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**Back in the  
Day**  
Wanda  
Orton

## Brig veterans share their memories

Plans continue for the farewell celebration of the Lee Brigadiers the weekend of Sept. 14, including recognition of former members at the Gander football game that Friday night and a reunion brunch the following morning at Robert E. Lee High School.

Names and addresses of former Brigadiers may be mailed to Marty Haynes at 2213 Mockingbird, Baytown TX 77520, or e-mailed to Julie Jannise at jajannise@goosecreek.cisd.esc4.net. Meanwhile, messages continue to pour in from all over the country lamenting the fact that the drum and bugle corps will be no more.

Celeste Lopez Garcia, class of 1990, recalls that the Brigadiers worked hard and had a structure that led to "wonderful, strong friendships."

She says, "I felt like the Brig inspired a different type of peer pressure. Our peer pressure was to be good and follow the rules. I cannot imagine what my years at Lee would have been like without the Brigadiers."

Kay Lansford Staton, class of 1970, says she hasn't stopped humming the corps song since she read the news. "The Brigadiers were very close to my heart."

Jimmy L. Smith of Dayton, a 1965 graduate of Robert E. Lee, writes, "I was under the my opinion that the Brigadiers would always be there — I cannot believe this is happening."

Pat Nicholson May, drum major of the Robert E. Lee Band, 1952-53, says she "never dreamed in a million years" that the Brigadiers would disband. "The school does not know what they have given up and will be no more. — The Lee Brigadiers was the best drum and

bugle corps in the state of Texas. They sent chills up and down my spine when they performed anywhere."

Dodie Derryberry Everard of North Carolina, a Brig drum major in the late 1950s, formed lifelong friendships in the corps. "That's what it's like to have been a Brigadier — friendship and connections. I still meet with Brig friends every time I'm in the Baytown area."

Another former Brig from the late 1950s, Sandra Sutphin Olney writes: "It is true that the qualities instilled by drill team participation are invaluable lessons, but unfortunately, today's girls will miss these lessons and will never know that they are the poorer for having done so."

Wendy Buenz Seghers of Gariand, colonel of Sterling Stars in 1981-1982: "I must admit that it never occurred to me that they would ever disband the Brigadiers — What the Brigadiers and the Stars represent is eternal and should not be so easily given up. I learned how to be a team player, leader, friend and other many important life skills while being a part of the Stars. I worry that there will be no outlet for girls (at REL) interested in developing a skill that a normal school curriculum doesn't provide."

Former Gander football player Gordon Schutze, class of 1976, writes from Arkansas: "The knowledge that the Brig was disbanding was very disheartening. I could not imagine a football game without them — Seventy-six years is a long tradition just to throw away."

Barbara Whitesides Mixon of New Braunfels, class of 1952, writes: "I had heard that they were disbanding but I had hoped it wouldn't really happen. That's an end to a real institution."

Charlotte Ellis Pate of Deer Park, class of 1951, remembers her first time to march with the corps.

"My brother came home from A&M in time to polish my black boots to a high shine and clean the brass buttons on my uniform to perfection the Friday of my first drill at Memorial Stadium. I literally shone when I got into my uniform."

She said, "I am grateful for all of the experiences from the searing August practices, the parades, the drills, the camaraderie and the bus trips — reunions and friendships and remembrances. The spirit will live until the last of us is gone."

*Wanda Orton's column appears every Monday. Comments may be sent to her e-mail address at wan@ctesc.net.*