

Ole!



**The Newsletter of the
Hawthorne Caballeros
Alumni Association/
Drum & Bugle Corps**

Volume 4, Issue 2

March/April 2023

Was The Song “Cherry Pink” A Jinx For The Caballeros?

By Mike Del Vecchio

When I think back to the early 50s, I often think about how we got the song and some of the problems that came along with it. Was it worth it? In previous writings, I held the song in high regard because I think we needed it. Did it really make it a song that put us on top of the drum corps world? Maybe we can sneak behind the so-called glamour of the song and find some of the misfortunes that hit us. As a member back then, I also got the assignment to be the backup soloist if Bill Hayes could not make the show. I have good insight into some of the misfortunes that occurred.

As it goes, we had completed the 1954 season on the up side as far as winnings go. We had won our second consecutive Legion National Champi-

**IN
THIS
ISSUE**

**Was “Cherry Pink” A
Jinx For The
Caballeros?**

**Meet The Caballero
You March With**

Alumni Corps

Schedule

Birthdays

Half Notes

Trivia

Answer To Trivia

Remember When

Bit Of Wit

Letter From The

Editor

Pics From The Past

And Here We Go

And Here We Go

By Chris Sortino

The beginning of the Alumni Corps' 29th season was bitter/sweet.

It was our annual stage show in York, PA. I was very excited and a little nervous being it was my first show as director of the corps. So, I really wanted everything to go smoothly. Silly me!

I got a call earlier in the week from our equipment truck driver and caretaker, Ken Clancy, telling me that we have a problem with the truck. He was so concerned that he made a 7 AM appointment with the mechanic on Saturday morning. He said if it's minor, he'll go straight to York, if not he'll have to unload all the equipment onto the bus. Around 8:00 he called me and says everything was fixed and he'll see us in York. Next, I get a call that the bus is running late.

The sponsor had changed the dressing room building which was fine but what we didn't realize was how far away it was from the build-

(Continued On Page 2)

(Continued On Page 2)

(Continued From Page 1)

..... Jinx

onship and were looking for something new in a song. We were looking for something with excitement. Something that would shout out to the crowd, excite them, bring them to their feet and expand our fan base.

About January 1955, John Lombardo, a baritone horn in our squad, came in with a record of a song that he thought we should be playing before one of the senior corps picked it up. Now John was a service person for a company that serviced JUKE BOXES. You know, a machine that was loaded with records and you put coins through a slot, push a button to select a song you wanted to hear. This record was the hottest thing on most of the juke boxes, and was wearing out faster than anything else on his machines. It was "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White." They were able to play it at the Post and felt that this was what we were looking for, but who could play it and hit the high F at the end? Bill Hayes was down also listening to the record and implied that he could play the F and if the Cabs did not use it, he would do it for one of his corps.

A week later Al Mura, our horn instructor, came with the arrangement. Bill Hayes was to be the soloist however he did not

make rehearsal that night so guess who had to play it that night? We worked for several weeks on that song and the rest of the songs we were using. Bill did make the following rehearsal and we were all set to do the show at Kingston, NY. Our show did not however include "Cherry Pink", as both Al Mura and Jim Cos did not think the song was ready to be judged. So instead, Cos agreed to play all the other corps off the field and that we would go last and introduce a new song for their opinion. As I wrote in previous additions of the Ole!, we marched off with the "Cherry" song and the crowd went wild on each and every slur and especially on the last note, the high F.

So, after the word got out about this song, calls came in trying to get the Cabs for their show. The biggest and most important call was from the man in charge of the Barnum show in Bridgeport CT. They wanted us at their show regardless of the cost. Mac, our business manager, told them \$1,000, which was also first prize money. Since we also won the contest, our D.M. also got the check for first prize and gave it to our business manager. Thus we got double the money at that show, and of course our price to be in a contest was always

(Continued On Page 3)

(Continued From Page 1)

..... Here We Go

ing that stage was in. We had to walk that twice. Once for a sound check rehearsal and once for the show. It looked like the walking wounded going back and forth. I was given two tickets for our instructors to watch the show from the sound box and I promptly lost them.

When the corps finally got to the venue, the horns got with Larry and the drums with John to go over parts to make sure we were all on the same page.

We originally planned to play "Halleluiah" as a tribute to Paul Bongiovi who suddenly passed away a month earlier. When we first spoke about it, this would happen only if the horns were up to it. Sadly, we never had enough time at the previous rehearsals to perfect the song. So, our backup plan was to have the mellophone quartet play the tune, but that fell through because some of the members would be coming late due to other obligations. Playing "Taps" turned out to be the answer.

