
ON THE STARTING LINE
FROM CHICAGO, SKOKIE, AND DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS ...
THE VANGUARD!

THE VOICE OF THE VANGUARD

www.DesPlainesVanguard.com

(Issue #7)

May 2005

Larry Rock Rocks the Grammy Awards

According to an article in *DCI News* (3/8/05), Vanguard Alum Larry Rock, who has worked as DCI's recording engineer since 1982, won two Grammy awards on February 13th for his production of "Adams: On the Transmigration of Souls," which won for Best Classical Album and Best Orchestral Performance. In addition to his work with DCI, Larry is in his ninth season as the audio director of the New York Philharmonic. Larry marched with the Vanguard in 1972 when we were finalists (7th place) at the first DCI Championship. Congratulations to Larry on his Grammy awards! (And, thanks, *Steve Pattengale*, for sending me this article!)

Change of address....

Please note that **Lee Romes Aitken** has moved. She asked me to post her new contact information here:

273 Jennifer Ln., Wilmington, IL 60481
815-476-9737

Email: alethaann57@sbcglobal.net

**May you have many years of happiness in
your new home, Lee!**

Upcoming activities....

- ✓ **Sunday, May 8th** – 1:30PM
(*Mother's Day*). **Bill O'Connell's** Chicago Skyliners Big Band is at Lilacia Park in downtown Lombard. Come and enjoy the blooming lilacs with Mom in this beautiful park. Bring lawn chairs.
- ✓ **Sunday, May 15th** – Buffalo Grove Symphonic Band (of which our **Art Marks** is a member!) concert. For information on the concert or joining the band, contact Art at amarks4360@aol.com.

- ✓ **Sunday, June 12th** – 6PM.
Skyliners return to Fitzgerald's in Berwyn. Reply to this email and let me know if you're coming!
- ✓ **Tuesday, June 14th** – 7PM.
Skyliners will perform in a concert in the park in Bloomingdale.

More information on the Skyliners Band, including venue locations, can be found at www.chicagoskylinersbigband.com.

- ✓ **Sunday, June 26th** – 2:30-? *Do not miss **Glory Daze Drum Corps Reunion at Maine West High School**. More info on this great event can be found on the Vanguard website. Time is of the essence as advance tickets are required. Check it out!!*

Condolences to...

- **Ray Smith** upon the loss of his beloved wife, Cathy, in March.

In our next issue, we'll hear from....

- **Art Marks**
- **Dan Galorath**
- **Greg Kmiec**
- **Dave Burkett**

Happy Mother's Day!

What would the Vanguard have done without all the mothers who volunteered so many hours to help the corps? They were our cooks, chaperones, seamstresses, nurses, boosters, confidantes, and biggest fans. They ran the banquets and countless fundraisers. They spent Mother's Day year after year cooking for us at drill camp. *Happy Mother's Day to those wonderful mothers who rarely got the thanks they truly deserved.*

Vegas Vanguard Visitors By **The Bevill Family**

The 2004 Vanguard reunion was the event of a lifetime for anyone who was ever associated with the corps and was able to attend. So many old faces, so many old memories that we keep alive, year in and out, as they always bring an emotional flood of pride, joy, and yes, even some pain.

I, quite like everyone else, was on a high and it took days to come down. During the “reunion high” we all made commitments to stay in touch with each other. “*Yea man, when I get to ??city?? I’m going to look you up*”. “*Now that I have your e-mail address I’m going to use it often*”...all sincere, great intentions, but difficult to honor as we maintain our busy schedules full of familial and professional responsibilities.

With that being said, I guess you can understand when I tell you that I was excited, but just a bit skeptical when **Cathy Letourneau** informed me of her family’s plan to visit us in Las Vegas during the Easter holiday. Too good to be true, REALLY, too good to be true!

Well, by mid January the Letourneau’s had purchased airline tickets and reserved hotel rooms so I knew that it was indeed true and going to happen. I couldn’t wait to let **Angie, Carl, Bob**, and my mother know that Cathy O’, Glen and their son Kevin were coming out to visit for Easter! My children knew of Cathy from the e-mails we exchanged as we planned our 1973 – 1976 presentation and from the reunion tape that I forced them to watch... several times.

We had a fantastic time. Our aunt (the Boyd’s mom) was also visiting from Chicago. Good folks, good food and as always when Vanguards get together, great fun and memories of a time gone by.

Bob shares: “... it was especially nice for me to see Cathy, as I was unable to attend the Vanguard Reunion last September. It was strange how quickly the years of silence and absence between us dissipated as we recalled Vanguard memories and shared past experiences. I was surprised that Cathy remembered conversations we had in high school about our goals and aspirations at the time. We’d discovered a common interest in education. I’m certain that her students are fortunate to have such a conscientious, committed and caring teacher.

