

Judging the 70's

By Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com

Being a Pacific NW drum corps means being stuck way out in the upper left-hand corner of the good old U.S. of A. Our isolation has been known to breed politics, nepotism, and outright skullduggery in the local drum corps scene. But hey, what's drum corps **without** those?

Back in the 70s, there used to be a theory that to get the true measure of your corps, you had to compete outside the confines of the Pacific NW and its home-grown, sometimes myopic judging. Many corps had employed this to some success. Some not.

[Pacific NW is loosely defined as Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia Canada for this article]

Since we live in the NW, our travel choices are to go east to Colorado, Utah, or the east coast. Or go south to California. Going north into Canada was the same as being judged locally, so not a "true measure".

If your corps had money, and the majority of Pacific NW corps did not, you'd go back east to compete (by east, I mean anything east of the Missouri river). The issue here was distance, time, and MONEY. Quite a few corps that made the trek practiced deficit spending that, in my opinion, ultimately led to their demise.

The only feasible option for many corps was to go south and tour California. Competing with those corps was an eye opener. They had their own scene going on down there. Tough corps, lots of shows, national champions, and a totally different level of judging (which was what we were after). Going to California was also cheaper compared to going back east. 2,200 miles round trip to Cali vs. 5,600 miles to the east coast and back.

That was the quandary; tour the Pacific NW and be subjected to the vagaries of local judging, or spend some coin, go play in someone else's backyard, and be subjected to the vagaries of **their** judging.

I love drum corps. (seriously)

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