to defend in 1998, but the Brigadiers went on to win every championship through 2002.

Although a "Corps of the 1990s" is hard to declare, with four wins, Empire Statesmen deserve the nod, just slightly edging out the early successes of the Bushwackers and the late domination by the Brigadiers.

As the new century begins

With strong leadership, stable corps, an abundance of sponsors and a solid commitment to entertaining its audiences,

DCA moved boldly into the new century. The Brigadiers have cemented their place in history with four championship victories in a row, a feat unprecedented in DCA history, and five championships in six years.

Although the Brigadiers dominated in 2000, 2001 and 2002, it is obvious that the senior corps have raised the bar on quality. What was in the 1980s a clear quality break between the bottom and top half of the membership has melted to a parity and quality never seen before.

From the first corps on the field to the end of the retreat ceremony, fans have been delighted with the overall quality of the programs, the competitiveness within the ranks and the dedication of the members to true drum corps.

Despite inclement weather, the 2002 event in Scranton, PA was recognized as the most competitive DCA Championship ever. Every corps had the audience on its feet. Every corps, no matter how large or how small, entertained.

The emergence of more corps from other areas became clear. Heat Wave of Orlando, CorpsVets of Atlanta and Carolina Gold of Raleigh, NC, have created a solid block in the South. In recognition of this, DCA has established its first subsidiary regional organization as DCA South for 2003.

After 20 years of successful participation in the DCA Championships, Minnesota Brass, Inc. has brought high standards from the Midwest. DCA hopes that with the addition of others like the Racine Kilties, the senior competitive corps movement will continue to grow and prosper in the Midwest. Soon, a DCA Midwest may become a reality.

The strong impact that San Francisco's Renegades made in 2002, becoming the first member corps from the West Coast, cannot go unnoticed. With more than 70 brass performers, they won over the audience and entertained to the hilt. They promise to be a DCA mainstay for years to come. Their success and the rise of other seniors on the West Coast may even bring the opportunity for still another geographic area to be recognized by DCA.

DCA goes intercontinental

While DCA's many fine Canadian members have always added a touch of international flavor to DCA, twice corps have successfully competed in DCA from other continents.

First, in 1990, a very strong Southern Knights of Brighton, U.K., finished 12th in the preliminary competition and became the first International Champions of DCA.

The 2002 championships saw the first Japanese corps attend. Yokohama Inspires brought over a tight 81-member corps and won over the hearts of the fans and competitors alike. Appearing early in prelims, their strong eighth-place finish was a shock to everyone, but that was only the beginning.

While admitting freely that they were formed as a Caballero "copy cat" by members who had attended the



Les Ambassadeurs from Arvida, QUE (photo by Leo Derlak from the collection of Drum Corps World).

championships many years earlier, they went on to not only get to visit with their "idols" and perform and party with their "stylistic counterparts" in the parking lot of their hotel, but they also beat the Caballeros in finals with an inspired performance where they jumped to fifth. They were crowned the second-ever, international DCA champion.

The personalities of DCA

One of the reasons DCA has remained so stable is that a relatively few people have been leaders and directors of the organization during an almost 40-year history.

Mayer's sudden and early passing (at the DCA Championships in Rochester, NY, in the mid-1970s) was the first major personality loss.

Petrone has directed DCA for the past 25 years. His tireless leadership has been unequalled in the drum corps arena and his tenure as president is unsurpassed in drum corps history.

Passing only recently, Costello, remained behind the scenes, but always maintained a clear position as one of the true leaders of the activity. Until his death, he was the only corps director the Cabs ever had -- from the



Blue Rock, Wilmington, DE, in their only season as a senior, 1975 (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

beginning in 1946.

DCA also recently lost Bob Murray, business manager of the Caballeros. He spent 30 years on the executive board of DCA and was active on the championship committee.

Bruni, who emphasized entertainment of the audience during his many years as president and onward as a member director, has been a dominating force in DCA for more than 30 years.

He continues as director of the Empire Statesmen. Starting in 1947 with the Rochester Crusaders and continuing with Empire, Bruni also boasts 50-plus years of leadership in the drum and bugle corps activity.

Along with Petrone, the icon and patriarch of drum corps officials, the current officers and management of DCA also boast long tenures and decades of drum corps experience.

