
by Michael Siglow

The following section contains excerpts from "As I Remember It," a short history of Garbarina by Rudy Caprifoglio, the corps' first director, as written in the New York Skyliners' 20th anniversary history book.

The 1940s

In 1945, the first meeting for the organization of a new senior corps took place at the Manhattanville Post of the American Legion. Present at the meeting was William St. John, director of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Post junior corps, and quite a few young men who were just discharged from the armed forces who wanted to formulate plans for a new competitive senior unit.

During that year, St. John drowned in an accident in New York harbor while on duty with the United States Customs Office. It was a loss from which the group almost didn't recover, but they went ahead with plans.

At the second general meeting, the post and corps were named after a young man who ate, slept and had his heart and spirit in drum corps. His name was Raymond A. Garbarina. Originally from the Grand Street Boys junior corps (one of the best junior corps in the country prior to World War II), Garbarina left the Grand Street corps and became a member of the Hearst unit, another corps regarded as one of the best in the nation.

In 1946, the members were accepted into the American Legion and the post received its first charter. It became known as the Raymond A. Garbarina American Legion Post No. 1523. The corps was also known as the Raymond A. Garbarina Memorial Corps, later called the Garbarina Skyliners.

Sam Aaron loaned the corps money to get started. He was always interested in the young men and never put himself in the limelight. He helped when funds were needed to start and also put up money to get the boys to California in 1950.

The corps was also fortunate to get two of the finest instructors in the country: James J. Donnelly, a music instructor, and Col. Edward Pierce, who instructed percussion



New York Skyliners, 1952 (photo by Ed Olson from the collection of Ron Da Silva).

and marching and maneuvering. These two men were largely responsible for the corps' progress and winning the national championship in the early years.

The corps' first appearance was at the Polo Grounds where it put on an exhibition at a Giants football game.

Hank Goldstein went to Elkhart, IN, late in 1947 to attempt to purchase bugles from the Conn Instrument Co., only to be informed the company had discontinued manufacturing bugles. The corps used a mixed set of horns until 1957.

The present uniform is a combination of the original worn by the two junior corps that formed after World War II and became the New York

Street Boys. As the Garbarina corps, the white shako with red plume was added.

The first contest was in the summer of 1947 when the corps competed as a member of the Interstate Circuit. The Garbarina corps placed third behind the Connecticut Yankees and the Doremus Post from Hackensack, NJ.

From 1949 to 1951, the corps went to contests every weekend, beating all units, big and small.

Commencing with a score of 95.4 at the state American Legion Convention and a score of 94.6 at Stratford three days later (beating Doremus, the national champions-to-be, by five points), there took place a four-year domination of the national drum corps scene that went virtually unchallenged.

During this time, in 41 separate contests,



New York Skyliners, 1952, with Hy Dreitzer as the drum major conducting (photo by Ed Olson from the collection of Ron Da Silva).



New York Skyliners, 1957 (photo by Walter Ermel from the collection of Ron Da Silva).

the New York Skyliners finished first 38 times, second twice and third one time. Rarely was the margin of victory even close; almost never was there any doubt as to the result or the overwhelming superiority of the Skyliners.

In 1947, the American Legion National Convention was held in New York City. At that time the rules and regulations of the American Legion Committee stated a

corps from the city where the national convention was to be held would not be permitted to compete. The Garbarina members had to sit this contest out.

In 1948, due to lack of funds, the corps was unable to go to Miami to compete for the national title. That year the Jersey Joes of Riverside, NJ, edged Hackensack for the title.

In 1949, the national contest was held at Municipal Stadium in Philadelphia and the corps won its first national title.

The following section contains excerpts from the New York Skyliners' 40th anniversary book by Ray Priester.

