



2019 in review

Parades, performances, Jeju South Korea Tour, Member photos, Annual Woods' Family Party, Old Skool Drum Corps and much more...

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PARADES

St. Patrick's Day Parade - Toronto, March 10.

Once again we "floated" through the Toronto St. Pat's Day Parade. When we marched in this parade it was long and hard. Sitting on a trailer while playing the music, as we do now, makes the parade easier and a lot more enjoyable for us. It's also great for the crowd since we can play a lot more (when marching we need "recovery time" to catch our breath).



Ken Taylor.



L-R: Joe Gianna, Soo Lee, Doug Darwin.



L-R: Liz Dodsworth, Rick Lang, Heather Hyslop.



Brian Collingdon.



L-R: Matt Davis and Rick Lang.



Lily and Seung Ah Kim.



Heather Hyslop.



L-R: Laura and Lindsay Weiler.

Victoria Day Parade - Woodstock, May 20.

This was our 12th annual trip to Woodstock for the Victoria Day parade and we always look forward to it. The people are great and, as usual, we had a wonderful time.



Ken Taylor.



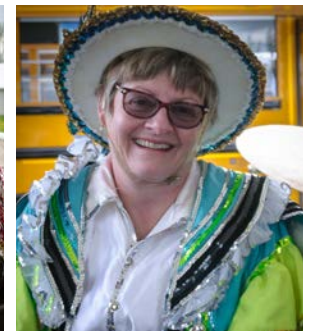
Joe Gianna.



Brian Menard.



Soo Lee.



Debi LaPointe.



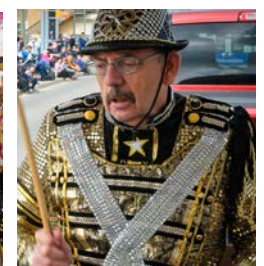
Mike Lang.



Liz Dodsworth and Heather Hyslop.



Bob Carell.



Doug Darwin.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Corps Director, Mike Lang

WELL 2019 WAS another exciting year to be a member of the Optimists Alumni. We have grown from just another alumni corps into an unique show band (it's the term most of our audience relate to). So whether it's an indoor or rainy day performance in Hawaiian shirts, cold weather parades in the green cadet tunics and black bibbers or a full blown show in Mummers for everything else from televised parades to international tours we defy comparison.



Looking ahead to 2020 we're working on our first ever tour of California aka the "Left Coast" code named "California Dreamin". It would see us performing around the DCI shows out there starting the 2020 competitive season in the June 18th - 28th, 2020 window. It would also provide opportunities to spend time with some of the World Class corps as they celebrate Family Days before embarking on their full tours. Yes there will also be time to sight-see (rumours abound they grow grapes out there) and the Pacific Ocean is never far away.

Will there be changes in 2020? Definitely but nothing redefining. A few new tunes, some visual changes costume wise, and of course some new faces as we include both new members and friends into our performing family.

Now on to the thank yous to everyone who provided assistance to us throughout the year whether it was here or off

in South Korea. We appreciate all the effort, focus, support and wisdom so freely given. Our own Executive (see below), Photographers (Eric McConachie and Laura and Lindsay Weiler on tour, Website Manager (Bob Carell), Trailer Drivers (Barry Woods, Trisch Greschner and Glenda Roblin), and Trailer Decoration Volunteers (Heather Hyslop and many more), GCC Staff (Bob, Eric and David Johns). A special thanks to our many new brass friends Jason Logue, Kevin Tierney, Geoff Adeney, Keith Matthews, Mark Audino, Russ Braman and Jim Wise. Finally thanks to Dave and Deb Bruce for their involvement on tour. Not to be forgotten thanks to Doug Darwin and Dave MacKinnon for all their guidance and patience. Together we achieved more than any of us could ever have accomplished alone.

May the Christmas season bring you and yours all the joy and warmth you deserve. We look forward to seeing all of you in the New Year.

AGM Report

Our 2019 season officially ended in September with our Annual Meeting on September 21, 2019 and the election of our Board of Directors.

Our Executive for 2019 - 2020

• Mike Lang	President
• Rick Lang	Vice-President
• Matt Davis	Treasurer
• Barry Bell	Director at Large
• Soo Lee	Director at Large
• Barry Woods	Director at Large
• Doug Darwin	Business Manager

VIDEO

The Corps on YouTube

A number of videos showing the Optimists Alumni have been posted on YouTube. I have yet to find a way to exclusively display videos of the Optimists Alumni (there are always other corps in the list).

I've posted the majority of the corps videos so the best method I've found so far, is listed below. It will display everything that I've posted as well as a video of the 1967 Toronto Optimists at the CYO Nationals.

- go into your browser and go to YouTube
- then enter the text below in the search bar: "optimists alumni" AND ##"happy snappy"

I've added an option on the video portion of the drop-down menu on our website to do this for you.



The corps performing at the Jeju Seaside Art Center in Jeju City.

Jeju - South Korea - August 5 - 16.

By Judy Ferguson

IN AUGUST 2019, the Optimists Alumni travelled to South Korea for the second time in three years. Why Korea? The tour director and the corps' business manager, Doug Darwin, enjoys a roughly 30-year association with the country through drum corps. His knowledge of events on Jeju Island led to our trips. We performed at the 24th annual Jeju International Wind Ensemble Festival. (One guest was French horn player Felix Klieser, a young German born without arms. He plays with his feet!) According to Doug, the Koreans invited us for our entertainment value. "We add another element with our colour, stage presence, and recognizable tunes. We're friendly and involve the audience," he said.

JEJU LIES OFF the southern tip of South Korea. A volcanic island, it has a population of over 600,000. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named Jeju to its world heritage list, as a site "of outstanding value to humanity" because of its natural heritage.

When planning the second visit to Jeju, the Optimists faced a problem: some members would miss the trip. Health and financial concerns prevented some from joining in; others felt that they'd "been there, done that." We picked up a conductor and several excellent horn players. Former member Kimiko Yamada joined us from Japan, as on our first visit. Professional trumpeter Jason Logue acted as music director and also played with us. Our group comprised eight trumpets, two mellophones, five baritones, two sousaphones, three percussion, and some relatives who helped out.



Kimiko Yamada.

The direct flight to Seoul lasted 14 hours. (The airport's slogan is Fly High @ Incheon Airport.) The next day we flew



Haenyeo head out to work from Hallasan National Park.

one hour to Jeju. At the airport, we laughed at the festival's promotional video. It features footage of sousaphone player Keith Dearlove dancing in a crowd of haenyeo two years ago.

Haenyeo are Jeju's (mostly elderly) female divers, whom UNESCO has inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. They dive without oxygen to harvest conch, abalone, sea urchin, and seaweed. Haenyeo sing haunting songs hundreds of years old while they dance with some tools of their trade.

During the 2019 tour, the Optimists performed six times, three times in haenyeo villages, twice at the Jeju Seaside Outdoor Stage in Jeju City, and once outside the World Automobile Jeju Museum.. Our set list included 11 songs, and



At the Gyeongju airport. L-R: Mike Lang, mascot, Lindsay Weiler, Laura Weiler, Soo Lee, mascot, Matt Davis.



Haenyeo carry a long net on their shoulders during their folk dance and song.

JEJU TOUR (CONTINUED)



Mark Sichewski and Mike Lang with some officials of the Jeju Wind Ensemble Festival, including former Alumni member Yun Jung Go.

my hand and exclaiming, ‘Annyeonghaseyo!’ [hello]), I was overwhelmed by their delightful response (and their giggles). Sometimes I invited children onto the stage and taught them to direct the band with my baton, or got them to march around as the ensemble played.”

Between rehearsals at the start of the tour and the performances, we had just one day off, but we fit in sightseeing most days. Much of it involved nature: Hallasan National Park, with a dormant volcano; Hallim Park, 80 acres of tropical gardens, caves, aviaries, and a folk village; ECOLAND Theme Park, another nature preserve, which visitors travel through on a small train; Cheonjeyeon forested park with waterfalls; and two beaches. We were surprised to find John Lennon’s Rolls-Royce, painted in a psychedelic pattern, at the automobile museum. Other attractions included the sacred (Yakchunsa



The Alumni accompany haenyeo as they perform their folk song and dance at the Gosan-ri Haenyeo Outdoor Stage..

performances lasted up to 30 minutes. We played outdoors except when we had to move into a pizzeria’s triple garage due to a nearby typhoon. At one village, haenyeo showed us photos of our members from our visit two years ago. Their faces fell when they learned that two heartthrobs had not made the return trip.

“One of my favourite parts of performing with the group was when we had an opportunity to really engage the audience, young and old,” recalled conductor Yvette. “The first time I greeted the crowd in Korean (enthusiastically waving



Yvette Byrne-Menard with with statuette for participation.

Buddhist temple) and the profane (Loveland). Pizza Hut pizza (just like home) fuelled us for a Drum Corps International Finals viewing party. At the end of the 12-day trip, most people stayed in Seoul for the weekend, and two members went with Soo Lee and her daughters (Laura and Lindsay) to Busan for a few days.