Some good things did happen to balance out the hiccups. We did one hell of a good job on stage at night. We had a chance to pay tribute to Paul and letting the packed house of 900

(Continued On Page 5)

(Continued From Page 2)

..... Jinx

equal to the first prize money or more if the prize money was below our requested price.

So, we were off and running into the contest season, with more crowds coming to shows to see and hear us do "Cherry Pink". It was 1955, that we won our first Dream Contest which made us feel that we were sure to win the Legion Nationals down in Miami, FL. We did not, however, have an undefeated season that year, but we did win most of the shows that season. So on to Miami, where the jinx begins.

We went by car, bus, plane, and whatever else we needed to get there. We felt we were going to win this one. We all arrived by the next day. Then it started. We got a call from Bill Hayes, who along with Walter Winkelmen and Ralph Shur, were riding with Bill in his car, that they had an accident and would have to rent a car and would not be there in time to pick up Bill's wife Mary at the Miami airport. Andy Sproha and I would have to go to the airport and pick Mary up. I was chosen since I knew Mary, and I would have to explain to her why Bill was not at the airport. Needless to say she was not happy, however I did tell her no one was injured but the car was not drivable and they had

rented a car and would be here by tonight.

The next day we had both horn and drill rehearsal in the morning. Again, we did not win the prelims, however that is not unusual for us. Sunday evening, the finals would be a date that would live in infamy for those in the corps that night.

I think we were on first or second that evening. We stood on the starting line looking east, because we could see lightening and storm clouds coming at us. The Legion insisted that we go on as they did not think the storm was traveling fast enough to reach us till after we were off the field. We stepped off the line and before the number was finished, we started to get a light rain. However, as we continued, the rain started to come down harder and as we entered the concert formation. It was pouring. Fortunately, we were not getting any lightening. Before we got to the concert formation, the people and judges had all left the field. We had to keep going as no one from the Legion told us to leave and start after the rain had stopped. If we had left the field due to rain and lightening, we would have been disqualified. We finished the concert in the bow position and you could hear the water roll off our sombre-

ros. We did not have plastic drum heads back then so there was a deep noise when the water fell on wet soggy drum heads. After the concert, we headed back field to play our big number, "Cherry Pink". After turning around and hitting the intro, I was looking at the stands and only saw 5 red jackets half way up the stands and they stayed there in the rain for our entire show. They were members of Archer Epler corps who came down to Miami to see us win the championship.

We came in 4th. We were the only corps that got rained on. We got on our bus, went back to our motel and changed into our drill clothes, which were white t-shirts and khaki pants and wet shoes. We went back to stand retreat and got the sad news. Skokie won, the corps from Stratford, CT came 2nd and Syracuse Brigadiers came in 3rd.

We packed up and left for home. Along the way, in Claxton, GA our equipment truck caught fire and all our uniforms and drums went up in smoke. A month after we returned, we got a bill from the Claxton, GA fire Dept for \$25.00 for putting out the fire in our truck. Our motto then was If you must go through Claxton, GA, be sure to not have any Caballero equipment showing.

In 1956, we stayed home as the

(Continued On Page 4)

(Continued From Page 3)

..... Jinx

Nationals were on the West Coast and we did not have the money to make the trip.

1957 was our chance to get revenge. We worked hard that year as the Nationals were in Atlantic City, N J. We felt we had the men and we were in our home state. What could go wrong? Problem! The Legion had changed the requirement regarding being a member of the Legion. If you had 80% Legionaries in your corps, you could enter the contest. However, you get a two-point penalty. The major senior corps went wild getting fake ID's for some of their men so that they had all Legion members, However the Legion found out about what was happening and three corps: Sky, Riley and Archie were all disqualified. Somehow Archer Epler got to do an exhibition at the finals. We had all Legion members and got in without any penalties. We went on and did our performance with "Cherry Pink" still in the show. But, with that, we still came in 4th. Syracuse came in 3rd; Connecticut came in 2nd and Skokie came in 1st. The exact same positions as in Miami in 1955. It just seemed that the Legion was not going to let us win any more championships. So, we worked hard and working on winning the 1958 Nationals out

in Chicago, on Skokie's home grounds. We never gave a thought that "Cherry Pink" was holding us back from winning. So, work we did. We also got some replacements, should some members not stay on.

When we got to Chicago we heard that the possible favorite to win was Syracuse. We were concerned, but found it hard to believe since we had beaten them all year. Jimmy Cos worked his magic harder than ever. We were determined not to lose this one. Jimmy worked us up to the last hour or so before we were due on the inspection line.

When we got to the field, Ralph Silverbrand played a game on Skokie. We were lucky at this point as Skokie was behind us in the lineup of corps at the inspection and ready lines. After inspection, we move up to the second line, but Ralph set us up at extended interval making us twice as long as Skokie. The line went down to the far end and then made a bend down the backfield side line with close to two dozen down the line. When we went on the starting line which again was 5 yards in front of us, we were in our starting position on the starting line. With Skokie being behind us, we had the greatest chance to blow them away.