“Meeting Glen and Kevin was a real treat! Not wanting to sound cliché, but it felt like I’d always known them. It didn’t hurt that Glen had his own drum corps experiences to share. I was really impressed by Kevin, and I know that his parents are very proud of him. It was good to exchange family greetings and to know that Mr. & Mrs. O’Connell are well; also good to hear about **Billy O’** and his Big, Bad, Skyliners Band. Thanks to the Letourneau’s for sharing their holiday vacation with us. As a result, our Easter celebration was particularly meaningful this year and symbolically represented a renewal of our friendship and a strengthening of our Vanguard ties to one another.”

In between their sightseeing excursions to Mt. Charleston, Death Valley, etc., we went out several times to different locations for food and ... (sorry folks, but what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas). As the new VP, I [David] was particularly pleased to give the Letourneau family a tour of my place of employment, Ethel M Chocolates (check out our newest Chicago store on the Mag Mile in the Nordstrom Mall this July). A heartfelt thanks to our friends, Cathy, Glen, and their son, Kevin who made our Easter holiday one to remember!

The **Bevills and Boyds** plan to celebrate our mothers' birthdays next October 14-17 in Chicago. If anything "Vanguard" is going on that weekend let us know because when we get to Chicago, *we're definitely going to look you up!*

The Bevills,
David, Angie, Carl, Bob

Editor's Note: Right back at ya, Bevills! We did indeed have a great time with you. Easter dinner was wonderful, and we thank you for your hospitality. Here are some pictures from Easter. Information on an October mini-reunion is forthcoming!



Easter with the Bevills in Henderson, Nevada: From left: David and Maria Bevill (our Easter dinner hosts), Glen and Cathy Letourneau, Bob and Carl Bevill. Sitting: Angie Bevill Triche.



Vanguard 2nd generation: back row from left: Anthony Triche, Kevin Letourneau, Darrick Bevill, Alexander Triche. Front row: Roger Lopez (kneeling), Davey and Lillian Bevill, Jesus Lopez, Lauren and Sabrina Bevill.

One Fleeting Year in the History of the Vanguard By **Ted Baur**

My name is Ted Baur; most of you don't know me. I marched in 1976, the last competitive year for the Vanguard. I was 19. Yes, a 19-year-old rookie. I came from the Regal Valiant Drum & Bugle Corps (1968 thru 1974). My Dad was the founder. From him I learned to be stubbornly loyal. In 1975 our "c" corps merged with the Skokie Imperials (Norwood Park). Unfortunately, the Regal Valiant corps, though unknown, had its own soul and many members, me included, couldn't stand the loss of "our" corps. Many of us dropped out. From this I knew pride. For talent, my resume was short: "lead soprano/soloist" for a "never was". Call that humility.

I was in college, Illinois State U. in Normal. Drum corps was still in my blood. Wanted to go somewhere where stubborn loyalty, pride and humility would fit in. There were the Guardsmen, (most of the Regal Valiant went to them), Cavaliers (no way), Phantom Regiment, Kilties, Blue Stars, Fox Valley Raiders, Knights, Vanguard was starting to come back, but, where should I go?

Mike Chiodo and I were friends until he up and left the Regal Valiant for the big time Vanguard in 1973. (My stubbornness caused problems and almost cost me a dear lifetime friend.) He was one of the few who had endured 1974 and helped bring back Vanguard in 1975. He was responsible for my coming to the Vanguard, though I don't remember how I came to be invited to practice, or even when it was. But, I came, was introduced and asked to sit in. About 30 horns, not bad when I was used to 18-22. In the horn line some older kids, Kevin Boyd for one, few as old as me. A great drum line. Good guard. All they needed were about 15 to 20 horns.

This was an integrated corps, integrated staff. And it didn't matter. This was all quite the change for a white suburban college kid. William, Phil, and Paul were instructing – three horn instructors who were really teaching, wow. It felt professional. So, different but, there was more than that. I couldn't put a finger on what but something drew me in. Later I identified it a mixture of heritage, purpose, pride, and desire. I came back, joined and even tried to bring some former Regal Valiant members too. For some reason they just didn't connect. They didn't feel it. Honestly, I only saw Vanguard and wanted to be part of it. I wanted to help bring the unique character of this organization back. From day one I was treated like a Vanguard. I quickly became a Vanguard. It transcended friendships and family. Many people go a lifetime without making a connection like that. ***I am certain that the members of the 1976 Vanguard would have fit in at any point in corps history.***

What I physically experienced was rapid improvement through a lot of practice. From 1975 to 1976 it was dramatic. For the record this wasn't through turnover, or additions like me; it was hard work from the returning 1975 corps. The Vanguard achieved several first place showings in '76 though the shows won weren't against anyone really big. In real terms we became respectable in the Midwest. What I most remember from the season was "Go-Go Big Red" coming from the stands on a cold Racine night. It sent chills down my spine of a different kind. By August the future was bright. What happened after that season was devastating. ***But, as I reflected, it was the loss of the corps and what it stood for that stung most.*** I could never march again except as a Vanguard. As I found that this wasn't really true, as a member of the Senior Version, the name, uniforms and colors could be the same without it being The Vanguard. The experience was more of drum corps alumni reunion than the spirit of the original.