JEJU TOUR (CONTINUED)

Laura and Lindsay took thousands of photos. Visit our website to see a selection, which our webmaster will augment over the coming months. As well, the Optimists Alumni's Facebook site provides links to many performance videos.

We are already planning next year's trip (not to Korea). Join us! We work seriously on our music with the twin goals of entertaining and having fun. ■



The Optimists Alumni perform at the Gosan-ri Haenyeo Outdoor Stage. Waves crash against the shore in the background.



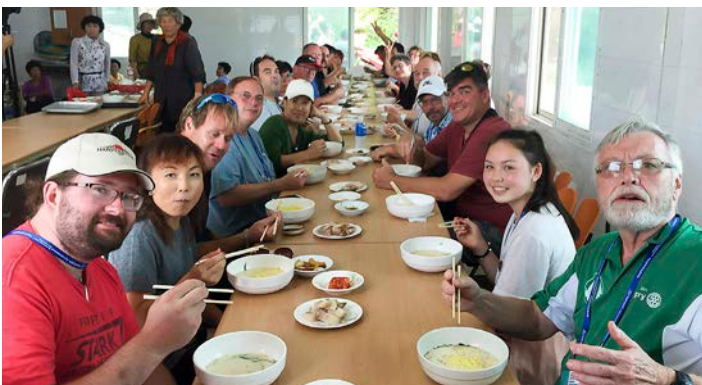
Some members joined us for the first time in South Korea. Music director Jason Logue keeps the beat during our first rehearsal.



Lindsay, Laura, Soo, Mike and Matt in Busan.



Geoff, Mark Sichewski, Mark Audino, Kevin, Russ and Soo pose with a children's car outside the World Automobile Jeju Museum.



A meal in Gosan-ri. Haenyeo cooked seafood for us each time we performed in their village.



A performance outside the World Automobile Jeju Museum.

THE 2019 OPTIMISTS ALUMNI



Barry Bell - Alto,
Board of Directors



Barry Woods - Trumpet,
Board of Directors



Bernadette Woods -
Support



Bob Carell - Mellophone,
GCC and Website



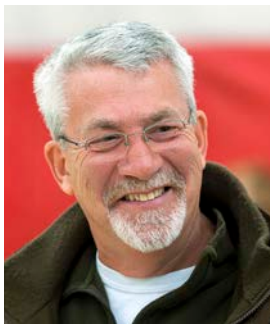
Brian Collingdon -
Euphonium



Brian Menard - Contrabass



Dave Bruce - Euphonium -
(Jeju Tour)



Dave MacKinnon -
Music Director



David Johns - GCC



Debbie Bruce - Support



Debi LaPointe - support



Doug Darwin - Drums,
Business Manager



Doug Roblin - Trumpet



Eric Dallosch - Drums



Eric McConachie -
photographer



Geoff Adeney - Trumpet -
(Jeju Tour)



Glenda Roblin - Support



Heather Hyslop -
Mellophone, trailer decoration



Ha-Bi - Trumpet



Jason Logue - Music Director
for Jeju trip - Trumpet

THE 2019 OPTIMISTS ALUMNI (CONTINUED)



Jay Walsh - Trumpet



Jim Wise - Sousaphone - (Jeju Tour)



Joe Gianna - Trumpet



Judy Ferguson - Drums



Keith Dearlove - Sousaphone



Keith Matthews - Trumpet - (Jeju Tour)



Kelly Matthews - Support



Ken Taylor - Congas and Baritone



Kevin Tierney - Trumpet - (Jeju Tour)



Kimiko Yamada - Trumpet



Laura Weiler - Support and Photographer



Lindsay Weiler - Support and Photographer



Lisa Lin - Trumpet

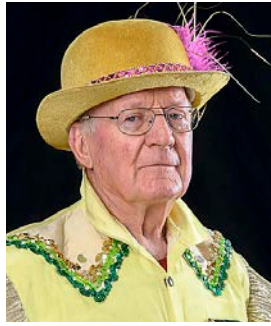
Optimists Alumni Show Band performs at the Jeju Seaside Art Center in Jeju City, South Korea.



THE 2019 OPTIMISTS ALUMNI (CONTINUED)



Liz Dodsworth - Mellophone



Lorne Ferrazzutti - Drums



Mark Audino - Mellophone - (Jeju Tour)



Mark Sichewski - Baritone



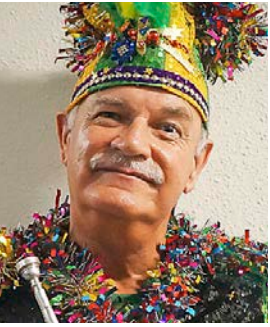
Matt Davis - Baritone, Board of Directors



Mike Lang - Baritone, Board of Directors



Ric Brown - Bass Drum



Rick Lang - Trumpet, Board of Directors



Russ Braman - Baritone - (Jeju Tour)



Seung Ah Kim - Mellophone



Soo Lee - Trumpet, Board of Directors



Sue Oswald - Baritone



Trisch Greschner - Support



Yvette Byrne-Menard - Conductor



THE WOODS' FAMILY PARTY

Annual Woods' Family Party - Kitchener, July 21.

Once again Barry and Bernadette Woods hosted a party for corps members. Usually we have a BBQ in late August; however, this year's event was held in July, before the corps headed off to Jeju, South Korea. For various reasons some of our members could not make this year's trip to Jeju and a few friends of the corps went in their stead. This year's BBQ was preceded by a rehearsal which included everyone! Thanks to the additional horns the sound of the corps was amazing!! It made me wish that we had a few more members.



Our hosts Bernadette and Barry Woods.

A big **Thank you**
to Barry and Bernadette!



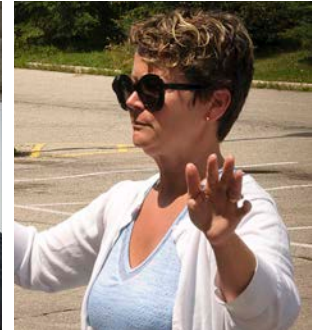
Ken Taylor.



L-R: Geoff Adeney, Ken Taylor, Rick Lang (trumpet) and Lorne Ferrazzutti.



Matt Davis.



Yvette Byrne-Menard.



L-R: Seung Ah Kim and Mark Sinden.



Russ Braman.



L-R: Soo Lee and Barry Woods.



David Bruce and Mark Sichewski.



Jason Logue.



Kevin Tierney and Geoff Adeney.

THE WOODS' FAMILY PARTY (CONTINUED)



L-R: Geoff Adeney, Doug Roblin, Rick Lang, Kevin Tierney and Jason Logue.



L-R: Barry Bell, Bob Carell, Seung Ah Kim, Mark Sinden, Liz Dodsworth, Heather Hyslop and Mike Lang.



L-R: Ric Brown, Doug Darwin, Ken Taylor, Judy Ferguson and Lorne Ferrazzutti.

PARADES (CONTINUED)

Grape Festival Parade - St. Catharines, September 28.

“Back in the day” the Grape Festival was the final parade and contest of the season. Our appearance this year was the first in many, many years. I wonder whether anyone watching remembers us from the old days. This year we were wearing our Mumpers costumes so they certainly would not have recognized us by our appearance. The crowd loved our music and we had a great time playing for them.



Judy Ferguson.



Mark Sichewski and Brian Menard.



Ken Taylor.



Standing: Doug Roblin.
Sitting: Lorne Ferrazzutti and Soo Lee.

Oktoberfest Parade - Kitchener, October 14.

In 2018 the Optimists Alumni joined the Oktoberfest parade as part of “Oktobercorps”. This year we appeared as the Optimists Alumni. The Haenyeo from Jeju preceded us in the parade. It was cold, but the folks watching the parade warmed our hearts with their appreciation. Another great day.



Barry Woods.



Ha-Bi.



Yvette Byrne-Menard.



Seung Ah Kim and Rick Lang.



Soo Lee, Mike Lang and a Haenyeo Diver.

Old Skool Drum Corps *by Bob Carell*

AS MOST of us already know, the music and design that make up the show for a modern drum corps is very different from that of “Old Skool” corps; however, many people who have grown up with DCI might not know how they differ. This article will explore some of those differences.

Background

Back in the day Drum Corps were often sponsored by service organizations such as Optimists Clubs, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Boy Scouts, Police Athletic Leagues (PAL), Catholic

especially in the North East area of the USA. One of the benefits of drum corps was very well articulated by Norm Fach who was both the Police Chief of St. Catharines, Ontario and the Director of the local drum corps, the Grantham Township



Drum Majors on retreat in Racine, Wisconsin in 1964. This contest was a precursor to the multi-regional shows of today. It included the Casper Troopers from the West, corps from the Midwest, the Boston Crusaders from the East Coast and the Toronto Optimists from Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Youth Organizations (CYOs) and local organizations (often towns or counties helped with the finances). Other sponsors were Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or American Legion (AL). In order to compete in the VFW or AL championships the Corps needed to be sponsored by a VFW or AL post. As a result, American Corps would have both AL and VFW sponsors.

