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THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS

Green Capsule Comments

Vol. 6 No. 4 20c

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GREEN CAPSULE COMMENTS
Official Publication of
THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS
DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

subscription: \$2.00 yr.
Offices: Suite 302,
205 Keele Street, Toronto

Executive Editor: DON DABER
Editor: VERN JOHANSSON

OUR SIXTH YEAR "*****"
Vol. 6 #4. Oct.-Nov. 1966.

COVER COMMENTS:

Members of the 1966
Optimists as photographed
at the Grape Festival in
St. Catharines, Sept. 24th.

- 1--DrumMajor: Vern Johansson.
2--Mike Thys, French Horn.
3--Mike Tierney, Nationals.
4--Bill Kane, Rifle.
5--Dennis Loughead, Guard.
6--John MacDonald, Snare.
7--Ed Collins, Soprano.
9--Marc Burns, Guard.
10--Garreth Green, Cymbals.
11--Guy Vezina, Guard Captain.
12--Dennis Lewsey, Soprano.
13--David Blevins, Guard.
14--David Harris, Rud. Bass.
15--Doug MacKenzie, Soprano.
16--Marcel Smolinski, Baritone.
17--Gord Lefevre, Tenor Drum.
18--Terry Warburton, Soprano.
19--Paul Thompson, Contra Bass.
20--Clayton Keat, Contra Bass,
21--Bernhard Roelke, Guard.

- 22--Keith Staff, Guard.
24--Barry Stinson, Soprano.
25--Art Tamaki, French Horn.
26--Russ Jarvis, Tenor Drum.
27--Dan Villeneuve, Guard.
28--Vince Ferraro, Tenor Drum.
29--Emilio Russo, Snare.
31--John MacAlphine, French Horn.
32--Doug Sparkes, Baritone.
33--Dave Byrne, Contra Bass.
34--Larry Greenwood, Rifle.
35--Bruce VanGoozen, Soprano.
36--Bill Gillespie, Guard.
37--David Matts, Soprano.
38--Bill Bradley, Soprano.
39--Brian Byrne, French Horn.
40--Ron Cooper, Rifle.
41--Rick Tracey, Bass Drum.
42--Bill MacMillan, Baritone.
43--Bill Fallows, Bass Drum.
44--Frank Mendicino, Soprano.
45--David Hibbits, Soprano.
46--Ron Kaiser, Snare.
47--Laurie Seto, Soprano.
49--Steve Cooper, Guard.
50--Orest Burack, Tenor Drum.
51--George Wright, Baritone.
54--Peter Walls, Soprano.
55--Richard Cooper, Guard Sergeant.
56--Martin Palmer, Rifle.
58--Stewart Young, French Horn.
59--David Collins, Cymbal.
60--Joe Palanica, Soprano.
62--Keith Adams, Guard.
67--Keith Buckingham, Soprano.
68--Neil Hawthorne, Cymbals.
71--Rick Shearer, Soprano.
72--Bob Carell, Soprano.
73--Bob Christie, Euphonium.
81--Dennis Roberts, Soprano.
82--Hide Mori, Soprano.
85--Bill Andrews, Euphonium.
87--Allan Accorn, French Horn.
91--Wayne Dean, Baritone.
92--David Simms, Rud. Bass.

The 1966 Executive:

DIRECTOR.....Don Daber.
MANAGER.....Clare Reid.
DIRECTOR, CADETS.....Al Simms.
PUBLICITY.....Warren Gilbert.
EQUIPMENT.....John Shearer, Gary Corbett.
MUSIC DIRECTOR.....Barry Bell.
BUGLE INSTRUCTORS...Barry Bell, Bill Thorne.
CADETS BUGLE INSTRUCTOR...Richard Boehnke.
DRILL INSTRUCTOR....Jack Roberts.
DRUM INSTRUCTORS...Lorne Ferazutti, Ron Kaiser.
DRUM INSTRUCTOR, CADETS...John MacDonald.
GUARD INSTRUCTOR...Jack Roberts.

OPTIMISTS MAKE IT 9!

"INSIDE THE CORPS"

by the Dynamic Duo...

