

Portland, OR, "Merrykhana" parade and "Drumkhana" competition

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The Portland "Merrykhana" parade and the "Drumkhana" drum corps competition were the start of the summer season for Pacific Northwest drum corps activity in 1964.



The "Merrykhana" parade was originally the "Rose Festival" nighttime parade started in 1907 and renamed "Merrykhana" in 1925 as a counterpoint to the more sedate "Rose Festival" parade or "Grand Floral Parade".

As Portland's version of the Mardi Gras parade, "Merrykhana" was a little wild at times for both the viewers and the participants. It was once called "The wildest, wettest, drunkenest brawl ever seen on the streets of Portland." The

parade was canceled in 1972 due to . . . we'll call it . . . over-exuberance. Most if not all of the corps participating in the competition marched in the parade the night before the contest.

The 1964 parade started outside the northeast entrance of the Portland Memorial Coliseum. The participants marched directly inside the coliseum via large access doors, over the basketball court in front of a packed house of spectators and exited through the south end access doors. The parade then went over the North Steel Bridge which at the time had a grated steel deck without pavement. You could see the Willamette River flowing 40 feet below your feet as you marched across.

"Drumkhana" was the home show of the Portland Leathernecks senior corps, AKA American Legion Post #169 of Portland, OR. They were called the Leathernecks (right) because the nucleus of the post was made up of Marines which are nicknamed "Leathernecks," of course.

This corps was formed in the fall of 1955 by Kenneth Douglas, their drum major. The music instructor in 1956

was Don Bradley, Washington State American Legion bugling champion in 1955. He accomplished that feat as a member of the Seattle Hurricanes (left) of AL University Post #11.

The 'Necks won the Oregon State American Legion senior title six times in the 12 years of their existence. They disbanded in 1967, but continued to sponsor "Drumkhana" through 1969.

The drum corps show was held at Madison High School in 1964, the



August 9, 1957 - Leathernecks AL Post #169, Portland Oregon



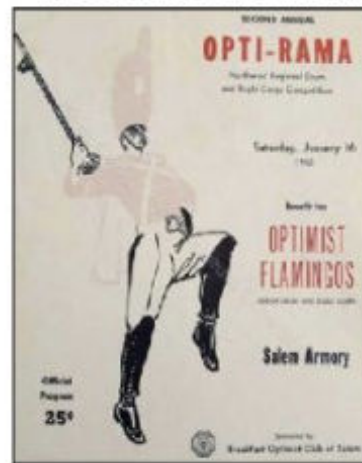
competition. (Above, Seattle Thunderbirds at "Drumkhana," 1969.

The Pacific Northwest Drum Corps Season

In the Pacific Northwest during the 1960s, our drum corps season started the third week of January with the first indoor show; "Optirama" was hosted by the Flamingos (below right) of Salem, OR.

The second indoor show was held midway through March and was hosted by the Seattle Thunderbirds, the Northwest Championships.

Both these indoor shows consisted of individuals, quartets, ensembles for bugles and percussion, individuals, duets, quartets for color guards, plus full color guard floor show, and a full corps floor show with drill and music on a basketball court.



Championships and later, the Northwest Drum Corps Association Championships.

The longest gap between drum corps shows during the year was the four months between September and January.

Sixty years later, the 2023 DCI season runs from June 28 to DCI Finals on August



June 4, 1967 - Seattle Shamrocks at Drumkhana in Milwaukie Oregon. The drum judge on the left wearing gold, is a Leatherneck Sr. drum corps member

same field that would be used for the 1965 American Legion Nationals prelims



January 20, 1973 Flamingos at the Salem Optirama (their show) "full corps third-diff" segment of the weekend competition

kisn
good guys killing

WATCH FOR THE
BIG BT JOCKS
THIS SATURDAY NIGHT

Merrykhana
Parade
PORTLAND

12. That's 10 MONTHS without a contest. Times have indeed changed.

Does any drum corps host a winter contest anymore? Individuals, quartets, ensembles? Let us know.

Long live drum corps, PacificNorthwestDrumCorps.com. ■



1955 American Legion University Post #11 Sr D&BC; AKA: Seattle Hurricanes
Nine-time Washington State Legion Sr. Champions

Don Bradley, 1955 Washington State Legion bugling Champion & Leathernecks Music Instructor is here somewhere.