Don Daber, a key figure in the Optimists organization (Toronto Optimists and Seneca Optimists) from 1960 until the Seneca Optimists disbanded, had a favourite chant: “What about the kids?” As Don knew so well, Drum Corps needed to focus on “the kids” and that happened in many ways. In addition to learning to play a musical instrument there was a real camaraderie in drum corps that created friendships which often lasted a lifetime. Corps members learned valuable life skills such as self-discipline and the value of working as a team to create something greater than oneself. Drum Corps also gave the corps members a positive focus. CYOs, with their emphasis on young people, were very active in the drum corps activity,

Police Boys’ Band. He said “look I can either chase these kids on the streets or gather them all up here and give them something constructive to do”.

Corps developed their shows during the winter and spring then competed on summer weekends in the cities and towns of North America. Determining who was best was decided by a group of skilled judges. Contests were usually “regional” with corps from the Midwest competing against each other and Corps from Canada and the Eastern states competing against each other. This presented a challenge for Canadian corps when a 500 mile overnight bus trip often preceded a competition. Upon arrival we had to practice then compete. It could be very gruelling. The first time that I experienced a contest that included a broad sampling of corps was a 1964 competition in Racine, WI. In addition to the Midwest corps the contest included the Boston Crusaders, the Casper Troopers and, us, the Toronto Optimists. It was a harbinger of the contests of today.

A typical American corps had access to large indoor

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

armouries which meant that they could develop their drill during the winter. As a result, they were able to finish learning the drill for their shows early and their competition season usually began in early May. Their season would end after the VFW and AL championships which were usually held in mid-August and early September.

Canadian corps did not have access to large indoor drill spaces so they usually began learning drill outside, often in the snow, on Easter weekend. Given the late start on creating a drill show the corps season in Canada usually began in late June, with the Rose Festival that was held in Welland, Ontario. The Canadian Nationals were held on the second Saturday of September and the season normally ended at the end of September with a corps contest at the Grape Festival in St Catharines, Ontario.

Composition and size of a typical drum corps

In the early days many corps were male-only while others were strictly female.

All corps, whether male, female or mixed, competed against each other although, for many years, the Canadian Nationals also included an "All Girl" category. Over the years the composition of corps changed so that most of them included both male and female members.

Today we have DCI corps that have a maximum age of 21 and All-Age corps. Back in the day there were Junior Corps with the maximum age of 21 and Senior Corps for which most member were over 21. One of the differences, though, was that Junior Corps sometimes competed in Senior contests.

A typical drum corps consisted of a Colour Guard, a drum



Toronto Optimists practicing on Easter Weekend, 1963, in the parking lot of the Shell Tower at the CNE (Canadian National Exhibition) grounds. The temperature was a chilly 5°C, which is 39°F.

line and a horn line. In the early days drum corps were much smaller than the corps of today. In the late 1950s a typical corps consisted of 40 to 60 members (eg: the 1958 Toronto Optimists had 39 members); however, corps sizes started increasing so that, by the end of the 1960s, corps often had 50 to 60 member horn lines!

Colour Guards were very different from the

colour guards of today. There was always a National Party that included an American or Canadian and American flags plus someone carrying a weapon (rifle, sabre, pistol) to "guard" the National Colours. "Old Skool" flag poles were often much taller than the poles used today and flags were much heavier, as many were embroidered. For example, the flag poles used by my corps, the Toronto Optimists, included an aluminum point (about 10 or 12 inches) at the top. When assembled (the poles were in two pieces) the total height was approximately 11 feet. The flags that we used consisted of two embroidered flags stitched together with a fringe. Given the height of the

poles and the weight of the flags it was a struggle to keep the flags upright in heavy winds. In fact, the flags were so heavy that our flag poles often bent when the guard did a "present arms" (a rapid dip of the flags to salute the National Colours at the end of the Colour

Presentation). Given the size of the poles and the weight of the flags about all that could be done with the flags was keep them upright, dip them and, on occasion, remove the poles from their holsters and do some simple movements.

A typical drum line consisted of three snare drums, three tenor drums, one or two bass drums, a few cymbals and, perhaps, some glockenspiels. By 1960 most corps had stopped



The 1958 Toronto Optimists Drum & Bugle Corps on the front steps of De La Salle "Oaklands". The total corps size was 39 members.

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

using glockenspiels. Except for small changes in numbers this configuration varied little until the late the 1960s when additional types of drums (side-mounted Bass drums, Typanis, etc) were added. In 1960 the Toronto Optimists introduced what was then considered a very big drumline that included six snares and three tenors; however, the extra tenths in GE were offset by reduced execution scores and they reverted to the usual three and three. Obtaining permission to use non-traditional instruments could be a challenge. I think it was 1965 when the Toronto Optimists planned on playing Temptation. We wanted to use Steelpan drums (also called Steel drums or Pan drums) in the music but the rules organizations refused to allow their use.

Early horn lines usually used G bugles that had a single, horizontally mounted piston valve which altered the note by a full tone. A half-tone slide was eventually added and this was replaced by a rotary valve. In terms of instrumentation, corps used Sopranos, Tenors, French Horns and Baritones. The Baritones were eventually replaced by larger Bass-Baritone horns. Whaley Royce, a Canadian bugle manufacturer that had developed the first French Horn bugle in the 1940s, developed the first Contrabass around 1959; however, it was not until 1962 that the Contrabass was first used by the Garfield Cadets and the Hawthorne Caballeros. By the way, the August 2012 issue of GCC contains an article by Don Angelica (reprinted from the August 8, 1962 issue of Drum Corps News) in which he discusses the controversy that arose from using the contrabass. Whaley Royce also created the Mellophone and the Euphonium which were first used by corps in 1964 (the Mellophone was based on the Mellophonium which was created by Conn in the late 1950s for the Stan Kenton Orchestra).

Field size and show design

Corps contests were held on an American size football field (100 yards long x160 feet wide vs 110 x 65 yards for a Canadian field). In the old days, the only lines on the field would usually be the sidelines and, perhaps, a line indicating centre field. Some of these fields were closer to cow pastures

and there was always the possibility of stepping into a hole on the field and tripping. At times a contest might be held on a baseball diamond which meant that the stands could be at an angle to the corps. Trying to maintain a straight line under those circumstances could be a challenge. If we were lucky the front sideline would be the third base line. A corps would often step off the line in a cloud of dust and it was always interesting to watch a line of corps members go up and down as they marched over the pitcher's mound. Today's fancy astro-turf fields with a flat surface and marked lines every five yards are a definite improvement.

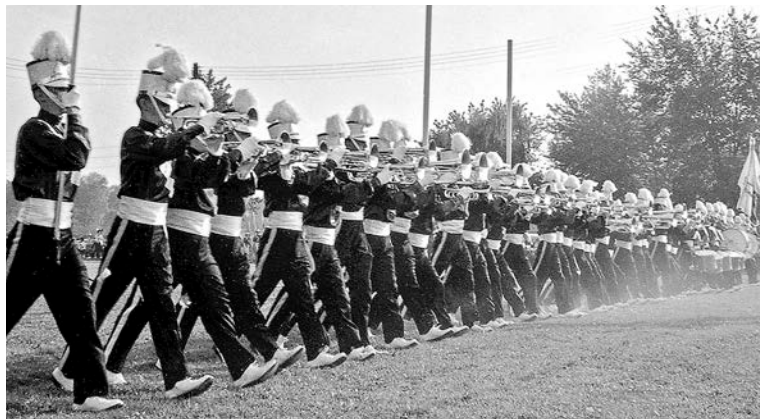
Typically a corps' show would include an "Off The Line" number, a stationary concert,

a mandatory colour presentation (presenting the National Colours) as well as an exit or "Off The Field" song. A corps would form up on the starting line (left end from a spectator's perspective), play some songs while in motion, perform a stationary "concert" at centre field, near the sideline, play an "out of concert" number and they would end their show on the "finish line" (on the right end of the field). Before the "Off The Line" number the corps might perform an "opening fanfare" and there might, perhaps, be a "closing fanfare" on the finish line.

Unlike the free-flowing drills of today M&M shows were designed to present effectiveness using company fronts, echelons, squads, platoons etc. "Ticks" were assessed (a tick reduced the score by one tenth of a point) if anyone was out



Toronto Optimists competing at Roosevelt Stadium in the 1960 "Preview of Champions". You can see that the only markings are an outline of the competition field.



1961 - Toronto Optimists step "Off The Line" on a dry, dusty field in Windsor, Ontario.

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

of step, if lines weren't straight, intervals were not equal, etc.

Judging and Point Allocation

Today, scoring and point allocation is standardized; however, that was not always the case. We'll get to that later. Right now let's look at the types of judges we used to have.

