

Prologue -

For those of you not familiar with this topic, it is a tad controversial with members of both corps. Some passions run a little high with folks on both sides trying to lay claim to the same history.

As usual, if you have insight on the topic, don't hesitate to send us an email. We respond to all communications promptly.

The Seattle Cadet Corps

Unravelling the Early Years

By

Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com

Specializing in PNW Drum Corps of the 1960s and 70s

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The early history of the Seattle Cascades has been written by many people. Not all versions floating around the internet are remotely correct. Right here, right now, with documentation and firsthand knowledge, we're writing the definitive version.

*All of the data below is supported by period documentation found on this site. Agree with it or not, period documentation is **usually accurate**. This site is merely putting the data together in a cohesive story in an attempt to dispel internet myths and fabrications on this subject.*

We have reached out to Garth Stubbs, son of Rod Stubbs, perennial Cascades drum instructor, and Thunderbirds corps member, to fill in the missing pieces of this story and confirm what is written below. We thank him for the generous contribution of his time and knowledge.

NOTE - "The Greenwood Boys Club" has been replaced with "Thunderbirds" to simplify the analysis below.

Rod Stubbs founded the Cascade Cadets in June 1966.

The Seattle Thunderbirds (TB) were formed in February 1958. In the fall of 1959, they added an all-girl color guard with Rod Stubbs as their instructor. He instructed the Thunderbird color guard from 1959 thru 1964.

In the March 1967 Thunderbirds' show program, the Cascade Cadets history reads as: the "**Cadet Corps**" was organized during the "**1963-1964 school term under the direction of Rod Stubbs**". This was at Wilson Jr High in Seattle where he was the principal. Note the use of "**Cadet Corps**" does not specify **WHICH** Cadet Corps, The Thunderbird Cadets or the Cascade Cadets. The TB Cadets were formed during the 1963-64 school term and were located at Wilson Jr High. [The TB Cadets were the genesis of the Cascade Cadets]

Summation: Mr. Stubbs taught the TB color guard from 1959 thru 1964. During the 1963-64 school year, he and Jack Avery recruited members for the new TB Cadets feeder corps. Additionally, in 1962 Mr. Stubbs was the Thunderbirds business manager.

Jack Avery founded the Thunderbirds in 1958²

In 1963, Jack Avery and Rod Stubbs started recruiting members for the new Thunderbird Cadets feeder corps. By 1965 there was dissention within the TB Cadet parents about how the Thunderbird organization was treating the cadet corps. That is; 1) The TB organization was taking money that was raised by the TB Cadets, and applying it to the A-Corps instead of using it to upgrade the Cadet instruments and uniforms. 2) The TB organization was moving members of the Cadet Corps up to the A-corps even if the TB Cadet member in question wanted to stay with the cadet corps. 3) The TB organization wanted to turn the Cadets into a parade only corps. No more field shows. (There were additional factors that we have not delineated for brevity).

The 1965 TB Cadets had approximately 40 members (remember, drum corps were smaller in those days!). Mr. Avery was the Corps Director, Music Director, and M&M Instructor.

At the end of the 1965 season, some TB Cadet parents approached Rod Stubbs and Jack Avery about starting a new drum corps separate from the Thunderbird organization due to the aforementioned issues. They obliged, and formed the Cascade Cadets in June of 1966¹. Those TB Cadet parents along with their kids, 25 of them, formed the nucleus of the new Cascade Cadets drum corps. (25 TB Cadets represented 63% of their corps, indicating that the formation of the Cascade Cadets had broad support.)

After that split, the TB Cadets did not have enough members to sustain itself (only 37% of the original membership was left), so they were absorbed into the A-corps for the 1966 season. The TB Cadets never marched again after the 1965 split.