Michael "Red" Corso, former director of the Rhode Island Matadors, has been treasurer

since the 1970s. Vice president Gil Silva, also from the Matadors, has held his position for more than 20 years.

The new officer in the crowd, secretary Dan Rippon, hails from the Harrisburg Westshoremans originally and also has many decades of experience as a performer, manager and contest sponsor. Rippon's predecessor, Candy Golding, held the office of secretary for more than 20 years.

Stability of leadership has been the foundation of DCA's success.

Assisting the officers, DCA has Dick Eschenmann of Harrisburg as class A chairman. Another of the Westshore alumni involved heavily in management of DCA, he and Rippon have been instrumental in the success of class A and have done much to encourage new corps and the return of past corps.

Tom Peashey is the director of marketing and public relations and has been the official DCA spokesman for the past seven years. He marched his first senior show in 1959 and spent many years as a performer for the Crusaders and Brigadiers, is a retired DCA judge and visual caption head and former Crusaders corps director, and brings more than 40 years experience to DCA.

Through the years, DCA has had some of the finest adjudicators in the business. Hall of Fame greats like John Collum, Walter Kelly and Truman Crawford used DCA as home base.

With DCA taking control of the rules that corps are judged by, it has been critical that DCA find the best possible judging coordinators to advise on the appropriate judging system for senior corps; recruit and educate experienced, qualified judges; and administer the entire judging program.

It is this control of the adjudicative process that has allowed DCA to keep its programs "audience friendly" while still challenging the performers and staff. The intentional emphasis on general effect has set DCA apart from other areas of the marching idiom. It is critical that its adjudicators understand this and respond to the edict set by the member corps to, first and foremost, entertain the audience.

Currently at the helm of DCA adjudication is coordinator Ken Sherry. He is ably assisted by Bob Cardaneo on brass, Ed Argenziano on percussion and Eric Sabach on visual.

And not to be forgotten is Dr. Almo Sebastianelli. The longest running contest sponsor in the business and catalyst to the formation of DCA some 40 years ago, he is still going strong as he nears completion of



Ohio Brass Factory, Alliance, OH (photo by Ron Wyatt from the collection of Drum Corps World).

his ninth decade.

Still an active and vibrant friend to Drum Corps Associates, Sebastianelli and his 11th District American Legion even took on the daunting challenge of hosting the 2002 and 2003 DCA World Championships in Scranton, PA. His contributions to drum corps, and DCA in particular, will not be forgotten.

Pepe Nataro, Hy Dreitzer, Joe Genaro, Corky Fabrizio, Walter Winkleman, Butch Anderson, Harry Hazelwood, Ralph Silverbrand, George Bull, George Parks, Jim D'Amico, Fred Gebhardt, the Sasso brothers . . . the list could go on endlessly as DCA continues to attract and produce the greatest drum corps people anywhere.

Not to be forgotten, the current DCA corps and their directors have the difficult task of protecting their heritage and maintaining DCA in its proper place of leadership in the activity.

Members of DCA and their directors for the 2003 season

- Syracuse Brigadiers -- Kevin Hassan
- Empire Statesmen -- Vince Bruni
- Reading Buccaneers -- Jim Gruber
- Minnesota Brass, Inc. -- Gavin Burnham
- Hawthorne Caballeros -- Frank Gerris
- Bushwackers -- Jay Morlot
- Connecticut Hurricanes -- Bernie Malesky
- Rochester Crusaders -- Mike Linton/
Dave Seeley
- San Francisco Renegades -- Chris Nalls
- Kingston Grenadiers -- Don Dean
- Associate members are:
- CorpsVets -- Jeff Pastor
- New York Skyliners -- Tom Shiffer
- Heat Wave -- Vic Kulinski/Jim Gillespie

Current international champion

- Inspires, Yokohama, Japan --
Takahisa Ogihara

The class A movement

Following the 1996 season, DCA decided

to try harder to encourage the growth of other senior corps throughout the country. As part of this effort, a class A championship was instituted.

Restricted to only 65 performers, class A offers the opportunity for success to the smaller but up and coming corps. It creates an avenue of competition that allows these smaller corps to

Erie Thunderbirds, Erie, PA, 1978 at DCA (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).





Milton Keystoners, Milton, PA, September 6, 1987 at DCA Prelims (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

improve and grow.

