



THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS  
THE OPTIMIST CADETS DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

# Newsletter

## **GREEN CAPSULE COMMENTS**

Our 8th Year of Publication! — 1960-1968

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS DRUM CORPS THE TORONTO OPTIMIST CADETS DRUM CORPS  
Publication Offices — Suite 302, 205 Keele St., Toronto 9.





## Avant Garde Optimists Close 11 Yrs. on Top!

by  
DOUGLAS MCFHAIL

**TORONTO, Oct. 26th.**--- The 1968 Canadian National Junior Champions have more than **class, on the field and off. They also have elegance. At their Annual Corps Dinner** ---this year celebrating their 11th consecutive National Title---they arrived in Nehru jackets, neck pendants, bell-bottoms, Adolph Menjou ties, white turtle necks and Clyde Wrap-arounds! The Dinner, complete with broadloom, brocade tapestries, and waiters bustling silver trays, was held at the Canadian Court of the King Edward Sheraton.

Guests included the Toronto Optimist Club President, Mr. Norm Kennedy and the National President of the C.D.C.A., Mr. Clare Reid.

"There was a time when three men ran this corps," said M.C., Optimist Al Baggs. "Now look at what it takes to make a winner," he added, as he introduced the 33 at the head table. Mr. Baggs is past Director of the Optimist Corps and past Chief Judge of the CDCA Judges' Chapter.

The Guest Speaker for the evening, Richard Boehnke, in comparing the Optimists of previous years with today's, said the old corps were "Nomads with Soul." In the tradition of class and good taste that the Optimists are known for, Boehnke drew from Aristotle, Nietzsche, McLuhan and Trudeau to point out the Optimists' future in a "Beautiful Canada" as a chance to "recapture Individual Pride" and stay on top, both as a nation and as a corps. Boehnke's past offices with The Optimists and The Optimist Cadets cover a wide range of instruction and administrative functions.

The Gord Robinson Trophy of "CORPSMAN OF THE YEAR, 1968" went to Paul Thompson the contra-bass soloist of "You Only Live Twice". Articulate Thompson explained why he felt he did not deserve the award. "Criticism is the best award," he said! "And it should go to the whole corps." The members of the corps itself votes for the "Corpsman-Of-The-Year" Award.

Calvin Johansson, 15 year old soprano player was the Rookie-Of-The-Year. His comment on winning the award: "Its just too much!"

The Ron Cooper "GUARDSMAN-OF-THE-YEAR" Trophy went to John Tierney. John was surprised at receiving the award and believed that a Rookie was going to get it!

## COVER COMMENTS!

The cover for this issue is dedicated to the "21's" some of whom are pictured here...from left to right, front to back, "LUMP" Andrews, of the Contra Bass section; the Drum Major, Vern Johansson, Marcel Smolinski, Soprano; John MacDonald, snare drum, now moved up to the Instruction Dept. Ron Cooper, Guard Captain, Vincent Ferraro, tenor drum, Peter Barclay, Bass and Rick Tracey, double Bass Drum.

## THE YEAR!

*THE YEAR IN REVIEW as seen by the Corps Publications: DRUM CORPS NEWS, CANADIAN COMMENT MAGAZINE, DRUM CORPS ON THE MARCH and GREEN CAPSULE COMMENTS---*

**SMITH FALLS, JUNE 22:** The 3rd contest for the Optimists and a third win that did nothing but make the corps more determined to immediately follow on to Kingston and apply the time rehearsing before the important evening show. The

supper hour would wait. The afternoon scores: OPTIMISTS: 74.666. Mets:71.383.

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KINGSTON, JUNE 22nd: Compared to the small crowd earlier that day in Smiths Falls a much larger and enthusiastic crowd was on hand to witness what was considered to be a battle between DeLaSalle and Optimists. Both these corps were so worried about each other they gave no thought to the corps that dove into the thick of competition and came out with the laurel wreaths...LES METROPLITIANS!!! The Mets left no time in expressing their gratification while both Del and Optimists quietly left the field with mouths full of humble pie. This event closed off the month of June and opened rumours and predictions. The scores: OPTIMISTS:75.58, METS:77.9, DEL:73.51.

*--Canadian Comment Magazine, July '68.*

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BRANTFORD, JULY 6th: The rumours from Kingston became fast in Brantford! The week previous to this contest the Cadets LaSalle thoroughly bounced the Mets back to Expo City and this logic made them #1 from Kingston. The Cadets from Ottawa were not scheduled to be in Brantford but in lieu of their victory over Mets were anxious to meet both Del and Optimists again on the same field.

Thus the setting in Brantford...CADETS LASALLE, anxious to make up lost ground--- DEL bewildered with their scores from Kingston and determined to do better and the OPTIMISTS wondering about Cadets LaSalle.

The Retreat was agonizing and resulted in Cadets LaSalle probably beating their heads against the bus racks all the way back to Ottawa...the Optimists bewitched, bothered and bewildered having lost 2 in a row to Canadian Corps and DEL delighted as the NUMBER ONE JR. for the first time in 7 long years!!!

The scores: OPTIMISTS: 76.233. DEL:77.233. CADETS LASALLE:73.566 (*Comment, July '68*)

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SARNIA, JULY 13th: And the pilgrimage was on. Like nomads the corps and fans crossed the Ontario plain to the west and the fans hit the stands at Norm Perry's Park all delighted at the sudden competition value of their seat with the meeting again of the Triple Estate.

Now each corps was worrying about each other and all that week cautiously re-prepared their shows to meet the challenge.

Could Cadets LaSalle release the strangle hold placed on them?

Could the Optimists beat back Del?

Could the corps from Oaklands keep their week-old crown untarnished?

Well, with the announcement of Retreat---fro the Cadets the rope got a little tighter; for the Optimists the crown moved away another point and for Del there was another jewel in their crown. The scores: DEL:72.266. OPTIMISTS:70.421, LASALLE:68.21.

*---Canadian Comment Magazine, July, '68/*

*There was now a break in the Canadian Junior series for a 2 week period. Del headed west for the first time to a series of competitions, while Optimists entered competition in the Keystone State of Pennsylvania. For the Canadian fans this was only a break. They looked to Ogdensburg, N.Y. and the next meeting...*

OGDENSBURGH, N.Y., July 27th: Practically an all-Canadian contest in this American town celebrating the 9th Annual Ogdensburgh International Seaway Festival. The Optimists had started off badly in the afternoon by participating in the parade, then realizing that both Del and Cadets LaSalle were not in it. Mark!

That evening, under grey skies and before a crowd of over 5,000, four Canadian Corps The Mets, Cadets LaSalle, Del & Optimists and 1 American, Emerald Cadets of Rochester, N.Y. put on a closely fought 4 way battle. Emerald was sadly outclassed...they were 1st on the line and some 18 pts behind the next corps. Sufficient commentary on their performance.

The second to appear was Del. A very nice show with lots of drive. Great to watch and listen to. They were well received by the crowd!

Next were the Mets of Montreal. They had defeated the Optimists several weeks earlier and they were out to prove this was no accident. They put on a good show but the drill was dull and they didn't seem to take advantage of their large all-girl guard. Fourth was Cadets LaSalle. They are improving each time out, but they don't seem to get the same crowd reaction received in past years...notibly '65. Some of the G.E. that was so effective then has become time-worn and could stand a change.

Optimists were the last corps to appear. They put on one of their better shows! The drill still needs a lot of work and their close formations are losing them the G.E. captions. Horns are improving and they still hold the mastery on drums, established earlier this year.

Just as Retreat started it began to rain. The special trophies were quickly announced as follows, along with scores: BEST BUGLE: Del. BEST DRUMS: Optimists. BEST D.M.: Mets, BEST GUARD: Cadets LaSalle. SCORES: Del:77.45, Optimists:74.75, Mets:71.85, Cadets LaSalle:71.13 and Emerald Cadets:52.91.

---DRUM CORPS NEWS, Aug. 14, 1968.

the DEL REPORTER, *Canadian Comment Magazine*, Sept/Oct issue, 1968.

...On July 27th, Canada's Big "4" met again on the same field for the first time in the 68 Season. This show was considered by many as a sort of "Nationals Preview"

DeLaSalle, fresh from their relatively successful and very educational Mid-west trip of the previous weekend, were not only out to prove that their victories in Brantford & Sarbia weren't flukes, but were also in town to defend their title---The Seaway International Champions.