There was always a Timing judge, often a judge who conducted an Inspection (inspections disappeared around 1965), as well as the mandatory Execution judges on the field and General Effect judges in the stands. A corps' final score would be the total of all categories minus inspection infractions and penalties.

Corps could receive "penalties" for a number of reasons. For example, in the area of timing a corps would receive a two point penalty for being over-time or under-time. Corps would also be assessed a minimum two point penalty for being late for inspection. During a performance a corps would be penalized a tenth of a point for dropping a piece of equipment plus a full point if it was picked up. Avoiding a one point penalty meant that, if a drum stick, mouthpiece, rifle, etc was dropped we had to wait until a judge (hopefully) picked it up and handed it to us. In addition

to these examples, there were numerous rules regarding the National Flag and Flag Violations often generated penalties. For example, "nothing could pass between the guard and the National Flag" or "when the National Flag passes by, all other flags must dip in respect". Each flag violation generated a penalty of two points.

When it came to timing, judging rules stated that a corps' performance must be between 11 and 13 minutes long and



1962 - Rome, New York. Toronto Optimists' National Party using regulation army issue, Lee Enfield 303 caliber rifles with nine inch steel bayonets. All the metal parts were chrome plated. Total weight: 9.2 lbs. (The breach was welded closed)

inspection a judge would look at each member to check their personal appearance, their uniform and their equipment. Each infraction (eg unkempt appearance, dirt on a uniform, an unpolished horn, etc) resulted in a penalty of one tenth of a point.

In terms of execution, a corps would begin with the maximum points for a category and judges deducted a tenth of a point for every mistake they saw. When it came to General

they must be in motion for at least 8 of those minutes. The timing for a performance began at the first note of music or at the first step off the starting line and ended when the last corps member crossed the "finish line". A starters pistol would be fired when the show began, again at the 11 minute mark as well as when the final corps member crossed the finish line.

During a typical inspection a judge would look at each member to check their personal appearance, their uniform and their equipment. Each infraction (eg unkempt appearance, dirt on a uniform, an unpolished horn, etc) resulted in a penalty of one tenth of a point. In terms of execution, a corps would begin with the maximum points for a category and judges deducted a tenth of a point for every mistake they saw. When it came to General Effect a corps began with zero marks in the category and the judges gave marks based on what they thought of the show.

There would typically be six Field or Execution Judges, two each for marching, drumming and bugles. These judges used a "tick system" in both drill and music. They looked and listened for



1965 - Toronto Optimists - "Colour Presentation" at the Canadian Nationals in Hamilton, Ontario.

errors and each infraction that they noticed generated a "tick" which decreased a corps' score by 1/10th of a point.

While I can't comment about the judging for horns and drums I remember M&M judging varied by jurisdiction with the most stringent judging occurring in the US Midwest. Jack Roberts was a former M&M judge as well as a drill designer and instructor for the Toronto Optimists. He remembers: "the Midwest judging was a little different with zero tolerance. If the

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

front had one or ten not in the front, you would receive a tick for each person, one or ten. If the front continued like that with no recovery, usually 10 steps, they would tick all over. That said, it was usually up to the M&M judge to decide, as long as he or she was uniform throughout the contest. The judges in Midwest, East and Canada all did it similar, but Midwest

was brutal. For example a squad had to have all its members perfectly erect at all times. In Canada and East, if the interval was equal, it was deemed to be correct as a squad even when the outside persons were leaning to the centre, because the interval was still correct. Ergo, I had to teach something I did not like because of the judges jurisdiction we would face. Also if the front was off, we had to make sure it was not intentional before ticking away. Many Corps would bend the ends of a company front to escape the ticks, but the GE judge would get them if it was still off.”

General Effect, or “GE” judges had the best seats in the stands. There would usually be GE Judges for M&M (Marching and Manoeuvring), Drums and Bugles. Their job was to analyse the “effectiveness” and “showmanship” of all aspects of a corps show. These judges would look at things such as the difficulty and complexity of the music and drill, how the various aspects interact (does the drill fit the music, do the drum charts work well with the horns), etc. Generally a corps would start with zero points in GE and the judges would add points as the show progressed.

A negative aspect of GE scoring was that corps that performed early in a competition often had lower



*Mr Baggs with the Chief Judges of the NY and Michigan All-American Association. (1965)
L-R: Al Tevels, NY; Mr Baggs; Col. G. Cutler, Michigan.*

GE scores because the judges needed to “leave space” in case better corps performed later.

As you can see, two main factors decided the winner of a corps contest. The first of these was, of course, the skill with which the performance was executed. The Field Judges handled that aspect. The second factor, General Effect, was less clear cut. Unfortunately,

when it came to the allocation of points, there was an absence of uniformity since competitions did not use a standardized scoring system. A corps could, for example, compete in three or four contests over the course of a weekend and be judged using three or four different scoring systems!

At the end of this article is an example of scoring as defined by the All-American Judges Association in 1958; however, this was not the only judging association. For example, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Midwest and Canada each had independent judging associations and rules. In fact, different contests in the same area might use different rules. For example, one contest in New York might use All-American rules while another might use the rules for the New York State Judges Association.

I’ve included a table showing a few examples of contests and how points were allocated for each category. As you will see, one contest might allocate as much as 90 points for

execution and 10 for GE while another one might assign 55 points for execution and 45 points for GE. In addition, the number of judges evaluating a particular category was not consistent. A Drum Corps competition always had two judges for each execution caption; however,



1961- Toronto Optimists Colour Guard with their tall flag poles bending slightly in the wind.

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

the number of GE judges often varied. In some contests there might be two judges for each category, in another there might be a single judge for each GE caption or, perhaps, one judge who assigned a score for total General Effect.

A few memories of shows

“El Cid”, the opening drill for Optimists’ 1963 show, had the corps stepping off the line then forming a large triangle that covered the width of the field. The triangle continued moving forward but condensed to single spacing. It then changed direction and moved at an angle to the crowd. Drum judges always hovered around the drum line. Those who had never seen our show were often too intent on their work, missing what was happening around them. On numerous occasions they got caught within the triangle, creating problems for both the judges and our corps.

After retreat we would gather in the dressing room and Barry Bell, our horn instructor, would review the caption sheets, pointing out areas that might be causing problems. He would also read comments from the judges. We did this after a 1964 Senior competition in Titusville, Pennsylvania (we’d won each of the previous two or three years). It had rained heavily and the grass was very slippery. During our performance one of our corps members had slipped on the muddy grass with their knee touching the ground. They stood upright and finished the show. A judge wrote that he almost missed it because the recovery was so smooth; however, he still penalized us a tenth



1961 - Toronto Optimists being inspected, Phillipsburg, New Jersey.



Toronto Optimists 1963 “El Cid” triangle which often captured drum judges.



Truman Crawford, Bill Shepherd of Whaley Royce and Dave Watt holding Optimists first Contrabass (1965)

for dropped equipment plus a full point for picking it up. That loss of 1.1 points cost us the contest.

In 1965 the Optimists opened their show with a company front – all the way to centre field. One August night at practice our focus was on ensuring that the front was like a board. Much of the evening was spent marching in a front and playing. When we reached the “finish line” we’d do a four count turn and march back to the starting line. The rehearsal was during the Perseid Meteor Shower and we were lucky enough to see a large meteor streak by. We continued marching and playing but all eyes were on the meteor. After it had disappeared our eyes looked down the line and it was as straight as an arrow. Gawd we felt good! And confident that the front was solid. Two days later we were competing – on a baseball diamond, at an angle to the stands! Sadly, for that show, the board was a tad warped.

What more can I say?

I hope you’ve enjoyed the read. Hopefully you have also gained an understanding and appreciation for “Old Skool” or “Classic” or “Golden Age” or “Old School” Drum and Bugle Corps.

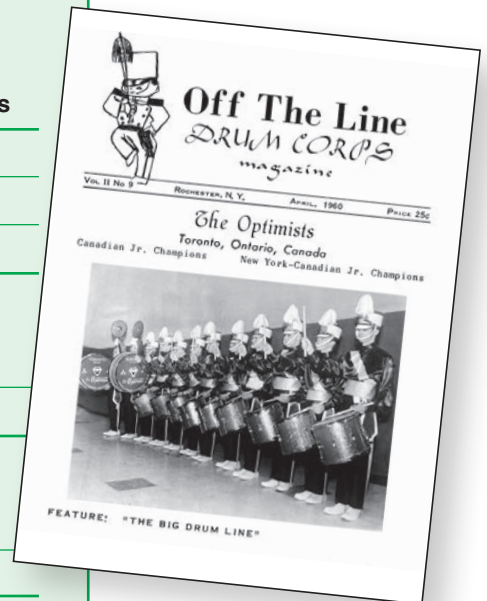
The following three pages contain additional material that will clarify or supplement aspects of the article. ■

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

Example of Point Allocation by Caption

(from a 1962 contest in Rome, New York using New York State rules)

	Toronto Optimists	Blessed Sacrament	St Catherine's Queensmen	Utica Yankees
GE M&M	14.9	12.6	13.1	12.7
GE Bugles	13.1	12.8	12.2	10.5
GE Drums	13.7	13.5	13.3	12.3
Total GE	41.70	38.90	38.60	35.50
Field M&M: 1	19.1	18.6	17.5	18.0
Field M&M: 2	18.6	19.4	18.6	17.5
Average M&M	18.85	19.00	18.05	17.75
Field Bugles: 1	11.6	12.8	12.1	12.3
Field Bugles: 2	13.2	13.4	12.3	12.5
Average Bugles	12.40	13.10	12.20	12.40
Field Drums: 1	12.9	13.5	13.1	10.6
Field Drums: 2	13.6	13.4	13.8	11.2
Average Drums	13.25	13.45	13.45	10.90
Penalties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Score	86.20	84.45	82.30	76.55



1960 - the cover of "Off The Line" magazine featuring the Toronto Optimists' "Big" drum line that included six snares and three tenors.