Beginning with the 2001 season, the class A championship was removed from its previous Saturday morning position as part of the open class preliminary competition. Now the top two-scoring class A corps on Saturday get to compete in a championship runoff on Sunday night as part of an overall finals concept.

This entire endeavor has been most successful. It has worked from several different angles. It has created corps that have become stable and successful competitors, despite being small in numbers, like Orlando's Heat Wave.

It has become a stepping-stone for new and fast-growing corps like Atlanta's



Southern Nights, Virginia Beach, VA, September 6, 1987 at DCA Prelims (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

CorpsVets, and it has helped corps that have fallen on difficult times regain their strength in a dignified way and work back to previous successes.

The New York Skyliners are an excellent example in this category. Class A has been a creative and beneficial addition to the DCA program of success.

What will the future bring?

Change is inevitable. Change is part of life. DCA finds itself in the enviable position of benefiting from the changes in lifestyle that are making it so difficult to succeed in any activity. Financial hardships, demands on everyday lifestyles, year around school activities and the ever-increasing variety of things to do have made it most difficult to survive.

Functioning as non-profit organizations, drum corps are not immune to the difficulties of the times. For all non-profit organizations, fund-raising becomes more difficult each year, while expenses spiral out of control. This has increased the demand for weekend-only corps. This has increased the demand for geographically central performance venues. This has made senior, or if you prefer "all aged," corps a much more viable entity.

These restrictions on what can be done by performers who have jobs and families have crossed over from being huge negatives to becoming positive recruiting tools.

The difficulty and enormous expense in traveling and lack of performance opportunities has caused another new phenomena. For the past few seasons, DCA has allowed a few junior corps to participate in DCA sanctioned contests. For the most part, this experiment has been successful and will continue. While this may not lead to a full junior division, the cooperation between DCA and the junior activity is at an all-time high and has been mutually beneficial.

Individuals/ensembles and mini corps contests

In the late 1980s, DCA began running their own individual and ensemble contest during championship weekend. This was the brainchild of former judging coordinator Dick Pronti.

He recruited Chairperson Donna Ernst of Upstate New York and she has developed this successful program into a major part of the championship experience.

Ernst is the only I&E chairperson that DCA has had. After the first few years, a separate part of the contest was invented called mini corps. This caught on quickly and has created an entirely new avenue of fun and entertainment.

Small ensembles of 21 performers or less perform on stage and actually compete against each other. This take-off on the old winter concert series of days gone by has now become a very popular part of DCA. Competing corps, alumni corps and parade corps are all welcome to compete.

Two of the most successful are the Erie Thunderbirds (from their alumni corps) and Ghost Riders (from Mighty St. Joe's Alumni Corps). In 2001, the San Francisco Renegades brought their mini corps to "test the waters" of DCA before bringing their full corps in 2002. To say they brought the house down would be an understatement.

Many corps are also beginning small programs like this to use as fund-raisers. With the advent of "BLAST!" (a Broadway-

type stage production that grew out of the Star of Indiana corps) and "Stomp" (an off-Broadway show that is based on percussive sounds using offbeat things like brooms and kitchen utensils), small mini corps are a marketable product in the advertising and trade show industry. This can be very lucrative for the organization.

The alumni corps movement and Drum Corps Associates

When the first alumni corps appeared in the 1980s, DCA was not quick to embrace them. However, through the hard work of Petrone, DCA has become a major proponent of the alumni corps movement and the DCA "Alumni Spectacular" held each year the day of the championship finals has become an annual tribute to the history of our activity.

This is the opportunity for the DCA fans to remember, respect and pay tribute to times past and the performers who made those memories special.

A history of DCA in statistics

Originally compiled by H. Worth Ake Edited & updated by Tom Peashey, DCA PR

For decades, drum corps was blessed with the words and wisdom of *Drum Corps News* and *Drum Corps World* columnist H. Worth Ake. His fanatical reverence for the history of drum corps was legendary. His passing has left a void in the drum corps world that may never be filled.

The following pages represent the minute detail that Ake relished. We have maintained this information as he chose to record it. It has only been updated to reflect current results.

The 38th DCA World Championships saw a move back to beautiful Montage Mountain in Scranton, PA, and sponsorship by the American Legion. The Syracuse Brigadiers become the first corps to win four DCA titles in a row, their fifth win in six year. The Brigadiers were also crowned the American Legion National Champions that year.