We did a great job that night and "Cherry Pink" got huge applause and yelling from about 30,000 people in the stands at Soldier Field. The result was one of our greatest jobs and we did win first place, eight tens ahead of Syracuse, and almost two points ahead of Skokie. The end result, we gave "Cherry Pink" one more year and then sent it on its way to the storage file.

Remember When

Sixty Years Ago

May 26, 1963

Jersey City, NJ

1	Caballeros	85.82
2	Skyliners	85.57
3	Buccaneers	83.23
4	Musketeers	81.33
5	Les Diplomates	73.28

Ole! is published every other month.

Next issue: May/June 2023

(Continued From Page 2)

..... Here We Go

people know that we were dedicating this show and the rest of the season to Paul. I wanted to brighten up the mood a bit so I took the opportunity to let the fans know about our corps hidden gem in the horn line - Mike Del Vecchio. He had just turned 90 the day before the show. This is another thing that makes our corps so special and unique. Every person in the auditorium was on their feet waiting for Mike to take a bow and finally he did.

Also, I persuaded our guide from the Hanover Lancers to get two more tickets to replace the ones I lost. The dressing room turned out to be the best one we ever had. The truck and the bus got back to Hawthorne safely and finally, I received the check as soon as we got there instead of waiting until we were done.

So, after all the not so great things that happened, the great things started to balance out.

The bitter and the sweet. ~

OFFICERS

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Mike Del Vecchio

Ole! Newsletter Editor

Chris Sortino

Meet The Caballero You March With

Jimmy "Pic" Piccolo is Vince Marchese's next victim.

When asked what made Jimmy interested in drum corps, he said "at the age of 2 I watched St. Vincent Martyr Cadets of Madison, NJ practice in the school field behind our house. My uncle marched in the Morristown Colonials in the color guard and my aunt was a member of the corps auxiliary which referred to themselves as 'widows.' They would take me to competitions and the rest is history."

Jimmy's drum corps experience includes Silver Lancers of Middlesex, NJ 1966-1972, Saints, Fords, NJ 1972-1977, St. Lucy's Alumni Corps 2014-Present and Avant Garde Alumni 2022.

Jimmy has been playing soprano in the Cabs Alumni Corps since 2013.

Beginning with an interest in printing that began when he was in high school, he worked in the printing industry for over 30 years. The company he spent most of his career with, printed the first Beatles album in the US "Meet The Beatles". As the

technology changed, so did the company.



Trivia Answer

Volume 4 Issue 1

Q: What years did the "Evening With The Corps" show take place in Carnegie Hall?

A: 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965.

Trivia Question

What year was the 1st Dream Contest, and where was it held?

March Birthdays

Jose "Pepe" Algarin
Donna Cetani
Brad DeWaal
J. Oliver Plunkett
Nick Stefano
Zack Grilk
Arlene Black
Hawthorne
Caballeros Birthday
Bob Cook
Glenn Kubacki
Chris Menear
Curt Hawkins
Frankie Salati
Jerome "J.J." Jones
(Vanderhoof)
Caballeros Alumni
Birthday
Pat Chadwick
Beth McGarril



Another Fallen

Member



Sadly, we lost another member of our alumni family. Bill Gibbons passed away a few weeks ago. He was one of our fantastic mellophone soloists who marched with the Alumni Corps for several years. His bright smile will be missed by all of us.

Rest In Peace Billy!

April Birthdays

Larry Coleman
Michelle D'Andrea
Ray Gatchalian
Dave Chadwick
Rich DePinto
Rose Silverstein
Fran Lauritano
Bruce Ziegler
Eric Weber
Linda Gathen
Joe Silverstein
Kenny Clancy
Jack Zampella



Alumni 2023 Schedule

Sunday, March 5 *

Music Rehearsal
12:30—5:00

Post 199

Sunday, March 19 *

Music Rehearsal
12:30-5:00

Post 199

Sunday, March 26 *

Music Rehearsal
12:30-5:00

Post 199

Saturday, April 1 *

Stage Show
York, PA

Sunday, April 16 *

Music Rehearsal
12:00-5:00

Lake Hopatcong Elks

Sunday, April 30 *

Music Rehearsal
12:00-5:00

Lake Hopatcong Elks

Sunday, May 7 *

Drill Rehearsal
12:00-5:00

N. Brunswick Twsp HS

Saturday, May 20 *

Camp Weekend
9:00-5:00

Hopatcong, H.S.

