



Toronto Optimists History-Newsletter

This publication honours and continues the tradition started by Don Daber in 1960.
Toronto Optimists History - Newsletter is published quarterly.

The Toronto Optimists History website celebrates:

The Toronto Optimists Drum & Bugle Corps 1958 - 1975 | The Seneca Optimists Drum & Bugle Corps 1976 - 1978

Published by Bob Carell. Please direct inquiries to: Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com

A PDF version is available on the website: www.TorontoOptimistsHistory.ca



ISSUE 14 April 2024

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PDF VERSION ON OUR WEBSITE: www.TorontoOptimistsHistory.ca

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR Newsletter

Contribute to your newsletter

Send your suggestions, stories or articles to Bob: tonto_optimist@rogers.com

We publish four issues each year. New issues are posted mid-month, in January, April, July and October.

IMPORTANT: The Toronto Optimists History - Newsletter is ONLY available in Acrobat (PDF) format.



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11. July 2023 12. October 2023 13. January 2024



6. April 2022 7. July 2022 8. October 2022 9. January 2023 10. April 2023



1. January 2021 2. April 2021 3. July 2021 4. October 2021 5. January 2022



WEBSITE ADDITIONS

Additions to both the Main website and the Photo Gallery continue to be made. New photos are added to the gallery about twice each week.



LaSalle Cadets (Nationals prelims, CNE, Toronto, 1972)

WEBSITE UPDATE:

What's new on TorontoOptimistsHistory.ca

THE WEBSITE, especially the Photo Gallery, continues to grow.

The Photo Gallery now contains over 14,000 images!

New photos are added to the Photo Gallery about twice a week; however, this schedule sometimes slips, depending on what is happening in my life. Even though the focus of our site is the Optimist Family (Toronto Optimists, Seneca Optimists and our feeder corps), we always post photos of other corps who competed during the old days. While these photos are usually from the competitive years, we sometimes post photos of alumni corps. While the majority of these photos are from Ontario-based corps, the site includes many photos of our American competitors. This page includes two recent additions to the Gallery. In addition to photos, I have recently added a couple of old issues of Green Capsule Comments.

There's already a wealth of information on the main website, so it's difficult to know what to add. If you have suggestions for new material that will improve the website, please let us know. Thanks.

- Bob

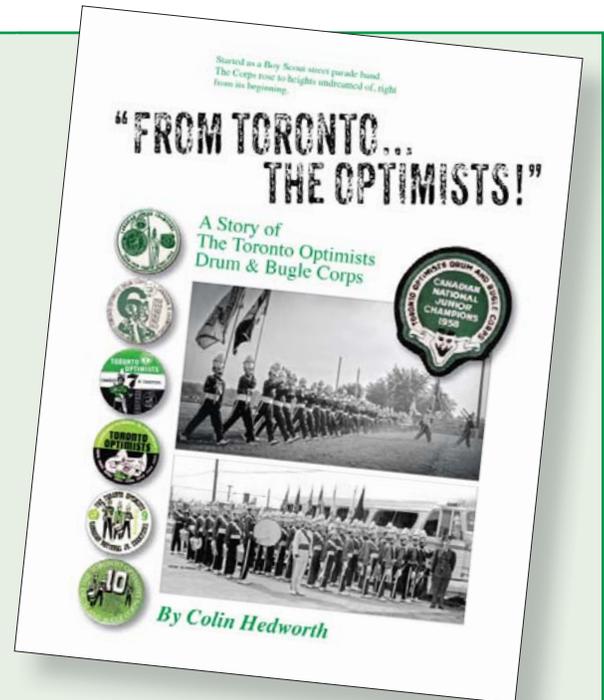


Toronto Optimists (Nationals prelims, Varsity Stadium, Toronto, 1964)

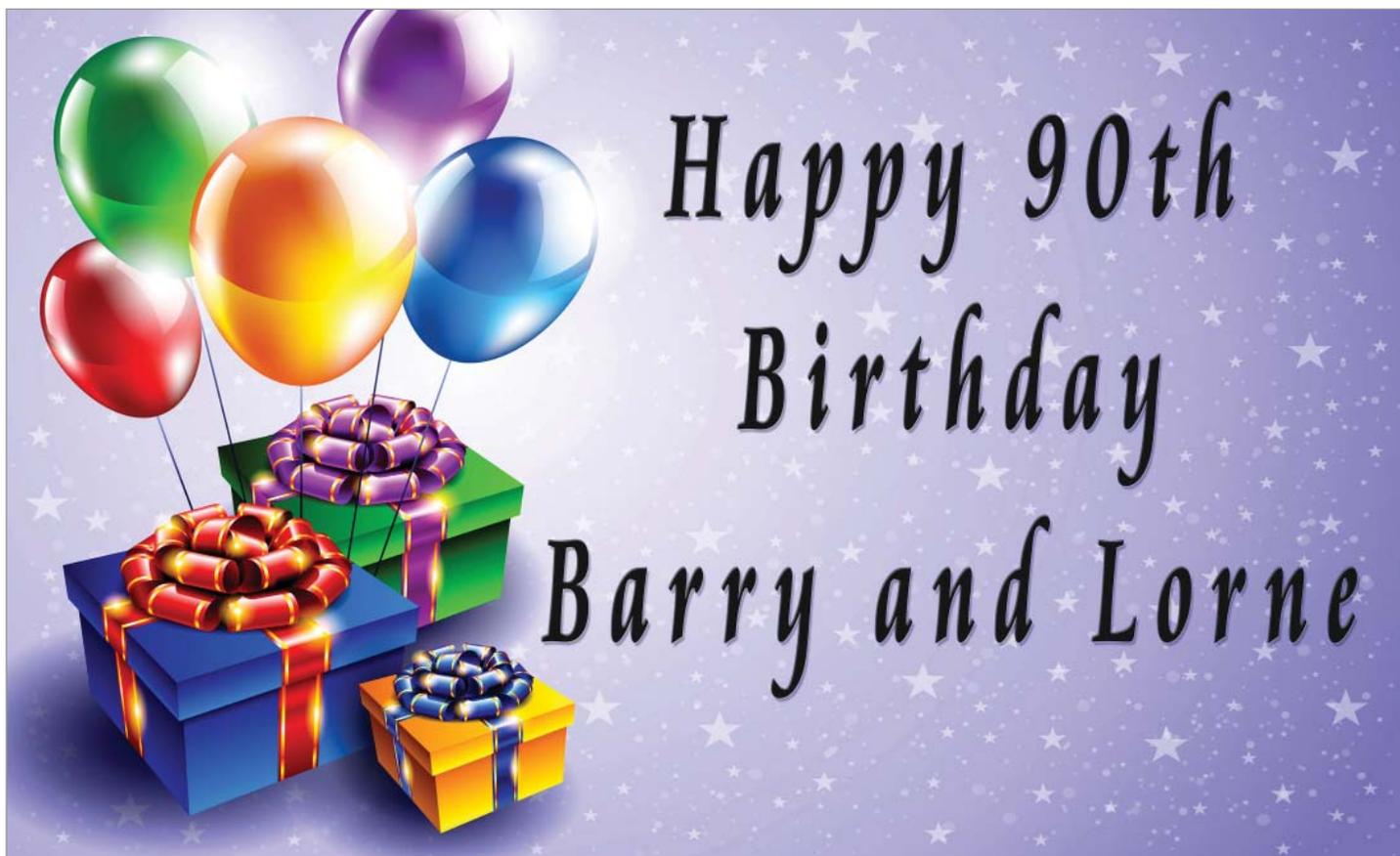
In our next newsletter: Chapter 29

The next issue of the Newsletter (July) will include Chapter 29, the final chapter in Colin Hedworth's book "From Toronto... The Optimists!".

TAPS is Colin's title for Chapter 29. While they had done an admirable job, the 1978 corps had started too late and had failed to make the top twelve in DCI. The agreement to use members of the Peterborough Krescendos had expired, their members had left and new bodies were almost impossible to find. In addition, the corps was deeply in debt. This chapter deals with the disbanding of the Seneca Optimists.



The book "From Toronto... The Optimists!" is out of print.



Barry and Lorne turn 90!

Introduction

MR. Al Baggs, Barry Bell and Lorne Ferrazzutti were intimately involved in creating the Toronto Optimists. Mr. Baggs was Corps Commander, Barry chose the repertoire, developed the brass arrangements and instructed the horns with Lorne creating the drum charts and instructing the drums. Without the excellent guidance given by these three gentlemen, the Toronto Optimists would never have become a championship corps.

The focus of this article is on Barry and Lorne, both of whom recently celebrated their 90th birthdays.



Lorne, Barry and Mr Baggs (Rally Night, 1961)

Background

When he was 12, Barry joined a Boy Scout troop and, later, applied to the Boy Scout Drum and Bugle Corps, whose primary function was to lead the scouts in small parades. The Corps boasted the tremendous figure of 12 bugles and Barry's first instrument was a plastic army bugle. Barry blew his

plastic bugle for two years as a scout before moving to Western Technical School, the next stage of his Drum Corps career.

Barry met Lorne while they were students at Western Technical School and they spent four years together as members of the Western Tech Trumpet Band. The musical side of their high school days at Western was under the talented instruction of D. F. MacIntyre, Tech's "Trumpet Band" Director.

During this time, Barry studied music theory and the fundamentals of drumming. He was handed a soprano bugle in the band. While this horn had no valve, it was not plastic! Barry was a very talented horn player who had a flair for music. He spent three years with the soprano bugle, then changed to a baritone horn and became a section leader. While at Western, Barry won many trophies and medals, including the Canadian Individual Solo Bugling Championship. During his last year at Western, Barry arranged and composed a march for the Trumpet Band – "The Spirit of Western". After graduating from Western Tech, Barry continued with the band for another two years.



Barry at Western Tech (1955)



Western Tech Trumpet Band

Lorne, too, had musical training. He played in the school orchestra for four years. He said that someone had handed him a clarinet and told him that was what he was going to play. Lorne had also taken accordion lessons at home for five years, so he could read music and understand theory. He had also taken drum lessons where he heard all the different rhythms and cymbal rides; however, he had not learned rudiments. Drumming was where Lorne excelled. While at Western he won many competitions, including the Drum Duet which he and Don McIntyre won in 1955.