George Wright and Vern Johansson

Hear about the 4 Riflemen, Bill Kane, Marty Palmer, Ron Cooper, Larry (Maudie) Greenwood who flung their 4 rifles up AND NINE CAME DOWN!!! Figure THAT out???

Before we go on to The Nationals, back to the CNE Show... We started the Saturday of the weekend off with a holiday but back on LABOUR DAY at Keating Field, Home of The Champions. Immediately after rehearsal we were told to meet at The Shrine for further orders, before going there however, we were turned loose to find a greasy spoon. Its nice to be trusted. Once there; into uniforms and into the bus for the long ride from one end of the CNE (Western Gates) to the Princess Gates, eastern end. Thrills!!!

Everyone was so excited because we got to march in the big parade with the rest of the "bands". Among those present were York Lions, Del, Chessmen (late) but where were LaSalle Cadets???

Anyway, the parade moved off with a police escort to head the corps through the Midway of the Mighty CNE with the corps moving in line of the draw position of the contest following. So who should lead? Naturally... The Optimists!!

LaSalle Cadets were given a 5 point penalty for not making the parade ... this wasn't much of a start for our newest competators, but all in all they did an exceptional show considering the difficulties which they had just gone through. Optimists did another average show and finished in first place with a score of 81. Somehow we didn't seem to have the cheering crowds carried over from the Ontario Championships. Wonder what happened?

BACK TO HAMILTON AGAIN... the next week---this Contest was a double header, going Senior and Junior. It was actually a "last minute" fill-in as a pre-Nationals and I think all the Corps appreciated it. Thanks Commanders for sponsoring same.

We drew first at this one too. You're falling down on the job, Uncle Jack. Lets hope this lucky trend doesn't continue. NOW we're starting to wonder about the Nationals draw position. We did manage to pull through and win this one by 4.1 which was a great improvement over the week. Del was second, York third, Chessmen 4th. In the Men's Class, Commanders 1st., then Ambassadors, Royalaires, Dutchmen.

THE L-O-O-O-O-NG 1966 CANADIANNATIONALS.... What can we say but WOOOOOW!!!! This year, for the first time in 9 Nationals Series a long trip and the Corps went first class all the way. We stayed at the best hostel in the Paris of North America so STEWART YOUNG spent most of the morning looking for the Eiffel Tower. Yes, we all had a real GOOD time (eh, MACKENZIE) thanks to the OPTIMIST CLUB.

Back to T.O. Friday night we left ON TIME. Figure that out. Wonders never cease. Even Don's compass was on time. After a few minutes on the 401 we stopped off at Markham



Quebec, to pick up Thys, Staff, MacKenzie and one other wayfarer who came out of the bushes and said, "I have been wandering around this wilderness for over forty days and forty nights" Reply from the back of the bus: "Reeeeeally?????" I'm sorry but we don't have any room for your ark. Noah, Noah, we don't know where you can put it. I must say Noah, we sure do like your clothes, who was your tailor? Corbett the tent-maker?"

Onto to Montreal. Lights out at 11 pm, even before we hit the Quebec customs. Another miracle. "Hey, what's all the noise back there? Be quite quiet! Who said that? Cut the noise! You're on report!" It's alright Don, it's only Noah telling us about his zoology course. We told him that he could put his ark on one of the buses, but the animals would have to go. So "Neanderthal" left the bus. The bus was stuffy enough.

We arrived an hour ahead of time because Noah knew the way. All the way up, we were trying to dry his clothes with our Zippo lighters, but they seemed to be water-logged. Rain, rain go away, little Noah wants to play. Shut up Noah and/or I'll take you to Ben's restaurant., with BILL THORNE.

We arrived in Montreal when the bus struck three (John and Sam were so excited on being in Paris.) We hit the hotel staff by surprise. We caught them trying to hide their silverware, towels, soap, glasses, bath-mats, etc. etc. It was the etc. etc. that really disturbed the Cooper clan.

Pause. Moment of silence. Now is the time for all good green to thank Gord Robinson, with his many, many connections, for opening the doors of this hotel, and making our weekend a complete success. YEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

Everyone then bedded down, even Noah, in one of the linen closets. Our team entered the room and found Karis eating tana leaves, he said they were good for him, it gave him a new outlook on life. After Noah told him to make like a tree and leaf, we all settled down to get some rest.