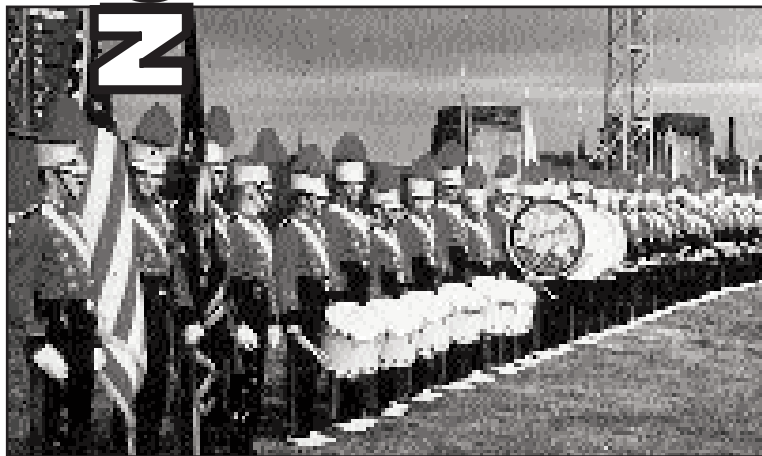
The 1950s

On October 8, 1950, the corps arrived in Los Angeles to defend its national championship. The Garbarina corps took first place in prelims and that evening the corps was back at the Coliseum to defend its title in front of 30,000 fans. A huge ovation followed the concert and the applause

Skyliners.

The black gabardine trousers with red stripe were those of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst corps, while the red cadet-style gabardine jacket, white shoes, cross belt, citation cord and breast plate of the black cummerbund were those worn by the Grand

New York Skyliners



New York Skyliners, 1960 (photo by Ron Da Silva from the collection of Drum Corps World).

continued until the last man had crossed the finish line and the corps had done its about face.

The members of the national champion color guard of the Doremus Post had four words to say: "You guys are in." The announcement went as follows: "In first place, with a score of 90.366 and still national champions, the Raymond A. Garbarina Post No. 1523 of New York City."

In 1951, John F. Mazarakos, one of the greatest marching and maneuvering snare drummers, died of complications following a long illness contracted in the fever-ridden jungles of the South Pacific while serving as a Marine. His name was immediately added to the post flag and charter in a final gesture of tribute to this great drum corps man.

The New York Skyliners were still undefeated by any American Legion corps. This continued until the Morristown, NJ, contest in August. It was a Saturday night, with thunderclouds threatening overhead. The Skyliners were on the field just finishing their second number when the heavens opened up.

The corps never faltered and continued its show to the end. Hawthorne was the next corps scheduled to compete and, wouldn't you know it, the rain stopped and the skies cleared. Hawthorne beat the Skyliners that night for the first time ever, by approximately one point.

The next day, the Skyliners competed at the Hawthorne show in still-wet uniforms and won the contest. It was then on to Miami for the 1951 American Legion Championships. The Skyliners won the prelims. Jersey Joes were second, Doremus was third and the Cabs were fourth.

The Skyliners put on a terrific show, winning all captions except drumming. The Cabs won the contest by one-tenth of a point. In looking at the drum scores, the Cabs received a 19.9 out of a possible 20 from judge Vincent Mott of Paterson, NJ. The



New York Skyliners, 1964 (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

other drum judge gave the Cabs a 17.8. The Skyliners received 18.7 from both drum judges. As a result, the Skyliners were deprived of winning their third consecutive American Legion National Championship.

Mott's explanation was simply, "That's the way I saw it." This was not the last time the corps would suffer defeat at the hands of a drum judge.

The stunning defeat of the New York Skyliners by the Caballeros at the 1951 convention brought to a sudden halt the monopoly of wins by any one corps.

In 1952, the Skyliners competed in seven contests, garnering two first-place titles, four second-place awards and one third-place finish. In 1953, the corps was still strong enough to enter six contests, winning three first-place trophies, two second-place spots and third place in the American Legion Nationals in St. Louis, MO.

The corps competed in only three contests in 1954, taking one first-place and two second-place positions. And then the roof caved in.