The point I would like everyone to know is this: for those of us who the Vanguard "spoke to," becoming a member and leaving it behind was every bit as emotional and meaningful right to the very end. To the alumni who came before, thank you for passing on the heritage, purpose, pride, and desire. To my 1976 comrades, thanks for accepting me into this special fraternity, even with seven years of "c" corps stubborn loyalty, pride and "humility". In the end I find that if you cut me I didn't bleed RV maroon or gold; I bled Vanguard red.

Finally, I lift a toast to the years that never came, and the memories that would have been.

Memorable Moments

By **Jay McGuffin**

It might be because I am still hanging around here in 2005, or maybe the fact that last year I actually marched again (this time with the Chicago Royal Airs) and that I was with the Vanguard all the way back in 1965 – (that’s a span of about 40 years). But for whatever reason, in the last year or so I have had a lot of people ask me what my most memorable moments or feelings were as a member of the Vanguard, even before this newsletter started asking that question.

My answer is as follows.

To understand how this goes together you first need to know where I came from....

I came from Custer’s Brigade (later on, we were called just “The Brigade”) with **Jim O’Donnell, Greg Hauser, Jim Eastberg, Rich Stanczak**, and several others. Custer’s Brigade was a really small corps of what I think I can safely categorize as “C-Corps.” I don’t think any of us were even old enough to get a driver’s license permit, at least when we started out (in 1960-1961). We were also a really “smart market” corps; by that I mean that our corps generally got invited mostly to the smaller shows – our main competition was against corps like the Grayslake Scarlet Knights, Maple City Cadets, Cedar Rapid Cadets, McHenry Viscounts, Morton Grove Cougars, St. Matthias Cadets, etc. But make no mistake – we saw a LOT of the big corps, and we were in true AWE of corps like the Vanguard, the Royal Airs, the Norwood Park Imperials, even the Cavaliers.

Anyway, fast forward from 1960 to September 1964, we had grown up a bit, but the Brigade then folded. We all didn’t just decide to become Vanguards on our own (I actually had my eye on the Royal Airs) – we were told that the Brigade was “merging” with the Vanguard (Brigade management never came clean with us on that – from what I can tell, the fact of the matter was that **Frank Pamper** was the key in talking our management into convincing us to come to the Vanguard where we would be welcome and “have a good home”) and that we were to join the Vanguard. But there were no arguments from any of us Brigade kids – we were a couple years older by that time and ready to move up to the “major leagues.”

We show up at Vanguard Hall that first rehearsal night and first we met Frank Pamper. After some other introductions, I was taken over to the drum line and met our drum instructor, Mr. **Dick Brown**, who was (and still is) a GREAT guy, a very talented drum instructor and writer, and still my friend to this day. My new drumming partners in the Vanguard line included **Bob Stohl, Bill Sosin, John Gruber, Greg Kmiec, Greg Luczynski, John Krueger, Larry Schuck** and the inimitable **Denny Heidmann**. Later, we also picked up **Jim Wisniewski, Herman Young, Brian Arwine, and Fred Huscher** from the Spartans, and **Craig Smith and Bob Muller** from the Phantom Regiment. Talk about TALENT – We were LOADED!

Anyway, over the next few weeks we learned the old Vanguard songs (“Luck Be A Lady” and “Bill Bailey”) and the newer ones for ’65 (“Over There” and “West Side Story”) and as I recall we were all pretty amazed at how good we sounded for only having been drumming together for so short of a time. Then, in March, we had our first standstill competition at Lane Tech.

So there I am on the stage, 15 years old, nervous as hell, playing with the VANGUARD drum line with all these great drummers, and wearing that great VANGUARD uniform (still the best looking uniform in the business) playing VANGUARD music and playing with VANGUARD LEGENDS like **Bill and Sam Agnello, Jay Knebl, Jim Grosso**, and so on. I can only imagine that these feelings were just what it is like being a rookie in major league baseball and finally making it into the starting lineup for the New York Yankees.