Lorne at Western Tech (1955)

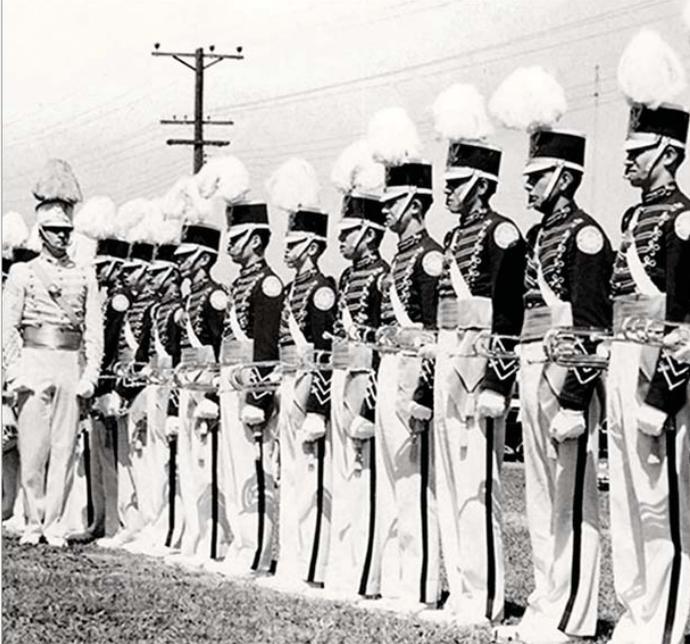
Something new

During his sixth year with Western, Barry made his first trip south of the border to view American Corps. The strong impression these American Corps had upon him heavily influenced the changes that would, later, come to Canadian corps. The American Corps made money with the type of show that all Canadian Corps would soon perform.

During that era, Canadian Corps worked for a year on one or two contest pieces and competed with these the end of each year. Canadian competitions were far from the vivid and colourful spectacles that we know today. The Judges remained in a tent throughout the entire contest, judging each Corps as they played the same contest piece. The Judges had to listen to twelve Corps, each playing the same two songs, so it is quite easy to understand why those contests were not in any way appealing to an audience. Canadian Corps at this time, still preferred to call themselves Trumpet Bands, playing stock arrangements. Of course, they did not make the money that the American Corps did.

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

It was with this new concept of Drum Corps from the United States, and the offer to take over Danforth Tech's Drum Corps, that Barry, once again, moved on.



Holy Name Cadets from Garfield, NJ (1950s)

Danforth Tech

IN 1955, the 330th Air Cadet Squadron Drum Corps, at Danforth Tech, consisted of 24 boys. It was to this unit that Barry moved in with the rank

of Director, Bugle Instructor, Drill Instructor and Manager. He also found time to teach a night class in Bugling and Drumming. The Corps progressed steadily the first year, doing parades and such. During this first year, they still continued to wear the Air Cadet uniform. In 1956, Barry designed a new Red, Black and White uniform and changed the name to "The Danforth Crusaders".

For one man to do almost everything, at this more complex stage, was impractical; so Barry brought into the picture his friend, Lorne Ferrazzutti, as drum instructor. This made an instructional staff of two.

Lorne joined Barry at Danforth at the beginning of 1956, and as time would prove, Lorne was the best selection that could have been made. Another graduate from Western Tech, Lorne had started in that band at the instigation of a boyhood friend. The director, Mr. McIntyre, put him on a bass drum where he consistently frustrated the efforts of the band leader by always leading off on the wrong foot; however Lorne eventually overcame any impediments in coordination and drumming. He stayed with the band for four years and rose to become a member of a championship calibre quintet. To cap this, at the time of his accession to the post of drum instructor at Danforth, Lorne



Barry Bell conducting the Danforth Crusaders (1957)

was the holder of the title of the Canadian Senior Drumming Champion. Like Barry, his background and abilities were to stand him in good stead in the years to come. Lorne and Barry were to become one of the most successful teams to ever exist in Canadian Drum Corps. Under their tutelage emerged many fine drummers and buglers. Western Tech produced many people who would contribute to Drum Corps in ensuing years.



Barry Bell, Drum Major of the Danforth Crusaders (1957)

As previously noted, Danforth was among the leaders in introducing Drum Corps to Canada. Their use of the term “Drum and Bugle Corps” rather than “Trumpet Band” and the creation and performance of a full-length Marching and Manoeuvring (M&M) show, when this form of activity was in its infancy, is evidence of this.

The Danforth Crusaders became one of the first, if not THE first, to call themselves a “Drum and Bugle Corps” rather than a “Trumpet Band”. With new uniforms and a new name, the Corps performed the type of M&M shows that became common in the 1960s and ‘70s. Danforth was rated the number three Corps, and continued in that position the following year, 1957. The move into Drum Corps had entailed more support than the school was prepared to give. Initially, they had purchased the uniforms and instruments, but support had ebbed as time passed, maybe because the band had not lived up to the expectations of its originator.

A new corps, WITH a sponsor

DURING 1957, Barry and Lorne had realized that, without powerful support from the school, the Danforth Crusaders would not achieve the success that they had hoped for. They needed a sponsor, one that was prepared to fulfill any conditions that might arise. As for the Optimists Trumpet Band, they had a sponsor but needed instructors and more people.

Driving home one afternoon, passing a park, Barry heard drums and horns playing. Wondering who it was, he parked the car and walked into the park. Up ahead, under the spreading branches of a large



Danforth Crusaders (circa 1956)



Optimist Trumpet Band (Toronto City Hall, 1956)

tree, were a bunch of teen-age kids having a jam-session. Maybe three or four drums and nine or ten horns. Having fun. He asked if they were with a drum corps and was told they were members of Opti-Corps. They said that they practiced at a school on Jarvis Street, they had a sponsor, the Optimist Club, and Al Baggs, their Director, was looking for instructors.

Al and Barry had a meeting, after which Barry phoned Lorne. He told Lorne that he had a meeting with Mr. Al Baggs and that Mr. Baggs gave him an offer he couldn't refuse. Barry said that he really wanted Lorne to be the drum instructor. It was an offer Lorne could not refuse. Two days later, they had a meeting with Al Baggs who said that he wanted to beat Preston Scout House in three years. Both wanted the same thing—a really excellent drum corps! The deal was made.

The important thing to ponder is this...If that group of kids had not made a racket at precisely the exact time that Barry had been driving within earshot... ?

Moving from Danforth to the Toronto Optimists

ONE evening in the fall of 1957, the Crusaders were asked to wait for an announcement. After thanking them for their dedication, Barry announced that he and Lorne were going to leave Danforth

to join the Optimist Trumpet Band as instructors. He didn't recruit any of the members but said that anyone interested was welcome to join them.

The first get-together was at the Jarvis Collegiate on a Monday night. There were approximately 20 people from Danforth Tech, Leaside and St. Mary's with more from other corps. The 25 members of Opti-Corps brought the total to about 80 people.

Mr. Baggs made a presentation, saying that he wanted a great drum corps. He informed everyone that the corps had a sponsor, the Downtown Toronto Optimist Club. Then he introduced Barry, Eric Burton who would be the new colour guard instructor, and Lorne. About two months later, the Optimist Club provided money for new horns and guard equipment and, eventually, new uniforms. The new corps would be called The Toronto Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps. Barry did all the music scores and picked all the songs. Lorne wrote the drum charts. The Optimists were on their way.

The Canadian Drum Corps Association (CDCA) was having their final meeting of 1957. Barry and Lorne had discovered that the age limit for junior corps in the USA was 21 while it was 18 for Canadian corps. Barry couldn't attend the meeting because he was Best Man at a wedding and Mr. Baggs was out of town, so Lorne agreed to go.



Danforth Crusaders (1956 or 1957)



Toronto Optimists first public performance (Ice Capades, Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, February 3, 1958)

At the end of that meeting, new business was to be discussed and voted on. Lorne put up his hand and brought forward a motion to change the age limit of the Canadian corps from 18 to 21, the same as the junior corps in the United States. He had heard all the pros and cons beforehand and was expecting a push back from the senior corps; however, with a show of hands “All for” it seemed every hand went up. “All against”, not one hand went up. The Chairman then said the ruling is being changed from 18 to 21. Just like that, the meeting was over. All the Canadian Junior Corps benefited from that discussion.

Extending the age limit to 21 meant that, instead of losing about 12 talented trumpets, drums and guard, the Optimists would have them for another three years.

1958 and beyond

AS most of you will know, the Optimists won the 1958 Nationals. What you might not know is that Lorne was not there to watch the Optimists compete in their first nationals because his job required him to work on Saturdays. He arrived late for the show but made it for the retreat. He



Toronto Optimists winning their first National title (Galt, September 13, 1958)

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

was listening to his car radio when he heard an announcement that the Optimists had won. Lorne was proud as he stood on the hill during the retreat, watching the Optimists file by, with their shakos in their hands and their chests sticking out with big smiles on their faces.

Under the guidance of Barry and Lorne, the Toronto Optimists attracted many talented musicians. They won eleven consecutive national titles, becoming the most successful junior corps in Canada.

They continued instructing the Optimists until the end of 1969.

During 1960, Barry added another role with the Optimists, when he and Phil Hennings were Optimists' Drum Majors.



Barry and Phil lead Optimists down Bay St. (Toronto, 1960)

In 1962, both Barry and Lorne began instructing the Jesters Drum Corps. Lorne, also, marched in the Jesters' drumline. They continued in these positions when the Hamilton Viscounts and Jesters merged, in 1964, to form the Canadian Commanders.

After leaving the Toronto Optimists, both Barry and Lorne continued instructing. Lorne instructed the drums of the Optimist Lancers Drum Corps then, in 1977, he joined the Burlington Teen Tour Band as their drum instructor. He continued instructing the Teen Tour Band until he retired in 2018.

Barry's path led him to instruct a variety of other corps, including Optimist Lancers, St John's of Brantford, Dutch Boy and Toronto Signals.

When the Optimists Alumni Drum Corps was formed in 2002, Barry and Lorne were charter members. Here we are in 2024 and both of them are still actively involved in the Optimists Alumni.



Lorne and Barry (Christmas, 2014)



Barry and Lorne (2016)

Memories from a few friends

NOTE: some of these memories are from Lorne and Barry's 90th birthdays while others were submitted for previous birthdays.

Simply, Barry and Lorne are two of the finest people that I have ever met. Their impact on youth over the decades is not only immeasurable, but the foundation to future success for those blessed with the benefit of their guidance and friendship.

— Marcel Smolinski



Barry and Lorne are two of the greatest men I have been privileged to call friends. I have only known Lorne since 2010, but Barry and I go back to the fall of 1973 when he became the brass instructor for St. John's Girls Drum and Bugle Corps. He has been by my side in the middle horns since 2016. He even took on helping my kid play better when they played with Optimist Alumni in 2017.

