

Lake Erie Fanfare Annual Report

October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011

Overview:

This past year was another intense and busy one for the Lake Erie Fanfare as we ran an unprecedented TWO regional shows offered to us by DCI. Receiving a phone call in late September of 2010, DCI requested us to host a “seeding regional” for 12 of the open class corps on Saturday August 6th followed up by our 28th annual DCI World class show the next day with nearly double the normal number of competing groups! And then a mere three weeks later we offered the 15th Annual German Festival as well! All in some really tough economic times!

To follow then are some of the highlights, accomplishments and also the setbacks of our major endeavors.

Lake Erie Fanfare Competitions:

This year marked the 28th year of hosting these Drum Corps International Competitions for our organization. We were hoping to again be considered for the two show concept that was so successful last year and we got that and a whole lot more! Both of the offered shows were true “regional” events and as such, we received excellent line ups of groups for both. The weather cooperated too on both days with just a minor rain burst at the end of the second night. All in all, the shows were very well received!

It should be pointed out that an opportunity to host shows like this does not happen frequently at all however, it was a huge nod to our organization to be asked to host such a regional weekend this past summer!

The first event was held at Harbor Creek High School and drew a nice crowd of about 600 drum corps fans and new patrons from the East County areas too. This show saw 12 of the “open” class groups compete for their starting position at the following Monday’s first day of Championships. The corps were all keenly aware of the significance and their extra effort not only produced a great show for our patrons but also provided the first upset of the reigning Blue Devils by their rival Oregon Crusaders!

The second day’s show was held at the McDowell High Field and featured 14 of the top World Class corps here in the last weekend regional before Championships. Here too we saw the groups at the peak of their performance season in a show so large we literally ran out of parking for their busses! The crowd also responded to this in a huge way as nearly 2,000 people attended the second show and enjoyed the spectacle.

The only mar on the whole evening was a small rainstorm that brewed up late and caused the last 3 groups to perform only at a standstill due to the slippery field conditions.

When we started the campaign for last year's show, we truly expected to find ourselves fighting a huge uphill battle to continue developing our sponsors. We were surprised then to keep ALL 17 of them involved. THIS year, we were even more surprised to add an additional sponsor to the list! The help of these business partners and the smaller advertisers really do make the difference in making the shows work and we are honored to have their continued support.

Overall we felt the two shows were great successes for the spectators and the corps. For the record, with both shows working together and the huge number of groups involved, we did not actually make any profit but just about broke even while treating our fans to an unforgettable monster weekend!

Lake Erie Regiment Winter Guard:

Once again, one of the great successes of last year was our 14 year old Winter Guard! This group competed in the Independent World Class and continued to train the members in color guard technique, choreography and dance. Currently many of our guard members are themselves teaching numerous high school band programs in the area further spreading the knowledge gained here to others.

The Guard carried a double membership this past season in the TRWEA (Pittsburgh area) and WGI (National) circuits and competed in 9 separate shows. The members of the Guard continued the reputation of being exceptionally strong on the floor of competition. Their show was centered around being "Under the Sea" complete with divers suits, fish flags and more!

The only negative on the whole season was that we did not grow in terms of actual membership numbers, only staying stagnant in that regard. In today's times, getting young adults to give up a day per weekend to rehearse and travel with the show does not receive the priority it once did. We hope this will change soon and we can once again increase the membership.

German Heritage Festival:

After last year's rain out of the whole first day, we tried to be a little conservative for this year's planning just in case another hurricane would show up on our doorstep. Fortunately, the weather was good this year with the only complaints being that it was unusually hot. Although this might have kept some of the patrons away, we were happy to see good crowds on both days with nearly 5,000 people once again attending the event!

The festival as a whole was again very positively received by the public and vendors involved. We are hoping to add a new dimension to next year's event by having separate bands and acts for each day and thus enabling the sale of a new 2 day pass which will hopefully add to the total revenue. In all, the festival itself netted the Fanfare about \$3,800 this year.

Fundraising:

The 2010 season saw another busy year of activity in one of our most important yet often overlooked areas. As an organization, we try to be as self sufficient as possible feeling that the surest way to achieve our goals is to work hard at them ourselves.

In this regard, we again ran several unique fundraisers which allow our student members and their families to get involved and help make the goals achievable. These fundraising efforts include: Our Annual Sportsman's Raffle, our Program Book for the Fanfare Competition, and the Concession Sales at the German Heritage Festival. All told, these actions brought in over \$9,000 for our organization!

Grants:

We are proud to announce that in 2011 we received grants from the Falcone Family Fund of the Erie Community Foundation, the Erie Community Foundation General Fund and the Erie Arts Endowment totaling \$12,443.00. Words cannot describe how deeply we appreciate the funds these programs provide us with and their ongoing support is truly something we hope we can count on into the future!

On an upbeat note, we have been kept in the loop regarding the ECGRA funds that have started to be distributed and recently applied for a grant for the German Festival and received \$2,050. We are also applying in October for the Regional Asset portion of the funds and hope we can be as successful there too.

In our particular situation we always note that before the casinos came into play, our weekly bingo games provided enough funding to operate all we do and more. Now that the bingo games are all gone, we are glad to see that at least part of this gaming revenue is coming to groups such as ours.

Volunteers:

Our volunteers simply make the organization exist! Whether in running the overall organization, helping with the Winter Guard or whatever else, if it were not for the huge investment of volunteer hours, we could not afford to offer a fraction of what we do. Our cumulative hours for the organization are still staggering – approx 4,000 hours!