All the rooms were awakened by a RIIIIIIING! at 10 a.m. A pretty female voice that sounded like Boris Karloff bid us good morning from the Sheraton. Some of us slept in and some ate, then we all gathered in the hotel lobby ready for a solid drill rehearsal, (not in the lobby, stupid). We went "single-file" from the hotel to a few blocks north to the grounds of McGill University, for music/drill. We then proceeded back to the hotel to get ready for the prelims. On to the buses on on to the new stadium for inspection, then prelims. Maybe it was the \$5.00 fine, but unlike the Ontario Championships there were no 10ths lost in inspection.

THE NIGHT SHOW: As we were eating supper we got the first of the 'bad news' ...Kaiser didn't come through this time...and drew first and we got the rumour that we were beaten in prelims by LaSalle Cadets. Supper was eaten in silence. Some didn't eat.

The restaurant where the corps ate was across from the street from the hotel and made it easy for everyone to get dressed in their rooms. After everyone was dressed they watched the drum line rehearse and as we watched the spirits seemed to lift. It was a fantastic rehearsal! On to the buses and the Stadium.

In the parking lot by the buses we were called into huddle and this proved to be the most emotional one of the year. Noah was gathering water all over the place. We never felt such enthusiasm as we did that night! The Corps did such a fantastic job that for once our Instructors were at a loss for words. Right from the starting line everything went 'right' and we did nothing but accelerate UP and UP. The fronts were like boards, the soloists were right "on". Everything seemed to come off perfectly. Everyone, I'm sure felt 10 feet tall during the march past the audience and as we left the field area the other Junior Corps watching sensed we had done our SUPERIOR SHOW OF THE YEAR. The excitement took a while to cool off, even as we headed toward the stands to watch the remaining Nationals '66.

RETREAT: After everyone had dusted off their french books (Warburton his french post cards) we proceeded to line up for Retreat. We waited. There was barking in the background. What did this mean? More barking. Dogs. Some were saying The Nationals had gone to the dogs...well, the dogs were there as part of the Montreal Police exhibition. They co-sponsored the show. About three hours later came the announcement we were waiting for... "Second place, with a score of 83.65---LaSalle Cadets!!!" Yes, there was a reaction from the crowd, but not as great as at Waterloo at the Ontarios weeks before...."In first position with a score of 86.0...Toronto Optimists.

The last job, the big one, was well done by all...lets give a big round of applause to our great instructors. Without them it wouldn't have been possible. A very special word of thanks goes to Jack Roberts, our new drill instructor. For his first year in this capacity with the Corps he has done one helluva, swelluva job!

BACK TO THE HOTEL: It was a different corps that arrived about midnight than the one that left at 7:00PM. This was the time for all good Corpsmen to drink of Noah's refreshments...thanks to RUSS JARVIS and RON COOPER we could celebrate in style with a giant bottle of CHAMPagne for a ninth year from the #1 trophy. Divided among the Corps I think everyone got a thimble full.

OUR THANKS TO THE CORPS BOOSTERS, parents and friends who both drove down and came in on Warren's special bus. They too helped win the contest for the corps by giving us a most welcome ovation at the evening finals.

On the trip home, leaving Sunday at noon, we finally did leave after MacKENZIE weaved through the roll call, for someone who wandered the halls with Noah for 40 days and nights he did alright. It only took 20 minutes to go through the roll. On the highway it was leep-frog with all the other corps buses that left about the same time. One amazing fact. The buses were relatively quiet coming back...perhaps because few had slept the night before?

THE GRAPE: What do you know? We won the parade, we won the contest, WE WON THE PARADE Allright, hold it. There were too many corps in this contest. I really couldn't count them all. Lets see. There was Optimists, St. Johns Girls, Optimissts, St. Johns Brantford Girls, Optimists and guests, Chessmen.