The Optimists wanted revenge for their 2 loses; Mets were determined to show that they could defeat these corps again; and Cadets LaSalle needed to prove that they belonged in this select company. Indeed, the stage was set for a very exciting evening!

Considering the fact that this show, even with threatening rain, was standing room only, I think the Contest Committee could have spent a few more dollars on better lighting. To say that there were dim spots on the field, is putting it lightly!

But back to the contest. The Retreat was reminiscent of the carnival ring game where 'everyone wins a prize'...the benefits picked up by Del south of the border was beginning to appear as they were 2.7 points ahead of the second place corps. The widest margin of the year. This also, despite the fact that Del's drums took it again on the chin from Optimists' drums. The big surprise of the night was the rather distant finish of Mets, who had been expected to be right up there after their victory over both Del and Optimists in Kingston.

It was also at Ogdensburg that Del was presented their corps' Mascot, Cleo. For those of you who have not seen this wonderous creature, let me say that it is the spirit of a powerful and majestic eagle imprisoned in the body of a white duck! Cleo was presented to the corps by the Mets.

A.Jr.C. CHAMPIONSHIPS, Utica, N.Y., Aug. 3: The Second Annual Championship of this new Association was held in Utica N.Y. with St. Josephs of Batavia retaining the Championship as first won last year. A crowd of some 5,000 were on hand. The Optimists appeared to be moving ahead in this one. Final scores: St.Joes:85.80. OPTIMISTS:79.95 Cadets LaSalle:76.4, Mets:73.71, Appleknoskers:72.65, Chessmen:60.88 & Yankees:60.66.

SENECA FALLS, Aug. 10th: On this date the Optimists made their last appearance for 1968 in the United States. This was the 4th Annual International as sponsored by the Seneca Falls Jaycees. Final scores: St.Josephs:72.616. Optimists:64.866. Appleknockers: 59.35, Marion Cadets:56.916 and Norwood Debs: 52.283.

The judging here doesn't appear to have any useful purpose. St. Josephs 85.8 in Utica just 7 days previous---a drop of 13 pts in 1 short week. The Optimists dropped 15 points over the same period! Hardly seems likely. On top of this no meeting was held with the judges after the contest. This National Judges Chapter is not helping corps when they refuse to have a meeting to interpret sheets following a contest.

---DRUM CORPS NEWS, August 28th/'68.

#### TROOPERS WIN NORTH AMERICAN!!!

---By John Bartello, D.C. News.

TORONTO, Aug. 17th: The North American Invitational Championships in Toronto this evening proved to be a drum corps' nut's delight!!! Over 8,500 witnessed a superb contest. This has to be Canada's greatest contest since it features corps at the peak of their perfection.

The American Corps ran away with the show, but that should in no way imply that the Canadians were anything less than great. The affair opened with a unique and impressive guard ceremony and as each guard was presented a brief blip was given for the corps they represented. When the corps competed the histories were tastefully read

on the finish line. The draw for position was arranged so that the Canadian and American corps alternated positions.

The Troopers, on last, were very impressive and easily captured the audience. The Vanguard show came off fair but they seemed little threat to the Troopers. St. Josephs seemed way up for this one and very exciting but somehow they let the "Big Red" slip by with a .6 edge.

Del looked the best I've seen them in years! They took Opti again but by just about a point. It was not an obvious victory, however...and the Optimists are on the move. The Canadian Nationals should be a real contest this year!!!

The scores: TROOPERS:85.3 VANGUARD:82.583. ST.JOES:81.983. DEL:77.55. OPTIMISTS: 76.383 and Cadets LaSalle:71.266.

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THE ONTARIO CHAMPIONSHIPS, Kitchener, Aug.24th:

The first contest for the new Optimist Cadets in the afternoon Standstill event. Although they came in second, they did very well for a corps that had been in existence less than one year to that date. Members of the Junior Corps who travelled up to Kitchener early that day were very impressed with their performance.

THE DEL REPORTER, Canadian Comment Magazine:

With the advent of this contest the Canadian corps were heading for the home stretch. At this one, DeLaSalle won their first Major Title in 7 years. They also won the Best Guard Trophy and "Top Score Of The Day."

The Optimists, although unsuccessful in the defence of their Ontario title, were starting a slow but definite rise toward Del. The following Saturday, while the Optimists were competing in Sarnia, Del took the weekend off. This was a decision which may have had an effect on later shows.

THE C.N.E. CONTEST: On Labour Day the CNE Contest was finally held after a hurried meeting with corps directors concerning the state of the field after the afternoon rain. The retreat results found the Optimists back in first place. They managed to beat Del by 1.3 despite the mud, rain, et al. Their horns put on one of their best shows of the season and as usual their drums were a deciding factor. Del seemed to be having "one of those days" and the first half of their show was far off the usual standard.

On retreat the Optimists could barely control their elation over the outcome of the contest. It was their first win since the Kingston show in June. Del was very disappointed at the outcome but maintained their poise and turned to salute the Optimists before they left the field...a move which caused surprise in some circles for relations between the two corps had become quite tense of late.

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TORONTO OPTIMISTS CANADIAN CHAMPS...11th IN A ROW!!! DRUM CORPS NEWS, Sept.25th Issue.

KINGSTON, Sept.7th---The Optimists capped an uphill battle here tonight when they successfully defended their Canadian title and won the Championship for the 11th year in a row. During the regular season they lost to the Mets and five straight to De La Salle but the tide began to turn one week ago at the CNE Championships when the Optimists defeated Del for the first time in about 2 months. This win gave the Optimists the confidence they needed and after a strenuous week of practice, they arrived in Kingston full of enthusiasm.

In the afternoon prelims they finished first over Del by a margin of 2.117. In the evening finals the junior section was last in the lineup and got underway with Del drawing first position on the line. The pressure must have been on after losing the prelims but you never would have known. Del put on a very strong show and proved to the crowd that they deserved their earlier wins. They received very strong vocal support all through the show!

Next were the Cadets LaSalle. This corps who nearly dethroned the Optimists at the Nationals in '67 never did seem to get untracked this year. They have an exciting show but it never did seem to reach its full potential.

Last corps to appear were the Toronto Optimists and with a shout from the line of "Green Machine" they set out to prove their win at the prelims was not an accident! They put together one of their better efforts and their strong superiority on drums was enough to carry them to victory. The final scores: OPTIMISTS:79.03, DEL:78.3 and Cadets LaSalle: 73.66.

COMPLETE ISSUE OF CADETS LASALLE PUBLICATION:  
 "DRUM CORPS ON THE MARCH"  
 DEDICATED TO THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS

The October 1968 issue of DRUM CORPS ON THE MARCH, the official paper of Cadets LaSalle, Ottawa, was dedicated to the Toronto Optimists and their 11th Championship. Today, when consecutive wins are not always recognized this dedication of their complete paper to The Optimists was a very fine gesture and very much appreciated.

For the information of the readers of G.C.C. we quote part of this issue:

COVER PHOTO: The Optimists.

EDITORIAL: "Dedication" We, of DCM are proud to feature, in October, the famous Toronto Optimists as the "Corps-of-the-Month."

As most corps followers know, the Optimists are Canadian National Jr. Champions for the 11th consecutive year. As a means of congratulation, the staff of DCM dedicates this edition to Canada's greatest corps in 1968...THE OPTIMISTS!

"IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR"...1968 is over. For most corps, anyway! And what a year it was! I personally think it was the best year in drum corps long history. Nobody can claim to have had a "Poerhouse Corps" such as the Boston Crusaders of '67, Cabs in '64 and the Optimists 10 years absolute reign in Canadian Corps circles!

PORTS OF CALL column, by Paul and Ian Stott:

Greatness comes in many shapes, sizes and colours. One of these colours is green. On August 17th, at Varsity Stadium in Toronto, the Toronto Optimists, who had been staggering and reeling on the ropes of defeat week after week, dug down into the depths of pride that only a true Champion has. They were at home for the first time since the Mets pulled the upset of the decade in Kingston and paved the way for Del to record victory after victory over them. Opti wanted this one so bad they could taste it. For them it was not only a 6 corps competition, it was the necessity to prove to the home town fans that the Canadian Green Machine was still The Class of Canadian Drum Corps...the corps that had to be beaten if you wanted to call yourself Champion...the corps that had to be reconned with!!!