Sunday, May 21 *

Camp Weekend
9:00-3:30

Hopatcong, H.S.

Monday, May 29 *

Memorial Day Parade
Hawthorne

Saturday, June 3 *

Elk's Parade
Wildwood

Saturday, June 10 *

Hawthorne 125th Anniv
Standstill On Field

Sunday, June 25 *

Drill Rehearsal
12:00-5:00
T.B.D.

Saturday, July 8 *

Grand Prix
Field Exhibition
Clifton

Saturday, July 15 *

Field Exhibition
Landisville, PA

Saturday, July 22 *

Field Exhibition
Milton, PA

Saturday, July 29 *

Field Exhibition
Williamsport, PA

Saturday, August 19 *

T.B.D.
T.B.D.

Friday, September 1 *

Mangione Tribute
Stage Show
Rochester, NY

Saturday, September 2 *

Music Rehearsal
Rochester, NY

Sunday, September 3 *

Alumni Spectacular
Field Exhibition
Rochester, NY

Sunday, September 3 *

D.C.A. Finals
Field Exhibition
Rochester, NY

Alumni 2023

Schedule

Continued

Sunday, September 24 *

Music Rehearsal

12:00-5:00

Lake Hopatcong Elks

Sunday, October 15 *

Music Rehearsal

12:00-5:00

Lake Hopatcong Elks

Sunday, October 29 *

Music Rehearsal

12:30-5:00

Post 199

Sunday, November 5 *

Veterans Day Parade

Clifton

Sunday, November 12 *

Music Rehearsal

12:30-5:00

Post 199

Friday, November 17 *

**Bus Leaves For Plym
From Hawthorne Pool**

9:00 AM

Saturday, November 18

T.B.D.

Plymouth, MA

Sunday, November 19 *

Bus Returns From

Plymouth, MA To

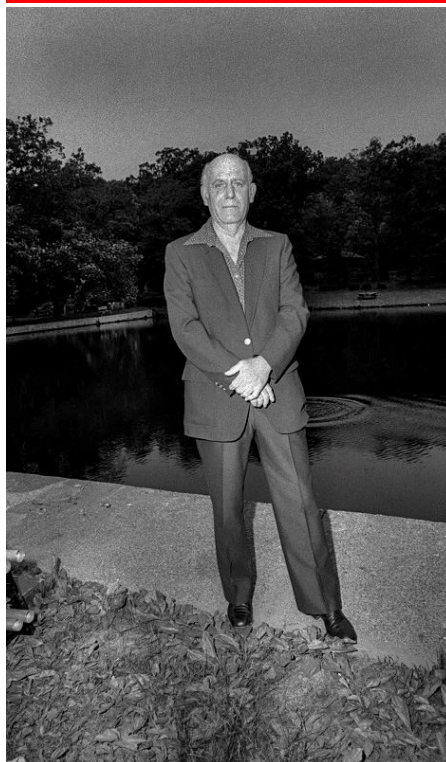
Hawthorne

Saturday, December 9 *

Final Rehearsal

T.B.D.

**Pics
From
The
Past**



HALF NOTES...

Condolences to the family of Alumni Corps mellophone soloist **Bill Gibbons** on his passing. He will surely be missed.....enjoyed playing in front of a crowd again in York, PA.....saw a lot of former and current Caballeros at the St. Lucy's Cadets reunion. **Duke Terreri, Jack Conway, Tim Conway, John and Barbara Flowers, Ray Remus and Jim Russo**exciting news coming up for the Alumni Corps in Rochester this September. Stay tuned.....heard that several Alumni Corps members transferred their American Legion membership to Hawthorne Post 199. Thank you! It helps the Post and our corps.....that's all for now!



A "Bit of Wit" from the Quill of Charlie Bratton...



The trouble with being on time is that no one is there to appreciate it.

A barber asked his client "How would you like your cut?"
The client replied "In silence."

I used to play basketball, baseball and tennis but I stopped after my son broke my Play Station.

About the time you think you can make ends meet, somebody moves the ends.

What do Facebook and a fridge have in common? You know there's nothing there but you still check every 10 minutes.

If you can't find your dog, open the fridge door. He's standing right behind you.

If a parsley farmer is sued, do they garnish his wages?

Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

If a mute kid swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

If man evolved from apes, why do we still have apes?

Is there another word for synonym?

HELP WANTED!

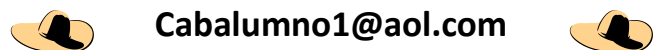
The Alumni Corps has openings in ALL SECTIONS, especially Contra and Sopranos in the Horn line, Color Guard and openings for Bass and Double Tenor in the Drum Line.



Articles for the OLE!



The OLE! welcomes all impressions/expressions.



Send your input/articles to

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