— Heather Hyslop Lowe



I never got to know these men but I sure admired their incredible work when I was a marching member of the Hamilton Conqueror and York Lions in the early to mid 60's. You couldn't help but admire the skills of the Toronto Optimists and those who taught them!!! Two incredible men who gave so much of themselves and the drum corps scene of the 60's and 70's!!!

— Bill Simon



Happy to both gentleman. No one will ever know the exact number of young men who became successful men because of the mentorship these two men provided them while they were instructors. — Ted Wilson

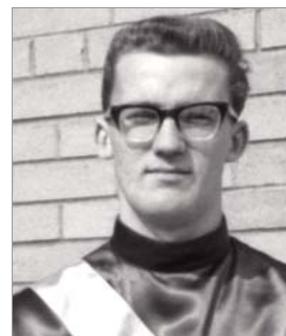


I marched with these two at Western Tech. Followed them to the green machine in 1957. Found Barry and many others from the above bands in the Pumpkinfest parade about 50 years later and joined Sigs. After living in Georgetown for thirty years I learned Barry had his business and condo half a mile away from me. One day I fixed a faucet in his kitchen and filled in a few names missing from his photo of the Optimist winning the Canadian junior championship. Barry and Lorne, truly the heartbeat and vision of Drum Corps. Happy 90th Gentlemen.

— Tom Johnson



In the spring of '62 (as recorded in Vern and/or Colin's history of the Corps) we were at a mentally low point which we still don't fully understand. I remember being so down (I was standing on a poster for the opening contest at Varsity Stadium) while practicing at Duke of York school. Quite a few people were upset, carping and grumbling for whatever reason. Lorne laid into us after the rehearsal and made us all feel pretty small. His lecture pulled us out of the dirt and we went on to do a bang up job at Varsity and the rest of the season. — Mel Dey



FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

In the early fall of 1957, as an innocent young fellow in his Western Tech jacket, I was walking up Lansdowne Ave. in the middle of the night on my way home. I was suddenly aware of a car stopping beside me and two people piling out. It turned out to be Lorne and his cohort Al Morrison, who at the time I assumed was Lorne's bodyguard. (If you had seen Al in a T-shirt at that time you would understand why). Lorne stood in front of me and with his muscle parked beside me started to explain where they had been. An Optimists rehearsal. He then started to harangue me about how I should come down and join. This went on for about 10 or 15 minutes which if you know Lorne, is really a short period of time. I happened to look over at the car and saw a couple of pieces of wood on the dash (turned out to be drumsticks but what did I know, I try to play a horn) Between the 2 clubs on the dash and Al beside me I decided the best thing to do would be to agree with whatever he wanted and get out of there safely, thinking that would be the end of it. Alas, it was not to be.



Somehow he found my phone number and called, strongly suggesting that I should accompany him to a practice. (this was before we had rehearsals) When we arrived, Lorne introduced me to Barry and that was the end of everything. There is no escaping when they get together. Turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to me. Made many life long friends, some of who are still marching and had the honour of marching with Lorne in both Jesters and Commanders and now in the Alumni Corps.

As an aside, you may notice that Lorne still carries those clubs around beating on anything and everything he can find, and I am sure he still uses them as a recruitment tool. — Warren Berger

Happy Birthday Barry. During my tenure with Optimists Barry instilled a sense of confidence in me. He always made me feel like I could achieve more than I thought I was capable of and he convinced me to take risks. These are attributes of a great leader.

*Thank you Barry.
— Dwight Angus*



Looking back...It would have been 1961, I was seventeen and had just started learning snare drumming in the Saints D&B Corps in Port Credit... Two 'heavy duty' Optimist instructors were hired to help us out. Brian Williams ('Wiff' I believe they called him) and Joe Gianna... WOW!... were we impressed. It was then that I began to hear about the infamous Lorne Ferrazzutti, a drumming legend even then.



*As fate would have it, my parents decided to move into the city and I would have to leave the Saints... sad day for all. Much to my surprise Brian, asked me if I wanted to try out for a tenor drum spot with THE Optimists... Holy S**T...THE OPTIMIST and Lorne Ferrazzutti... I was on cloud nine and scared to death.*

I remember the first meeting and practice. Brian Williams was leaving so Ronn 'Skip' Prokop was the lead snare... leading the drum line tryout. I kept looking for the Lorne Ferrazzutti but didn't see him. There was a quiet, unassuming, older' guy with glasses, standing by... watching attentively... this

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

couldn't be????? He looked like an accountant... a school teacher and was so quiet... Not the great Lorne Ferrazzutti... but of course it WAS Lorne Ferrazzutti.

Always understated, Lorne guided the drumline and was the rock behind everything we did. I switched from snare to tenor to join the drum line (with Colin Headworth...a wonderful guy and Orest Burack.) Two years later when Prokop left, I switched back to snare when Ron Kaiser took over lead snare... and all this time Lorne was in the background... unassuming... but always there.

I worked for over 20 years as a musician and jazz drummer..in the U.S. and here....every time I pick up a pair of sticks I think of those days....and I will ALWAYS remember the first time I saw and met Lorne Ferrazzutti.

Lorne 90????? no way! All the best Lorne.
— Mark Wicken

I think it was also in '62 down in Sarnia where Barry felt we were getting a little too cocky and walked down the line before the show. Barry stopped in front of each member and chewed them out. I remember when he came to me he shouted "Dey, you don't talk much, but when you do, you say too much, so shut up!!" (Barry was steamed) He then went on to my buddy Ron Cottrell beside me and gave him hell for the condition of his uniform ("look at your pants they're round!!").



After this dressing down we were raring to go.
— Mel Dey

Lorne and Judy spent every Wednesday afternoon of the winter of 2013 in my basement working on our "chops". My basement was the halfway location. Thanks to Lorne, both Judy and I managed to play the show to everyone's satisfaction.
— Ken Taylor



Welllll I can remember in 1963. Lorne had to work till 6 o'clock in Toronto on the Saturday and drive to Kitchener Seagram's Stadium from TO. The corps was announced and dressed up on the start line as Don Chisolm did a little dance to amuse the crowd. Just as the audience was about to storm the field I heard the feet running up behind me and, being the only snare drummer that day, hoped it was Lorne. It was! and we scored a high drum mark.



I heard he changed to his uniform on the 401 at 70 mph —Ed Law

I love both of these kind, talented, funny men. Lorne was my first drum instructor, in Lancers, in 1969, and I've been drumming with him in the alumni corps for several years. They link me to the past. And they provide great models for rich lives as seniors.



— Judy Ferguson

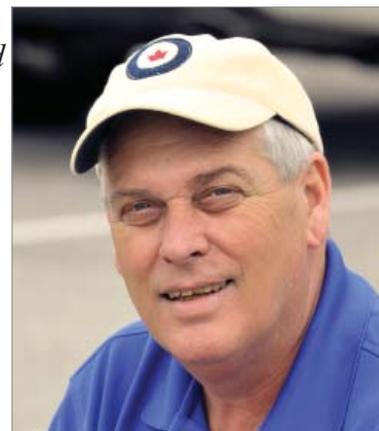
FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

Back in 1962, Dave Harris and I used to ride our bikes down to Keating to watch the big corps practice. We were both

in the Bantam Optimists and held dreams of one day being in the Toronto Optimists. At one rehearsal the corps was taking a water break and Barry Bell came striding towards us. THE BARRY BELL! I quickly muttered to Dave, “Don’t look at him, don’t talk, he’s coming right toward us....look down, look down!” As Barry passed he said, “Hi guys.” We muttered hello without ever looking up. As he left I said to Dave: ‘HE SAID HI....BARRY BELL JUST SAID HI....TO US!. Dave, who was usually much cooler than I just said: “Cool” — Vern Johansson



I remember well the first time I met Barry Bell, well I didn’t exactly meet him but I did see him in action. Thanks to the good folks at Fleetwood records all the album liners identified both Barry and Lorne as the Optimists instructors.



In 1962 I was in Grantham Drum Corps and we were attending the same show as the Optimists in Sarnia.

Some details are fuzzy but what I do recall clearly was watching the Optimists, all in uniform, standing in a semicircle at attention. They looked magnificent in the new uniforms and there was Barry Bell in front of them going down the line, one individual at a time, and delivering a personal beasting to each and every member. Of course I had no idea of what he was saying or what transgressions had been committed but there was no mistaking the fact that he was not pleased. What a disciplined outfit.

When I switched to Baritone, Barry took me under his wing and got me to press the valves down straight so I wouldn’t damage the valves. He emphasized the situation to the point where he told me to do it right because other people would blame him for teaching me bad habits !! — Ken Taylor



After joining and marching with the Optimists for four years I knew one thing for sure —I didn’t want to be one of those guys who let him down. I don’t know if I accomplished that but he never once personally took me to task. Yeah, I leaned my lesson early in the game. He was a great and inspirational leader! — Brian Byrne

Barry and me racing against each other from the Burlington Commanders rehearsal heading back towards Toronto. Barry is in his Buick Electra with me in my 240Z). Lucky to be alive. — Bill Holloway



Dave was cooler except when it came to drummers. One evening at our Bantam Optimists rehearsal at Oak Park Junior High on Lumsden Ave. Lorne and Ron Kaiser came to work with us. Dave was playing snare and I was playing tenor. At the start, Lorne and Ron went up to each kid and introduced

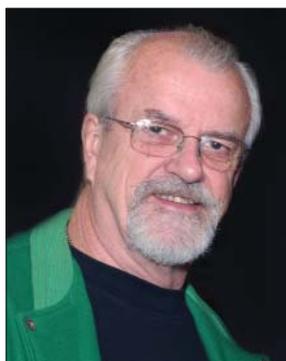


FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)

themselves. When Lorne got to Dave, he said: “Hi, I’m Lorne what’s your name. Harris just stared at him with his mouth open and never uttered a sound. I was standing beside Dave and I said: “His name is Dave, sir but we call him Harry”. Even then, Dave just stood there looking up at Lorne with his mouth hanging open, too afraid to speak.

— Vern Johansson

October 1961... Vic Krukalis, recently of the Columbus Boys Band, encouraged me to try out for the drum line of the Toronto Optimists. I arrived at practice, was handed a Bass drum and asked to practice with the drum line. The drum instructor’s name was Lorne Ferrazzutti which was often corrupted by announcers to Fezarooti or Fursatuzzi or... After a brief introduction, there I was, “in the Line” so to speak. Lorne did not say much, he just listened.