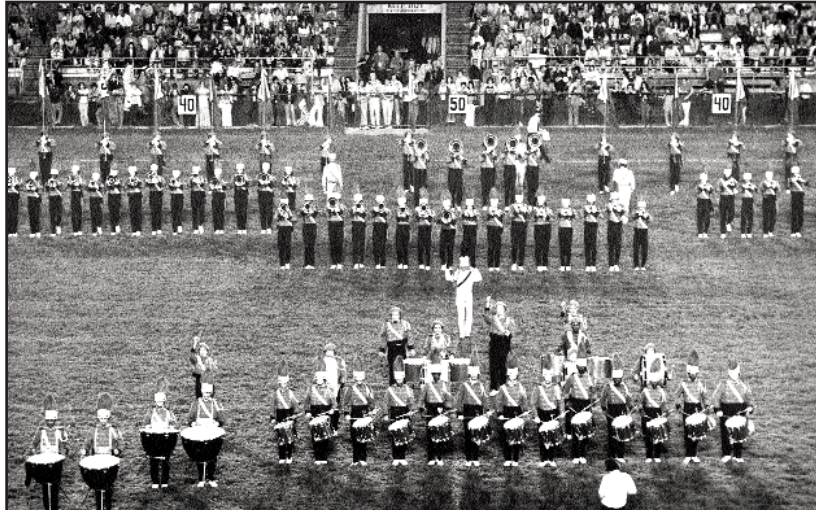
It was at this time, shortly after the Skyliners "no show" at the American Nationals at Washington, D.C., in 1954, that more than a dozen members abandoned the Skyliners and joined the Caballeros. The move was triggered by despair over the administration not doing its job.

At a meeting at New York City's Kingsbridge Armory in October 1954, the membership numbered approximately 16 men. The color guard accounted for nine of those members. You could hear the bells tolling for the

once formidable New York Skyliners.

Spectators always came to watch each Skyliners' rehearsal and this night was no different. Onlookers were saddened to see what had transpired. The remaining members voted to remove the present director from office and a corps member approached one of the visitors, a former director, to return to that now-empty position. Bill Boerner, on leave from the corps, accepted the challenge because he knew, although small in number, this was a committed, supportive group.

The first person Boerner



New York Skyliners, June 30, 1973 (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

approached was one of the most dependable drum corps men of all time. Jim Salamone immediately agreed to work alongside Boerner. A flicker of light could be seen at the end of the tunnel.

With a handful of old members, plus some recently acquired members, the Skyliners began virtually from the beginning on a long and painful rebuilding program. Everyone present that evening became a networker, communicating with as many former members as possible. In the first four or five months of 1955, the corps grew from 16 to 36 members and it was still growing.

Boerner decided to call Henry "Lefty" Mayer, an old friend from his standstill days, to become the Skyliners' business manager. After some prodding, Mayer agreed to come on board and a strong tritium emerged.

Boerner, Salamone and Mayer made the difficult decision that the corps should not compete in the 1955 season and the members agreed with them. Plenty of work, sweat and tears went into strengthening the "reborn" Skyliners. Parade jobs enabled them to obtain some much-needed capital. Exhibitions at standstill contests were the avenue for the corps to show it was still alive and kicking.

In 1956, the Skyliners reappeared on the starting line at the "Pageant of Drums" in Kingston, NY. They garnered third place to a thunderous welcome. In Bridgeport, CT, they once again took third place.



New York Skyliners, September 15, 1963, at the World Open (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of the Ray Priester).

At half a dozen more contests that year, they continued to make an admirable showing. The Skyliners were back!

All the hard work bore fruit in 1957, when the Skyliners competed in about a dozen contests. Garbarina was again running neck-and-neck with the finest corps in the nation, finishing sixth at the American Legion finals in Atlantic City, less than a point behind the winners in the preliminaries.

Boerner retired from active participation in the administration and on the playing field and appointed George Rodriguez to be his successor. Salamone retired as assistant director, but continued to be a playing member of the corps. Mayer remained as business manager.

The addition of talent from various junior and senior corps in the area started a resurgence in the New York Skyliners' spirit for the 1958 season. New members came from the

Irwin Post in the Bronx; Our Lady of Loretto in Brooklyn; St. Joseph's and Blessed Sacrament out of Newark, NJ; Sam Young Post in the Bronx; Our Lady of Grace in Hoboken; St. Patrick's of Jersey City, NJ; and St. Vinnie's of Bayonne, to name a few.