Well, as you know, they didn't beat Del that night. But they marched off the field tall and proud. Your authors said (to some disbelieving Delettes in the next row)... "They will win the Canadian Championship!" We wonder if they knew it that night?

The following week Del won the Ontario Championship but the hand writing was on the wall for all to see. Time was now the only fee. But the Green Machine wasn't having any of this! By Labour Day they had licked old man time too. So 5 days later they hit Kingston riding high on the crest of their Labour Day Victory and the only question left was how they would win.

They came out driving. Some say they were only 75% of former Optimist Corps. Maybe so, but the other 25% and more, was made up in pure guts. And that is what Champions are made of. There was none of this, "Take it easy, its only Prelims" attitude. Too much had already gone by the boards. Now it was, "Grab everything in sight that isn't nailed down!!!"

They blew heat and stomped to an 81.83 prelim score...1.2 ahead of Del and 1.7 ahead of a newly vibrant, vastly improved Cadets LaSalle...and 5 points ahead of Mets, who, as we noted previously had started the whole thing on this very field.

But yet, there was more to come. Del, so often the bridesmaid, now had the added motivation of a loss in the prelims to spur them on to a super-human effort in the finals. The Cadets seemed to have shot their bolt in the prelims for their final score was only 73.666. But Del and Opti locked horns in a battle of the Junior Giants. The scores? Del:78.3 Optimists: 79.033.

When the chips were down they did it. Eleven National Championships in a row! But not since #4 have they been challenged so much. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

"Ports of Call" salute a corps that is in every way a true Champion...THE TORONTO OPTIMISTS.

CORPS OF THE MONTH PAGE: "THE OPTIMISTS"...The setting is 1958. The time of year, September. On the P.A. system we hear, "On the line, in their first year as a Jr. "A" Corps, the Toronto Optimists!" That same day the same corps became Canada's top Junior Corps. The following year revealed the same story. Then in 1969...oops...a little

more competition. A rivalry had started that was to last for a long long time...DeLa Salle took # 2 spot beating such favourites as Scout House, Grantham and Leaside Lions.

1961: The location, Waterloo Seagram Stadium. As everyone knew Del had beaten the Optimists at the CNE at the beginning of the week and now, NOW would it happen? The Optimists still won but by only .05!!! 81.55 to 80.50. Wow. What a cliff-hanger!

1962: Del was closing in from the previous year. Something had to be done! Music had to be changed. Truman Crawford wrote...everything! In came a superb repertoire: "Big Wide, Wonderful World"---"St.Louis Blues."---Concert of "Mood for Love, Riverside" --- "Tabu"---"I Believe"---and "The Party's Over." MAGNIFICENT and Champs again for #5.

1963: Optimists, this year, we believe, the strongest corps in drum corps history. That year, they met and defeated The Blessed Sacrament Golden Knights in Rome, N.Y. an 86.4 to 84.6. The Champions in Waterloo in Sept.---another 1st with 89% ---#6---GREAT.

Music changes in '64---"Who Will Buy?"---"The Battle Cry Of Freedom"(acclaimed as great)---"El Cumbanchero" and "Mandy". That year Nationals moved home, to Toronto and again another first, again quite easy an 84 to Del's 79.

The same story again in '65!!!...in Toronto.

1966:Nationals were on the move again, for the first timethey travelled to Quebec and Montreal's Autostade. And that year, a newcomer to the finals, Cadets LaSalle were closing in fast. Optimists had to settle for a 2nd in the prelims but bounced right back to take a convincing 1st in the night finals...86 to 83.5!!!

1967, CENTENNIAL YEAR: The scene, Ottawa, home of the Cadets. Again Optimists came second in the prelims. At night both corps presented fantastic shows. Optimists nevertheless walked away with first place, though not tooconvincingly. Scores:86.3 to 86,1.

1968: Del had the most successful season to date, beating Opti 5 out of 9.

However, Opti came through with a superb performance to win the Nationals. No.1!!!

So there we have a short summary on the life of Canada's top Junior Corps, if not Canada's TOP CORPS. Good luck in '69.

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REPRINT FROM CANADIAN COMMENT MAGAZINE: "A Day In The Life Of A Corps" by Douglas McPhail, a former member of the Optimists and now a professional writer. As a professional writer with a corps background, Mr. McPhail had the opportunity of observing a corps at close hand on the most important day of their year, The Nationals. The result we regard as a classic in drum corps writing..."A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CORPS..."



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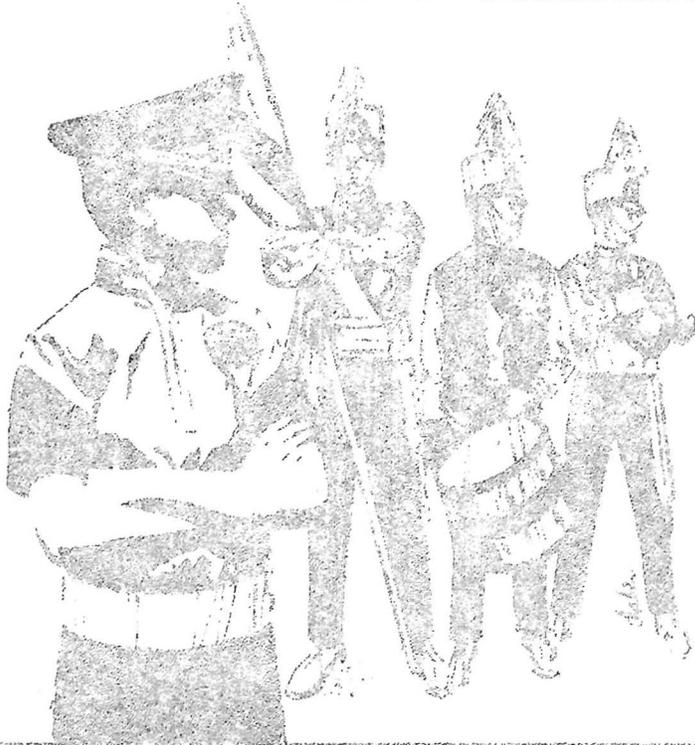
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Yes, Cadets...we are looking for items from you, too.



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1968 ROOKIE-OF-THE-YEAR

JOHN TIERNEY  
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# FRANK ROODOPHOTOSY



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# A Day in the Life of a Corps

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THE UNUSUAL ACCOUNT OF HOW A JUNIOR CORPS  
PRIMES ITSELF TO WIN THE CANADIAN NATIONALS...

*by Douglas McPhail*

My original plan was just to get a ride up to Kingston and watch the Nationals like any other spectator, but it didn't work out that way. I made arrangements to go on one of The Optimists corps buses and it was the strangest trip I have made in fourteen years in drum-corps.

It started Friday night, the day before the Nationals.

It was the usual parting scene for a young junior corps. Members who had girl friends lingered with them behind the bus, although not to talk; forgotten parents waved unnoticed goodbyes after the customary lunch bags had changed hands. And I stowed my suitcase of sandwiches carefully in the bunk (the luggage rack) of bus #1.

The buses revved and rolled eastward and the sun dropped down behind, perhaps somewhere out past Winnipeg.

And that's when the trip began to take on its strangeness.

These Optimists were not the boisterous six-footers who had stomped Scout House out of all events except memories. These were younger and smaller, most of them, and diligently tempered more with training than with fire. And they are a better corps.

They sat quietly, at first, like double rows of robots and read the signs which peppered the inside of the bus.

Most of them were subtle signs: "Today is Sept. 11th..." although the date of the Nationals was the 7th. A sign which had once rode home from many victories read, "Optimists are down this year..." Of course there were the arrogant signs which

rivals scoff at but also post proudly on their own buses. And there was also an excerpt from a poem, which although unusual for a drum corps, did not seem out of context. It read:

"Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;"

I knew it was from a well known poem and I made a definite note to look up its name and its ending when I got home.

On most corps trips there is a lot of smoke, some hands of poker and the guffaw-talk about exotic and delicious fantasies. But the Optimists surprised me. The conversation --at least what I heard---included arguments on how a given substance alters its dimensions at the speed of light, and speculations on the concept of infinity. They joked about contests getting so technical that eventually punch-card data of your computer-programmed show would be sent to contest headquarters where the Chief Computer would evaluate your hornless, drumless, manless show and the season would be over in a milli-second. Some future.

