

THE MACE



The Newsletter of the **REGIMENTAL DRUM MAJOR ASSOCIATION**
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WELCOME TO THE MACE

This is the first issue of The Mace, a publication that we shall publish quarterly. We hope that The Mace will be an effective tool to communicate to the membership of the RDMA. In this inaugural edition, you should find items of interest. If you have an article or an idea for an article that you would like to submit or if you have material that would be suitable for the website, please email them to polson8568@aol.com.

SEMINARS

There are several seminars coming up in April. If you are new to this activity, I would strongly suggest that you attend and learn from the masters! See the site for details.

- April 9-10 Victoria, BC with Norm MacKenzie, CD
 - April 10-11 Panama City, FL with Neil Lester, CD, PESM
 - April 17-18 Albany, NY with Billy Jordan
 - April 24-25 Hartford, CT with Billy Jordan
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NEW BAND NEEDS MACE

The Newport News Police Pipe Band is forming and the Drum Major needs a used mace that can be used for practice and parade. Please contact Doc at dccat964@verizon.net

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are an all-volunteer virtual organization. We started the RDMA with a plan, three people with computers and tolerant significant others (as appropriate). Over the course of the last year, we have put together several manuals (there are more to come), collected manuals from the military, and solicited articles/suggestions from subject matter experts. This has been a daunting task. As you might imagine, this is a work in progress.

Currently, we need someone who is familiar with setting up 501 (c) (3) USA Corporations. We started the RDMA as a non-revenue generating entity; however, there are areas that we would like to develop that require funds, sponsoring seminars for example. A 501 (c) (3) designation would permit us to sell logo wear and other items to fund such ventures. Officer positions of the RDMA will continue to be volunteer and not compensated.

If you would see an area (online publishing, marketing, regional coordinator, etc.) that we could develop and you would like to head it up, let us know.

NEW ARTICLES

There are lots of new items on the site if you haven't visited in a while.

THAT FIRST COMPETITION

Like some of you, I have only been in the Drum Major role for a relatively short time, slightly more than a year. As you can imagine, in the Panhandle region of northwest Florida, there is not only a shortage of pipe bands, but an absolute drought of experienced Regimental Drum Majors from which to learn. I have pieced together what I know from several sources. First is our band's fabulous Pipe Major Geordie Ord (former British officer), Jim Thompson (DM of Atlanta Pipes & Drums) and his video "By the Center", personal observations of other more senior DM's, the RDMA's excellent website, and from personal advise from Paul Olson.

I entered the Amateur Drum Major competition for the Central Florida Highland Games in Orlando in mid January; not with any expectations of winning, but more for the exposure to other Drummies and to get an expert critique from the judge, Neil Lester. Neil was the 1991 World Champion Drum Major and I truly value his opinions on all things related to DM work.

Surprisingly, I took first place in my division. Thank goodness none of the other Amateur competitors flourished or else I would have been toast. They clearly were well coached, but I firmly believe that Dress, Drill, and Deportment won out in the long haul.

FIRST COMPETITION (Con't)

As stated on the RDMA website, this competition was more of an accumulation of gigs for things done wrong, than of points for impressive mace-work. Below is a brief list of gigs and evaluations of the performance as stated by the judge, and from my own review of the video.

Dress:

1) **Kilt apron puckered under sporran.** I don't care how many times you straighten things before marching out onto the field, gear **will** move when you walk. Take one last second before inspection to tug and yank everything into place before striking the position of attention.

2) **Hose tops not even in the back.** They looked great from the front, but video of my backside clearly showed about a 3/4" difference for each leg. Have someone, spouse, band mate, innocent bystander, even another competitor, do a 360 degree walk around looking for uneven horizontal and vertical lines. This is of key importance.

3) **Bonnet Tapes.** Ahhhhhh, couldn't believe I did this! When I placed my feathered bonnet on my freshly mowed noggin, the tapes were lodged between my scalp and the bonnet's headband. Very embarrassing to have a judge pull your tapes out of your head with hundreds of spectators looking on. Once again, you can't see what is behind you. That 360 degree walk around would have caught this oversight.

Drill:

1) **Stutter when starting Slow March.** I've never Slow Marched before in public, so I was a bit apprehensive about making my Slow March debut in my first competition. The problem was that the other competitors stumbled out of the chute even worse than I did. Instead of following my own timing, I picked up their falter from the corner of my eyes and hesitated briefly. But, I did recover quickly before the second step, and the rest of the Slow March went fairly well. Unfortunately for the others, they were completely off step for the remainder of the Slow March. In my favor, I was the only one to march a perfectly straight line in the Slow March segment.

2) **Tempo change failure.** Oops! Opening Day jitters got the best of me and I was the only DM to completely forget about the mace command for tempo change between the Slow March and Quick March. But, I caught them in the end. I guess that they too had a bad case of nerves as they all inexplicably forgot the shut-off signal at the end of the Quick March.