In 1959, the corps was still rebuilding, but it was clearly the crowd's favorite. At Havre de Grace, MD, when they were second to Reilly, and at Kingston, NY, the crowd came down from the stands and encircled the corps, cheering for more. As former member Gus Wilke remarked, "I've witnessed this reaction only three times in 55 years of drum corps activity -- these two episodes and the other time was at the 1963 Dream. All three times, it was our corps that elicited this response from the crowd."

The 1960s

The start of the "big sound" was in 1960, when the horn line went from 28 to 48 players. Eric Perriloux's drum line became a fierce weapon and the corps won its first show in Jersey City, beating arch-rival Hawthorne.

The 1961 Skyliners chalked up four wins, six second-place trophies and three third-place finishes. Most members who joined in 1958 were maturing into what would be their peak years.

The 1962 season proved to be significant for the corps. Many of the members who carried the corps through the latter part of the 1950s would end their careers at the close of this season. New energy for the corps was

found in many of the junior corps then in existence.

The corps captured the state championship at Gaelic Park in the Bronx, but that was one of the few highlights of the season. The Skyliners may not have had many victories during 1962, but the corps always performed in true Skyliner tradition.

The 1963 season did not appear promising during winter rehearsals. Many sections of the corps were undermanned. However, the misfortunes of a number of the junior corps in the area proved to be fortunate for the Skyliners. New members from Loretto, Selden, Floyd Bennett and other junior corps swelled the ranks and were the nucleus of better things to come.

Members of the U.S. Air Force Bolling Field drum corps also added their talents to the ever-improving corps. The Skyliners ended the Caballeros' dream of another

undefeated season when the corps met at Hedges Stadium in Bridgeport. Sadly, a strong performance at the Dream contest was not good enough for a win.

Following the Dream contest, all the efforts were aimed at the national

championships that would be held in Miami. In late August, the corps boarded a jet and headed to Florida with dreams of the elusive national title. This was not to be.

The corps went on to capture the 1963 World Open Championships in Jersey City. Unfortunately, the national champions could not attend due to a prior commitment.

The Skyliners were smaller in 1964. For the first time, the corps did not compete at the National Dream. The corps remained strong and just missed capturing the World Open Championship for a second year, losing out to a strong performance by the Connecticut Hurricanes.

The corps greeted the 1965 season with excitement and new energy. A new drill instructor was introduced. Frank Kubinak gave the corps a rude awakening and promised it would improve rather quickly. He was true to his promise, as the corps prepared for a run-in with the

national champion Rochester Crusaders.

The Crusaders had surprised the drum corps world by defeating every senior corps they met, including the Hawthorne Caballeros, a week prior in Portland, OR, at American Legion Nationals. The anticipated meeting in Syracuse proved to be the high point of the 1965 season. The Skyliners emerged as the only senior corps the national champions did not defeat that year.

The 1966 season dawned with a great deal of promise. The corps seemed to have everything. A powerful horn line, a great drum line and a fine color guard did not provide other senior corps with any weaknesses on which to capitalize. The season was a real dogfight until the National Dream. The Skyliners' victory at the Dream after a two-year absence set the stage for the national championships in Washington, D.C.

The American Legion Nationals turned into a déjà vu of 1951. As in 1951, the out of line scoring from one drum judge turned a victory into defeat. At the 1951 show there was a spread of 1.1 points between the two execution drum judges' scores. This time there was an eight-point spread.

The Hurricanes, Crusaders and Caballeros performed splendidly, but it was felt the Skyliners' season-long strength in drumming, coupled with their magnificent horn line and excellent marching record, would prove too much to overcome.

The corps vowed to put the incident behind and concentrate on the upcoming DCA Championships. For the first time since the World Open in 1963, all the major corps were on the same field of competition. The Skyliners handed the national champions a resounding defeat.