But for the present we were on our way to Kingston and the headlights cut a swath of light down the dark of the 401. There was the rolling hum of the tires and the quiet talk, not the excited chatter about the most important contest of the year, only quiet talk; restrained talk. The moon was a tangerine on the right and a smaller window bounced up the windows on the left, and the night-black hills and the blinking gas stations dropped back fast to the west.

It was often hard for me to realize that these guys in the bus were drum corps, let alone The Optimists who had been beaten repeatedly by DeLaSalle this season, except for the last week at the CNE and at the Shrimers' show much earlier. And Kingston, tomorrow, would be a one-night-stand to retain a title they had held for ten years. Imagine---10 years on top, twenty-four hours to the Nationals, and no one talks about it!

You could say that the older ones in the corps had never known such defeat in Canada before and refused to believe it now. Or you could say that the younger ones had been urged to retain a reputation whose origin they never knew, except from stories. Both could be true. Yet these people are too emphatic over trivia, you know there is some deep emotion held back so strongly that it hurts. And on the bus nobody asked, "What if we don't win?" They said nothing about it at all. But you could tell they were thinking.

The Optimists were more like a corps when we checked into the motel on the outskirts of Kingston. It was a new, two-story motel with a balcony. When the corps was finally cajoled and herded into their respective rooms, I heard a loud thumping on a door. Someone was hollering, "Let me in! Let me in!" He kept shouting, insisting it was his room, and I watched until the door opened and swallowed him in. Then the hollering came from inside the room, more frenzied, and when the door reopened four skinny forms in underwear straightarmed the flailing intruder, carrying him overhead, and dumped him into another room before running back down the balcony to their own.

Even after the lights in the rooms went out, you could still smell the quick-lime, fast-dry smell of white shoe polish. There was the sound of rolls and triplets muffed on a mattress in the dark, then on a practice pad, and then on a drum.irate phone calls stopped the drumming and no doubt the manager soothed the non-corps guests. That was just before someone meticulously tuned a new head on a bass drum.

Eventually all sound softened into sleeping, silence thickened on the crickets, and when the sun rose, there were roosters. It was the morning of the day of The Nationals.

It was a bright, crisp morning and it looked like the beginning of a good day although weather can change easily, especially in the fall. But the corps was eager. They finished breakfast quickly, started rehearsal at ten and worked on music, breaking it down bar for bar. For drill they went over and over manoeuvres, stopping at each infraction and starting over, the kind of rehearsal you expect to see much earlier in the year and which is boring to watch. It took them a long time to get right through the show. Even then the drill was just passable, hardly exciting, and a breeze pulled small gray clouds in from the west.

On the bus on the way back to the motel for a buffet lunch they were laughing and

showing as is usual with a corps and it was good to see the tension lift. They talked loudly and emphatically about everything before the question came. It was a single voice and at the same time it was everyone's and everything that was never said. The voice hollered, "Shut up!"..."What have you got to talk about?" Why aren't you thinking how rotten your drill is?" And the heavy, hurting silence dropped down on everyone like acoustic tile cubicles, one per man in double rows, and you could feel the earnest resolutions of the thinking.

The sky was gray now and there were the first signs of fall, a few dead leaves that skittered in the gutters as the bus droned by like a hearse of mourning pallbearers. The arrogant signs in the bus seemed out of place and I saw no one staring at the one that read, "Tho' much is taken, much abides..."

We saw some of Kingston on the way to the preliminaries after lunch. It was like touring a labyrinth of gray, handmade, limestone canyons. There were upright ancient houses, some restored and some crumbling their tradition into history like those corps who, after greatness, disappeared. The clouds had gathered thickly now, one large ominous gray.

The Optimists dressed into uniform and there was not much talking. They were inspected after the de-linting, sewing, trimming, polishing, dusting and last-minute haircuts. A tenth was lost because a horn player's pants were too short.

The Mets from Montreal were on the field. Looking from the school where they changed you saw Optimists and Del and Cadets LaSalle, in that order, lined up in fronts to go on for the prelims. And when it was over, that's the way they placed: Optimists first by nearly 2 points.

The corps was back at the motel when they were phoned the results. They jumped a bit and rippled with exhilaration but more from relief and release than excitement. It was not the big title but it was a start.

And it was peculiar to see how the weather coincided with their mood because the sun was out by then and there were no more clouds that day.

They had a long rehearsal after supper, all through the evening and past the time when it was too dark to fully dress a front. Still it was not the warm-up and the polish before a show but the grinding stop-start breakdown, just like most of the other 39,000 man-hours of practice which the corps had logged this year. The drill looked better. The horns were crisp and the drums, as always, would be relied upon.

The Optimists sang on the way to the finals. They sang all corps songs---Boston, Chicago, and even some old Princemen with horn parts that go, "Lalaalaaaala lala, laala lala," and drum parts that go, "Zdm zdm, zdm, zzzzdbbump ziggitybiggitybum..." And then they were in uniform. You could tell by their eager eyes that they were ready and that they shared a knowledge of something strong which reaffirmed, "That which we are, we are..."

They filed onto the field and the thing they knew flowed up and down the line and you could feel it sparkling under the lights. LASALLE had just come off and three of them were crying. Del watched straight-faced without a glint of rivalry. The long green line ran the gauntlet of Ambassadors and Commanders, many of the old Optimists, and the passing handshakes and the smacks and the pats were a blur of white and orange on green, ... "And from Toronto, The Optimists!!!"

The crowd cheered. And they cheered as they had not done for a long time, not like at other contests where they booed because the Optimists won too much. Now they cheered the green to win again.

The starting front broke once, snapped straight and feet grabbed the field and held it tight. They did better than they hoped. You could not have asked for more.

When they went off, they were smiling.

The sweat was still fresh on their uniforms when the line broke back of the stadium. And they danced and hugged and jumped and cried. A drummer babbled..."It was just like being one guy out there, all of us!" You could feel how smooth it was!!!" And there were a few, the perfectionists, who knew they each had lost a tenth---a dropped rifle, a dry solo, a flammed triplet---and they did not look at each other. But the rest did not care ...they, the corps, had done what they had come to do. Everyone knew it.

Even the rookies were freed from the agreement which bound each of them as a flunky

to a senior until the Nationals was won. They had been good apprentices.

Instead of suspense, the retreat was more the waiting for a confirmation. And after they won their eleventh National title, the Optimists played and sang the Corps' song and their fans crowded in around them on the field.

Out of uniform they brimmed with smiling; a few let out shouts which had been so long held back. Mostly they smiled, deeply pleased and happy, looking forward to the Victory Party which all corps plan but few have earned.

And thats how they were when they won.

When I got back to Toronto, I looked up the poem which I had read so often on the Optimists' bus that day. It was from Tennyson's ULYSSES. The poem ends:

".....that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

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3/11/'68.  
Mr. D.Daber,  
The Toronto Optimists.

Dear Don:

Many thanks for a wonderful evening at the corps banquet. For me to hear the past of the corps was a pleasant reminising of the ebents so well described by Al Baggs and Richard Boehnke. I looked over the head table and there were only a few of us present that could really look back at the start. I shall always remember being there to enjoy it.

I also noted your special ways of direction and organization of such an event. It was 'tops' as usual. I hope your new Executive Meeting was off to a good start for another ebentful year. I believe we'll have increased numbers which is greatly needed. Of course, in the past I have had the pleasure on my return trips to the Boston area and in '68, Quebec.

Enclosed is the usual \$2.00 for the coming year's subscription to GCC I look forward to your next issue as a gret memoir for the year 1968---the year of surprises.

Sincerely,  
Keith Morgan.

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Oct. 29, 1968.

Dear Sir:

I am a great admirer of your drum corps and I would like to gongratulate you on your fine win at Kingston. I have been an Opti fan for many years now. I have your corps buttons hanging all over my room. Another reason I was glad you won was because I bet my drum major a steak dinner that you would win.

I have a little booklet on the Optimists from 1967 and I was wondering if there were any for 1968? I did not see them at the National Championships table so I thought I'd write to you. Please answer this letter quickly for I will be waiting every day until I get a reply. Thabk you.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Stasiuk, Sudbury, Ont.

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Nov. 2, 1968.

Dear Sir:

When I received your package, I couldn't eat for the rest of the day because I couldn't get your show out of my mind. I played your '68 show, closed my

eyes abd pretended i was again watching you people in a live performance.

When I showed your poster to a couple of people and they were all jealous. Yes sir, you have a lot of Optimist fans around the Sudbury area.