Rules from the All-American Judging Association: Drum & Bugle Corps Rules — June 29, 1958

- A minimum drill of 11 minutes, a maximum 13 minutes.
- All judging will continue through entire performance.
- Inspection. Condition of uniforms, equipment and general appearance as a military unit. All instruments used must be on the inspection line.
- Total penalty will be deducted from the General Effect score.

Musical quality of bugles or fifes	25%
Excellence of drumming	25%
Marching and manoeuvring (M&M)	30%
General effect	20%
- A penalty of two points will be deducted from the total score for each minute or fraction thereof for over or under time on the field.
- If a member of the corps proper steps over the side boundary, a penalty of one point for each error will be assessed.
- A two-point penalty for any breach of the flag code.
- All competing drum and bugle corps must march in the parade and appear in the grand finale to qualify for competition and prizes.
- All-American judges will be in charge. No contestant or directors will be allowed to converse with judges while contest is going on. Please abide by this rule.
- Any unit not reporting within 15 minutes of their set inspection time shall be penalized two points; a unit not reporting within 30 minutes shall be penalized four points.
- Failure to report by any unit prior to the start of the inspection of the last competing group shall disqualify the unit.

OLD SKOOL DRUM CORPS (CONTINUED)

Samples of Point Allocation by contest

The table below shows examples of point allocation in a variety of contests (the information was taken from contest programs). The total for execution categories could range from 55 points all the way to 90 points while the total for GE could vary from as little as 10 points all the way to 45 points. Also, inspection penalties could easily cause a corps to lose a contest – before they even stepped on the field to perform!

As you can see, when it came to assigning scores to a corps' performance there was an absence of consistency and uniformity. The result was that the same performance could yield different results depending on which judging system was used.

Contest	Execution				Execution Total	General Effect			GE Total
	Inspection	M&M	Bugles	Drums		M&M	Bugles	Drums	
All-American (1958)		30	25	25	80				20
New Jersey (1962)		30	30	30	90				10
Waterloo, Ontario, Canadian Nationals (1963)		25	20	20	65	15	10	10	35
Mundelein, Illinois (1963)		30	30	30	90				10
Falconer, New York (1963)		30	20	20	70	10	10	10	30
Medina, New York (1963) Using NY State rules		25	15	15	55	15	15	15	45
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (1963)	10	30	20	20	70				20
Racine, Wisconsin (1964)	10	20	20	20	60				30
Rochester, New York (1964)		20	20	15	55	15	15	15	45
Wisconsin (1964)	10	20	20	20	60				30
Kingston, New York (1965) All-American rules		30	25	25	80				20
Garfield, New Jersey (1967) All-American rules		30	25	25	80				20

How contests are judged

(from the program for a contest in 1957 sponsored by The Optimists)

✓ Inspection

At the end of the field each Corps is set up in a Corps front. Mister Curiosity is there with his pad to insure the primary basis of a good Drum Corps — neatness. For each infraction he finds, he takes off a tenth of a point. Failure to be clean shaven, lack of a haircut, spots or dirt on uniforms, unpolished shoes are individual items for which he takes off a tenth of a point. Equipment such as drums and bugles must be spotless — infraction thereof means a tenth of a point. Mr. Curiosity is there to find each minute violation — that is his job and he does it.

✓ Marching and Manoeuvring

As the Corps lines up on the field — two nasty little rabbits with pads under their arms suddenly pop up playing the game of Hounds and Hares. On the competition field the hares are after the hounds.

No army general is more exacting. A mistake is not the glaring error noticeable to the public, it is the minute failures which detract from perfection that constitute their meat. Interval between men, distance between ranks, files not covered, dress or ranks, squad, sections, platoons and Corps fronts must be in perfect array. Any failure, even of the slightest degree, means the loss of a tenth of a point for each unit infraction.

The perfection of detail must be carried out to such a degree that any bad break of formation or any nonconformity of even a pivot meets with disapproving check of Mr. Rabbit to the tune of a tenth of a point. The unforgivable Drum Corps crime — out of step — is greeted with a tenth of a point for every sixteen steps. Should the hound decide to become

a little lazy and fail to pick up his feet, marking time or become sloppy in his bearing, Mr. Rabbit is there to take off one-tenth of a point. An unmerciful cuss is Mr. Rabbit but he must do his job and he does it.

✓ Bugling

If you take special notice of a couple of individuals with big ears, they are the Bugle Judges. The poor fellows have been straining their ears so long to detect mistakes, their ears almost leave their heads, propel a pencil and note a tick for each mistake.

Theirs is the task of ascertaining that each man in the bugle line is a musician, playing his part. Tone quality, musical accents, proper musical blend, tone and release are all qualities which a good Drum Corps must effect. Failure to do so in any way means the loss of a tenth of a point. Musical contrast, diminuendo and crescendo, accelerando and retard are vital qualities of a good musical unit; each failure means the loss of a tenth of a point. Handling of equipment such as position of bugles while marching and playing, bringing them up and down at the beginning and completion of a song lend to the good order of the unit. Each failure means a tenth of a point. The poor fellow has a tough job — no wonder his ears become big and his eyeballs hang from their sockets.

✓ Drumming

These fellows are really stinkers. They sneak behind the Corps, they walk beside the drummers, they have no respect for privacy. If you suddenly see someone take out survey equipment, it is the drum judge trying to ascertain the proper angle of the drums, the exact position and height of the stick. Each failure means a tenth of a point. Each drum rudiment which corresponds to the musical note on the bugle, must be done to perfection. Attack, release, contrast,

diminuendo, crescendo are all tonal requisites of a good drummer. Any time he errs in any one of these departments, he loses a tenth of a point for his unit.

✓ General Effect

Showmanship is a vital part of a Competition. Hidden in the stand at vantage points are three big judges spotting their prey. These men ascertain the effect of the Corps on the audience, the smoothness of execution of the drill, the general temper of the bugling and drumming, the action of the drum major and the Color Guard. Are the manoeuvres simple or complex, are they set to the music, does the entire show have the harmony and blend it should have? These are questions the General Effect Judge must determine and score the Corps accordingly. It is a difficult task and takes a capable man.

✓ Timer

The fellow has a starters pistol and a clock. He fires the pistol on the first step off the line or at the first note of music. A Corps must be on the field from eleven to thirteen minutes. He times them as to the length of time in motion. He fires the warning gun at 11 minutes. He times the Corps as they leave the field to make sure they are within the specified time. If a Corps is under or over, there is a penalty of one whole point.

We have tried to present a brief picture of a competition in a light vein to make it more impressive. Our purpose is to pay real tribute to the Judges who are men of high calibre and of precise training. They are the watchdogs of fair play, they perform a difficult task and deserve real tribute. We salute them today and on each occasion, congratulate them for their fine work. You, the people, can enjoy a competition because of their watchfulness and hard work.

Looking back and...

RECENTLY one of the hard drives on my computer crashed. It was the drive on which all of my drum corps images are stored. Thankfully I did not lose many thousands of hours of work. The drive was “mirrored” so that everything that was on the failed drive was also stored on a second, mirrored drive (those files are also on external backups). Replacing both drives then restoring everything cost money and time, and it was a nuisance; however, it was not the loss that it could have been. The incident did, however, make me realize that I have created what is probably the most comprehensive archive of Optimists audio/visual material in existence. I have volunteered more than 30,000 hours (that is not a misprint) over the last fifteen years. Much of this time has been spent creating and modifying the website as well as scanning old photos, slides and negatives then restoring them before posting them in our Photo Gallery. Vern Reid is the “keeper” of Don Daber’s slides and negatives so that material could, if needed, be re-scanned in the future; however, that is not the case with the Alumni Corps images. Dave and Eric overwrite their memory cards after events so it appears that I am the only one who has a major collection of Alumni Corps images. Thinking about this was a bit of a rude awakening. It also caused me to pause and reflect on how I’ve used that material and what might happen in the future.

This is probably a good place to offer a Big “SHOUT OUT” to David Johns and Eric McConachie, the two individuals responsible for almost all of the Alumni Corps images. These guys have spent thousands of dollars of their own money to buy high-quality camera equipment to take photos of the corps. They’ve also volunteered a tremendous amount of their time and energy to photograph corps events. They have created the images that make our Alumni Corps Gallery so exceptional!