Victories at the American Legion State Championship, the Dream contest and the DCA Championships made 1966 a memorable season. It also marked the last time the Skyliners competed for the American Legion National title for almost 15 years.

The summer of 1967 arrived and things looked good for the defending champions in spite of the feeling something wasn't clicking as it should have. The corps took fourth place at the Dream and paved the way for fourth place at DCA Finals as the Hurricanes won the first of their DCA titles.

By Skyliner standards, 1967 was not a great season.

The 1968 season was yet another of



New York Skyliners, July 1976 (photo by Ron Da Silva from the collection of Drum Corps World).

New York Skyliners, July 12, 1980, at the "Grand Prix," Meadowlands, NJ (photo by Joseph Zepko from the collection of Drum Corps World).





New York Skyliners, July 10, 1982, at the "Grand Prix" in the Meadowlands (photo by Joseph Zepko from the collection of Drum Corps World).

change in personnel, music and attitude. A lot of men called it a career and made way for a deluge of new Skyliners in their late teens whose junior corps were decimated by the draft, but whose "number" had not come up yet.

The 1968 DCA Finals proved interesting: four of the top five corps were from New York and the fifth-place Skyliners were only 3.1 points from the champion Reading Buccaneers.

An influx of new talent into the Skyliners made 1969 a transition year that would hopefully reverse the slide of 1967 and 1968.

Every anticipation of the New York Skyliners breaking out of a two-year slump was fulfilled by the corps winning four of the first five shows. The balance of the regular season was predominantly close seconds. A strong showing at DCA Finals moved the corps from its third place slot in prelims to finish second to the Hurricanes.

The 1970s

As promising as 1969 was, 1970 took the corps back into the role of "also ran." That season provided the Skyliners with a single victory, coming at the expense of the defending DCA Champion Hurricanes.

Drastic measures were called for and that winter drastic measures were taken to restructure not only the 1971 corps, but the instructional staff as well. In January, the corps had few spots available in the drum line, but the horn line totaled 19 players. This nucleus never gave up and soon the confidence became contagious as more and more people came through the doors of the Saldarini VFW Post to see and hear for themselves if the rumors were true.

The corps that was just trying to rebuild went out with 46 horns and lost the first show by a tenth of a point due to a penalty.

The second show was also lost by a

penalty, but it was obvious to those in the stands and the competitors that the Skyliners had indeed rebuilt a magnificent structure.

Just as the 1963 corps ended the dominance of Hawthorne, so too did this great corps, with a stunning victory at the Dream that started a streak of 22 consecutive wins. A miracle happened that year as a corps that was in a rebuilding process captured the Dream, the World Open and the 1971 DCA Championship for a true triple-crown victory.

In 1972, victories came by margins of up to seven points. The Skyliners had become the "Big Red Machine." An undefeated season stared the Skyliners square in the eyes. Then came Schenectady a week before DCA and, in the blink of an eye, it was all over.

One drum judge was all it took to wipe the slate clean. But, as in 1966, the corps looked ahead to DCA. They were still the defending champions and would not give up the title easily. It would have to be taken from them.

And so it was. During the corps' powerful performance, not an eye blinked, but a thumb twitched and the stopwatch said seven minutes 59.3 seconds in motion. A one-point penalty was assessed for seven-tenths of a second undertime and the corps was a bridesmaid once again.

No one could explain how the other 20-25 seconds that were there all year could disappear with the nervous twitch of one man's thumb and a corps would win without taking a single caption.

Seven-tenths of a second! It was 1951 and 1966 all over again, and suddenly, 22 consecutive wins were meaningless.

The 1973 season brought many changes. There was a large turnover in personnel. Walt Winkleman, the man who many felt exemplified the heart and soul of the

New York Skyliners, June 13, 1987, in Colonie, NY, with Butch Anderson as drum major (photo by Joseph Zepko from the collection of Drum Corps World).



New York Skyliners, 1991 (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Skyliners, retired. The rebuilding process started over again with many new faces joining the ranks. The corps needed time to grow as a unit and a victory was not in the offing that year. A fifth-place DCA finish in Rochester brought the curtain down on another season.

