



GCC



VOLUME 1, #2

The official publication of the Optimists Alumni Corps.

THE BIG EVENT! SEPT. 14

WHAT TO BRING:

Your wife, your husband, your kids, your grandkids, your dog, anyone who has heard all the tales of daring-do when you were in the corps. Also bring a picnic lunch, your instrument, your music, a camera, a jacket, lawn chairs. The Conservation area has a Chalet, picnic shelters, swimming, a playground, nature trails and driving range. Entrance to the park is \$4 per adult, \$2 per child, \$3 for seniors (65 +). Each Corps member will also be charged \$35, which entitles you to a terrific Corps memento. All proceeds from this picnic, after expenses will be donated back to the Optimists Alumni Corps.

WHAT TO WEAR:

Optimists Alumni white shirt, ball cap, black pants, black socks, black shoes.

HOW TO GET THERE.

Take the Don Valley Parkway/404 north to Stouffville Side Road. Turn right on Stouffville Road and travel about 3 km east. Bruce's Mill Conservation area will be on your right.

WHAT TIME?

The Reunion begins at noon, however if you can come earlier and help set things up that would be helpful. Then you can spend a few hours catching up with old familiar faces or examine the many exhibits of Corps memorabilia that will bring all the old memories flooding back. Our performance will follow Scout House sometime between 2-3 p.m.

This is a significant event in our short history. It will be our first performance in front of guests other than Optimists friends and Alumni. It is also our first ever outdoor performance. We deserve to be proud of what we have accomplished in 10 short months. This is our chance to shine. We need a full turnout to shine fully.

THE NEXT BIG EVENT: SAT. SEPTEMBER 20TH.

YORK LION'S REUNION

This event will be held at the Legion where we rehearse. Optimists Corps members should plan to arrive by 1 p.m. The Corps will perform around 2:30 p.m. The Hamilton Firefighters Drum Corps will also be performing. The Hamilton Corps is also the organizer of the G.A.S. convention where we will be performing at the end of April next year. If you have any questions about G.A.S. they will be able to help you out. This reunion is also a perfect opportunity to recruit new members for the corps. We urge you to recruit enthusiastically! The York Lion's have generously agreed to feed Corps members during their afternoon BBQ. Parking will be a problem so perhaps you can drop your equipment off at the door and then find parking down the hill. If the weather is fair we will perform outside. Please wear your standard issue uniform. The York Lion's organizing committee is expecting over 200 guests so toss out a big Optimists smile and get them to join us. Why it'll be just like the old days!

UPCOMING REHEARSALS

NEXT REHEARSAL; SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1-5 P.M. AT THE CNE BASEBALL FIELD (EXTREME WEST END OF CNE GROUNDS)

NEXT REGULAR MONTHLY REHEARSALS:

SUN. OCT. 26, 1-5 AT THE LEGION

SUN. NOV. 30, 1-5 AT THE LEGION

DCI & DCA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS:

DCI – ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Blue Devils-98.80, Cavaliers-97.25, Cadets-97.1, Phantom Regiment-94.75, Santa Clara Vanguard-94.7, Boston Crusaders-90.95, Blue Coats-90.75, Madison Scouts-89.55, Crossmen-86.9, Carolina Crown-86.65, Magic of Orlando-85.6, Spirit of JSU-84.4

DCA – SCRANTON, PA.

Hawthorne Cabelleros-97.38, Syracuse Brigadiers-96.08, Empire Statesmen-95.81, Minnesota Brass-92.5, Reading Buccaneers-92.15, San Francisco Renegades-91.8 (1 pt. Penalty), Bushwackers-91.04, CorpsVets of Atlanta-86.28, Rochester Crusaders-86.06, Kingston Grenadiers-83.41

UNDER THE LID.

Marcel Smolinski

This byline has traditionally been a harbinger of a great deal of bitching and complaining. You know, stirring up the garbage, so to speak. Wrongs to right, injustices to undo---all that sort of stuff. And I do plan to get there sooner or later but after an absence of 35 years the lash I once used has turned into a bit of a wet noodle (no, not that, you dummies. Get your mind out of the gutter and get with the program). Whew! That feels better (maybe sooner rather than later). Besides that, there's so many new distractions like what typeface to use or why the #\$\$%^&*)##@ won't this file attach to my email. Will the Editor forget his recent huffiness with Miz Novack who claims to be the editor of the Simcoe Reformer and dare to hack away at my work as he did so many years ago or will he finally understand the perils involved? There's also the issue of the burnt out grey cells. Can they rise to the challenge and string together words in a pleasing fashion? After all, I'm not a young man anymore and those who have remained close can attest to some serious issues concerning abuse of both the rotting grape and the grain distillates. However, I'll give it a shot and see how it goes. Sooo.....