I guess I should return to the “Way Back Machine”. I believe that it was Ray Roussel who started the website then Gord Lefevre took over. In 2005, under Gord’s reign, I first started posting images in the Photo Gallery. At that time there was only one user name for posting images – Gord’s. As a



even planned on learning!

When I took over the website my first objective was to develop a new site which meant that I had to teach myself how to create, organize and maintain a website. Since I hoped to increase the number of images in the Photo Gallery I wanted to make it easy to find photos. That meant reorganizing the Photo

Gallery. In addition, I wanted both the website and the Photo Gallery to have a theme that was unique to us so I taught myself how to write the code to create a theme. Since getting involved with the website the Photo Gallery has gone from fewer than 200 images to more than 13,000 images. Those images include shots of the Boy Scout Band that started in 1952 and led to the formation of The Optimists, Opti-Corps (Optimists’ Junior

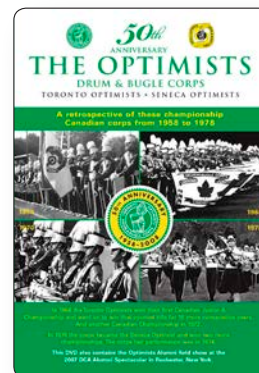
“B”competitive corps), the Toronto Optimists, the Seneca Optimists and the Optimists Alumni. Of course there are also images of many other corps. What I find amazing is that these images have been viewed more than 2.8 million times. Who would have thought that a small, “niche” website could be visited that often!

In 2006 the Seneca Optimists scheduled a reunion celebrating 30 years since their formation. I thought that they should have a remembrance so I taught myself how to create a video slide show. At that time I had very few photos of the Seneca Optimists so I borrowed some from videos. That gave me enough material to create individual slide shows for 1976, 1977, 1978 as well as one for 1976 through 1978.

A couple of years later, in 2008, the Toronto Optimists celebrated their 50th anniversary



Website Home Page.



50th Anniversary DVD.

BOB CARELL - RETIRES (CONTINUED)

with a reunion. A DVD had been created; however, there were some concerns about its quality. I set about teaching myself how to create a “professional” DVD. Given my total lack of experience, I was happy to learn that people actually liked it. Who knew?

David Johns and I had always wanted to resurrect GCC and, in late 2009, we got management’s approval to do so. For five consecutive years we produced a new issue every three months! While producing four issues of GCC each year was fun it was also a great deal of work! For the last few years the corps



G&GCC 2010 and GCC 2019

has had fewer engagements so we decided to turn GCC into a “Year in Review”. We still supply free Black on Green issues to our corps members but most people are choosing to buy a colour version which looks much better.

It was about 2012 when I managed to get my hands on a few thousand of Don Daber’s negatives as well as more than 1,000 slides (sadly, a great deal of Don’s work has disappeared over the years). I set about scanning and restoring these slides and negatives. I have to admit that the restoration process is still not complete (sometimes it takes a few hours to restore a single image); however, a large number of these images have been restored and are posted in our Photo Gallery. This work proved to be essential when I started another project a little while later.

Over the course of many years Colin Hedworth had created a hand-written history of the Toronto Optimists and the Seneca Optimists (Colin had played tenor drum with the Toronto Optimists in the early days while Colin and I had driven the equipment truck for the Seneca Optimists). In late 2013, after Colin had passed away, I decided to digitize and publish his history. I knew that this project would require a considerable



Seneca Optimists' Equipment Department and others (1976)
L-R Back: Doug Coull, Tim Burrage. L-R Front: Barry Woods, Gilles Paquin, Bob Carell, Colin Hedworth, Evert Botterweg, John Konstantinou, Chuck Sokoll.

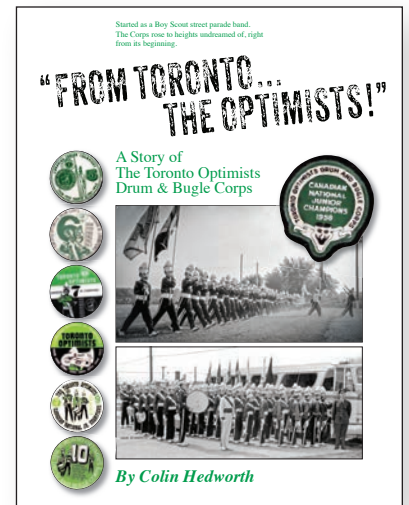
amount of work and a lot more learning but I felt that it was important to do. Thankfully, my previous work came in handy. By this time, I had already spent thousands of hours scanning and editing material so I had a stash of images that I could use in the book. Using these images made it easier to put the book together. Colin’s history of The Optimists did not make it onto the best-seller list but I thought, and still think, that it was important to publish his history of The Optimists. By the way, an Acrobat version of the book can be found on our Alumni website.

I guess this is where I talk about why this article has been included. I’ve decided that, after 15 years of working on our website the time has come for me to pass the torch to someone else.

It’s been fun and very rewarding; however, I am looking forward to having some time to myself. Brian Menard will be taking over the website. After a transition period Brian will assume full responsibility.

Looking forward, I’m not sure what will unfold. In relation to the corps my hope is to continue editing and posting more of Don Daber’s photos. I also want to scan and post more issues of GCC from the old days. In addition, I have managed to get some old video footage (no audio). Some of it is already on our website but I’m hoping to do some video editing, perhaps adding an audio track and posting the new files on YouTube.

While I will no longer be performing with the Corps I wish it every success in the future. The Optimists will always be in my heart. ■



Book: History of The Toronto Optimists and The Seneca Optimists.



Kitchener - Saturday, November 16.

This year the Optimists Alumni were in six Santa Claus parades. Unfortunately we do not have images from the Maple parade. This was our first Kitchener Santa Claus parade. The parade went smoothly and we were well received.



Mike Lang and Lisa Lin.



Doug Roblin.



Sue Oswald and granddaughter.



Liz Dodsworth.



Keith Dearlove.



Barry Bell.

Brampton - Saturday, November 16.



The Brampton parade is always at night, which means the weather is colder and it's harder to play. Also, we gather at a parking lot near the end of the parade route then drive to the beginning. Guess what? Sitting on a fast moving trailer in cold weather is a tad chilling. Thankfully the appreciative parade watchers warmed our hearts. As for warming the rest of our bodies, we had to resort to warm clothing augmented by hand-warmers, foot warmers and, yes, bum warmers!



Soo Lee.



Doug Roblin.



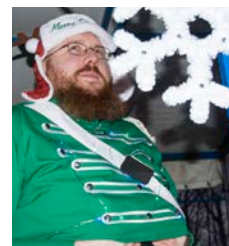
Matt Davis.



Joe Gianna.



Doug Darwin.



Eric Dallosch.



Mike Lang.



Guelph - Sunday, November 17.

Eric, our photographer, could not make this parade; however, Soo Lee managed to take a few shots. This parade is fun because the parade route is always lined with families and their young children. The spectators were already happy and our music seemed to make them even happier. What more could one ask?



Judy Ferguson.



Joe Gianna.



Liz Dodsworth.



Lorne Ferrazzutti.



Barry Bell.



Eric Dallosch.



Doug "Smiles and chuckles" Darwin



Aurora - Saturday, November 23.

Aurora was another night parade. It was fun but, as you can see from the image below of Heather, it was coooold!



Keith Dearlove and Ric Brown.



Seung Ah Kim.



Keith Dearlove.



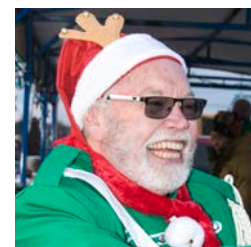
Heather "Bring It On" Hyslop.



Brian Collingdon.



Liz Dodsworth and Soo Lee.



Ken Taylor.

SANTA CLAUS PARADES (CONTINUED)



Brantford - November 30.

Brantford was our last parade of the season and of the year. It was another cold, night parade but the people were great! A good end to the year.



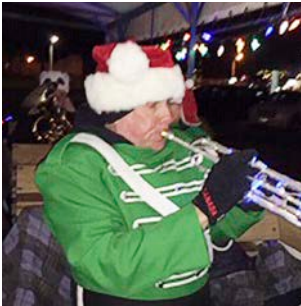
Mark Sichewski.



Heather Hyslop.



Doug Roblin and Barry Bell.



Barry Woods.



Mike Lang.



Lorne Ferrazzutti.



Rick Lang.

FROM THE WAY-BACK - AURORA 2013



"It was sunny outside while I enjoyed coffee with Bob Carell and other members of the corps in a restaurant before the Aurora Santa Parade. It clouded over and the next thing I see out the window is a snow storm. Well, the parade must go on!"
Eric McConachie.