I would like very much an Optimist crest for a jacket, the biggest one you have. I would gladly pay for it.

If at all possible, (I don't know if you can do this) but I would also like a few drum scores from your show so I could say that I can play an Optimist beat. If you do giye a score...I Play a snare drum.

Meanwhile, keep up the good work and lets see you take the Championship fpr '69!!!

Yours admirably,

Jerry Stasiuk.

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#### CURRENT EVENTS AROUND THE CORPS:

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#### OPTIMIST CORPS FEATURED IN 'OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL' MAGAZINE:

Reprinted in this issue of GCC is the Doug McPhail article that has just been published in the November Issue of THE OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE. This magazine has a circulation of 100,000 and is mailed to every member of the Optimist Club in Canada and the United States.

The front cover features Paul Thompson on contra. Paul is really getting the honours ---"Corpsman-of-the-Year---and now 'Cover Boy.'

There was one major error in the story...we did not take the Ontario Provincial Championships 11 years in a row. The Ontario Provincials haven't been running that long.

As a result of this fine feature article the corps can now boast that they are now known to 100,000 more fans.

#### OPTIMISTS TO PERFORM AT HALF-TIME GREY CUP EVENT:

Two of the Canadian Drum corps Champions will perform at 1/2 time at the 1968 Grey Cup Classic at CNE Stadium, Toronto, November 30th. Optimists will do 10 minutes of their 1968 drill immediately followed by the 1967-68 Sr. Champions, the Ambassadors.

At this moment both corps are also negotiating to appear in the morning parade. Both events will receive National television coverage on both networks, CBC and CTV.

#### FIRST MEETING OF CANADIAN GUARD CIRCUIT:

The first meeting of the new Canadian Colour Guard Circuit was held on Saturday, Nov. 2nd at the Stouffville High School. This event was organized by Mr. John O'Hara of the Commanders. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the basic requirements of a Guard Show...floor size, time limits, required manouvers, penalties, etc.

The next scheduled meeting is for Sunday, Nov. 17th at 4:00PM at the Michael Power school. At this meeting there will be the election of new executive, the setting up pf a constitution, rules and bylaws and dues.

The forming of this new Guard Circuit is an important step forward for the Guards of the Canadian corps. This will give them the opportunity for more competition in their immediate area in Ontario, raise the standards of winter competition by having more guards here interested and involved and best of all give more competition to the guards here this winter and spring.

So far 14 guards in this immediate area have expressed an interest. If each one sponsored just one event all the guards would be kept much busier this winter. This would indirectly help the International Circuit too as the Canadian units improve up go the standards.

#### 1969 NATIONAL GUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS:

The National Directors of the CDCA have requested bids to hold the 1969 National Guard Championships. This contest will be on a Saturday at sometime during the month of March. With the possibility of a preliminary contest during the day this could be an all-day event with the finals at night.

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL GUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS:

The Optimist Club of Toronto, Inc. will again sponsor their 3rd Annual Optimist International Guard Championship. This will be held in March, tentively one week previous to the Canadian National Guard Championships.

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1969 NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:

The National Director of the CDCA have requested bids to hold the 1969 National Individual Championships. This will be held at sometime during the month of March with the exact date being set by the sponsor.

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OPTIMIST BUGLES PLAN NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN INDIVIDUALS:

Over the past number of weeks 6 members of the Optimist bugle line have been "Up up and away" with extra rehearsals of this popular number as arranged by baritone Ray Roussel. The Sextette will include Bob Burman, Brian Byrne on Mellophone, Paul Thompson on Contra and Wayne Dean, Ray and Dennis Roussel on baritone.

Part of this same group are also in a quartette...Wayne Dean on Baritone, Dennis & Ray also on baritone and Paul Thompson on Contra,

A baritone trio is also planned consisting of Dennis Ray and Wayne. A baritone duet will feature Ray and Dennis. And finally, Ray will venture forth on his own on a baritone solo,

Not to be outdone by the Optimists "Heavy Horn" section the Optimists sopranos will also be represented with Ron Chong on solo, a duet by Ron and Dwight Angus and a trio of Ron, Dwight and George Tamaki.

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THE ASSOCIATED JR. CORPS MEET IN KINGSTON, Ont., November 2nd:

The Rules and Bylaws Meeting of the Associated Jr. Corps was held at the Holiday Inn Motel in Kingston, Ont., Saturday afternoon, November 2nd. The official meeting started at 2:00PM and ended at 7:00PM.

Representing the Optimists were Don Daber, the Corps Director and Cliff Billington the Corps Manager. During the first part of the meeting the election of officers for 1969 was initiated. They are: PRESIDENT: Roy McKenzie, of the Chessmen. VICE-PRESIDENT: Mr. Mike DiMeo, Yankees, Utica, N.Y. RECORDING SEC: Don Daber, Optimists. TREASURER: Dave Baroody, Geneva Appleknockers. PUBLICITY: Don Daber. DIRECTORS: Ray Bordeleau of Cadets LaSalle, John Bartello, St. Josephs Batavia and Howard Lacey, Metropolitains.

The Rules and Bylaws were then reviewed and revised.

The date of the 1969 A.Jr.C. Championships was verified as Saturday, Aug. 2nd., sponsored by the Mets in the city of Montreal, East.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF A NEWS RELEASE FROM DE LA SALLE, OAKLANDS: DeLaSalle have sent out a news release from the office of their new Publicity Director, Mr. Ray Stea.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Mr. Cosmo Caruso and Mr. Bern Beer are no longer affiliated with Del...the new and larger Executive Staff is as follows: DIRECTOR: Rev. Brother Xavier, EQUIPMENT MGR: Richard Craddock. Assist: Mr. Harry Duggan. SECRETARY: Mrs. P. Perrin, BUSINESS CONSULTANT: Mr. John Ryhorski, PUBLICITY: Mr. Ray Stea, PHOTOS: Bruce Roberts, INSTRUCTORS: Drums: Harry Clark. M&M: Dave Parker. Bugle: Terry McKolskey. ASSISTANT INST: Paul Zazulak, John Cameron, Dave Fellion.

There is talk of alternatives to the present uniform for brighter G.E....a big recruitment drive is on and things are looking A-1...Some new horns have been purchased ...Look for some extreme changes in the music repertoire for '69...and finally, Del's practices are 2 nights per week and are closed and will remain so.

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SUPERRECORDS OF NATIONALS ARE GREAT!!! SuperRecords have released 4 volumes on the 1968 Canadian National Championships. Vol. SCS-170-1 features the Toronto Optimists, Cadets LaSalle, Chatelaines & Commanders! Limited number available from Whaley, Royce, Toronto @ \$4.50...one of the best records ever issued & Christmas is coming up....

by A. Tierney



# cadet report

THE CADETS FIRST AWARDS NIGHT, October, 1968

The Directors Remarks: "Good evening, Ladies, Gentlemen, and Cadets and welcome to the First Annual Awards Night. My name is Al Tierney, and I have had the pleasure of directing this corps for the past three years."

"We are most pleased with the results of our first full year as an active drum corps. To summarise, let me go back to September of 1967. The Junior "A" Corps, of whom we are justly proud, paraded here in Scarborough, Sept. 17th to add to the advertising of the fact that the Cadets would be operating in this borough, and were looking for members. By the second week of October we had 180 recruits and little equipment...about 18 horns and 6 drums. We immediately purchased some 45 straight bugles but we had so many buglers that they had to take turns, rotating bugles each week so that each cadet had one at home every other week. Drummers were working out on rubber pads and were a little better off, except that right at this key moment both of our drum instructors had to leave because of other commitments. Very shortly after that we were fortunate in obtaining the services of our present instructors on drums, Gord O'Halloran and Rick Splonick."

"By this time the expected loss of enthusiasm began to take its toll, and some Cadets left, but at the same time new recruits were being added. It was quite some time before the declining membership was noticeable, but it did ease some of the instruction problems that had been created by such large numbers. In point of fact we actually had some 230 members but by the time of the Ontario Championships, we had 93 active Cadets."

"In February and March we started a campaign to obtain sufficient money for the uniforms and at the same time a decision had to be made on obtaining new drums."

"We were fortunate at that time to learn that the corps equipment of the former Hamilton Conquerors was for sale. For the total that new drums would have cost, we obtained all of the drums, bugles, flags etc. of this corps. Mind you, we are still paying for them, but it was a very good buy."