By the way, thanks ALEX and friends. We did it for you, Al G. Gee, Al. Vern presented A.G. with a purple and white toothbrush after the parade. After the parade and during the parade we wanted to play "Don't Rain On My Parade" but it did. Interesting trying to get the buses out of the parking lot eh, SAM and JOHN but you did it, only to get caught in a one way street a few minutes later. Finally, at the shopping centre we did all arrange to get one room to eat in, this time we had out Den Mother with us, MRS. BLEVINS whose presence at least kept one side of the room off the tables.

Later, at the Contest the corps really put on a driving show. Compared to the week previous it was as driving as a wet cornflake. Vern did liven it up a bit by changing in to his Uniform ala Neon to add a little 'sparkle' to the show.

Back to the school. Those that were leaving handed in their equipment for the last time and we climbed into the buses for about the last time this season and headed home.

 Here they are.....THE NATIONALS 1966 RESULTS:

- The afternoon prelims: (1) GE/MM--McKean. (2) GE'DRUMS--Clark. (3) GE/Bugles--Arnold/
 (4) FieldM&M--Leonard. (5) FieldM&M--Biggs.
 (6) Field Drums---Cardwell. (7) Field Drums---Tachauer.
 (8) Field Bugles--Bernier. (9) Field Bugles---McKnight.

CORPS	(1)	(2)	(3)	Total	(4)	(5)	Total	(6)	(7)	Total	(8)	(9)	TOTALpos.
OLYMPIQUES:	10.4	5.6	6.7	22.7	19.8	18.6	19.2	10.7	12.5	11.6	11.3	14.6	66.25 9
GRENADIERS:	11.5	5.9	7.5	24.9	19.2	20.8	20.0	12.0	14.1	13.05	12.5	16.4	72.20 7
LA SALLE CADETS:	11.9	8.1	9.0	29.0	20.0	20.6	20.3	15.9	16.5	16.2	14.5	18.1	81.80 1
ARNPRIOR LIONS:	8.6	6.6	7.2	22.4	19.1	20.3	19.7	13.8	13.5	13.65	11.8	14.2	68.55 8
DE LA SALLE:	11.0	8.0	7.9	26.9	20.4	20.2	20.3	16.3	17.7	17.0	14.6	15.3	78.95 3
OPTIMISTS:	11.4	7.8	8.4	27.6	20.6	20.8	20.7	17.2	17.2	17.2	16.2	16.9	81.05 2
YORK LIONS:	10.5	7.3	8.1	25.9	21.1	20.1	20.6	16.4	16.7	16.55	14.9	17.0	78.70 4
CHESSMEN:	10.1	7.1	7.8	25.0	20.4	19.7	20.05	14.8	15.1	14.95	13.9	15.1	74.50 6
SERTOMANAIRES:	11.3	7.5	8.9	27.7	20.0	19.3	19.65	14.9	15.7	15.3	13.9	17.0	78.0 5

COLOUR GUARDS: Night Finals---

- (1) LaSalle Cadets.....80.0
 (2) DeLaSalle.....74.0
 (3) Optimists.....71.0
 (4) York Lions.....64.0

DRUM MAJORS: Night Finals---

- (1) LaSalle Cadets.....91.
 (2) Toronto Optimists....66.
 (2) DeLaSalle.....66.
 (3) York Lions.....65.

THE NATIONALS 1966 RESULTS, NIGHT FINALS:

GE/MM---(1) Dugan. GE/Drums---(2) Cardwell. (3)-GE/Bugles---Macciocchi.
 (5) Field M&M---Biggs. (6) Field M&M---McKeen. (7) Field Drums--Clark. (8)F.Drums-Scudder.
 (9) Field Bugles---Wormington. (10) Field Bugles---Conrad.