The more often we rehearse the more I want things to be the way they were (I feel a rant coming on, so it's 10 deep breaths and pleasant thoughts only). It was a great time in my life and I'm pleased to say that my closest friends to this day are some guys I marched with in the '60's. Add to this the friends of the "long lost" variety and things are only getting better. Top that off with the new friends who may have been legends from years before or after my time and we're getting pretty close to "Old Fart Heaven". Another phenomenon is the influx of "new Optimists". It really gets me pumped that people who marched (or not) in other Corps sign up to be part of new history. Their reasons are many and varied and if I can manage to stay pleasant for a few columns I'll do some profiles and anecdotes on these folks. (Can't say guys any more 'cause we are graced with a number of ladies and I'm glad they are here.) Put all of these elements together and we've got the makings of something special.

Speaking of special, here are some things that make me smile!

- My courageous friends, Wayne Dean and Ray Roussel at my side again, armed with Baritones.
- Ain't scared of no stinkin' bypass (Ray, Bubba, Gary and others?)
- Barry and Lorne, our oldest Rookies and Warby looking at least 23. Can he march Underage?
- Tears in Vern's eyes.
- Playing in the same line as the "Elvis of Drum Corps". Ditto-Barry, Mel, Ron, Al, Len Warren, Phil, etc.
- Brian Byrne's commentary is as caustic as ever and Ted Wilson is still terminally OPTIMISTIC!
- Our drummers are still sent out for lobotomies. I guess that's why they're so great.
- Chong still has his pellet.
- Mhairi and Al still fit into their old unies.
- We got to Battle Cry and Big Bad Bill. (That's why you play Baritone, plus of course, chicks dig the BIG HORNS!)
- The final tally in the "Should we play San Francisco?" plebiscite: NO = 73, YES = 1. Sorry Bubba but the masses have spoken.
- Seven, count 'em, 7 Contras and twice that many Snares.

- Hendergobble flying in from the left coast and Warby & Bossert haulin' ass from FLA.

I'm pretty sure it doesn't get any better than this!

So on those cheery notes I'll slide off to my trusty G.T. and get out and do a little curb shopping. 'Til the next time please remember that garbage goes into the green ones and recyclables into the blue ones.

Dobra Noe

Polish

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hey Vern

After yesterday's practice, which by the way was the best one yet, I finally realized just what it took and what it takes to be an Optimist I always said that so much of the success we all have enjoyed in life since Our time in the corps was a direct result of the lessons we learned while a Member of the corps. We were taught that hard work, team effort and maintaining a higher level of confidence and class and dignity than those whom we competed against, or whom we surrounded ourselves with. allowed us to reach the goals we set for ourselves and those that the corps set for itself. Yesterday I witnessed all of those things and I now know what it really means to be a true Toronto Optimist and all of it can be said in two words: WAYNE DEAN!!!!!!!!!!

Ted Wilson

Optimists Alumni Association:

Many thanks for inviting me to the barbecue. It was great seeing old friends. Alan would have been honoured to be inducted into the Optimists Hall of Fame. It brought back memories of our grand times together. The picture of the Corps is great and I have it on the wall over my desk in the den.

Love to all,
Gladys Baggs.

UP FROM THE BASEMENT

Ted Wilson

So it has been awhile since I last wrote something. It was not because I had nothing to share of significance but rather because I was totally blown away by Gord Lefevre's article and needed some time to develop good material. But last night something happened that I must share with everyone.

As all of you must have guessed by now nothing in my life has affected me more than having been a member of the Toronto Optimists. I believe, as many of you do, that our experiences and those who mentored us during those times have impacted us how we have carried on with the rest of our lives.

In '68 and '69 I worked my butt off as a soprano player and hung on every bit of advice that Barry Bell or Joe Gianna passed my way and tried my best I to show them I was working hard and I assumed that they knew who I was and that I was trying to do my best.

Thirty five years later I'm still trying and the fact that I was the first one to say I'll play contra and I'll do what you say and I'll work hard, would, I thought, have earned recognition from the powers that be. But then came last night.

The phone rang around 9.00 p.m. and my wife answered and I heard her ask, "may I ask who's calling?" She then turned to me and said, "Barry Bell is on the phone". WOW!

THIS IS NEAT. Barry Bell never called me in my entire life. I'm thinking this is like getting a call from the White House. My heart was racing. What did he want? Was he actually calling for information or was he going to say, "I have added a new part in Devil Moon for a contra solo and I want you to consider trying out for it".

So I answer the phone and nervously say "Hi Barry what's up?" Except I'm pretty sure it came out "HABURYWHATZZZZOPPP?" He says to me that he had tried to get a hold of me several times and was unable to contact me. My heart starts to go even faster. What is he going to ask me? I reply it must have been because of the blackout. So he agrees and then proceeds to tell me that he had been talking to Marcel and that the Baritones had had a really good sectional rehearsal and that he was calling all of the second baritones to join the next rehearsal and could I make it. I said I would be glad to and then I added, "so you want to have the contras at the baritone practice?"