At the end of the evening the corps assembled in the main gym. No commotion, just getting together and playing. WOW, what discipline, what co-operation. No unnecessary chatter!

There I was, kind of in control of my position and responsibility as bass drummer. Al Morrison, DM, cued up the corps. Silence! Horns ready. It would be four bass beats into the intro. I was cool, Barry was cool, Lorne was cool, and then...1, 2, 3, 4 beats, I think the cadence was around 185... STOP, arms waving, silence. Barry looked, then walked over, not to me but to Lorne. He spoke quietly then went back to centre behind Al. Ronn Prokop took over the intro.

I thought that was it. My career with Canada’s Number One Drum Corps was over, in just four beats! After practice, I packed up the bass drum, and felt totally demoralized – until Lorne and

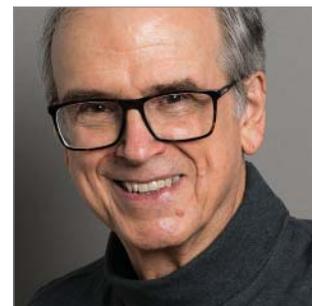
Barry came to me. Lorne introduced me to Barry as “Frank Rudd”, like in mud, “the newest member of our drum line.” Barry shook my hand and welcomed me to the Corps. I was in!! Since Lorne couldn’t remember “Frans Rood”, as in food, I became “Frank Rudd”. And from then on I called him Lorne “Fezarutti”.

If it had not been for their understanding and ability to see beyond a very nervous and intimidating situation, I might never have been an Optimist. Not hard to see why these two amazing talents worked so well together and continue to be friends to this day. Happy 90th to both of you. — Frans Rood

In the spring of ‘62 (as recorded in Vern and/or Colin’s history of the Corps) we were at a mentally low point which we still don’t fully understand. I remember being so down (I was standing on a poster for the opening contest at Varsity Stadium) while practicing at Duke of York school. Quite a few people were upset, carping and grumbling for whatever reason. Lorne laid into us after the rehearsal and made us all feel pretty small. His lecture pulled us out of the dirt and we went on to do a bang up job at Varsity and the rest of the season.— Mel Dey



Two great guys I have always admired. During rehearsals and on the road – no yelling, no tantrums, just quietly going about the business of teaching and setting a very high bar with a low-key approach. I was proud to be part of the drum line in the early 1960s being associated with such talented instructors. Did I mention Barry’s extra dry sense of humour?— David Johns



From Phil “Crash” Hennings

One thing that stands out is Lorne was always working on the weekends and arrived late for a show. Lorne had the ability to teach the Drummers their music at practice and had the confidence that they would perform well at a show.

Lorne was an easy going person and didn't get too upset, except when I smashed up his car. The story about the car – I was asked to drive the car back home from a Contest. Lorne had been working that

day and was tired and this would give him some time to rest. We had a couple of other guys in the car as well. Everything was above board - we had not been drinking. I think we might have been coming back from London Ontario; it was around 1:00 am. It was a nice warm evening driving on this two lane highway and everything was quiet – then out of nowhere – this car was stopped in the middle of the road. I tried my best to avoid hitting the other vehicle but it was not to be. There were two men in the car that I hit – the force of the accident sent

their car across the road and on to the side of the road. We got out of the car to check on these guys, it was quite obvious they had been drinking and they were not injured. The police arrived and said they would look after the scene. The damage on their car was nothing but Lorne's car, as you can see in the photo, was not too bad – that's what I thought but, it was not what Lorne thought.

Lorne never asked me to drive for him again and gave me the handle – “CRASH HENNINGS”. He says I still owe him \$500.00. He has got to be dreaming – this happened back in 1959. He hasn't asked for the money lately – I guess that's because he is 90 years young – time does help and memory does fade.

Lorne have Great Happy Birthday and don't worry about the \$500.00



Lorne, his damaged car and Phil Hennings (1960)

A few photos of Barry and Lorne from past years



*Drum Duet Champions (1955)
Flt Lt D. F. McIntyre and Sergeant Lorne Ferrazzutti*



*Barry with the Optimists' Corps Flag (1961)
Barry designed the "Optimist Head" on the flag. This logo was integrated into the symbols for the Toronto Optimists, the Seneca Optimists and the Optimists Alumni.*



Lorne in his Jesters uniform (1962)



Barry, in front of the Optimists (Nationals, Hamilton, 1960)



Barry with Joe Gianna (1962)



Vic Kruklis, Lorne Ferrazzutti, Ed Law & Bill Stoney of Commanders (Hamilton, 1964)



Barry in the stands with a bunch of corps members (Rochester, 1960)



Lorne speaks at his Retirement Party from Burlington Teen Tour Band (2018)



Lorne with wife Pam and son Adrian (2009)



Lorne with Judy Ferguson (Canada Day, Caledonia, 2018)

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)



Barry's wife, Pat, and Barry (1961)



Barry's daughter Debbie, Barry and wife Pat (2007)



Barry and his son-in law, Dave Bruce (2017)7



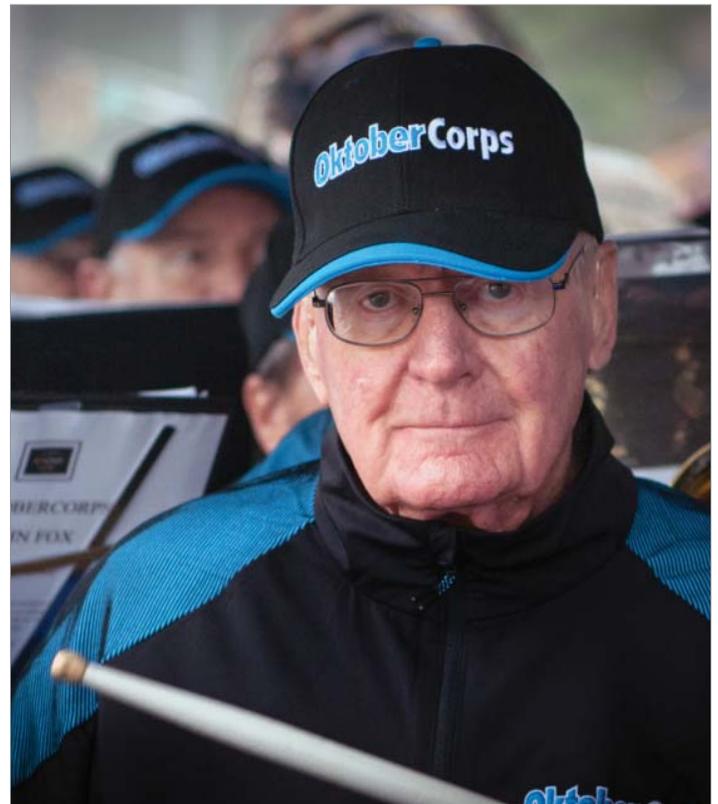
Lorne in his Mummers costume in the Optimists Alumni



Barry in his Mummers costume in the Optimists Alumni



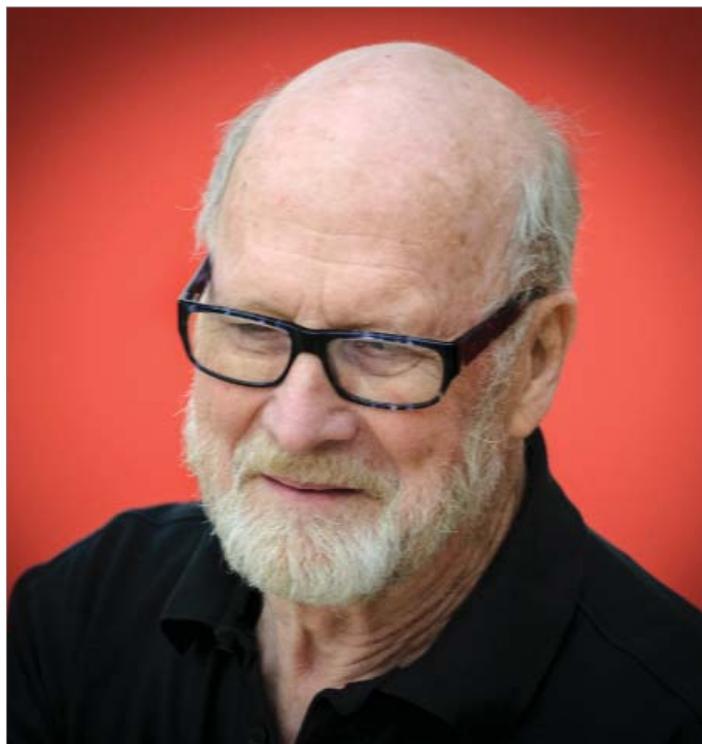
Barry (2018)



Lorne, with Oktobercorps (2018)



Lorne (2018)



Barry (2013)



Barry (2019)



Lorne (2018)

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)



Barry (2013)



Lorne with Optimists' drumline (De La Salle, 1958)



Lorne, Eric Burton (Optimists original guard instructor) and Mr Baggs (East York, June, 1958)

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)



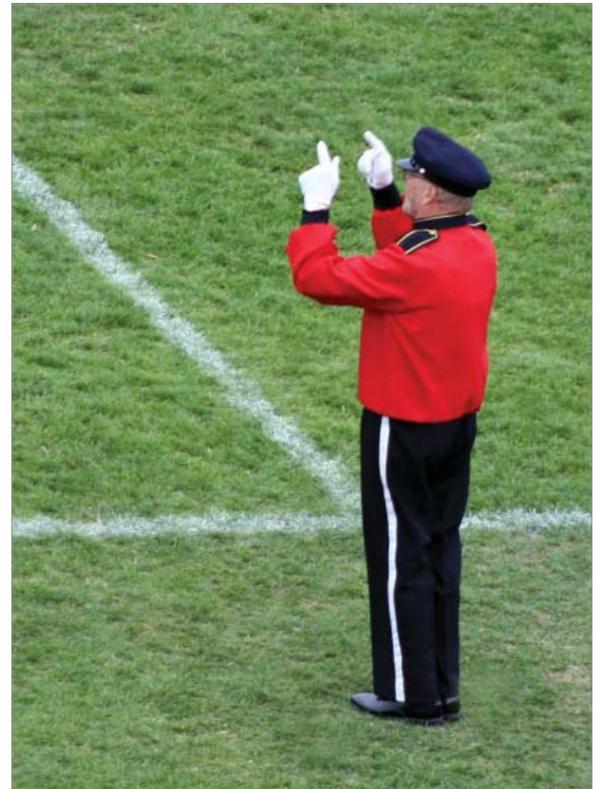
Lorne, Judy Ferguson, Ric Brown and Doug Darwin
(South Korea, 2017)