Deportment:

No gigs. In fact, I received numerous verbal commendations pertaining to professionalism from other Drum Majors, pipe band members, event officials, vendors, and most importantly, the paying spectators.

Lessons learned:

1) Pay meticulous account of your gear, **all of it**, especially the things you can't see.

2) Perform the **basics** well, leave the **fancies** you haven't **mastered** in the back yard. Pull that stuff out of the bonnet when you can nail it with your eyes closed.

3) Compete for the sole purpose of self improvement through gaining knowledge, input, and exposure. A good judge's critique is worth a hundred times more than any trophy or badge.

4) Department, department, department. Project an image of professionalism, even if you are not the most skilled Drum Major on the field. Look, act, and **be** like someone that they want to have back next year.

5) The paying spectator, without whom none of these events would be possible, is your number one responsibility. Make them happy and learn something in the process, and the whole day has been a huge success.

Ken Hosey, DM
Panama City Pipes & Drums
Panama City, FL

PICTURES

We need your pictures! If you have a photo of yourself in your Drum Major uniform either by yourself or in front of your band, we would like to post them to the Media section of the site.

LINKS WANTED

If you have a link that is Drum Major related, please let us know. We are looking for links to *QUALITY* suppliers, competitions, seminars, and other Drum Major sites.

TRIP TO CONNECTICUT

Over the course of our charter year we have had over 150 Drum Majors join the RDMA. Most hail from pipe and drum bands, a fair number of military bands (particularly from the USMC), and a few school or regimental bands. But not one fife and drum corps Drum Major. In fact, one of our members left the fife and drum community and joined the pipe band genre because there were no instructors to be found.

One of our goals for our second year is to develop our participation in this realm of field music.

On February 14th, VP Scott Grant and I attended the Annual Meeting of The Company of Fifers and Drummers. We were a bit apprehensive about this meeting. We were definitely outsiders. I being from California and only having seen one fife and drum corps, a New England phenomenon, was concerned about how we would be perceived. Scott, from New Hampshire, would be very adept as our link to New England culture.

The Company is located in the picturesque town of Ivoryton. There was still snow on the ground and the temperature hovered in the 20's (°F). Driving there from Boston was beautiful, akin to driving around in a Currier and Ives painting.

The Company museum is typical New England: a white two story structure with dark trim. Downstairs was a seating area complete with a bar. The walls papered with posters of long ago competitions and old photographs.

Upstairs was the main hall. The main floor surrounded by displays of old rope tension drums, vintage corps uniforms, Drum Major batons and maces, fifes, etc. In the attic was the library. Dozens of file cabinets lined the wall. In all an irreplaceable resource of everything fife and drum.

We made our presentation and were very well received. Many new friends were made as they had a bit of a dilemma that we were in a position in which to help.

Unlike every other band, corps, pipe band that I have been associated, no one was much interested in being Drum Major of many of the fife bands. All agreed that having a skilled Drum Major was beneficial in improving the quality of the fife corps, there just wasn't much interest.

We have several ideas in which to assist the fife band community in finding Drum Majors. We have contacts of the current stable of qualified fife band Drum Majors. We shall be contacting them so that we can have them instruct seminars. Next we will solicit information from the various fife corps to see how many do/do not have Drum Majors. We will then target the local high schools and Drum Major camps to alert those that enjoy the Drum Major arts can continue with the craft after graduation. If you have further suggestions let us know!

Also, I did meet several RDMA members while I was in town: Tom Belyea (our resident uniform and regimental expert), Ox Gara (perhaps the most well known D/M in the Greater East Coast), Tom Darling of the Brian Boru Pipe Band, and Philip Staples of the Aleppo Shriners Pipe Band

I certainly hope that we can find additional ways to network among the members because discussing our experiences and the camaraderie that results is what makes this activity so enjoyable (also, if in Salem, MA, stop by McSwiggin's Irish Pub for excellent fish & Chips and a strong likelihood of running into Tom Belyea!)

Paul Olson
D/M Stewart Tartan Pipes & Drums
San Francisco, CA

**IMPORTANT!!
PLEASE READ
RESPONSE
REQUESTED**

NETWORKING

One of the goals of the RDMA is to facilitate the networking of Drum Majors. Currently we put people together as requested by individual members. We are looking for ways to streamline this. We have received requests to have everyone's name and/or email listed on the site. There are pros and cons. One of our concerns is that external or internal spammers could acquire the email addresses for non-RDMA related purposes. We would like to get your thoughts on the matter.

Networking is very important, particularly for those new to the activity. However, we don't want you to be inundated by unwanted commercial messages.

Let me know your thoughts at
polson8568@aol.com