CORPS:	(1)	(2)	(3)	Total:	(5)	(6)	Total:	(7)	(8)	Total:	(9)	(10)	Total:
OPTIMISTS:	12.3	9.0	8.4	29.7	21.7	21.9	21.8	17.8	18.0	17.9	17.5	16.1	16.8
LASALLE CADETS:	11.8	8.8	8.3	28.9	20.5	20.7	20.6	16.8	17.5	16.85	17.8	17.0	17.4
YORK LIONS:	10.9	7.9	6.9	25.7	20.0	21.7	20.85	15.7	15.3	15.5	15.1	14.2	14.65
DELASALLE:	10.8	9.1	7.6	27.5	19.4	21.0	20.2	16.3	16.9	16.6	16.3	15.2	15.75

CORPS:	TOTAL SCORE	PENALTY	FINAL SCORE
Optimists.....	86.2.....	Dropped equipment--.2	86.0
LaSalle Cadets.....	83.75.....	Dropped equipment--.1	83.65
York Lions.....	76.7.....	-----	76.70
DeLaSalle.....	80.05.....	-----	80.05

SUMMARY: NIGHT FINALS

FIRST IN GE/MM.....Optimists.
 FIRST IN GE/DRUMS.....DeLaSalle.
 FIRST IN GE/BUGLES.....Optimists.
 FIRST IN TOTAL GE.....Optimists.
 FIRST IN FIELD M&M (1)...Optimists.
 FIRST IN FIELD M&M (2)...Optimists.
 FIRST IN AVERAGE M&M....Optimists.
 FIRST IN FIELD DRUMS (1).Optimists.
 FIRST IN FIELD DRUMS (2).Optimists.
 FIRST IN AVERAGE DRUMS...Optimists.
 FIRST IN FIELD BUGLES(1).LaSalle Cadets.
 FIRST IN FIELD BUGLES(2).LaSalle Cadets.
 FIRST IN AVERAGE BUGLES..LaSalle Cadets.

SUMMARY: AFTERNOON PRELIMS

First in GE/MM.....LaSalle Cadets.
 First in GE/Drums.....LaSalle Cadets.
 First in GE/Bugles.....LaSalle Cadets.
 First in Total GE.....LaSalle Cadets.
 First in Field M&M (1).....Optimists.
 First in Field M&M (2).....Optimists&Grenad.
 First in Average M&M.....Optimists.
 First in Field Drums (1)....Optimists.
 First in Field Drums (2)....DeLaSalle.
 First in Average Drums.....Optimists.
 First in Field Bugles (1)....Optimists.
 First in Field Bugles (2)....LaSalle Cadets.
 First in Average Bugles.....Optimists.

The Television Review Column, The Globe & Mail, Friday, September 9th., 1966

By Dennis Braithwaite:

TOO MUCH GREEN

I woke up the other morning, looked out the window, saw the sun shining on the trees, and thought:"There's too much green in that picture."

Too much green, I am learning, is the thing you have to live with when you get color TV. Green, apparently, is the most insidious and most insistent hue in the prism; he pushes in everywhere, knocking old red for a loop and spreading himself insolently all across the screen. Colour TV really comes down to just two colours, red and green; red's territory is supposed to be the left side, green's the right. The idea is to let each advance toward the middle with equal force, then you end up with a full-color picture. But it never works out that way--except the first day you have the set; apparently they do something to them at the store to make the first day perfect. But then, green gradually takes over. At first you make allowances; if it's a jungle picture or an Irish travelogue you say to

yourself that the green's sure natural, just right. But finally you have to admit that the great wide wonderful world outside isn't all THAT green.

The other night, John Wayne's splendid western, Hondo, was carried in prime time in full colour; as least it was so advertised. But Wayne turned out to be the Green Giant with a hat on. Sadly I turned the whole thing to black and white...just too much green.

+++++
 + For the green Optimist... +
 + ON SALE SOON ++
 + +
 + FOR THE 1967 OPTIMIST +
 + +
 + BOOSTER.... +
 + +
 + NEW...3" Button, 9 Yr.Champs...50¢ +
 + NEW...3" Decal.....25¢ +
 + NEW...1966 Field Show Record. +
 +++++



DRUM MAJOR
Vern Johansson

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72

44

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49

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THE LAST SHOW...

GRAPE FESTIVAL '66

Grape Festival '66, the Last Show for (pictured left to right)....

DAVE BYRNE, Contra Bass.
 OREST BURACK, Tenor (Moses)
 RON MAISER, Snare (Heinrick)
 CLAYTON KEAT, Contra (Maxine)
 BILL MacMILLAN, Baritone (Nutsey)
 BOB CHRISTIE, Euphonium (Samantha)
 and...

not pictured at left---

GARRETH GREEN, Cymbals.