Three-peats have been accomplished only three times in DCA history: once by the Hawthorne Caballeros, once by the Harrison Bushwackers and, of course, by the Brigadiers (most recently). Undeclared for a second straight regular season, the Brigs held off the Statesmen, scoring a record 98.6 in 2002.

The 2002 DCA Championship weekend was unique in many ways. Not only because of the



Les Dynamiques, Buckingham, QUE, September 5, 1998 at DCA Prelims (photo by Alan Winslow from the collection of Drum Corps World).

four-peat, but also because 12 corps were allowed to compete for the first time since 1993. It also saw the Inspires from Yokohama, Japan, spend more than \$200,000 to attend, shocking everyone with their pristine performance and exciting show and finishing an amazing fifth place in finals with a strong 91.85 score.

Since the start-up years of 1965 and 1966, this rare "intrusion" into the top five has only been accomplished on the first attempt once before Rochester's Phoenix in 1975.

Empire Statesmen posed the strongest challenge to the Brigadiers, but fell short for second place and a score of 96.75.

Buccaneers remained in contention until the end with a third-place finish and 95.55. Minnesota Brass brought in their strongest corps ever and was a close fourth with 93.9.

Caballeros finished sixth with a 91.15, just .05 higher than seventh-place-finishing Bushwackers. Hurricanes snuck into eighth place with an 88.0. Rochester Crusaders were ninth with an 87.3.

Another first-time competitor became a



Generations, Bristol, RI, 1998 (photo by Ron Walloch from the collection of Drum Corps World).

full member of DCA. The San Francisco Renegades became the first California member corps, bringing in 74 horns and a solid 10th place with a score of 86.2.

The tie bug jumped up and grabbed the last

two competitors as the powerful CorpsVets of Atlanta jumped more than two points from prelims and tied the Kingston Grenadiers with a score of 84.55.

DCA held its sixth class A title show in 2002. All corps competed in the preliminary competition. Four corps with 65 or fewer competitors elected to declare class A and the two highest-scoring declared class A corps went on to compete in the big arena Sunday night for the class A championship.

This night saw two DCA champions crowned, with charter member New York

Skyliners winning the class A title with a score of 80.15 and joining the Brigadiers in the spotlight. The Skyliners' strong brass line, colorful personality and New York City flair brought them a well-deserved win.

Former class A champion Heat Wave was second with a score of 77.2. The Orlando corps, DCA's most consistent class A unit, powered past both Carolina Gold and GVB Nightstorm to challenge Skyliners with their own zany brand of entertainment.

Although unusual, ties have happened at the DCA



Capital Brass, Albany, NY, September 5, 1993 at DCA Prelims (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Championship. This was the case in 1997. The Empire Statesmen and the Brigadiers shared the title and once earlier, in 1988, the Bushwackers and the Sunrisers ended in a tie.

Ironically, only a newly-placed tie-breaker rule prevented the same two corps from being tied again in 1989. The tie-breaker gave the championship crown to the Bushwackers. Even then, it went down to the final category, color guard, to determine the winner.

The color guard judge that evening was George Cowburn of Horseheads, NY, a long time DCA judge. He had no way of knowing before the show that his numbers would determine a DCA World Championship that night. Cowburn and DCA brass judge Kurt Powell were tragically killed in the crash of Cowburn's private plane not long after.

Only nine corps -- 25 percent of the finalists -- have won all 38 open class DCA crowns. The Caballeros, a consistent DCA frontrunner, have won the most titles outright -- eight. The Bushwackers and the Sunrisers are very close, each having earned six titles, including the 1988 tie.

The Brigadiers, with their four-peat, have now won the title five times. The Reading Buccaneers have won the crown four times (the last time in 1980), as have the Empire



Les Metropolitains, Quebec, 1992 (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Statesmen. The Connecticut Hurricanes (the last time in 1981 at Philadelphia's Franklin Field) and the New York Skyliners (the last time in 1975 at Allentown) have won three titles each. Westshoremens won in 1996, to join the select title-holding list.

An even dozen corps have placed among the top three at the DCA Championships. This prestigious group -- in addition to the previously mentioned champions -- includes the Rochester Crusaders (third, 1988), Steel City Ambassadors (second, 1986) and the Yankee Rebels (twice second, once third, the last time second in 1971).