In 1974, the corps came on like gangbusters and was back in the winner's circle by the third week of the season. By mid-season, victories were pretty well evenly divided between the Skyliners, Caballeros, Buccaneers and Crusaders, with all of them winning shows during the year. It would prove to be a three-horse race going into Rochester.

When the smoke cleared, Hawthorne had its fourth DCA title, Reading took second and the Skyliners placed a respectable third. At the end of the 1974 season, longtime director and business manager Mayer retired from drum corps and moved to California. Bob Heuhoff, who had served as business manager since October 1965, was elected director and business manager.

After several weeks of intense meetings, the staff and repertoire were set for 1975. The corps had an excellent winter, great attendance at rehearsals and the members were focused. Midway through the season, they replaced *Mambo* with *Elk's Parade* and at the Schenectady show the day before the Dream they unveiled their new show and won by a tight margin.

The next day brought the corps' first Dream victory since 1972. The corps went into DCA at Rochester more determined than ever. Under threatening skies at prelims, hot performances by the Skyliners, Reading and Hawthorne saw scores of 88.50, 88.25 and 87.50, respectively.

The 1975 finals would prove to be just as hotly contested. The results had the Skyliners taking high horns and scoring 91.11. The corps celebrated its third DCA Championship.

In 1976, the Skyliners, Caballeros, Buccaneers, Yankee Rebels and Sunrisers were all in contention at one time or another,



New York Skyliners, September 2, 1995, at the DCA Championships (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

but inconsistency was the rule for nearly everyone. The finals in Rochester saw Hawthorne regain the title by a large margin over the Bucs, Sun and the Skyliners.

In 1977, the corps had a large turnover -- some 90-plus people were replaced from the start of the season to DCA Finals. It seemed that it was to be another "rebuilding year." The Sunrisers had arrived as a DCA power. They unseated the Caballeros by a mere five-hundredths of a point to become only the fifth corps to win the coveted DCA title in 13 years.

At the end of the 1977 season, new leadership was elected for the next two years. The most radical and significant change though, was that for the first time in more than 20 years, Hy Dreitzer would not be at the helm of the brass section.

The pieces seemed to fit as the corps opened the 1978 season with a victory over the reigning champs at New Brunswick and again by almost two points at the Meadowlands. The Sunrisers, though, bounced back stronger than ever and went into Hershey that Labor Day weekend as the odds-on favorite to repeat as champions, which they did in spite of strong performances by both the Caballeros and Skyliners.

At the 1978 DCA Championships, the Skyliners settled for a still respectable third place, less than three points behind Hawthorne.

The 1979 DCA Championships in Hershey that year would find the corps in fourth place, a disappointing five points behind the third-place Sunrisers. A new champion was crowned that evening as the Reading Buccaneers finally regained the title they last held in 1968.

The following section contains excerpts from the New York Skyliners' 50th anniversary book.

The 1980s

There are many words that can describe the emotions felt during the 1980s: turbulence, disappointment, elation, satisfaction, agony, survival and sorrow. For the Skyliners, 1980 was a good news/bad news joke. The good news was that the drum line finally got the recognition it deserved: top drums at DCA. The bad news was fourth place.

The Skyliners could not wait for the start

of the 1981 season. The corps was getting hotter as the season progressed and it seemed too good to be true. Everyone felt it was finally going to happen after six long years.

However, once again it was not to be. The "Cinderella" corps of the year, the Hurricanes, turned in a fine performance and earned their third DCA crown. The Skyliners finished fourth.

The summer of 1982 will be remembered for the fine brass section. The most memorable moment occurred on a hot August afternoon at Verdun, QUE. Seven

senior corps gathered the day after DCI Finals to give the fans one more day of drum corps.

The competition included the Skyliners' nemesis, the Sunrisers, and the surprise corps of the year, the unbeaten and untied Westshoremens. The Skyliners defeated the competition and stunned the previously unbeaten Westshoremens.

At DCA Finals, the Skyliners garnered the high brass award, but could do no better than fifth place overall as the Sunrisers took their third DCA title.