BOB CARELL, Soprano.

BILL FALLOWS, Bass Drum (Willard)

FRANK MENDICINO, Soprano.

DAVE COLLINS, Cymbals (Smash)

JOE PALANICA, Soprano (Flash)

 A Last Look at those leaving...
 by George Wright.

DAVE BYRNE---This was Dave's first and last year with us... His absence will be a great loss to the BassHorn section. Parting thought---"May you master McMaster..."

OREST BURACK---This last show ends a long membership in the

Corps for Orest. He has always been in the drum end and very successfully. Now that you are 26, Orest...best of luck in Commanders. You ARE moving there, aren't you?

RON KAISER---Ron has also contributed his talents in the snare line for many years as evidenced as one of the few members wearing the 5 Year ring. We understand that after graduating from Hidelburg University he came to the Optimists with his Masters In Drumming. All kidding aside, Ron has been a great asset to the Corps, despite the petitions drawn up by the Drum Line. He will be continuing with the corps as Assistant Drum Instructor.

CLAYTON KEAT---This was Claytons first year on Contra and he certainly gave the Bass Section added power, or something. Understand he is joining the Air Force now. Want to wish him every success. JUST DON'T FLY OVER THE PRACTICE FIELD WHEN THE CORPS IS REHEARSING.

BILL MacMILLAN---Bill is known as the Choral Leader on the bus---he has led us in many a song and merriment during the summer of '66. I just wish he wouldn't do it on the field; the Judges get carried away. Understand Bill is now working (?) for American Airlines. You can always give Keat a push! Hummmmmmmmm.

BOB CHRISTIE---Another "First and Last Year Member" and a very enthusiastic one. Fortunately, for the Corps, Bob will be around in '67 with the Executive of the Corps.

GARRETH GREEN---The one with the COLOURFUL name. Garreth was known for his long walks to rehearsal...from his house in the East end to the Shrine in the west. He was known as the Pied Cymbalist. When not with the corps he is majoring in Commercial Art. Best of luck, Garreth. Look forward to seeing your work in Playboy, and in green, naturally.

BOB CARELL---Rumour had it that his younger brother talked him into joining YORK, but since he has'nt asked for a release, this can't be so. Hard at work at the UofT during the winter, Bob may be back in the spring.