Don Daber, Henry Beben and Barry (2009)

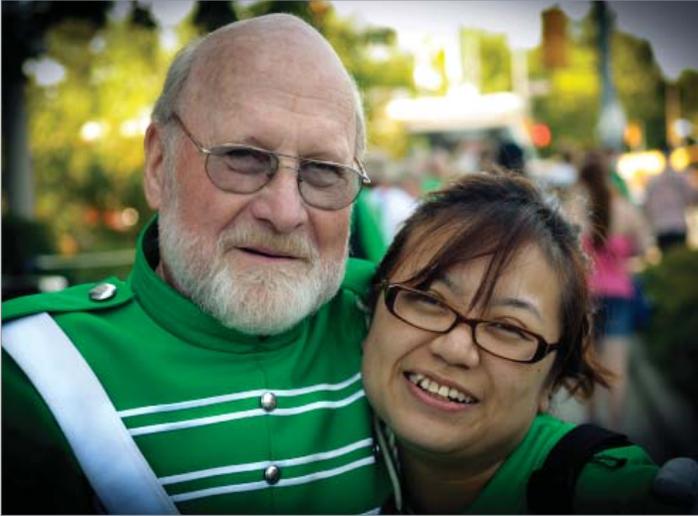


Barry (in fake beard) with the drums (1961)



Barry conducting Toronto Signals (Waterloo, 2007)

FEATURE ARTICLE: Barry and Lorne turn 90 (continued)



Barry and Kimiko (2011)



Lorne with Scott Butcher (2008)



Lorne, Rolly Formica and Barry (2022)



Ronn Prokop and Barry (London, 2011)



Lorne in Jesters uniform



Barry and his wife, Pat (2010)



Barry (1961)

Chapter 27: The Only Way To Go

With most of the Corps’ executive and instructional staff still intact from last year, prospects looked good for the year ahead. More importantly, sponsorship was still there. Officially, there were three: Seneca College, the Optimist Club of York-Toronto, and the Seneca Optimists Booster Club.

There were changes within all of these departments, but all were to prove beneficial.

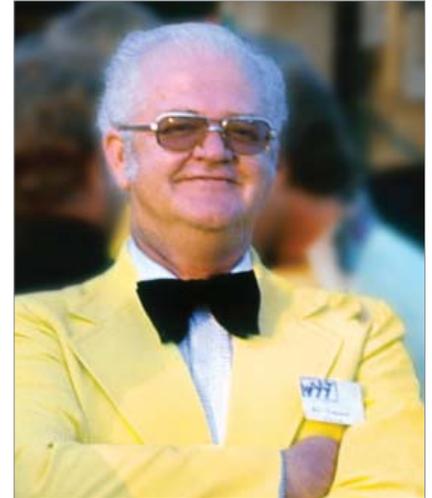
Mr. Rex Martin was now the President of the Booster Club. He had held this position with the Toronto Optimists.

The executive consisted of:

- Al Tierney.....Director
- Ric BrownAssistant
- Evert Botterweg.....Equipment Manager
- Don DaberPublicity, public relations, etc.

The instructional staff had changed but had a full complement.

- M&M Field DesignGary Czapinski
- M&M InstructionGreg Oxenham, Gilles Paquin, Tom Furiano, Doug Coull
- Colour Guard.....Marie (Kas) Grana, Wendy Paquin, Debbie Miller
- Bugle Arrangements.....Wayne Downey
- Bugle InstructorsPeter Byrne, Myron Melnyk, George Nasello, Wayne Dillon
- Drum ArrangementsSam Kays, Pat Irvine
- Drum InstructorsSam Kays, Pat Irvine, Bill Bula, Wayne Lewis



Al Tierney

Most of these people were homegrown, but originating with various corps. Those who were from elsewhere, the United States mainly, were occasional, coming for long weekends, or camps. These were Gary Czapinski, Marie Grana, Wayne Downey, and sometimes Fred Sanford on drums. All others listed were permanent staff. They were greatly responsible for what appeared on the field, the occasional instructors adding invaluable advice and knowledge. With this crew, things should go well.

Peter Byrne, on bugles, had started in Corps at the age of eleven. Joining Grantham, he spent a few years in Optimists then had played for one year in the Anaheim Kingsmen, winners of the first D.C.I. Championship. He claimed that his biggest problem as an instructor was adjusting to a D.C.I. calibre Corps. Well, whatever, he had done well so far and was to continue this year.



Gary Czapinski and Marie Grana

In 1976, Seneca Optimists, at one time or another, had beaten all but four Corps, Blue Devils, Madison Scouts, Santa Clara Vanguard, and Phantom Regiment.

Myron Melnyk, one of Peter’s assistants, was a member of De La Salle for six years. He had wanted to stay on as an instructor, but it did not work out. He played in the Blue Devils for one year and, returning, went to the Princemen, until the 1975 Nationals, then, the Optimists. Feeling out of place at first, understandably, with his history, he eventually fitted in and stayed.



Seneca Optimists (1976)

Sam Kays, on drums, had originated with the Midlanders Drum Corps. He had scored the highest score in his caption at an individuals, highest score of the day.

Under Wendy Paquin, on silks, and Debbie Miller, rifles, the colour guard had made, and maintained, a reputation as one of the best in North America. This year, they were to get off to a slow start, but making up for lost time, were to come through again.

The Corps itself was full in all sections, with a full marching complement of 128.

Bugles	58
Percussion	32
Guard: Flags.....	24
Guard: Rifles	10
Nationals	2
Officers.....	2

Most of these were from last year, but there had been some turnover, almost inevitable. Some of the rookies, this year, had interesting backgrounds.



Dave Phillips, Terry McCullough, Johanne Briere (1977)

Jacques Dicaire, from Quebec, was a baritone player. He came from 4th Brigade and wanted to play in a D.C.I. Corps during his last year.

Janice Bell, a soprano player, had started in drum corps at age 10, with the Peterborough Krescendos. She had been their Drum Major in 1976.

Johanne Briere had joined Corps when 12 years old. She had marched with Mousquetaires, Chatelaines, and 4th Brigade. Also, she had taught drumming to several Quebec Corps. A unique distinction was that she was the first girl to march in the drum line in the history of the Corps. Girls were now commonplace in the corps but none had been in the drum line, until now.

Finally, Sylvain Menard, contra bass had been in Corps since age 13, with 4th Brigade. He joined Seneca and was a Seneca Optimist nut.

The Drum Major this year would be Mike Williams while the Colour Guard Captain would be Dianne Tenaglia. Dianne was a graduate of the Optimist Cadets, moving to the junior Corps in 1974.

Altogether, twenty-five members of the Corps were from out of town. One of them, Tony Lidstone had, last year, and would, this year, hitchhike twice a week for practices from Kitchener, Ontario, 100 miles away.

Across town, the Oakland Crusaders reportedly also had a full 128-member Corps. A difference was that they had had a big turnover, and many of these people were new.

Other potential competition, the new “Northstar” Corps from Kitchener was an unknown quantity. Directing them, now, was Doug MacKenzie.

The Optimists Cadets Director was now John O’Leary.



Northstar

The Ontario Drum Corps Association had a lot of familiar names on its roster. Jack Roberts, former Optimist player and instructor was now the Executive Director. Al Tierney, Seneca Optimists Director, was President of the Association. Don Daber was Secretary Treasurer, John Jones of Oakland was Vice-President, Recording Secretary was Jacqui Kennedy and other directors were Dick Brown, Jim Towie and Jack Turner. I mention all these people because without them there would be no Drum Corps.

Back to the Corps

The horn lines had improved steadily over the last couple of years, those of Optimist and Seneca. Last year,



Myron Melnyk (1977)

after the merger, Myron Melnyk had started a program to improve tone and intonation. This had paid off, but consistency was the biggest factor. Each performance was better than the last, except for D.C.I. finals.

Things moved ahead rapidly even though quite a bit of music had been changed for this year. Off-the-line was still Mahler’s 7th Symphony, but with a modified entry. The lively “Children’s Dance” led in to concert which, as yet, had not been selected. A long drum solo then displayed changes. Congas and Bongos had replaced triple drums. “Pippin” from a musical of the same name followed. Changes and alterations would occur, but basically this show was of D.C.I. calibre.

“From Toronto... The Optimists!” by Colin Hedworth. Chapter 27. (continued)

The concert, which was selected later, would be a medley from “West Side Story”. This music was the most challenging ever played by the Drum Corps.

Drill rehearsals began in January. The double gym at Seneca College was large enough for the whole Corps to learn and practice parts of the 1977 drill. Later, it could all be put together outside.

On January 21st and 22nd, the O.D.C.A. Symposium 5 was held. It was considered a fabulous success. The largest symposium ever held for Drum Corps in North America. Presented by the O.D.C.A. and C.J.A., over 500 instructors, managers, and judges took part.

For the bugle clinic, the horn line of the Seneca Optimists was used for demonstrations. Wayne Downey conducted sessions on both days. The Oakland Crusaders drum line was used for the drum clinic, with Fred Sanford conducting. M&M was handled by Mike Maxley, Gary Czapski, Marie Grana, and Len Kruszecki.



Seneca Optimists' Congas (1977)

This year's “award of merit” went to Barry Bell. It was overdue.

At the conclusion, over 600 people assembled for dining and socializing. Al Tierney opened the program. At the head table was the Hon. Robert Welch, Ontario Minister of Culture and Recreation. He was partly responsible for the “Wintario” program, from which Drum Corps had benefited greatly. Bob Duggan and Al Tierney, directors of Oakland and Seneca, respectively, received “special awards” for their two Corps. This recognized the accomplishments of both in international competition. These were presented by Mr. Welch. The fact was highlighted that Toronto was the only city in North America with two Corps in the D.C.I. top twelve. A distinction probably not recognized outside of Drum Corps circles.

A letter in “Information Drum Corps” slammed the publication for its definite slant towards the Seneca Optimists. This magazine printed what was sent in to it. Only a few co-operated.

Another letter was received, from Nonie and Bernie Beer, who were wintering in Florida. They wanted, and were getting, “Information Drum Corps”.

Al Tierney and Bob Duggan represented the O.D.C.A. at a D.C.I. Management Seminar in Chicago.

Two measures of note, in March, were:

- The first issue of “Gold Capsule Comments”.
- The Seneca horn line got the new 2-valve bugles.

Though costly, these new 2-valve bugles were necessary if the Corps wished to remain competitive.