At this point Barry says to me, "Wait a minute is this Ed Wilson?????" I said, "no it's Ted Wilson". So Barry says, "I'm so sorry I was looking at the phone list and I was trying to call Ed Wilson the little guy that sits beside me at practice." So then we do some fumbling of words and try not to embarrass each other and do some little Chit Chat. In the end, I say to him that I realize that he doesn't want me at the baritone practice and I say no problem and that I will continue on practicing by myself in front of Heidi and Spencer the Wonder dogs who sit there and faithfully look at me wondering why I make all that noise with that scary machine.

Barry did say to me " I know you are going to write about this" and I said, "Oh Yeah, I will". So there you have it. It took 35 years but I think Barry now knows who I am and what I attempt to play and how much I have always respected him for the opportunity he gave me and hundreds of others to be the best we could be and to have the ability to say I am a Canadian Champion. I accomplished that with an organization that had class way beyond any of our competitors because of the men who were our instructors.

But there is just one lingering, unanswered question I have. What if, 35 years ago, when I was playing soprano and he called to ask me about the solo in Devil Moon and my name was DAVE McKenzie, what would I have said?

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD WRITERS

The thing about a newsletter is that to be really good it needs to be an outlet for many voices. GCC was recognized as the best Corps newsletter produced anywhere in the drum corps movement in the '60's and '70's. Most corps envied it and most official drum corps publications quoted it.

In short, it was worthy of being a voice for The Optimists. We need it to be that way once again. To accomplish that we need many voices. How about a column on those people and events that made the corps special to you way back when? How about an article from all those souls who drive great distances to join us each month? How about a story on what The Optimists meant to people who weren't in it in the glory years? How about something on where are they now? Funny stories. Larger than life events. Special moments. Thoughts on our progress as an Alumni Corps. The field is wide open. Why not whip something together and submit it to the Editor?

This is the voice of the Corps. Start speaking and remember, this is one place where you can all speak at once.

SUCKED IN LIKE A MAY-FLY

Gord Lefevre

I have a better appreciation for the subtle struggles between a trout and a fly fisherman now. The hook was baited by Vern Johansson the day we met for lunch and a friendly chat back in January 2002, it was set at the second consecutive BBQ/Silent Auction I attended this past May. I actually swallowed it, line and sinker too, somewhere between when the Alumni Corps finished playing and my next brown pop when either Vern or Gord O'Halloran (the brown pops were taking their toll) casually suggested I should join the tenor line.

This really wasn't fair, emotionally wracked by a wonderful performance by the Corps and finely tuned by some of Canada's best hops, I folded like a two-buck suitcase.

My wife was as surprised as I was when I told her at 11:00 a.m. the next day that I was leaving at noon for Corps rehearsal. She and the majority (alright, all) the friends I have made since aging out, are not drum corps people. But over the years they have seen my passion for drum corps possess me when I'm talking about it or watching it on TV. Unfortunately, my exuberance is typically rewarded with a look of indifference or total incomprehension. This is a Don Cherry kind of thing. You either love it or hate it; there's no middle ground.

My intention for the Sunday rehearsal was simply to check out the lay of the land and go away and think some more about joining; however, shortly after my arrival, I found myself pounding away with Gordo with a new pair of sticks and drum pad to the tenor part for The Party's Over. We were in a little room just off the men's washroom flailing away and I was wondering what I was doing there when I heard the same balanced chords that Kevin Mathew referenced in his article in the last GCC. I was instantly transfixed in a time warp of beautiful sounds and memories. I love those contras too!! Boy, how Clayton Keat, my friend and former Optimist contra player, would have loved this gig! And Kevin's right, I still remember most of the corps song although I haven't sung it in years. By the way, thanks to GCC for providing the lyrics to this inspirational song.

My wife is concerned about the amount of time my new adventure will consume. I told her it's only one rehearsal a month. And King Kong is a monkey! The reality is that I am practicing daily now and have already attended additional tenor practices. What's better, or worse depending on your perspective, is that I am sure there will be a few more additional drum line practices before September 14th. Oh, the joy!

It's been 36 years since I lugged a drum around for fun but I was totally unprepared for the assault on my vertebrae when I slapped on a harness and clamped on a drum. I don't remember drums being as heavy as the beauty I strapped on! I think it took about 10 minutes before I felt like Quasimodo undergoing back-straightening therapy. This probably has more to do with my Molson muscle than with the weight of the drum in which case I'm hoping Lorne can get wheels for the drum stand he's acquiring for me. I feel like a rookie again, like one who lacks the skill and confidence that are developed through thousands of hours of practice with a hundred other corps animals who are focused on achieving excellence.

While my debut has been less than stellar, the support from my fellow drummers and other alumni is encouraging and valued.

Frankly, it's great to be back in the Line under the banner of one of the greatest junior corps ever. Something strange is happening to me. It's been gradual, relentless and obsessive. I like the feeling. I trust I will measure up to the challenge and look forward to sharing this fantastic experience with every one of you, executive and fans (we have fans?) alike.