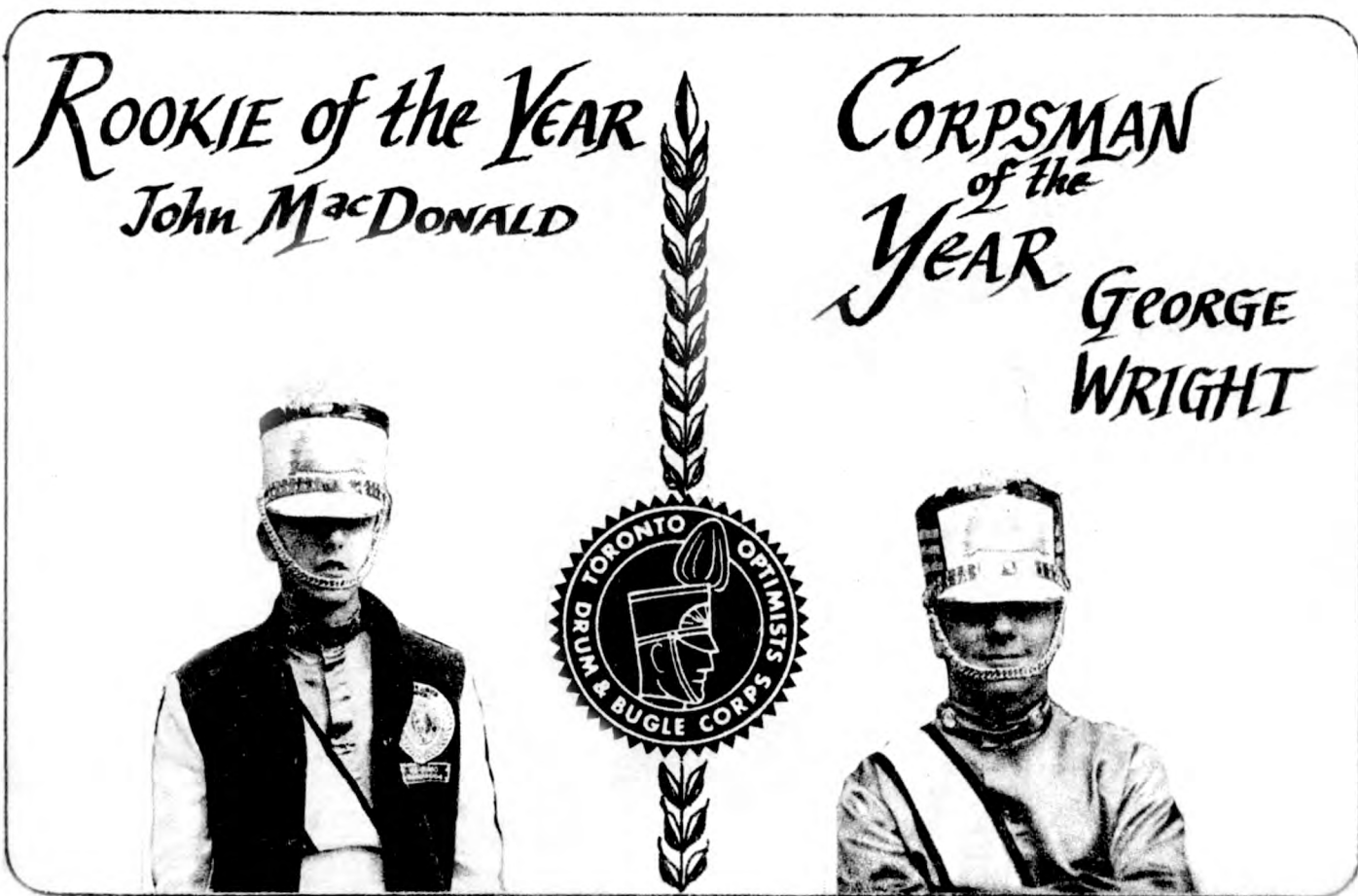
BILL FALLOWS---Known for his "super-sensative" one handed bass drum roll. He will be beating out the books at the University of Waterloo during the winter...think of the Corps when at the football games at fame SEAGRAM STADIUM, Willard. Question---Will MacKenzie miss his three hour arguments with Fallows, or will Fallows miss same???

THOSE LEAVING, A Last Look...(continued from page 6):

FRANK MENDICINO---Joined the same year as this writer, started by playing in the Guard and later marching in the Horn Line, on Soprano. The Board of Education has claimed another victim from the green line...but perhaps he will be back. Otherwise who will VINCE FERRARO sit with on those long bus trips in '67????

DAVE (smash)COLLINS---Dave's last show was The Nationals...his home town now being Montreal as he moved there two weeks before the Big One. His last remark as he departed from the bus was..."Is there a good Junior Corps in Montreal???" With accomodation being what it is in Montreal for EXPO next year, undersatand Dave is working out special rates for the Corps members who drop by.

JOE PALANICA---As soon as the cigar smoke clears, I'll continue. This is one Corpsman that will really be missed. Joe was the only one through the years who arrived late and thought the rest of the corps, at rehearsal, was early. Joe's late habit has caused his calendar watch to read 1965. I guess he will best be remembered for his talk in The National's Huddle of 1966. So long, Joe.



ANNOUNCING THE TWO TOP AWARDS AS PRESENTED TO MEMBERS OF THE OPTIMISTS CORPS at the Fifth Annual Corps' Dinner, the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Saturday evening, October 15th.

"ROOKIE OF THE YEAR" 1966," presented to snare drummer John MacDonald as the outstanding First Year Member for the year. Presented by last year's winner, David Simms. In recognition of his outstanding enthusiasm, attendance and extra help with the Corps; especially instructing the Cadets Drum Line over the year. "CORPSMAN OF THE YEAR" A new award, presented by Mr. Gordon Robinson to GEORGE WRIGHT as voted by the 1966 Corps; the vote based on co-operation, enthusiasm, attendance, punctuality, esprit-de-corps, and progress over the year. Congratulations, John and George.