>>>> See the Thunderbirds Show program excerpt next page <<<<

THUNDERBIRD CADETS

Junior Drum and Bugle Corps
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

CORPS OFFICERS

Business Manager — Lou Dvorak
Drum Instructor — Garth Stubbs

Music Director — Craig Salins
M & M Instructor — Lorin Grinolds

The Cadet Corps was a consistent contender and made many fourth and fifth place showings last year. The highlight of the year was placing the highest of all "B" Corps at the American Legion State Competition at Wenatchee, Washington.

The growth of the Cadets has not been without significant administrative difficulties which created a major decision during the later part of the 1965 competition season. An appraisal was made to increase the size of the "THUNDERBIRDS", in order to be a top contender in the American Legion Nationals in Portland last August. It was necessary to "strip" the Cadets of those members capable of "moving up" to the more difficult music and marching demands. The value of a feeder Corps was clearly demonstrated, as the ultimate goal, of all Cadet members, is to become "Thunderbirds". In this respect, the Cadets enjoyed the most successful year in its three year history.

The Cadets are not competing in this year's Northwest Competition as at the present time are in the process of re-organization. Recruitment of new members will be stepped up as quickly as the "Thunderbirds" can get more drums, bugles, flags, etc. necessary to field a competing unit. They INTEND to be BACK in the "B" circuit learning basics and serving the original intent of a feeder unit.

From the 1966 Seattle Thunderbirds show program

Summation –

In February 1958, Jack Avery started the Greenwood Boys Club D&BC, AKA: The Seattle Thunderbirds.

In 1963 the Thunderbird Cadets feeder corps was formed with the help of Mr. Avery and Mr. Stubbs.

After the 1965 season, a group of TB Cadet parents asked Mr. Stubbs & Mr. Avery to form a new corps, separate from the Thunderbird organization.

Mr. Stubbs, along with Mr. Avery, formed the Cascade Cadets in June of 1966 with the nucleus of the TB Cadet parents and 25 of their kids.

In 1966, the remainder of the TB Cadets were absorbed into the Thunderbird A-corps.

Without the TB Cadet parents asking Mr. Stubbs to form a new corps, it's highly doubtful that he would've ever formed a corps of his own.

Mr. Stubbs successfully ran the Seattle Cascades D&BC until the mid-1990s. One man running a drum corps for 30+ years is a testament to his managerial acumen and his dedication to kids of all ages and backgrounds.

The Seattle Thunderbirds, TB Cadets, and the Seattle Cascades shared founders, directors, instructors, and members. The lineage is clearly evident. The organizations and outcomes are different.

There you have it. The origins of the Seattle Thunderbird Cadets & Cascade Cadets.

Comments? Observations? Contact us. We'd love to learn more on this topic.

Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com

Miscellaneous Tidbits – As of June 2021

- On the net, there are statements about the Cascades being formed in 1957, 1958, or 1959. Those are incorrect. I believe that those authors are adopting the Thunderbird timeline for their own purposes.
- The Cascade Cadets first known field competition was in New Westminster BC Canada on August 20th, 1966.
- Summer of 1966 – First known photo of the Cascade Cadets. Taken in Greenwood (Seattle).
- Cascade history in DCX is all honked-up. It is definitely not correct. This site has been in touch with DCX to correct this, to no avail.
- Some Thunderbirds are aghast that some Cascades want to adopt the TB history as their own. Some are OK with it. Cascades are generally proud to be associated with the Thunderbirds.
- These two corps shared founders, directors, instructors and members. The lineage is the same. The managerial structure and outcomes are different.
- These two corps marched as a single unit in the 1968 PNE Parade in Vancouver BC. Other events too?

- At the end of the Thunderbirds life, there was talk of a merger with the Cascades.
- Mr. Stubbs learned from the parental debacle the Thunderbirds experienced, and prevented that from happening to the Cascades by literally owning all of the corps' equipment. It's hard for the parents (the Board) to get uppity and take control of the corps when the corps entity itself doesn't own any equipment, the Director does. Smart man, Mr. Stubbs.

Footnotes -

1. Per the 1970 Optirama program.
2. Mr. Avery's 1965 letter to all members



1963 Thunderbird Cadets



1975 Seattle Cascades