Seneca Optimists members with their two-valve bugles (1977)

“From Toronto... The Optimists!” by Colin Hedworth. Chapter 27. (continued)

Seneca College announced that it would sponsor a D.C.I. contest this year. Don Pesceone and Bill Howard, both from the D.C.I. Executive Board, came to the college to discuss this with the people listed below.

- Peter ShorePresident of the Optimist Club of York-Toronto
- Joe Gianna.....Past President
- Rex MartinPresident of the Seneca Optimist Booster Club
- Al TierneyCorps Director
- Wolfgang Petschke.....Corps Co-ordinator with the College

Another merger had taken place. The Lancers, in a final break with the Optimist organization, merged with the Oakland Crusaders Parade Corps. It was planned to increase it to 80 boys and girls and would be known as the Etobicoke Knights.

At the O.D.C.A. individuals this year, sponsored by the Oakland Crusaders, the Seneca Optimists took nine firsts. The Oakland Corps outdid them with eleven. The Seneca Optimist Brass Quintet scored 89.5 for their first place. The “Mellow Yellow” also recorded numerous seconds and thirds. All this was reported in the April issue of “Gold Capsule Comments”.



Front cover of Seneca contest program (1977)

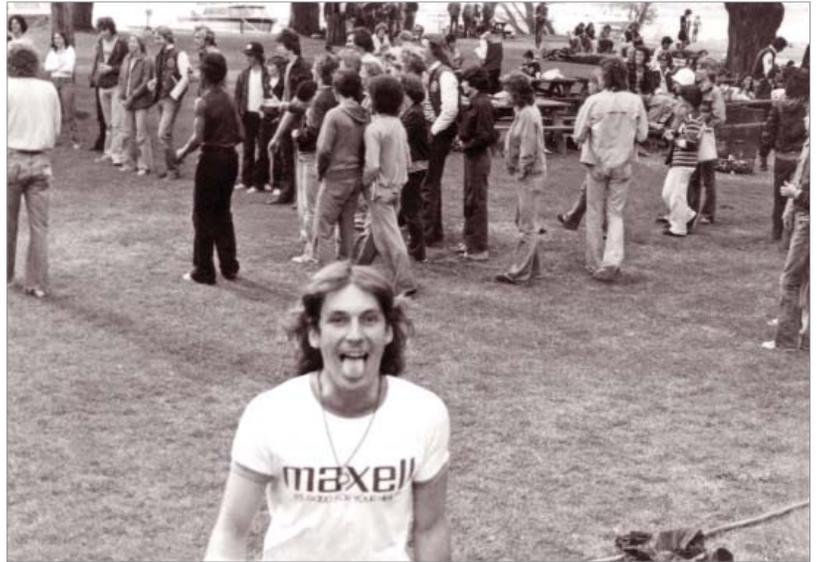
In May, Wayne Downey flew in from California, bringing the new concert of West Side Story. This was the Victoria Day weekend, for the Corps, a camp weekend. It began with a T.A.S. night, a custom inherited from the Toronto Optimist’s side of this Corps. Drill-wise, Gary Czapinski introduced the “parachute” a novel idea for general effect. It was to amaze audiences all over. With camp over, everything intended had been accomplished. It was less than two weeks to the first contest, which was on June 3rd, in Toronto. It was the International, sponsored by the Seneca Optimist Booster Club. No one was ready. Due to this, the Oakland Crusaders pulled out of it. Their problems would become apparent later. Everybody else competed.

Seneca Optimists were eager to go against the new Corps “Northstar”, to see what would happen. What happened was the Seneca Optimists won by nine points, even with a two-point penalty. Their show was shaky, and the concert showed that it had been played for less than two weeks. But a win is a win, and now they only had to go against the Oakland Crusaders, to see where they stood in Canada.



Northstar

It was not heavy competition time yet. That would be here soon enough. The next day, another Optimist tradition was observed. Nobody seemed to mind. They were all in fun. This one was M.O.O.G., Most Organized Optimist Games, always reserved for the day after the first concert. It took place on Toronto Island, starting around 12:00 noon. Egg-throwing contests, mooger ball, tug-o-war, and buck-buck were all part of the fun ‘n games. The Booster Club showed up later to cook hamburgers and hot dogs. The last ferryboat left at 12:45 a.m., with the last partyers. After this, things would get more serious.



Celebrating M.O.O.G. at Centre Island

Gold Capsule Comments came out this June, but, surprise, it would be the last issue this year. Due to printing costs, it would now only appear from January through May. There would be a yearbook though.

The Corps had twenty-seven contests scheduled to date. This could change, either up or down, but probably not very much. Coverage of them will be condensed as much as possible.

The Contest Season Begins

June 11th – Waterloo

Seneca wins, already starting to come together, doing the type of show one would expect from a D.C.I. Corps. The next week it was a two-stop trip to the United States. For the first time this year, the competition included the Oakland Crusaders. This Corps had suffered a large turnover in personnel, and it showed. Seneca Optimists were second, two points behind Garfield, and, unheard of before, twelve points up on the Oakland Crusaders. The “Oakies” scored high drums. Their drum line was superb. Everybody could see that. Next day, it was Waverly, N.Y. and, again, a second place to Garfield. The score for our Corps was in the 67-68 range. Back in Canada, on the 25th in Welland, Ontario, another win, both parade and contest. The number “Children’s Dance” clicked for the first time. It was a difficult piece. The score was 74.30, an improvement, but now only six points above the Crusaders.



Oakland Crusaders (1977)

Now, in Port Dover, Ontario, on the warm shores of Lake Erie, was the second Corps camp. Other Corps were there too, and all put on an exhibition for the townsfolk. “Ventures”, the fine Girls’ Corps, made breakfast for the Seneca Corps the next morning. A party was held at the home of Mark Lewis, a Corps member, his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis, being most accommodating. The final day of camp was spent perfecting the “parachute” maneuver, for more U.S. competition the following weekend. This brainchild of Gary Czapinski, when executed properly was sensational, drawing oohs and aahs from many crowds.

The U.S. competition was actually to last four days. It was to prove a gruelling trip.

After an exhibition at an Argonaut football game, it was away, off to Ramsey, N.J. The guard was issued new flags, and the Corps did an inspired performance. It was the first showing of the “parachute”, and the reaction was one of stunned amazement, before the cheers. This show was a good one for this Corps, placing third.



Seneca Optimists perform at CFL (Canadian Football League) game

Four points behind Phantom Regiment, in first, and only 2.3 behind the Madison Scouts. The closest they had ever been. That was July 8th.

The very next day, the contest was in Allentown, PA, and it was D.C.I. East, the first big show of the season. The Corps for some reason was mediocre, placing sixth, at both prelims and finals. We were off, now, to Boston, for the C.Y.O. Nationals. The tour routine was practice, compete all day, ride, and sleep all night. Seneca was again in sixth place, with a score of 74.35, almost identical to that of Allentown.

It was here, in Boston, that the flaws in the Etobicoke Crusaders presentation became evident. They did not seem to have the show or personnel to make up the necessary ground. They would pull themselves up but they had old music with an uninspired drill. Tonight it was 10th place, with a score of 64.35.



Seneca Optimists (CYO Nationals, 1977)

Seneca Optimists, though, were on their way.

The next show was one they had been waiting for all year. Last year had been their first appearance at it, and the crowd had loved them. This was proven by the fact that at their rehearsal there was a large crowd. Word was out that the Seneca were here.

Leaving Boston at midnight, they neared Montreal at daybreak. The show that night was the best, so far, of the season with the crowd showing its enthusiasm. Montreal, July 11, 1977.

1st	Madison.....	80.80
2nd	Phantom Regiment	80.30
3rd	Seneca Optimists	78.10
4th	Kingsmen	69.60
5th	Oakland Crusaders	66.15
6th	Royal Crusaders	65.05
7th	Velvet Knights	52.05



Cathy Parrott, Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)

The Seneca Guard was in the top three.

The same placings, and almost the same scores, occurred on July 15th in Toronto. This was the show sponsored by Seneca College, and marked the return of D.C.I. to Toronto, after a three-year absence. Again, with Madison first and Phantom second, Seneca Optimists were third, 2.8 out of top spot. This was, for this Corps, a period of new highs. Oakland Crusaders, with only 109 people on the field, were still having their problems. Still, although in fifth place with 67.55, and almost eleven behind Seneca, they captured the top drum score. This would happen all year, against all the best. The “parachute”, playing to new faces wherever it went, was partly responsible for the standing ovation received by the Seneca Optimists. Their concert of “West Side Story” was being compared to that of the Madison Scouts. Things, during this period, looked very rosy for this Corps. This early, on July 15th, it looked as if they could go a long way. They would, but a flaw was to appear later that would slow things down a bit.



Seneca Optimists' Parachute (1977)

The Ontario Provincial Championships, on July 23rd, saw the Seneca Optimists win their first major title. Oakland Crusaders, defending champions, put forth a supreme effort and managed to draw within five points of the new Canadian powerhouse.

1st	Seneca.....	81.75
2nd	Oakland	76.85
3rd	Northstar	71.75

It was here that it was noted that the Oakland Crusaders drum line had beaten those of all the D.C.I. Corps that they had met.

“From Toronto... The Optimists!” by Colin Hedworth. Chapter 27. (continued)

At this contest, the Peterborough Krescendos won their division. They had reverted to Junior “B” from Junior “A”. The Seneca Optimists now dominated junior “A” in Canada, with the Oakland Crusaders and Northstar still possible contenders. The Corps director for Northstar was now Doug MacKenzie, a former Optimist.

Next day, in Kingston, and a week later in Simcoe, Ontario, it was the same story, with Seneca in first, maintaining, and even increasing the spread.

North Tonawanda, on August 1st, was something of an event. The Corps was an hour late on the line, holding up the show, as they were due

on first. Why? The equipment truck was late. Why? U.S. customs officials held it up at the border, until a dog had inspected it, sniffing for drugs. Fortunately, it was drug free, so the truck and I, the driver, were allowed to continue. With a police escort, we found the stadium. It was thought that my assistant, Bob Carell, and I had stopped for a long lunch, or more. Whatever, the Corps went out and, with an 82.30, still won the contest. The truck had been held up once before, prior to tour one, when involved in a minor accident on Hwy. 401. Before police were informed, due to a pressing schedule, the driver took off. He was a wanted man when he returned. The police understood but a stern warning was issued.

As an aside, had drugs been found on the truck, prior to Tonawanda, it would probably have been game over for the Corps and the driver. U.S. customs officers do not fool around. It was a good thing that none were found because two days later, on Wednesday, August 3, tour two would begin. This was the big one that would end in Denver, Colorado with D.C.I. finals.