Clincher Number 1: We won that show – and we beat the Royal Airs, the Cavaliers and the Kilties. Sam Agnello just recently reminded me of this part of this story:

“I remember the first Lane Tech Standstill when they were announcing the scores and places. I was standing with a group of Vanguards and we kept waiting for our corps to be announced. All of us were from corps that usually took 4th place or lower. Well, when they kept announcing and it got up to the 4th and 3rd place corps and we weren’t announced yet, I thought they forgot us. All of us standing in the group began to realize that we were down to the last two corps to be announced. They announced second place, which I believe was the Cavaliers, and then we went nuts with joy!”

The Vanguard had arrived!!

Clincher Number 2: In another week or so, there was another standstill, and we won that one too!

Clincher Number 3: The high school which I attended had an all girls drill team (called the R-Lettes) – these ladies really were the “hotties” of their day in our high school. But the big deal is that they used to end up attending all the big drum corps shows, and they were VERY impressed to know that they actually KNEW a real, live BIG TIME drum corps guy. Whether it was standstills, or South Milwaukee, the Woodstock show, the McHenry show or VFW Nationals – I seemed to have inherited my own personal fan club. PLUS, on Monday mornings after each drum corps weekend, and in between classes, I (a freshman) had all these great looking girls (juniors and seniors) coming and talking to me. I not only impressed the babes, but my male classmates as well had a VERY NICE time in high school during that time!

What a LIFE!

My First Performance as a Vanguard **By Bill O'Connell**

While recently viewing a news broadcast on television, the local news covered the St. Patrick's Day Parade down Michigan Avenue in Chicago. It reminded me of my very first performance in the Vanguard uniform. For many years, it was our first outing. The saying, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb," was never more true than in the Windy City. When those cold breezes whipped their way down Chicago city streets, especially when you were standing around waiting to step off, one would ask why we do this.

I remember warming up with the drum line and the wind played havoc on my 20" cymbals. I remember **Bill Agnello** warming up the horn line with many spectators standing around watching us. I said to myself, "This is cool!" We were the Vanguard on the verge of our most successful season.

It was 1968 and our next outing was a standstill at the Civic Opera House. Besides working our regular repertoire, we also rehearsed the 1812 Overture complete with bells and a cannon at our hall on Oakton Street in Des Plaines. Actually, the cannon was a shotgun with blanks shot by **Jim Unrath** into a barrel. It was intense. In fact, the first time Jim shot the gun, there was debris in the form of sand in the barrel that shot out and sandblasted his arm. I thought the roof was going to come off the place. We traveled to the Opera House and waited our turn to perform. When we opened with Captain from Castile, I knew that I would be hooked on this drum corps stuff for years to come. The cannon shots in the 1812 Overture actually brought dust (perhaps asbestos) from the rafters. The crowd went bananas and we set the tone that the Vanguard was the corps to contend with.

Prior to the marching season, we did another standstill at Roosevelt University. I don't remember much about that.

My first competition was the Lombard Lilac Festival. We had a parade and a show. Though our debut was unsuccessful, our next show was in Kenosha. For years, this would be the first show of the year. It was on the lake and usually quite windy and cold. We began a winning streak that included VFW State. Though state was a local competition, it was big since so many national contenders were from Illinois, and the enemy had won that show for many years in a row. I remember after Grand Finale, Bill Agnello hoisted the trophy and VFW flag about his head. As a rookie, I could only guess that this must have been big.

Like all competitive endeavors, it is hard to maintain the level from post to post. After slumping mid-season, we regained our composure and, though the big one slipped through our fingers, we finished strong and won a title at World Open.

Following the season, our connection to Louie Peick and the Teamsters led to us performing in the Democratic National Convention Parade held in Chicago. What a wild

event that was. Our buses had a police escort down the Kennedy Expressway, there was rioting in Grant Park, and an overall, intense atmosphere. Hubert Humphrey's motorcade came to a complete stop. Secret Service freaked over that one and a cameraman was crushed between two cars. I stood back taking it all in, but the look on my dad's face was, "What have we gotten ourselves into?"

Well, what started out as a memoir of my first performance has turned into a summary of memories of my rookie year. What are your significance memories?

Thanks for the memories, Ted, Jay, Bill, and the Bevill Family!

*If these stories spark a memory of YOUR time in this great organization, we'd love to hear about it! Just respond to this email and I'll take it from there. Next month, in addition to our regular features, we'll begin a "Where Are They Now?" column featuring the personal and professional accomplishments of our Vanguard brothers and sisters today. (Thanks for that great idea, **Greg Kmiec!**) Let us know what's been going on in YOUR life!*

*As always, click on "Reply" if you would like copies of previous **Voice of the Vanguard** issues.*

Have a great month!

*Cathy O'Connell Letourneau
('69-'76)*