Don Daber

May 2, 1929 – April 4, 2019



IN 1960 Don Daber burst onto the scene with an explosion of creative art and singlehandedly changed the way we viewed Canadian Drum Corps. Quickly his distinctive

line drawings, photographs and montages appeared at the highest levels of the North America Drum Corps movement. Who can forget the record jackets, buttons, crests, souvenirs, programs, cartoons and logos?

Don discovered drum corps in May of 1960 and his involvement with the drum corps activity progressed at lightning speed. His first direct contact with a drum corps was at a Scout House show on May 28, 1960. About a week after seeing Scout House Don happened upon De La Salle Drum Corps (they were giving an outdoor performance on their school's football field) and a couple of weeks later he was at a Toronto Optimists' practice. Within a few days of that practice

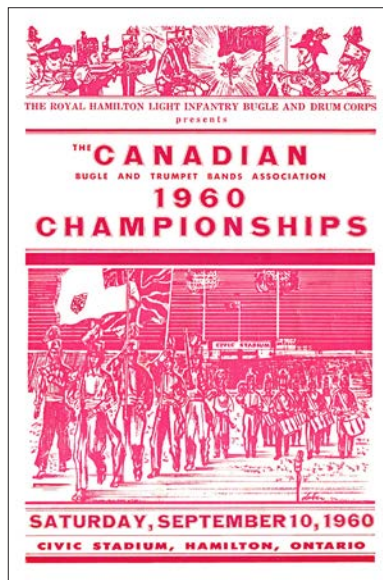


1960 - Don with his BIG membership card.

Don went to a show in Kitchener, Ontario with the Optimists and the following week he joined Opti on a trip to Rochester, NY. In early July Don asked Al Baggs, Optimists' Corps Director, whether he could be the official photographer for the Optimists. Two weeks later Mr. Baggs asked Don to join them on every trip. At the beginning of August Don's connection with the Optimists was cemented when he was presented with an oversized membership card (30" x 24") for the Optimists. In addition to Mr. Baggs, the Corps Commander, the card was signed by every member of the corps! Since he didn't drive no one is sure how he got there, but Don also made it to Jersey City for the 1960 Dream. We know that Don was there because some of his photos from that show still exist.

Don's relationship with the Optimists was very successful and continued until his death.

Don's connection with the greater drum corps community began in July of 1960 when he joined Al Baggs, Director of



1960 - The cover of Don's first program.



1963 - Green Capsule Comments.



1966 - Clubhouse on Keele Street.

the Toronto Optimists, and Clare Reid, Secretary-Treasurer of what was then called the Canadian Bugle and Trumpet Band Association (in 1961 the name was changed to Canadian Drum Corps Association) to attend a CBTBA meeting. As a result of this meeting Clare Reid gave Don a contract to do the artwork and program for the upcoming Championship contest. Don also designed the cover for the record album of the 1960 Canadian Championships. For Don, a tremendous amount happened in the two months following his introduction to drum corps!

During his years with the Optimists (Toronto Optimists and Seneca Optimists) Don was a photographer, the publicity director and the Corps Director (more than once). In fact, Don replaced Al Baggs as Optimists' Corps Director in 1963, only three years after Don had discovered drum corps. In 1961 Don created GCC, Green Capsule Comments, the newsletter of the Toronto Optimists Drum Corps. In 1976, when the Toronto Optimists and Seneca Princemen merged to

form the Seneca Optimists, the newsletter kept it's letters but changed its' name to Gold Capsule Comments. Don's cartoons

WE REMEMBER (CONTINUED)

were often included in editions of GCC and many of Don's cartoons can be found in the pages of Steve Vicker's book *The Art of Drum Corps World*. The Seneca Optimists disbanded after the 1978 season but Don continued taking drum corps photos into the 1990s. Since Don never did learn to drive most of these photos were taken in the Greater Toronto area.

In addition to his work with the Optimists, Don found time to work with both the Ontario and Canadian Drum Corps Associations, serving as a photographer, publicity director and board member. In his spare time Don supplied photos and articles for various drum corps publications such as Drum Corps News, Drum Corps World and Drum Corps Digest. In



Album cover for the 1978 Canadian Nationals

addition, Don produced the artwork for over 20 record albums as well as designing posters and doing the program artwork for a variety of contests.

that she'd asked Don why he never married. Don's response was: "I was too busy". She wondered whether it was true. When I outlined all that Don had done while working at a full-time job she said "I understand". Truly, Don had dedicated his life to Drum Corps and to "the kids".

In his later years I would visit Don and bring my laptop to show him what was happening on our website and in the Photo Gallery. On one visit a staff member said

"The Old Days" section of the Optimists Alumni website covers the years 1952 through about 1978. This section contains albums for the Toronto Optimists, The Seneca Optimists, the various Optimists feeder corps (Bantam Optimists, Optimist Cadets, Optimist Lancers and Cadet Lancers) as well as numerous other corps. If you look through these old photos you will discover that the majority of the photos in the Toronto Optimists, Seneca Optimists, Optimists Feeder Corps and Other Corps albums were taken by Don.

The Optimists Alumni Photo Gallery has an area dedicated to Don. It can be found at the end of "The Old Days" section. There are three albums devoted to Don and his work: "Photos of Don Daber", samples of "Don Daber's Artwork for Record Albums and Programmes" as well as samples of "Don Daber's Promotional Materials".

The URL for the Optimists Alumni Photo Gallery is:
<http://www.optimists-alumni.org/photos/>

Here's the URL to link directly to the Don Daber albums in our Photo Gallery:

<https://optimists-alumni.org/photos/index.php?cat=36>

Remembrances

"Every time I put on a corps album, I see his artwork, and think of Don and I'm glad to have met him. He will live in our memories..." Thom Sacco

"When I think of the Toronto Optimists, I think of Don Daber." Jim Stevenson

"Don was brilliant, compassionate and highly organized. He was a marketing guru who individually created the visual legacy of the drum corps activity. I learned a lot from Don." Phil McArthur

"He had such talent...which he used positively to promote not just the Optimists, but all of our drum corps. I will never forget him, nor his wonderful contributions to our activity." Stephen J. Cooley

"A true legend and wonderful person has left us. Thank you Don for all you did for all of us." Ted Wilson

"After I aged out at the end of 1963, Don asked me to help him photograph. He enticed me by offering me his Exacta camera at a very reasonable price. I remember asking 'Am I permitted to go on the field? He replied 'Of course, get out there... take pictures'". David Johns

I first met Don my first full year with the Toronto Optimists in 1960. At that time I was in awe of his talent as a commercial artist and the many attributes he brought to the corps through his art, writing and ideas. My tenure playing in the corps lasted for eight years and throughout that time Don came up with many inventive ideas that made belonging to the Optimists a special thing – not only the championships we won but the banquets, five year rings, twenty one club, GCC and the store on Keele Street to name a few that he was either instrumental in or partnered with others in bringing to fruition.



1966 - Rick Cooper and Don working on GCC in the Clubhouse.

For many of us the history of our teenage years were captured by Don on film, if it had not been for that there likely would be no record of our participation or achievements. In 1974 when I became the corps director Don was there with many suggestions and ideas that made the 1975 season most enjoyable for me and hopefully for the membership as well. Don always and only cared about the “kids”. What about the kids? What about the kids? That was Don’s rally cry, he really did care.

It was always fun to be with Don – I never heard him speak ill of anyone or talk down to anyone. It was always fun to be with him after a rehearsal and a few libations when you knew Don would start up his Chinese Food, Chinese Food mantra. We would all wind up a Sai Woo’s for you guessed it – Chinese Food.

Don was kind and generous. In his later years he suffered a form of dementia that would rob not only him but his many friends of meaningful social contact. Even though he had to go through this state to where we are today, many of us continue to benefit through his meaningful work in the drum corps world and through his many photographs that are now posted on the Optimist Alumni web site. Don may have left us but his legacy lives on through the media that he loved.” Doug MacKenzie

“We were so privileged to not only have known Don, but to have befriended him. Don was a great mentor and although he never marched with the corps he was truly a Toronto Optimist. I never heard him say an unkind word and he was for the kids in the corps. He never lost sight that this was an activity that kept so many of us off the streets and out of trouble (generally).” Richard Bruton

Don. We Remember!

Eric Burton

1929 – April 19, 2019

**Corps: Toronto Optimists,
Jolly Jesters. Army Service Corps**



Eric never marched with the corps but he was the first colour guard instructor for The Optimists. He did an excellent job of training the guard and he was held in high regard. Teaching drill was just one area of expertise. At one point Lorne had an idea for tenor drum mallets with wooden balls for heads. Eric was the one who manufactured these mallets and he and Lorne sold them to other corps. Eventually Ludwig saw the idea, liked what they saw and started manufacturing their own version of the mallets.

Eric eventually moved to Rochester then, as he got older, to the warmer climes of Florida.

Here are a couple of comments from some of those who knew Eric.