Seneca Optimists rehearsing (1977)



Seneca Optimists (CYO Nationals, 1977)

Tour Two

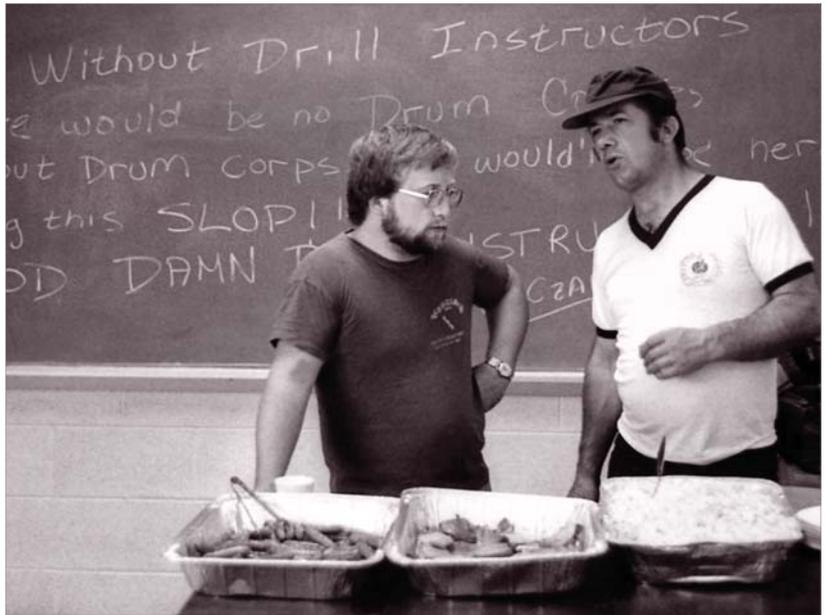
Day 1 – Wednesday, August 3rd

After a noon hour rehearsal at Keating Park, delayed due to a late equipment truck, the Corps reassembled at Seneca College. From there, it was onto the buses and heading westward to Ypsilanti, Michigan. The 1977 D.C.I. tour was underway.

Day 2 – Thursday, August 4th

D.C.I. North, Ypsilanti

The whole Corps was up at 7:00 a.m. for the first meal at “Konstantinou’s Kafe”. A father of one of the girls in the Corps, John Konstantinou was a most valuable member of the staff. Cooking was his profession, and he was accustomed to catering for a large crowd, in this case, 150-160 people. Throughout the entire tour, he and his assistants, under his direction, were to capably keep the Corps and staff well fed. All this on a couple of barbeque type open griddles. It was a demonstration of great skill. Not because of John’s breakfast, the Corps had a bad rehearsal, after which it was off to the stadium for the prelims. A good performance gave a score of 77.30. It was a better show at the finals, moving up to 79.30, but with no change in standings.



Steve Malloy and John Konstantinou, staff at Konstantinou’s Kafe (1977)

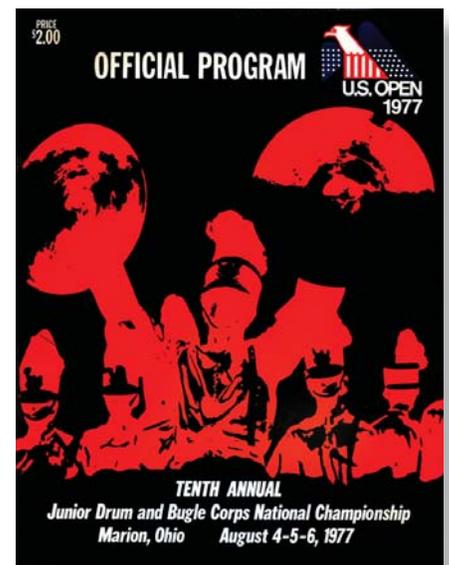
Day 3 – Friday, August 5th

After another gourmet breakfast, it was away to Marion, Ohio, for the U.S. Open Contest.

Day 4 – Saturday, Aug 6th, U.S. Open, Marion, OH

All were very excited about this show, as there was a strong possibility that this Corps could become the first Canadian unit to win this title. Appearing early for the prelims, 11:19 a.m., the spirit showed with a score of 81.95 for first place, a close second, by 0.5, were the Crossmen of Pennsylvania.

Following this, an afternoon practice, of the kind that makes a championship Corps, set the stage for the evening finals. Then, rain, rain, rain. Some Corps got their shows over, and the rain eventually seemed to end at 10:30 p.m. There were still five Corps yet to perform when it started again heavier than ever. Executives, sponsors, and judges all met and decided to wait it out.



Program Cover for U.S. Open (1977)

Finally, Seneca Optimists got on the starting line at 1:45 a.m. Sunday morning. The show was fantastic, and it had to be, as the Crossmen were also fantastic.

The result:

- 1st Seneca Optimists 85.05
- 2nd Crossmen..... 84.85

The Corps became hysterical. The Crossmen were downcast. Both were excellent, and it was anybody’s show. However, the “Eagle” trophy came to Canada for the first time.

In the class “A” division, as opposed to the “Open” division, the Cardinals of Precious Blood won the title. They were from Scarborough, Ontario, so it was a great day for Canadian Drum Corps.



Jim Kane with US Open Trophy (1977)

Day 5 – Sunday, August 7th

This was a travelling day, to Alton, Illinois, with a stop in Indianapolis for lunch. A treat was the view of the St. Louis skyline. Arriving in Alton, the Corps was greeted by a monstrous thunderstorm, with tornado warnings posted for the city.

“Youth on the March” saw this Corps give, for them, an unsatisfactory performance. Again, a third place finish.

Now it was on to Wichita, Kansas. On the route were seen the Mississippi River, the Missouri River, and the Stadium of the Kansas City Royals baseball team. Such diversions were good, as most of these tours were work, travel, and sleep. There was not much time for fun. Home base this time was a local Salvation Army Camp. As might be expected, it was a neat, well kept place. A rehearsal in the late evening was interrupted by the local sheriff. An angry housewife had alerted him, and the practice had to be called off. Such problems are common to Drum Corps, loud as they are.



Seneca Optimists (1977)

Day 8 – Wednesday, August 10th

These contests were labelled with appropriately colourful names. “Drums Across the Plains” was the name of this one. It could have been the title of a western movie. Practice was difficult because this turned out to be the hottest, most hurried day of the tour. However, everybody would be in the same boat, so things were equal. For the Seneca Optimists, the practice field was less than perfect. Up hill, down hills, trees, high grass. Attacking indians would not have been out of place here. Struggling though a rehearsal as well as could be done, the reward was a most spectacular performance at the actual show. They thought they had finally defeated the 27th Lancers. Alas, it was still third place. Again.



Seneca Optimists (1977)

A very low drum score contributed to this. Also M&M was not up to its usual standard. Due to rain, it was a drum majors only retreat. Back to the camp and a change of plans. Instead of staying over, it was decided to push on to Denver that night.

Day 9 – Thursday, August 11th

Arrival in Denver was to a cool 50° F, up in the mountains now. Settling into a school in Sheridan, a suburb of Denver, the practice facility was examined. It turned out to be excellent. It was just down the road, part of the “Fort Logan Mental Health Centre”. When the Corps practised some of the staff and inmates came out to watch the proceedings. Somebody commented that they must have felt right at home.

While at this location, the Corps would participate in several contests, in scattered locations, some quite a distance away.

August 12th, the day after arriving, was spent rehearsing for the entire day. There would be little rest at this end of the tour. Next day, it was off to Glenwood Springs, 185 miles west. It took five hours and turned out to be the most colourful and exciting part of the whole tour. Until now, we thought that we were in the Rockies, but actually were only in the foothills. On this trip, we had a glimpse of the real Rockies, and they were awesome to us dudes. Through Glenwood Springs to the mining town of Carbondale. “Drums Along the Rockies” saw the Seneca Optimists put on a good performance, placing four points behind Santa Clara Vanguard. This was good for this Corps. After a dip in the local “Hot Springs” courtesy of free passes from the contest sponsor, it was back through the mountains to Denver.



*Laura Score,
Seneca Optimists (1977)*

The return trip was interesting with breakfast in Glenwood Canyon, beside the Colorado River, some mountain climbing, and collecting rock samples for the folks at home. The busses picked up some members of Northstar, whose bus had broken down. Finally reaching Denver, the Corps continued east to Greeley, Colorado.



Seneca Optimists (Pueblo, CO, 1977)

This was another “Drums Along the Rockies” as was the next one after it. It was a good show, as most of them now were, but the Seneca Optimists could still not defeat the 27th Lancers.

Day 13 – Monday, August 15th

South 115 miles to Pueblo, and the last chance to beat a major Corps before D.C.I. prelims. It was a chance neglected, losing even to the Kilties for the first time. Hard work lay ahead, but there was not much time. We had not even met the Blue Stars or Cavaliers yet.

Day 14 – Tuesday, August 16th: A day off at last.

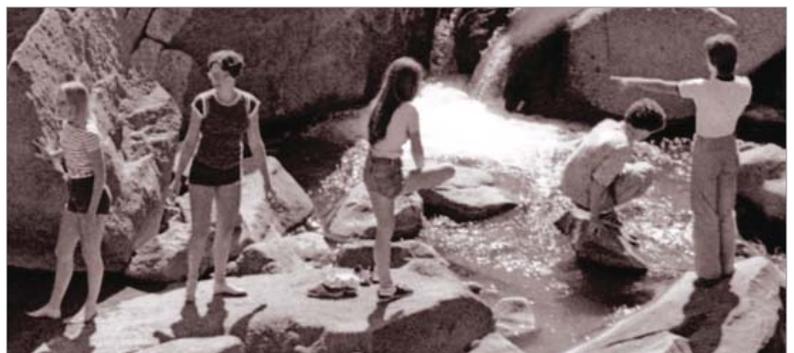
Day 15 – Wednesday, August 17th

Devoted entirely to practice for the imminent D.C.I. prelims.

Day 16 – Thursday, August 18th: D.C.I. Preliminaries

It was here, the prelude to the culmination of the tour, D.C.I. preliminaries. For some, it would be the final tilt on this circuit, this year.

Arriving in plenty of time for a good warm-up, the Seneca Optimists were the first Corps on. After stepping off to what was their best show of the season, chances looked good for the Seneca Optimists. Too good. The score sheets saw them finishing in 9th place overall, lower than expected. However, what’s done is done, and next day was the finals.