"Our campaign to raise money by selling fertilizer was a success, and we obtained sufficient money to buy the necessary uniforms to outfit close to 90 boys"

"Our inaugural parade was fittingly performed for the Knights of Columbus, without whose blessing this corps would not have been possible. We then quickly did parades for the "Beautify Toronto" Campaign, The Council of Catholic Men at the CNE along with Michael Power Knights and Del; the Optimist Club of North West Toronto, The Alhambra, The Shribers' Parade with the Junior Corps and on the evening following the Shriners' Parade a select group of 15 Cadets were asked to be the Judges' Assistants at the famous Shriners' International Contest."

"We also did parades for the Baseball Association of West Hill; The Sports Association of Bramalea and a Parade in downtown Toronto for the Olympic Committee, in which the Cadets appeared on T.V."

"We then took the Cadets to the Ontario Championships in Kitchener, where they did us proud! They finished second, but at a performance so exemplary that several of the judges made a point to congratulate several members of our instructional staff on fielding such a fine group. It is this corps that we honour here tonight."

"Let me at this time take a moment to thank the many parents of the Cadets who unstintingly gave of their time. We can quite truthfully say that we have never asked anyone for help, who did not give it and seem overjoyed to be of assistance. This help has been greatly appreciated by all members of the Cadet staff."

"The Junior "A" Corps has for many years, presented a Membership Certificate to cover the year. This is a tradition we are establishing here tonight with the Cadets."

After the presentation of a certificate to each Cadet special awards were then presented to: DEREK BRANTON, Bugler-of-the-Year; PAUL BAZINET, Guardsman-of-the-Year; and STEPHEN JOHNSON, Drummer-of-the-Year and "Perfect Attendance" Award to DANA BURRAGE & MARK DECLoux. (This covered about 60 performances and rehearsals). Top attendance presentations also went to VIC DECLoux, PAUL WHYTE and JOHN LARSEN.

# SEASONS END NATIONALS '68

By DAVE SHAW Associate Editor

God what a season! fascinating, sometimes exasperating, often chaotic, but always interesting. As the time for V.F.W. Nationals drew near only one thing was absolutely clear....this was a season unlike any other. No single corps, east or midwest, had emerged as the obvious title favorite. In the midwest the Cavaliers, Kilties, Royal Airs, Troopers and Vanguarders continued to trade positions in all of the seemingly crucial pre-V.F.W. competitions, providing all five corps with a legitimate basis for title aspirations. Back east the situation was much the same, with one exception. The constant trading of positions, coupled with financial difficulties and a widespread belief that V.F.W. Nationals was too midwestern oriented for any eastern corps to entertain realistic title hopes, was causing many top eastern juniors (Blessed Sacrament, St. Lucys, Garfield, Boston Crusaders and the Muchachos) to reconsider their plans and decide against participation in the Detroit Nationals. Meanwhile contest time drew closer and closer, and from Batavia, N.Y., Casper, Wyo. Wilmington, Del., Chicago, Ill., Revere, Mass., Racine, Wis., and a score of other cities, the buses began to depart for Detroit. This was the big one....

## V. F. W. NATIONALS: DETROIT

The convention city was big and hot and humid almost beyond endurance. Excitement was running high, and as word filtered in of the Blue Rocks surprise victory in the U.S. Open and the Troopers victory over the Vanguarders in the North American Invitational the atmosphere grew increasingly more tense. Speculation persistently and stubbornly centered around a Trooper, or surprisingly, a Kiltie victory. The reasoning was that the Chicago-area corps, while strong in execution, had failed to develop a sufficient edge in execution to counterbalance their comparatively weak G. E. programs. Both the Troopers and the Kilties had demonstrated some execution inconsistencies, the former in drumming and the latter in marching; however, the supposition was that all the challengers, operating under the pressure of the moment, could be counted on to present comparably proficient execution performances. G.E. was considered to be the focal caption, and since G.E. drumming (the Troopers and the Kilties weak component in this caption) could be expected to be all but negated on an overall G.E. sheets, as utilized in V.F.W. competition, it was generally anticipated that both corps could count on about a one point advantage in that caption.

Speculation soon gave way to action, however, as Monday morning dawned and with it the first of the week's formal activities, inspection. Penalties for most of the major corps were running in the one to three tenth range, when suddenly, without warning, a flash rainstorm hit the area. At that point there were still about seven or eight corps to be inspected, and all were caught, without cover, in the storm. After a short delay inspection resumed only to be interrupted once again, with two corps remaining (the Troopers and the Vanguarders), by a second storm. Inspection for these two corps was subsequently postponed, with their reluctant agreement, until Wednesday noon just prior to their preliminary competition.

Tuesday brought the first day of preliminaries, paced by the Cavaliers with a score of 89.75 and a particularly impressive execution job. No basis for comparison was really legitimately possible since most of their major competitors were scheduled for Wednesday preliminaries. The 89.75 was considerably higher than their nearest challenger of the day; however, the previous years high score of ninety one plus weighed heavily on everyone's mind. While the Cavaliers had no real basis for concern, since as defending champions their order of appearance in the finals was predetermined anyway, they were very conscious of the psychological value of a respectably high preliminary score. That at least they were sure they had achieved.

Tuesday evening was the big parade. It is very difficult to describe a National V.F.W. Parade to anyone who has not been in actual attendance at a V.F.W. Convention. First, it is primarily composed of drum and bugle corps. One after another, all in top form, all acutely aware of the impression they are attempting to make. Up on the reviewing stand sit all the judges for the following evenings competition, involved at that moment in choosing the best appearing musical unit in the parade. It's probably the only parade of the year where every member of every corps does the job he or she has been trained to do from the very first step to the very last. Really very impressive. The winner for 1968 - Vanguarders, Des Plaines, Illinois.

Finally, Wednesday, second day of preliminaries and the all-important finals. Another unbearably hot, muggy day. The Kilties took the field early, without benefit of a warmup, and their hornline reflected the disadvan-

tage. The other captions were there, but horns were considered their execution strong point, and they hadn't come through. Some moments of tension, then, score... 89.50. Their stock had slipped somewhat, but they were still in the running. Next, the Royal Airs...a beautiful, strong, well-balanced show. Score: 89.50 They had tied the Kilties. This was turning into quite a battle, and once again the Kilties fortunes were on the rise. Then the Troopers hit the field. Another strong, well-balanced performance. They looked good for top score, then a rumor exploded around the field...PENALTY. The Troopers had received a one point trailing violation penalty. It could mean disaster. In a contest as tight as this one, one point could mean the difference between first and fifth. The crowd held its breath. Score: 90.35. Even with the penalty the Troopers had moved into the top position. Now near pandemonium reigned. Taking the line, the Vanguard, Des Plaines, Illinois. Early season favorites and still strongly in the running. Another fine job, score: 90.40...good for high. That was it...nine tenths of one point separated the top five corps. God what a contest! The evening's finalists: Norwood Park (Ill.), Argonne Rebels (Kansas), Racine Scouts (Wis.), 27th Lancers (Mass.), Blue Stars (Wis.), Blue Rocks (Dela.), St. Joes (N.Y.), Royal Airs (Ill.), Kilties (Wis.), Troopers (Wyo.), Vanguard (Ill.), and the defending champion Cavaliers (Ill.) It was decided that a coin would be tossed to break the tie between the Kilties and the Royal Airs in determining the evening's order of appearance. In what may have been one of the most crucially important victories of the year the Kilties won the toss, thereby placing themselves within, rather than on the fringe of, the generally accepted circle of contenders. The psychological impact of this positioning, both on the corps and the contest in general, while difficult to determine, should not be underestimated. National contests and national titles have been won or lost on less.