“Eric was a very good friend of mine having known him since the 50’s. He played a tenor drum for the Army Service Corps Trumpet Band at the University Armories where I met him. He also played for the Jolly Jesters Drum and Bugle Corps. In 1958 when the Toronto Optimists were formed Eric became the Colour Guard instructor. He was well informed regarding the D.C.A. Colour Guard’s protocol. He taught the guard to march, how to handle the flags and how to spin & toss the rifles. These were Army issued rifles weighing 10 pounds. Eric’s passing saddens me, he will be missed.” Lorne Ferrazzutti

“Eric was the man who taught the Colour Guard in the 50’s and 60’s his instruction and knowledge of the rules were number one. Many Corps would ask him about Guard excellence on how to preform. He worked very hard to make the Colour Guard the best in the Drum Corps circuit. The Optimist Drum Corps won many awards for being the best Colour Guard in competition. He was a man who wanted excellence from the guys and he got it. The guys in the guard thought highly of him. He got the best show from the guys every time. He was a pleasant person. He was very proud of the Corps. I’m sure he had fond memories of the Corps.” Phil Hennings

Jim Dwyer

February 20, 1935 – March 2, 2019

**Corps: The Vics (Montreal),
Optimists Alumni.**



From 1960 through 1965 Jim marched in the drum line of the Vics, a Senior corps from Montreal (the Vics had begun as the band of the Victoria Rifles of Canada, an infantry regiment from Montreal). One of Jim's friends talked about The Vics first competition against the Hawthorne Caballeros. Let's just say that it was a sobering experience

Around 2006 Jim discovered the Optimists Alumni. Jim jumped in to help out as our Business Manager and Transport Manager, sometimes Drum Major or anything else that was needed. When health issues forced him to leave in late 2010 we were very sad to see him go. Jim brought excellence to everything he did.

Jim was the guy who got us into the Toronto St Patrick's Day parade. In fact, Jim was one of the five guys who founded the Toronto St Pat's parade back in 1988! (Actually, there had been an earlier St Pat's parade in Toronto but that parade had last been held in 1878.)

Here are a few comments from some of those who knew Jim.

"He was a fine gentleman who will be missed."

"I'm sad to hear this. He was a fine guy."

"Saddened to read this; got to know him, great guy, very supportive, great Irishman."

"Very sad to hear this. Jim was very involved in all the corps activities."

"I remember Jim many years ago when he was in a marching band in Montreal with my brother Earl. They were marching with their band in a parade one weekend when our family saw the band coming up the street marching and playing their instruments. There was my brother Earl marching without his drums and Jim right beside him tapping on his drum set. We had a chuckle but the band group looked so proud and smart marching in this event. "

Penny Tudhope Cassady

1957 – January 23, 2019

**Corps: St John's,
Seneca Optimists.**



Penny played soprano with St. John's from 1969 through 1976. In 1977 she joined the Seneca Optimists, playing soprano.

Here are a couple of comments from some of those who knew Penny

"I remember her from both marching with her and high school. She was always a positive role model."

"She was such a kind and fun young women."

"Very sorry to hear this news. It was a long time ago, but I still remember her big smile and dedication to drum corps and the experiences we all had, that forever bind us all together."

"I marched beside Penny for many years she was someone I truly admired and looked up to."

"Loved marching with Penny and will always remember her positive attitude and admire how she put her heart in to everything she did. "

Wendy Paquin

1951 – 2019

**Corps: St John's,
Les Chatelaines, Seneca Optimists,
Anaheim Kingsmen Alumni**



Wendy was a member of St. John's Drum Corps from 1967 to 1972. After moving to Montreal she became an instructor for Les Chatelaines. In 1976, she moved to Toronto and began instructing the Seneca Optimists. She moved to L.A. in 1979, where she lived for 38 years and was a personal bookkeeper and massage therapist. In 2007 she fulfilled a lifetime dream of marching with the Anaheim Kingsmen Alumni Corps performing at the Rose Bowl.

Here are a couple of comments from some of those who knew Wendy.

"I'll always remember Wendy's energetic personality and her love of Weiner doggies."

"She will always be in my fondest memories of my time with Seneca Optimist and was grateful and blessed to have her for my colour guard instructor."

"She was in my life for a short time in 1978 but made such a difference. I will always remember her with fondness and proud to have been Wendy's hot and juicy colour guard."

"She touched so many lives in such a positive way. The world is a slightly lesser place without Wendy."

"Such a sad loss for everyone who knew Wendy she was a wonderful and beautiful woman inside and out"

"Never forget when she arranged to call out our commands to the colour guard in French during pass and review to mess with the girls from Phantom Regiment who were talking about us (as if behind our backs) because they thought, because we were Canadian, we only spoke French. Wendy was a gem and left us way too soon"

Rick Roussel

April 6, 1950 – APRIL 21, 2019

**Corps: De La Salle "Oaklands",
Toronto Optimists**



Rick played snare drum his entire corps career. He marched with De La Salle "Oaklands" until late 1968 when he lost a bet with his three brothers, all of whom marched with the Toronto Optimists. Rick agreed that if the Optimists won the 1968 championship he would join his brothers. Even though it was a lost bet that got Rick to join the Optimists he fully embraced the corps. Rick was lead snare when George Kopetski joined in 1971. George said "Rick lived and breathed the Green Machine. What a great mentor!" Rick marched with the Toronto Optimists from 1969 thru 1971. Rick was an exceptional snare drummer. (The Optimists Alumni website includes the story about Rick joining The Optimists. You can find a link to the story on Rick's "We Remember" page.)

Rick had a wonderful sense of humour. You could always count on him for a hilarious joke from his repertoire.

Rick's greatest joy was his family. He was a wonderful, loving father and amazing husband. Rick is missed terribly by his wife Susie, son Josh and daughter Riley. He is also missed by his sister Mary of Calgary and Lorne of Vancouver. Rick was predeceased by three of his brothers who played with the Optimists alongside him Ray (Baritone 1967-1969), Den (Baritone 1967-1970) and Tim (Baritone 1968-1970).

We will miss the husband, father, brother and friend that Rick was to us all. We will mourn the amazing man that was taken from us too soon. We will remember Rick as the kind loving soul he was.

[a reminiscence by Rick] I marched with Del in 67 and 68 the Optimists from 69 to 71. After that I moved to Vancouver. In 1976 or 77 I was a money market trader for Walwyn Stodgell and had a meeting with the treasurer and assistant treasurer of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. I arrived at the meeting a little late and they were deep into a conversation that I recognized. It was Drum Corps talk. I sat there for a few minutes then put my hand in the middle of the table with my three year Toronto Optimist ring on. It turns out that the treasurer was Jim Fletcher an Optimist from the original 1958 corps. The assistant treasurer was Cliff Von Zuben, a member of De La Salle in the early 60's. Needless to say that there wasn't much talk about finance for the rest of the meeting.

CORPS SCHEDULE

Please check our website for the current schedule: optimists-alumni.org

January - February, 2020

Saturday	January 11	W.T. Townshend Public School	Noon - 3:30 pm
Sunday	January 19	Royal Canadian Legion – Etobicoke	Noon - 4:00 pm
Saturday	February 1	Guard Show Exhibition – Hamilton	Confirmed
Sunday	February 9	Royal Canadian Legion – Etobicoke	Noon - 4:00 pm
Saturday	February 22	Royal Canadian Legion – Etobicoke	Noon - 4:00 pm



L-R: Doug Darwin, Mike Lang, Mark Sichewski and Lorne Ferrazzutti.

Update on our Website: Bob Carell

Photos have been viewed over **2.85 million** times and the website continues to be a popular source of Optimists Alumni and drum corps information.

Bob has just finished making some changes to the main website. There have been a few design changes but the biggest one relates to videos. Browser support for the once popular Flash video format is quickly disappearing. All videos have now been converted to MP4, the new web standard. "What's New?" will give more details.

On another note, after 15 years Bob Carell has retired as webmaster. We are very grateful that Brian Menard has agreed to take over. After a transition period Brian will be accepting full responsibility for both the website and the Photo Gallery.

GCC STAFF

Editor: Bob Carell.

Editorial Staff: David Johns and Eric McConachie.

Photo Credits:

Don Daber, David Johns, Soo Lee, Eric McConachie, Laura and Lindsay Weiler.

A special **thank you** to all those who contributed to this issue: Judy Ferguson, Soo Lee, Lindsay and Laura Weiler.



HOW TO REACH US

CORRECTIONS: We tried to get everything right. If not, please let us know: openrd2002@yahoo.ca
Thank you to all those who send photographs.

GCC is published once a year, in January.

Please submit your material to Bob Carell at:
Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com in one of the following formats:

E-mail. A Microsoft Word document, saved as "Rich Text Format" or "text only".

Or mail to Bob Carell:
1407 - 3050 Dufferin Street, Toronto, Ontario M6B 4G3

E-Photos should be sent to: Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com

If your photos were taken using a digital camera, please save them to your hard drive then email the unedited photos.

PRINTS: contact Bob Carell at:
Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com.

NOTE: The editor may need to modify your stories for space allowances. We will make every effort to retain the spirit and intent of your submission.