The 1983 season was frustrating, ending without a victory. One of the more memorable weekends of the season occurred at the DCA regional held in Rochester when the corps took high horns and high M&M.

The drum line was in the midst of the top marks and the color guard was second by one-tenth of a point. However, the Sunrisers took the show by eight-tenths over the Skyliners.

This year furnished the corps with its best placement of the 1980s: third at DCA in Allentown.

The Skyliners looked

forward to 1984 with enthusiasm and determination until tragedy struck the drum corps world. Hy Dreitzer, who had returned to the corps in 1981, passed away.

The man and his music were inseparable from the Skyliners, even during his three-year absence, as some of his magic could not be topped by staff arrangers at the time.

The highlight of the 1984 season was a contest at Torrington, CT, where the corps rebounded from a lackluster performance the week before, defeating the competition and depriving the Bushwackers of their first win ever. The season closed with a fifth-place finish at the DCA Allentown Finals.

The 1985 season will go down in the annals of the Skyliners' history as the "year of survival." The loss of seasoned Skyliner drummers would almost prove to be the final test for the corps. The summer ended without any victories and a seventh-place finish at DCA Finals.

In the 1986 season, there seemed to be only one way to go: up. Despite a strong winter, the corps was disappointed in its seventh-place finish at DCA.

With 42 members in 1987, the horn line proved to be a force to be reckoned with. At Hershey, PA, the corps placed sixth and won high execution horns; in Waterbury, CT, the corps placed second and won the same category; at the "Barnum Festival," the corps placed fifth and took the caption again. At the "Grand Prix" in Bloomfield, NJ, the corps finished third and took home the high horn trophy.



New York Skyliners, July 1993 (photo by Ron Da Silva from the collection of Drum Corps World).

DCA Finals that year was rained out. The corps finished in seventh at the end of prelims. Due to the rainout, the prelim scores stood as the final scores as well. The Skyliners took the high horn award.

In preparation for the 1988 season, the Skyliners had one of the best winters it had seen in many years. With 48 horns, 28 drums and 16 in the color guard, the corps seemed bent on proving once again that nothing could keep it down.

The corps started learning drill earlier in 1988, so all indicators pointed to a potential championship year, but the corps mostly saw third-, fourth- and sixth- place finishes. At the DCA Championships in Hershey, the Skyliners finished sixth.

The beginning of the 1989 season started the

1988 season ended; the placements just did not seem to change. Even though the corps had improved 20 points in two months, it just wasn't enough. Eighth place

stared the corps in the face once prelims were over.

The corps pulled out all stops and gave the crowd what it wanted to hear. Amazingly, the judges advanced the Skyliners two places and the corps finished in sixth. Although not satisfactory, this respectable finish gave hope that things could be better in 1990.

The 1990s

The spring of 1990 started with low expectations. Rumors were rampant: the corps was small, the performance levels were not expected to be high. Then came June.

On opening night in Fair Lawn, NJ, the rumors were quickly dispelled and once again the myth started to take hold. The great red and black was back with a vengeance, placing second and taking high drums and high brass, but to no avail. At DCA the corps came in sixth.

The scores from the 1991 season show variances in placement ranging from second through sixth. The Skyliners placed fifth at DCA Finals.

In 1992, 36 horns, 30 percussion and 16 color guard represented the red and black. The corps had to be content with a seventh-place finish.

As the 1993 season began, the scores at the first competition were unbelievably low. The Skyliners placed fourth with a 46 and the Bushwackers won with a score of 57. By the time DCA Finals rolled around, there had been much improvement.

The corps did a good prelims show that landed it in seventh with a score of 85.8. With a dynamic, exciting finals show, the score improved to 87.2, more than 40 points better than the score at the first show of the season, but they remained in seventh place.

At the 1994 judges' clinic show in June, the corps placed third, nearly nine points behind the first-place Empire Statesmen. At DCA, a sound performance positioned the corps in sixth.