In a record that's hard to match, only the Caballeros have appeared at all the open class DCA Finals except one. They chose to not appear in the first championship in 1965. Their 37 finalist entries lead the 36 entries of Hurricanes (cut in 1986 and 1989 prelims) and the Buccaneers (cut in 1994 and 1995 prelims). Next with 35 is the New York Skyliners (cut in 1996, 1997 and not appearing in 1998 after having appeared at finals since the first championship in 1965).

The Sunrisers (cut in 1991, 1994 and inactive in 1993, 2000 through 2002 and missed the first title show) and the Rochester Crusaders (having missed only the first two championships and finals of 1982 through 1984 as well as 1998) have been very consistent entries, being at 32 title shows.

An amazing set of title records that have continued to show constant high-level quality have been set by the 40 DCA open class finalists.

The Sunrisers are the only corps to win back-to-back titles on three occasions. This unusual record was set in 1977-1978, 1982-1983 and, most recently, 1987-1988, the latter year being a tie for the crown.

The Caballeros in 1976, Empire Statesmen in 1998 and Brigadiers in 2002 won the only major caption sweeps in the 38-year DCA title history with high visual, percussion, brass and general effect scores.

Only eight times at the 38 championships have three of the four major captions been won outright. Buccaneers (1979, 1980), Sunrisers (1978, 1983) and Caballeros (1993, 1995) did it twice, while Hurricanes (1967) and Brigadiers (1999) each did it once.

An interesting note is that Bushwackers (1992), Sunrisers (1988), Syracuse Brigadiers (1997, 2001) and Empire Statesmen (1997) have each won three captions, including ties.

Record setting has been a characteristic of the ever-popular and consistently challenging Hawthorne Caballeros as they extend and reset championship quality standards.

The Caballeros hold the record number of championship titles (eight); runner-up placements (12); most often in top three (29 times in 37 finals); most consecutive runner-up placements (four from 1977 to 1980); most championship 90s scores (24, 19 of which did not win the championship that year); most consecutive 90s scores (19 straight in the last 19 years); and longest

consecutive streak of top-three placements in finals (11 years, 1970-1980).

The record for the most consecutive same-caption wins at finals is held by two corps -- Caballeros (six M&M/visual highs, 1973-1978) and Bushwackers (six percussion highs, 1986-1991).

The Caballeros have the runner-up record of five M&M/visual scores, 1983-1987. The Bushwackers hold the record for the most consecutive title shows in which they won at least a single caption high eight years from 1986 to 1993 (during which they



The San Francisco, CA, Renegades, August 31, 2002, at DCA Prelims (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

shows. The first show in 1965 had six corps.

Only nine cities in four states have hosted the 38 DCA championship finals. The first title show was in Milford, CT. The two following shows were also in Connecticut, in Bridgeport. Then followed nine shows in New York State at Aquinas/Hollerer Stadium in Rochester; two at Syracuse; one at the famous Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City, NJ; and 23 shows in Pennsylvania (Hershey with three, Allentown with 13, Scranton with six and Philadelphia with one).

Except for four finals, all championships have been held on a September date, usually over the Labor Day weekend. Four August finals were held on August 31 (1969, 1975, 1986 and 1997). Only the first two championships were later than Labor Day (September 11, 1965 and September 21, 1966).

As of the 2002 championships, a total of 40 different open corps had reached finals. The East still dominates in quantity of corps, with Brigadiers returning to defend for a fifth consecutive time. The Midwest continues to be well-represented by strong contender Minnesota Brass, Inc. The South and West

have popular challengers in Renegades and CorpsVets. The Japanese Inspires hope to return soon.

There is always a possibility of again setting a new record, besting Brigadiers' 98.6 in 2002, and there are certainly more records to be challenged in the exciting 39th DCA World Championship in 2003.

Publisher's note: Photographs in this chapter are of groups that have competed in DCA, but do not have an article in this book.

DCA Championship placements

The chart that appears on the right hand page lists every senior drum and bugle corps that has participated in the Drum Corps Associates Championships between 1965 and 2002. Much of this information has been printed in the DCA program book for years, but it never included prelims results and the corps were never listed in alphabetical order.

For the full scoring results of the 38 DCA Championships, see pages 249-254 in "A History of Drum & Bugle Corps -- Volume 1."



Heat Wave, Orlando, FL, August 30, 2002, at DCA Prelims (photo by Harry Heidelberg from the collection of Drum Corps World).

won 15 caption highs, including three ties).