Now, all attention shifted to the University of Detroit Stadium and the finals. The packed arena was livid with excitement. 18,000 people jammed every available inch of viewing space. It was a perfect night, a perfect stadium, a perfect crowd, and they waited impatiently for the beginning of what promised to be the perfect contest. First on, the Norwood Park Imperials. As always the first corps suffered from the inattentiveness of a not-yet-settled crowd. Still, in a contest of this caliber the honor was in being there, and Norwood Park more than justified their inclusion. Next, the Argonne Rebels, and again...agonizingly...a flash downpour. The crowd stayed in their seats and Argonne stayed on the field, but who knows how much they were effected by the disadvantage. Sympathy aside, the shame of it is that they have such a beautiful corps. Argonne could, without qualification, hold their own in any realistically evaluated top-level contest in the Nation. Tenth, the Racine Scouts, followed by the 27th Lancers who surprisingly but justifiably received the first (and one of only three) standing ovations of the evening. The Lancers are creative, original and entertaining from

beginning to end. It's extremely rare for a corps not really considered to be an active contender for the title to achieve a rapport with and a response from the audience of the magnitude enjoyed by the Lancers in Detroit. It would seem strong indication that something special is developing in Revere. Next, in order, the Blue Stars, the Blue Rocks and St. Joes of Batavia; all with fine, fine shows lacking only who knows what? All three have a distinct image, all are absolutely top caliber, all it would seem are eventually destined for titles. A few tenths more in one caption, a few tenths more in another and they could very easily be wearing a crown right now. All we can hope is that they have the patience to further refine, to persist and to endure. Success, if they continue on their present course, with perhaps just a few alterations, is just around the corner. On fifth, through the luck of the toss, the Royal Airs. What a musically beautiful, well-balanced performance. It's difficult to imagine at this point in the season that they were on the verge of disbandment during the winter, but they were, and that fact coupled with their accomplishments up to and including nationals warrants a great deal of respect. Their performance tonight, marred only by an unfortunate one point penalty, was about as near to a title performance as it's possible to get without actually being touched by divine providence. Next, the Kilties...WOW! Every year at nationals this corps turns on (much to the mystification and consternation of their fellow competitors, and disbelief of those not in attendance who chance to see them earlier in the season), but never, never like this. The Kilties were everything tonight; dazzling and spirited, musical and sensitive, emotional and controlled. They reached their hands and their hearts out to the crowd, and the crowd grasped and never let go. It was all there...no weak captions, no weak numbers, no weak moments! The second and by far most enthusiastic standing ovation of the evening was accorded the Kilties, and there was no question but that they deserved every bit of it and more. Now the crowd could hardly contain their excitement. Next on the line, the popular Troopers. Only one corps in the Nation could follow a performance like the Kilties' and survive, and that was the Troopers. They too had a show and a half, and once again the crowd exploded. Still, their close proximity to the Kilties invited comparison between performances, in this rare instance to the detriment of the Troopers. Nothing was lacking, everything was excellent and more, but somehow the hard-to-define spark was missing. Still, for the third and what was to be the final time, the crowd stood and cheered. Whatever happened now it was easy to sense that this was going to be a close national. Now we were down to the wire. Only two corps remained; the Vanguard and the Cavaliers. Next on, the Vanguard. Performance; smooth, clean and professional, but lacking the emotional impact of the two preceding shows.

The Vanguard had gambled everything on cleanliness of execution, and now they were to know if they had won or lost their gamble. As talented or more talented than any corps on the field, the Vanguard could now only

rely on the emotional detachment of the judges. Finally, number twelve, the Cavaliers. Here was another corps well known for coming alive at nationals as evidenced by their numerous championships. Now, as defending champions once again, it was obvious they intended to make a battle of it. For the past several weeks tenth by agonizing tenth they had closed the gap separating them from the top. It was an effort and a corps to be respected, and the crowd watched intently. The Cavaliers looked every inch a champion, with class to spare, but somehow, tonight, in spite of their obvious talent and determination, it just wasn't there. Still, they were defending champions, and in a competition as close as tonight's, that can be a formidable advantage.

That ended the contest, and the wait for scores, for rumors, for anything began. The tension seemed to act like a magnet drawing the audience out of the stands, onto the track, right to the very fringe of the field itself; until, as the nonrelated awards were announced, a fantastic bubbling block of humanity materialized in an eyeball-level confrontation with the twelve nervous, expectant corps on the field. Announcement, "the scores." Absolute silence now, a heavy, unbroken silence. "In twelfth place with a score of 73.75, the Norwood Park Imperials." "In eleventh place with a score of 75.40, the 27th Lancers." Now the familiar boos began, and intensified. The crowd was displeased, and their nervousness magnified their displeasure. Tenth place, Argonne, 76.25. Ninth, the Racine Scouts, 77.20. Eighth, the Blue Stars, 78.70. Seventh, Blue Rocks, 80.40. Sixth, St. Joes, 83.80. Now everyone tensed. The five remaining corps stood unmoving on the field, eyes closed beads of sweat on their foreheads, knuckles squeezed white. "In fifth place with a score of 88.0, the Royal Airs." Their one point penalty had taken its toll, and the tears of disappointment rolled down the cheeks of the color guard girls. Fourth, 88.35, the Vanguard's. Third, 88.70, the Troopers. All five corps stood their ground; silently, stoically, resignedly. Second, 88.90, the Cavaliers. The Kilties, for one split second, failed to react. Then, as the crowd roared its approval, they exploded. Over the noise, and the cheers, and the bedlam, the voice of the announcer boomed out; "and in first place, our new National Champions, with a score of 89.85, the Kilties." As I watched the Kilties erupt into uncontrollable happiness, I glanced on either side of them, to the Royal Airs on their right and the Troopers on their left, and watched as they forced themselves to swallow their disappointment and turn to offer their hands to the Kilties in friendship and congratulations. How difficult it must have been; how nobly it was done. One by one each corps came up, still burdened with their own disappointment, to offer their congratulations. It was moving, and even more it was inspirational. This, above all, was what it was all about. It was over, and it was worth it.

Tomorrow was a new day, and soon, very soon, there would be another contest.

## C. Y. O. NATIONAL: BOSTON

Another big one! The only 1968 meeting of the major eastern, midwestern and far western powers. Fourteen corps, all carefully chosen on the basis of past record. Pre-contest interest was centered on four corps. This was to be the first meeting of the Cavaliers and the Crusaders since their explosive and emotional clashes at Legion and C.Y.O. Nationals the previous season, and fireworks were expected. In addition the New England audience was anticipating with undisguised enthusiasm the first appearance in two years of the fabled Troopers. Word had reached Boston of the Troopers victory over the Cavaliers and St. Marys the previous evening in New York, and early arrivals who had been in the audience in New York were very vocal in their praise of Casper and predictions for a Trooper victory in Boston. Finally, everyone wanted to see how the Vanguard's, probably the midwest's most successful corps on a season-long basis, would shape up against the east.

Again, a perfect night, a perfect stadium, a noisy, enthusiastic standing-room-only crowd. The contest committee, alarmed by incidents earlier in the season, had gone to great pains to insure a smooth-running, trouble-free contest. All competing units had been prewarned that poor sportsmanship or infractions of the rules would be severely penalized.

The results: St. Kevins (61.49), long-time national favorites and one of the two local C.Y.O. Circuit finalists. Neisi Ambassadors (66.71), a fast-rising, distinctly creative midwestern corps. Their surprisingly low score this evening proved a disturbing contradiction to their seasonal record. Bridgeport P.A.L. (67.48), Anaheim, Calif., Kingsmen (68.96), the shock corps of the evening who set the stands on fire and eleven short minutes completely obliterated all the east's misconceptions about the quality of drum corps on the west coast. Racine Scouts (69.86), Garfield Cadets (70.41), St. Marys (73.16), C.Y.O. Circuit Champions and one of the local favorites. The Cardinals seemed to lack some of their appeal of last season (probably due to the now familiar aspect of their routine), but off-the-field proved as popular with their fans and fellow competitors as ever. St. Lucys (75.30), one of the east's most successful corps of the season suffering through a disappointing setback. Blue Rocks (76.30), with one of the most professionally conceived and effective programs in the east. Every contest they seem to draw just a little bit closer to that elusive number one spot. Vanguard's (77.93), failed to reach the audience, but their overall score was misleading. A spectacularly low G.E. drum score accounted, for the most part, for their low position. Blessed Sacrament (78.48), as always came alive when the pressure was on, and this time, with a strong assist from the G.E. drum man, surged ahead. Basically a weak book, but a hard-driving, dedicated corps that makes the most of every asset. Cavaliers (79.96), one of the focal points of interest. Their show appears to go over much bigger with eastern audiences than with

their midwestern counterparts, due in part no doubt to its lack of familiarity, and the near-legendary status of the Cavaliers back east. Crusaders (81.88), the home area favorites in one of their strongest shows to date. They brought the crowd to their feet, and had everyone guessing right up until the last minute as to who would emerge the victor. Troopers (83.05), nearly everyone's favorites had the crowd oohing and aahing from their first step to their last. This time it was the Troopers turn to sparkle, and they seemed to light up the whole field. Announcement of their victory brought a roar of approval that had the travel-exhausted Troopers smiling from ear to ear.

