Belonging to a drum corps has given many boys a great deal of fun, a sense of belonging and a spirit of competition. They often find them-

selves going off to a weekend camp to practice when they are not travelling around the continent in the various competitions in the summer.

Drumming out delinquency

By BRIAN CRUCHLEY Star staff writer

"You never find a delinquent boy in a drum corps," said Mrs. Audrey Burns, mother of 21-yearold John, a mellophonist with Toronto's De La Salle Drum and Bugle Corps.

With competitions every weekend and practices two nights a week throughout the summer, the boys never have the time to get into trouble, she added.

Mrs. Burns shares this attitude with the teenage boys who are members of Toronto's two top junior drum corps, The Toronto Optimists and De La Salle.

During the last few weeks the corpsmen had been polishing their marching routines and sharpening their fanfares for the Shriners' Pageant presented Saturday night. Three Canadian and four American corps put on 13 minute displays for over \$2,000 in prize money at the CNE grandstand. But prestige more than prize money was at stake in this event. De La Salle was striving to outpace the Optimists, their traditional rival. Last weekend at their camp near Lake Simcoe, De La Salle practised 14 hours in preparation for the pageant. "Last Saturday night we wanted them to stop practising, but the kids went on for another halfhour," Father Xavier, leader of the corps, said. "The boys felt they had a good chance to win this pageant and they wanted to do the extra work rather than be sorry on Saturday," he said. As it turned out yesterday afternoon the Crusaders band from Chicago were judged the top corps. But the Optimists, Canadian Junior Champions for the past nine years, kept pace with eager De La Salle. The Optimists started their own camp near Lake Couchiching this year and combined a weekend of drill with their rookie corpsmen initiations at the end of May.

parts of Ontario nearly every weekend from June to September, this is a major expenditure.

Often the organization hosting a pageant provides transportation and accommodation for out-of-town competitors, but the boys contribute from their own pockets when ends don't quite meet.

"We each have to pay about \$80 a year for our trips," said Doug MacKenzie, 21, an Optimist soprano bugle soloist.

Car washes, ticket drives and Christmas tree sales help pay for the professional instructors and the replacement of instruments as well as the trips, Optimist director Dan Daber said.

In 1966 De La Salle bought new uniforms at a cost of about \$10,000, Father Xavier said.

New instruments cost between \$100 and \$600 each, he added.

Esprit de corps

The initiations aren't designed to humiliate new

Family type

Despite the costs and long hours of practice, corpsmen enjoy their work and many keep on turning out for competitions until they reach the 21-year-age limit.

But when as many as 20,000 people buy tickets for the competitions, it is evident that corpsmen are not the only ones who enjoy their music and precision marching.

"Drum and Bugle Corps are the finest form of family entertainment today," Athol Layton, chairman of the Shriners' Pageant, said.

When he first witnessed a drum corps competition four years ago, Layton felt "this was the type of entertainment that would be ideal as a Shrine project."

Profits from Saturday's pageant went toward the Shriners' hospitals for crippled children.

The Shriners paid all expenses for visiting corps during the weekend.

Both of the 80-member corps, which are composed of drummers, buglers and color guards, expect to be travelling to New Jersey, New York State, Ottawa and Montreal and many other Canadian and American centres this summer.

The Optimist Corps, founded in 1955, includes members from Barrie, St. Catharines and Welland. An interesting feature of the corps is their "rookie system" whereby new members press uniforms, clean instruments and save seats on the buses for the more senior boys. But the new members accept their lot graciously because the best rookie each year is given an award. As in the Optimists, De La Salle corpsmen range in age from 13 to 21 with an average of about 16 or 17. Originally an army cadet band in 1910, De La Salle became a drum corps in 1958. The pageant chairman, Athol Layton, a wellknown television wrestling commentator, has organized three annual Shriners' Drum and Bugle competitions as a hobby.