The Caballeros (12 caption wins, 1973-1978) and Hurricanes (12 caption wins including one tie, 1965-1970) are runners-up with six-year streaks each.

Leaders holding the most captions won at DCA title shows are Caballeros (32 outright plus three ties), Buccaneers (18 plus two ties) and Sunrisers (15 plus five ties).

The top caption winners in each major caption are: Caballeros (16 field visual/M&M wins plus a tie and eight field brass plus a tie); Buccaneers (eight overall GE); and Bushwackers (seven field percussion, including six straight, 1986-1991). Bucs have won seven brass caption highs.

DCA finalists have scored 90 points or more 110 times since 1971 when the first scores in the 90s were tallied. Twenty-four such scores by the Caballeros are well ahead of the Empire Statesmen (15), Bushwackers (13) and Sunrisers (nine). First scores of 95 or more were scored in 1988, with 39 such tallies in 15 years. Statesmen lead with 10 95-point scores.

The 1993 season saw the most finalists in a title show -- 13. An even dozen corps were finalists in 2002, 1992 and 1972-1974, and there were 11 in 1986. Ten corps were competitive in 30 of the 38 championship



Yokohama Inspires, Japan, August 30, 2002, at DCA Prelims (photo by Alan Winslow from the collection of Drum Corps World).



CorpsVets, Atlanta, GA, August 30, 2002, at DCA Prelims (photo by Alan Winslow from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Tom Peashey was born into a drum and bugle corps family and has spent his entire life in the activity.

He was a member of the Oswego Pathfinders, Fulton Gauchos, Syracuse Brigadiers and Rochester Crusaders.

In 1978, he left the Crusaders and became a visual instructor with the Rochester Patriots junior corps. He eventually started a bingo game for the corps that today is in a 24,000 square foot facility, operating seven days a week and assisting 11 different charitable organizations.

In 1989, Peashey retired as manager of international marketing for Scientific Radio Systems and became CFO of the Patriot operation. His marketing background led to developing a consulting business in gaming, along with computerized programs for running bingo halls and pull tabs.

He has extensive experience judging drum and bugle corps and marching band competitions on a state, regional and national level.

Peashey and his wife, Karen, live in Rochester. They have three married children and five grandchildren. He currently serves as marketing and public relations director of Drum Corps Associates.

Name of corps, hometown

F = Finals; T = Tie; P = Prelims; A = Class A • The 1987 DCA World Championship Finals were rained out, so the top 10 scores from preliminary competition were used for final placement.