The following material was written specifically for this book by Michael T. Siglow

The 1995 season was the last year the Skyliners finished within 10 points of the top spot in open competition. Their score was 9.7 points from the 1995 DCA Champion Hawthorne Caballeros, who scored a 97.70 and enjoyed another undefeated season.

Circumstances got even worse in 1996 and 1997. In 1996, for the first time in its history the corps did not make the top 10 at DCA Finals, placing 11th with a score of

80.10, more than 15 points behind the leader. The summer of 1997 was even worse, with a 13th-place finish and loss of DCA member status.

The Skyliners once again had to start from scratch. Antony Cartinella stepped forward to direct the corps for the 1998 season. As winter rehearsals began, it was hoped the change in leadership would have a positive impact, but this was not the case.

With fair turnouts in the drum line and as few as seven horn players at rehearsals in March, Cartinella reluctantly made the administrative decision to not field a corps in 1998. Recruiting began with the intention of getting the corps back on the field for 1999.

During the winter leading into 1999, things began looking up. There was a resurgence of older members returning and a group of new faces that demonstrated a new enthusiasm and the "never-say-die" Skyliner attitude. The corps showed it was back that season and the crowds were behind it.

The 1999 show was entertaining and, regardless of its size, the corps played with spirit and enthusiasm. Realizing that due to the size of the corps they possibly would not make DCA Finals, the corps opted for class A status. With a score of 74.90, the corps convincingly won the class A competition, more than five points better than their nearest competition.

This was the first win for many of those faithful members who had suffered through 15 winless years. The class A championship was also used as a recruiting tool for the upcoming 2000 season. Cartinella had performed his duties magnificently and turned the corps around under some difficult circumstances. He remained director for the 2000 season.

The new millennium

The winter of 2000 saw a larger horn line and drum line, with the positive result of being able to once again return to the top 10 in the DCA Open Class with a ninth-place finish. The same ninth-place held true for the 2001 season.

During the 2000 season, a major change in the style of the uniform occurred that was seen as "sacrilege" by most alumni and fans. Following the 2001 season, Cartinella wed and retired from drum corps.

During the 2002 winter season, a fund was developed to return the traditional West Point cadet-style red and black uniform that had been unceremoniously discarded in 2000, and

the corps stepped on the field in 2002 in the new "old" uniform.

As the season got underway, it was found that, just as in 1985, the drum line would be grounded in the pit with too few drummers to put on the field.

As in 1999, the corps performed in class A competition for 2002, which they once again captured handily.



New York Skyliners, 2002 (photo by Patrick O'Toole from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Michael Siglow began his drum corps career in 1953 at the age of eight as a soprano bugler with the Madonna Parish CYO Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps in Fort Lee, NJ. During his 11-year tenure in Madonna,

he also played tenor drum and marched in the honor guard as a rifle bearer.

On November 11, 1964, he joined the New York Skyliners and was a member of the color guard for two years. He was assistant drum major to Walter Winkleman in 1967 and 1968. In 1969 and 1970, Siglow worked on the support staff.

In 1975, he returned to the color guard, and in 1976, he again helped on the support staff. He returned to his assistant drum major job under Richard Anderson during the 1977 and 1978 seasons.

After a hiatus from drum corps, Siglow returned to the Skyliners as a soprano bugler in 1992, his last season of competition.

In 1993, Siglow became a founding member, as a soprano bugler, of the Grand Street Boys Senior Drum and Bugle Corps, which later became the New York Skyliners Alumni Corps. Siglow was instrumental in ensuring the Skyliners Alumni Corps was able to produce a drum line. He performed with the Skyliners Alumni Corps as a soprano bugler from 1993 through 2000.

In 1997, Siglow began his tenure with the Archer-Epler Musketeers and has been performing with them since that time as a soprano bugler. He is also a member of the Steel City Ambassadors Alumni and has been performing there as a lead soprano bugler and soloist since 1999.

Siglow is chairman of the board of trustees for the Pennsylvania Drum Corps Hall of Fame, which is in the beginning stages of its development and is taking a new and fresh approach to honoring those who have served the activity with honor, integrity and distinction.

New York Skyliners Alumni, July 20, 2002 (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