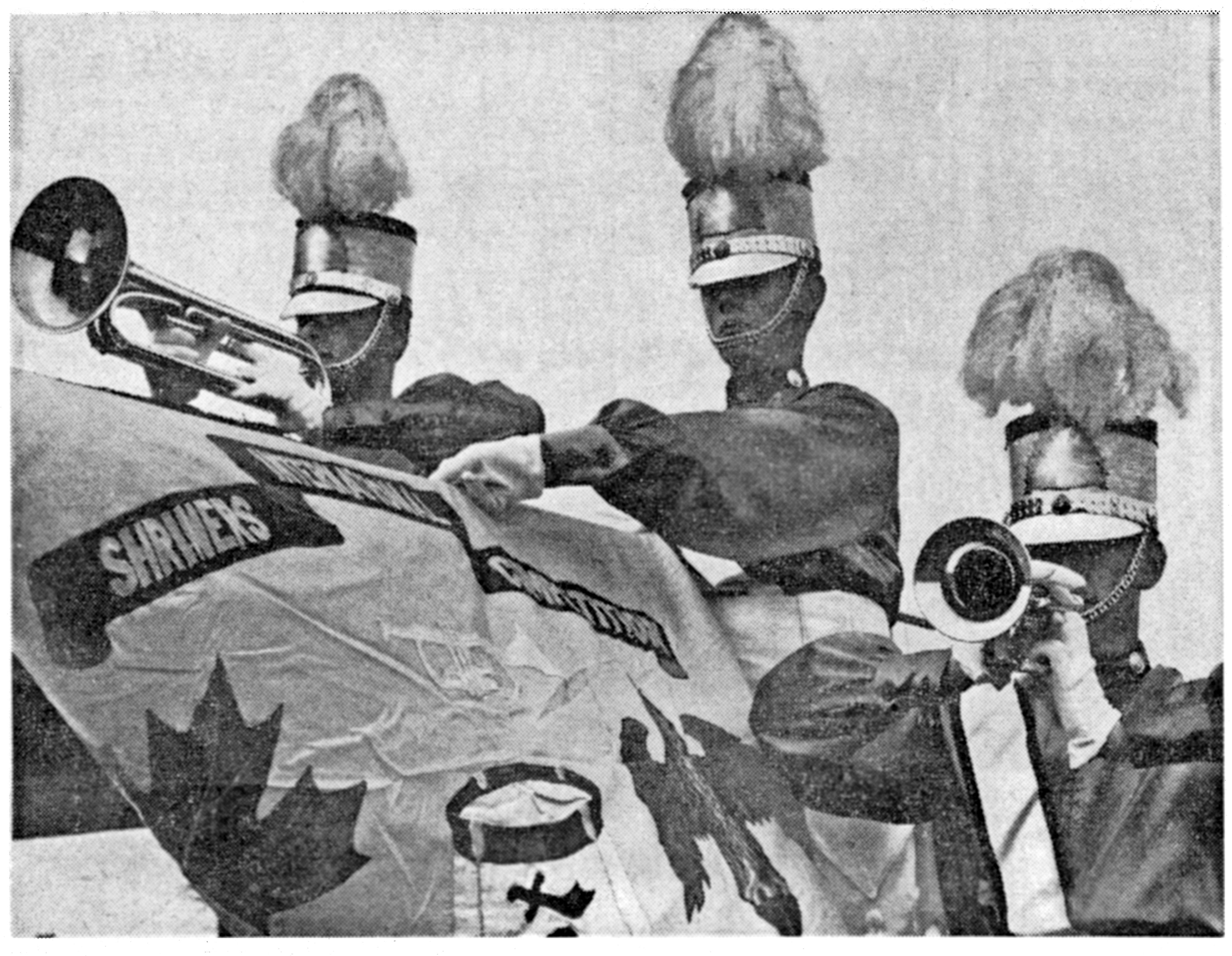
members but rather create an esprit de corps for the group, said Optimist Drum Major Vern Johansson, a seven year veteran of the corps.

Unity within De La Salle is strong as well since its members are drawn from De La Salle College, a private high school.

Operating costs are a big problem with Drum and Bugle Corps. While De La Salle College and the Optimists of Toronto sponsor these two groups, corpsmen often raise money on their own to meet the high costs of travelling and uniform and instrument replacement.

Father Xavier said De La Salle spends about \$10,000 a year on bus transportation. Since the corps travels to the north eastern United States and other

He feels that drum corps can "absorb young people and give them a big interest in life."



MUSIC AND PRECISION marching, according to some become a delinquent. They have competitions practimothers, keep their boys out of throuble. It is said cally every weekend and practices two nights a week. \exists that any boy in a drum corps is much too busy to Some corps have their own camps where they practice. \exists