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	
• Allegheny Knight Storm, Butler, PA																	5A	3A	4A
• Ambassadeurs (Les), Montreal, QUE																			
• Archer-Epler Musketeers, Upper Darby, PA		8F	9F																
• Bayou City Blues, Houston, TX																			
• Blessed Sacrament Golden Knights, Newark, NJ																			
• Blue Rock, Wilmington, DE																			
• Bonnie Scots, Harrisburg, PA					11P	15P													
• Boys (Spirit) of 76, Racine, WI					9F	16P													
• Bushwackers, Harrison, NJ							14P	11P	17P										
• Canadian Ambassadors, Toronto, ONT				9F	14P														
• Canadian Commanders, Hamilton, ONT						11P	11F	14P											
• Capital Brass Ensemble, Albany, NY														17P	T15P	13P	13P	12F	
• Carolina Gold, Raleigh, NC																			
• Cascadeurs (Les), Montreal, QUE																			
• Chicago Connection, Chicago, IL									11P	13P	12P								
• Chicago Vanguard, Chicago, IL																			
• Clique Alouette (Le), Montreal, QUE																			
• CMCC Warriors, New York City, NY																			
• Connecticut Hurricanes, Shelton, CT	2F	2F	1F	6F	1F	3F	4F	T4F	3F	6F	4F	6F	8F	5F	5F	3F	1F	3F	7F
• Connecticut Yankees, Stratford, CT						15P	17P												
• CorpsVets, Atlanta, GA																			
• Criterions, Poughkeepsie, NY																			
• Defenders, Troy, NY																			
• Diplomates (Les), Montreal, QUE				15P		10F	7F	6F	4F										
• Dunkirk Patriots, Dunkirk, NY										14P	14P	16P							
• Dynamiques (Les), Buckingham, QUE																			
• Emmaus Sentinels, Emmaus, PA								17P	12F										
• Empire Statesmen, Rochester, NY																			
• Erie Thunderbirds, Erie, PA						11F	10F	10F	8F	9F	11P	8F	9F	9F	12P				
• Esquires, Westmoreland, PA													17P						
• Excalibur, Erie, PA																			
• Fitchburg Kingsmen, Fitchburg, MA																			
• General Butler Vagabonds, Butler, PA																			
• Generations, Bristol, RI																			
• Grenadiers, Albion, NY				13P															
• Grey Knights, Johnsonburg/St. Mary's, PA																			
• Guelph Royallaires, Guelph, ONT			17P		13P	13P		12F	9F	12P	12P	13P	10F						
• Hamburg Kingsmen, Hamburg, NY				10F	9F	8F	9F	9F	8F	13P		15P							
• Hamilton Knights, Baltimore, MD																			
• Hanover Lancers, Hanover, PA							17P	11F	16P	13P	15P		12P		17P				
• Hawthorne Caballeros, Hawthorne, NJ	5F	2F	8F	7F	1F	3F	1F	1F	1F	2F	1F	2F	2F	2F	2F	5F	4F	2F	1F
• Heat Wave, Orlando, FL																			
• Hershey Chocolatiers, Hershey, PA																			
• Interstatemen, Albany, NY	5F																		
• Johnsonburg Diplomats, Johnsonburg, PA																			
• Kawartha Cavaliers, Smiths Falls, ONT						18P													
• Keystoneers, Milton, PA																			
• Kilties, Racine, WI																			
• Kingston Grenadiers, Kingston, ONT																			
• Knights of Noble Callahan, Albany, NY																			
• Lehigh Valley Chieftains, Allentown, PA																			
• L'Odyssee, Montreal, QUE																			
• Long Island Sunrises, Hempstead, NY	4F	5F	2F	6F	6F	8F	8F	8F	9F	8F	7F	3F	1F	1F	3F	6F	2F	1F	4F
• Lt. Norman Prince/Princemen, Melrose, MA	9F															16P	18P		
• Marching Ambassadors, Lewiston, ME																			
• Metropolitanians (Les), Montreal, QUE	10F																		
• Minnesota Brass, Inc., St. Paul, MN																			
• New Bedford Whalers, New Bedford, MA							13P												
• New Image/Sound of Long Island, Hicksville, NY																			
• New York Skyliners, New York City, NY	3F	1F	4F	5F	2F	5F	1F	2F	5F	3F	1F	4F	6F	3F	4F	4F	5F	3F	5F
• Niagara Regionnaires, Niagara Falls, ONT																			
• Northstar/Royallaires, Guelph, ONT																			
• Ohio Brass Factory, Alliance, OH																			
• Pittsburgh Rockets, Pittsburgh, PA	6F	7F		14P	10F	12P	12P	10F	15P										
• Reading Buccaneers, Reading, PA	1F	3F	3F	1F	4F	4F	6F	3F	2F	2F	3F	2F	3F	7F	1F	1F	3F	6F	T5F
• Reilly Raiders/Musketeers, Philadelphia, PA				16P															
• Renaissance, Wind Gap, PA																			
• Renegades, Boston, MA																			
• Rhode Island Matadors, Providence, RI																			
• Rochester Crusaders, Rochester, NY																			
• Rochester Phoenix, Rochester, NY				7F	4F	5F	7F	5F	T4F	6F	5F	T7F	7F	5F	6F	7F	8F	14P	14P
• San Francisco Renegades, San Francisco, CA																			
• Southern Knights, Brighton, United Kingdom																			
• Southern Nights, Virginia Beach, VA																			
• Soundwave, Butler, PA																			
• South Wind, Baltimore, MD																			
• Springfield Marksmen, Springfield, MA																			
• Steel City Ambassadors, Pittsburg, PA																			
• Syracuse Brigadiers, Syracuse, NY																			
• Tyrone Guard, Altoona, PA																			
• Warriors, Lewiston, ME																			
• Westshorem/Bonnie Scots, Harrisburg, PA																			
• Wind Gap Blue Eagles, Wind Gap, PA																			
• Yankee Rebels, Baltimore, MD	4F			8F	7F	3F	2F	2F	7F	7F	7F	6F	5F						
• Yokohama Inspires, Yokohama, Japan																			