REMEMBER
WHEN...



REMEMBER WHEN...On a Monday evening, June 25th., 1962 the Optimists did one of the few parades in their own home town when they paraded down Yonge Street for the Canadian premiere of the motion picture "Hatari". On reaching the Imperial Theatre, Jim McConkey Drum Major of the corps presented John Wayne, star of the picture, with a certificate making him an Honorary Member of the Corps.

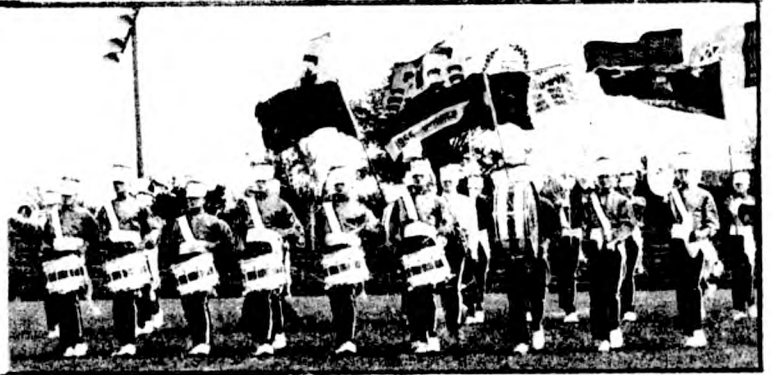


THE HATARI! Parade



SWEET GRAPES

a short story by
DOUG McPHAIL



He stood with the corps on the starting line and waited. It was a cold, grey water-colored day that smelled of grapes fermenting. He was not worried about losing the contest and he was not excited about winning it. He only hoped he would do a good job on the field. It was the last contest of the year, The Grape Festival Contest, and his last year in the Corps.

The feeling was hot at all like it was last week in Montreal; before the Nationals. He remembered the corps before going on the field that night...

"What are we going to do, Barry?"

"You'll have to say something, Barry. Anything. Lie; we'll believe you..."

..."Barry. I think I'm going to puke."

"Let's have a huddle. I guess you've all heard how we did in the prelims this afternoon. I understand 'The Cadets' beat us. I know some of you haven't been pulling your weight this year. I don't have to say who. It's too late for that. You know who I mean."

"Can I say something, Barry? I guess I'm probably one of the worst slackers in the corps. I admit it. All I want to say is---I'm sorry. I'm sorry because....."

"We can't hear you back here. Speak louder!"

"I can't." He looked up. He was crying. "I'm sorry because I love the corps..."

It was good then. An earnest arm around your shoulder, yours as earnest on the next guy and singing..."On, March On, Our Battle's not yet won..." It was the feeling you hoped you would feel. It was the feeling that made you know you would win.

But that was last week. There was a reason then. There had been the shouting of the audience in the stark new concrete stadium at night and the corps was hot. Today, there was a small knot of huddled faces in the paint-peeled eight-rowed wooden-slivered bleachers across a centre field.

"Corps. Right dress....HO!!!" More waiting. "Eyes front....Ho."

At the far end of the field there was the finish line. In twelve and a half minutes, the end of the show, the end of the season and the end of six years on-the-line. Just like that! No corn-ball, nice farewell and 'thanks'. You just step across the limed-white line at the end of the field and make a quiet exit through a door that doesn't slam.

"On the starting line, Ladies and Gentlemen, The Toronto Optimists..."

All the speeches had already been made, already heard, and made and heard over and over again. All the superlatives had been used up. No one was saying, "Come on. You can do it. You have to." There was no pressure on the corps today. No one pumped him with a reason to try harder. But six years could not fade "just like that." He would do this show for himself, he decided.

"Corps. Mark time....Ho."

Twelve and a half minutes later, six years was over. There was a standing ovation. The huddle of spectators rose for a relief from sitting and clapped to warm their hands.

He had played one of his best shows all year because he had decided he would. He was not happy in the march-past, only pleased. It was not good to be finished but it was good to finish clean.

The End.