Fourteen corps proved to be a bit of a marathon, but the audience sat glued to their seats and seemed to love every minute of it. For many of the corps present it was the end of the road, the last major contest of the season. Still to be decided were the World Open Championship and the American Legion Nationals, but by comparison the latter was to prove a dull contest indeed. Still, for better or worse it was one of the big ones, and all attention now shifted to....

### AMERICAN LEGION NATIONALS: NEW ORLEANS

It would be easy to be facetious and say "this was the year they threw a nationals and no one came," but actually the reasons were many, the circumstances unfortunate and the disappointment genuine. For the juniors it was a matter of timing and logistics. The late date of the convention meant that school was in session, and the location, New Orleans, meant that it was outside the realm of a short-haul bus trip for virtually everyone. Unless you could afford to fly, the trip was out of the question, and after a full season of travel who, realistically, could afford to fly? On the senior side the story was a bit more complex. Money was a big factor of course, as well as the feigned indifference of most D.C.A. corps to the Legion title. The intangible consideration would have to be the results of the D.C.A. finals in Rochester the weekend preceding New Orleans. Whatever the reasons however the end result was that only one senior of national stature, the New York Sunrisers, made the trip to New Orleans, and in the process collected the National American Legion title that they had been persistently and most successfully pursuing all season long. Their performance was top caliber; a championship performance in every way. There's no point in theorizing on what might or might not have happened had the competitive line-up been different. The Sunrisers had at one time or another during the course of the season beaten all of their eligible Legion contenders, and there is no reason to assume that they couldn't have done so again. It was unfortunate that no one else made the trip, but fortunately, for the Legion and for drum corps, the Sunrisers did not follow the trend.



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On the junior level the picture was much the same. St. Lucys won with a frankly disappointing performance. They had during the course of the season presented much more capable shows, and it is probably reasonable to assume that had the competition been different they would have done so again. The Cedar Rapids, Iowa Grenadiers placed second, followed, much to the surprise of those present, by the Louisiana Stardusters. Cedar Rapids has a very nice, very pleasing corps with a great deal of obvious potential, and a fine, fine group of kids; but, it was clear to even the most casual observer that they weren't on a competitive level with the Stardusters. The latter have a seasoned, experienced, very professional corps with a great deal of ability. Even with the one point penalty they were assessed they should not have lost to Cedar Rapids. Something, somewhere went haywire.

And so, with the announcement of the new American Legion National Champions, St. Lucys and the Sunrisers, the 1968 season was entered into the history books, and all thoughts turn to 1969....

### CANADA & UPPER N.Y.

ROBERT SCHLEIDT

Did you ever hear the song, "Mission Impossible?" Well, it was achieved. After 10 straight years of being the Canadian National Jr. Champions, the boys from Toronto had their backs to the wall. They had lost over 30 boys and that was a lot to make up. The Opti Cadets did not yield that many boys, but being a champion, the went out with pure courage and skill and did what no corps could ever accomplish. After set-back after set-back, and losing the Ontario Championships they won their 11th straight Canadian National Jr. Championship title. This is a record, I believe, held by no other Jr. Corps. Optimists, we salute you and may you win 11 more!

The Marching Ambassadors easily won their 2nd straight Canadian National Title. The Royalairs of Guelph, Ontario, came on too late, and the Commanders had trouble all year.

So this winds up another season. Again, congratulations to the Optimists and the Racine Kilties. Two of the greatest Jr. Corps ever to go on a Drum Corps field.

Good luck to everyone in '69" and may you read the Digest all the time.

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## Up From The Top

by  
DOUGLAS MCPHAIL

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Members of the Optimist Club of Toronto, Ont., point with pride to the Junior Optimist Corps — national champions for 11 straight years.

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The Toronto Optimist Drum and Bugle Corps is a self-made Cinderella with a short cut to success—just start at the top and stay there!

The story of this story-book group began in 1958 when the Optimist Club of Toronto, Ont., re-formed its boys band into a new, Class A drum and bugle corps. The new corps was the young, moving picture of The Optimist Creed ("Believe in the best and work only for the best") clothed in green satin uniforms, with horns and drums.

The 51 boys, aged 14-20, practiced in schools and factories when the snow was too deep to march in. They rehearsed in parking lots in the early spring while it was still so cold the horn valves froze. They drilled beside city incinerators in the summer when the soot and sulphur choked the

grass. The Optimists chased success with WORK.

The Corps memorized its quarter-hour field show and honed it to perfection. A wrong note . . . a line with one man inching out . . . a flash of a drum stick almost imperceptibly lower than the others . . . a flag pole not at right angle to the ground and they heard, "Not good enough! Do it again! Again! Again!" At the contest, each of these seemingly minor infractions could cost a tenth of a point on the judges' sheet and a single tenth off could cost them the contest and the championship they were so determined to win.

The Optimists competed in their first Canadian Championship in Galt, Ont., in 1958. It was a bright, crisp, autumn afternoon and the announcement came two hours after the judging.

"Ladies and gentlemen . . . In first place . . . from Toronto . . . The Opti---!" The crowd exploded with an instant mushroom of applause drowning out the boom of the announcer. The Optimists, the baby of all the drum corps, had just defeated the famous, previously unbeatable, Preston Scout House to become the new National Drum Corps Champions of Canada. As they said they would, the Optimists started on the top. To prove

The road to continuing championship performance is never easy — this group of dedicated young men has learned there's only one way . . . work, work, WORK

they could stay there, they have captured the coveted championship every year since 1958—11 years in a row.

But no group directs itself to the top . . . it is led! Barry Bell, the group's music director, has guided the Corps to every victory. Besides planning, arranging and instructing the Corps' music, Director Bell projects the quality which builds capable young men into strong leaders . . . honesty.

Eleven years of honest work have accomplished an enviable record: Since 1960, when the first complete statistics were amassed, the Corps has traveled 57,103 miles and played to 1,074,300 people as it made 237 appearances in the United States and Canada. Besides taking 68 firsts in its 75 Canadian contests, the Corps won the New York-Canadian title four times, and the Canadian National Exhibition title 7 times. It also took the

Ontario Provincial Championships 11 years in a row.

This past year, each of the 65 boys in the Corps marched 89.4 miles in going through the show 183 times. By the time they had returned to win their eleventh national title in a row, the boys had volunteered 39,065 man hours . . . or boy hours . . . in one single year. Still, the Corps members agree, "We just gotta practice more."

#### Recruits Are "Sold"

After ten years, the Optimists have become an institution. Every year recruits are "sold" to the highest bidding senior who teaches his new "flunky" the rules of the Corps' winning habit. There are initiations with mustard and whipped cream as well as a special camp weekend solemnly referred to as "Concentration Camp." Each training session hones the show before it goes on the road. Then at the season's climax—the National

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The Toronto Drum and Bugle Corps demonstrates the flawless style which has carried it to its eleventh consecutive Canadian Championship.

## Up From The Top

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Director Barry Bell puts the boys through their paces at the annual outdoor work camp.



Corps drum major and soloist kid brother enjoy a well earned rest on the trip home.

Championship—the rookie emerges as a seasoned senior.

Although the long string of wins attracts recruits, a top team needs more than "green" talent. To help feed the champions, Al Tierney (the Optimists' assistant business manager) started the Optimist Cadets, the "farm team" of the senior group. The success of the Cadets has also been phenomenal. This past year the 160 pre-highschoolers in the Cadet program cleared nearly \$1500 in a fertilizer sale campaign and invested their profits in uniforms—green, of course! These talented youngsters are more than a sharp parade corps; they are the very future of The Optimist Corps!

Enthusiastic recruits remain with

the Corps an average of three years and all would like to stay longer if they could, but the age limit is 21. The best become instructors for the Optimists and the Cadets. Perhaps continuing satisfaction breeds their allegiance to the Corps because, unlike hockey or baseball, the Corps is for all seasons. A boy in the Corps is an entertainer . . . cheered by thousands . . . approved and applauded . . . in the public eye. But one retiring Optimist soloist gave a much simpler reason for allegiance. When he received his five-year-ring during the Corps' graduation banquet, he said, "I loved the Corps! I STILL love the Corps!" What better reason can there be? □

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