A day off in Colorado (1977)

Day 17 – Friday, August 19th

D.C.I. Finals

All the work of the past year had been aimed at this contest. This was it! Now!

Excitement ran high within the Corps, and it grew with the size of the crowd, 30,000 plus, the only crowd of this size on the tour. Applause for the “parachute” number was a thunderous frenzy from a crowd this size. Also, cheering for the Seneca Optimists were the Northstars and the Oakland Crusaders. These two Corps had not made it into the finals. Setting aside any past rivalry, they all cheered lustily for the Seneca Optimists.



Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)

In a fine display of national unity, the Oakland Crusaders displayed a Canadian flag.

In the exalted company, which was at this show, nobody could tell how they had done on the field. All the other eight Corps were watched, while waiting for the retreat.

The Retreat

A very un-D.C.I. like spectacle followed. Disorganized and, at first, for the Seneca Optimists, disappointing. They tied for eight place with the Capitol Freelancers, with a score of 82.40. Disappointing because the Corps had set out this year with aspirations to a higher standing. Later, though, it was decided that this was an accomplishment. It was. Eighth best in the world, against more experienced units, and only in their second year. De La Salle and Oakland Crusaders, one and the same really, had placed higher at earlier finals, but, nevertheless, it was still a major feat. Just to enter the top twelve was. Many dozens tried. Eventual recognition of what they had done made all the time, work, and pains seem worthwhile.



Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)

Very few Corps achieved this. They had done their best and had reason to be proud. Looked at from a different viewpoint, out of 4-5 billion people in the world, they were now in the top 1,152 in their field.

Now, all the excitement over, it was time for the long haul back to Canada. First stop, Lincoln, Nebraska where, arriving late, an appearance at the State Capital was missed. Given the night off.

Next stop, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, arriving late again, one bus, an exhibition at the Wisconsin State Fair was missed.

Day 20 – Monday, August 22nd – Last day!

The guard bus and drum bus dashed straight for home, while the horn bus took its time, stopping at a McDonalds in Michigan. The equipment truck was stopped at the border, it, and its entire contents, being confiscated in the name of the Government of Canada. The Corps, as of now, ceased to exist. Some phone calls to Toronto, and back, cleared up the misunderstanding and the truck proceeded on its merry way, the Corps now being back in business. All agreed that the C.N. Tower was a sight for sore eyes.

Still to come, in Canada, were the Canadian Nationals, and it took some adjustment to prepare for it. To recover somewhat from the rigours of the tour, Tuesday and Wednesday were taken off. Practices both Thursday and Friday were poor, being hard to get into with enthusiasm. It was a now familiar situation. After the D.C.I. finals, anything else seemed an anticlimax.

The right attitude finally returned on Saturday, just in time. One hundred percent attendance at rehearsal and high spirits showed that the Corps, again, meant business. It was the last chance to perform the show this year, and they were determined to make it a good one. It was!

Pulling out all the stops, the Corps performed as never before, doing their best show and to a hometown crowd. The biggest threat was the Oakland Crusaders, the defending champions. Over the course of the year, they had pulled themselves up by the bootstraps but it was not quite enough The Seneca Optimists won their first Canadian National Championship by three points. Oakland Crusaders were to be credited. They had started the season 10-12 points behind.

A very brief review of the year shows that drum scores, noted in judges' comments, on score sheets and tape recorders, had hurt this Corps. It was an often heard comment that if Seneca's horns and Oakland's drums were combined, they could have taken on anybody. Possibly.



Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)



Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)



The Parachute (Ottawa, 1977)

The “parachute” maneuver was the most effective part of the drill show. It drew much favourable comment.

The whole visual show was pleasing, so much so that its constant flowing movement somewhat overshadowed the music. It was a credit to Gary Czapinski and Marie Grana. The music ensemble was presented properly, and the music itself was of the right calibre for this level of competition.

The only grey spot in this scenario was the low scores of the drums. Something was lacking, and the Corps would have placed higher had it not been. The overall impression at D.C.I. was, “watch out for this Corps next year”. Well, next year was next year, and many things could, and would, change by then.

Now was time for all the awards, congratulations, discussions, etc. Most of this all took place at the 2nd Annual Awards Banquet. This had been the second year of the Seneca Optimists, so this was the second banquet. The Toronto Optimists banquets had ended in 1975.

After a fine roast beef dinner, prepared by the Booster Club, Al Tierney, “Uncle Al”, gave a speech, his final one as Corps Director. He had had enough, but would be the Corps D.C.I. representative. Also, he could spend more time as the President of the O.D.C.A./C.D.C.A.. He was presented with a picture of himself, taken at the 1977 Nationals. His story has been covered before, and his contribution to the whole Drum Corps movement had been considerable.



Seneca Optimists (Denver, DCI Finals, 1977)

Special presentations followed. Numerous trophies, plaques, and mementos presented to different people for various reasons.

- 1977 Guard of the Year.....Debbie Biggs
- 1977 Drummer of the YearTommy Sams
- 1977 Bugler of the YearEnzo Morella
- 1977 Corpsman of the YearMike Williams

These four were the most prestigious.

The least prestigious, indeed highly embarrassing awards, were the G.C.C. awards. Of course, these were meant to be humorous.

- “Biggest Boobs in the Drum Line” Award
- “Mouths That Roared” Award
- “Short Shorts” Winner
- “Most Gullible Person of the Year” Award
- “Miss Butterfingers” Award

These were just some of the “dreaded” awards, all helping to lighten things up.

After all this, the disco centre opened and the Corps enjoyed themselves after a most successful year.

There would be a yearbook for 1977, but it would come out much later. Most of the credit for this goes to Mike Grimes and his staff, who had worked on the 1976 yearbook. They wanted to make the 1977 one better and put out a first class publication. Anyone, who has one of these, or one of the Toronto Optimists books, has a keepsake for life. A letter from Don Daber, to the Corps, saluted Mike Grimes and his staff.

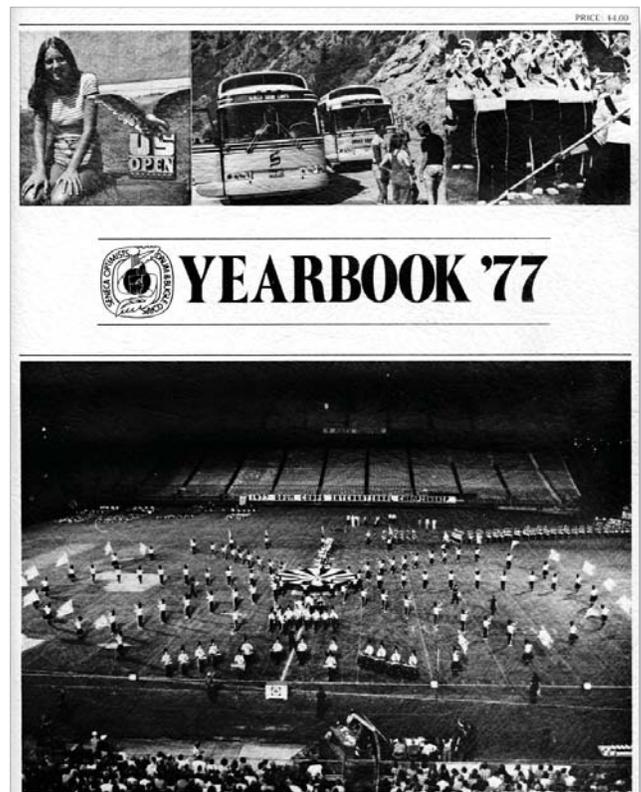
A final note for this banner year was that an advertisement on the back of “Yearbook ‘77 “ featured the Seneca Optimists horn line. It promoted DEG Dynasty bugles. Shown in the ad was Mr. Evert Botterweg who had been Equipment Manager of the Toronto Optimists for many years and was currently Equipment Manager for the Seneca Optimists. Evert had also conducted numerous clinics on Corps maintenance and equipment at both C.D.C.A. and D.C.I. Symposiums.

Dynasty bugles were used by a host of the top Corps so Seneca was in good company.

1978 lay ahead, together with an uncertain, unforeseen, future that was yet to unfold.



Members of the 1977 “21 Club”



THE PARACHUTE

by Gary Czapinski (as told to Mike Grimes)
(Reprinted from the 1977 Yearbook)

Gary told me he had always been frustrated with wanting to do something for the Seneca Optimists—something that would become their own identification.

The parachute concept began back in 1971 when he designed the “Alice In Wonderland” show for the Madison Scouts. He had always been fascinated working with clothing and cloth and the result of this fascination was the costuming for the ‘Rabbit’ and ‘Pinocchio’. The 1971 show was long before Bayonne took their approach to show design onto the competition field, but Gary was somewhat limited by the rules at this time, and could not go the step further that he wanted to.

He attended the production of “Hair”. A large cloth structure was used during the performance and Gary was surprised at how easily it was moved about on stage. He also attended the stage play of “The Wiz”

and was captivated by the use of cloth during the ‘Tornado’ sequence.

While working on fund-raising for his company, Gary happened to go to one of the local elementary schools. The man with whom he had an appointment was not immediately available, so Gary found himself passing by the gymnasium. Inside he saw the students exercising with a parachute and co-ordinating their movements to music. After talking with their teacher he discovered that this type of exercise was common in many schools because it was a method that the kids liked and they were entertained by it.

By this time, he was sold on the parachute idea. He began to formulate an idea for the closer—an idea that would be effective and at the same time give the corps an identity. When he explained it to the staff, they could only laugh and humour him, but this did not deter Gary in his plans. He approached some of the



Gary “Chops” Czapinski



theatre groups in Chicago and explained his concept to them. They provided him with the necessary information needed to work with the parachute.

The first problem he encountered was finding a company to produce the parachute to the specifications he wanted. After approaching several companies in the States, he was lucky to find one in Ontario that would do this. When Gary asked to get something done, Wendy Byrne was the only person who gave him any co-operation. She alone went out and located the company and provided the corps with a parachute to practice with. Gary wanted to wait until mid-season before actually putting the parachute onto the competition field. He wanted to make sure the drill was blocked out the way he wanted it, the people trained in working with the ‘tarp’, and the individuals blocked out timing-wise. By the time our second drill

camp rolled around, everything was just about ready.

Port Dover was selected for the camp because of the heavy wind conditions. After all if the rifles could handle the parachute under the worse possible conditions, they could handle it anywhere.

Gary told me that the parachute was hailed as "The most sophisticated “gimmick–non-gimmick” in the business, mainly because it fit so well with the particular program. It is feedback like this that assures Gary he has done what he set out to do. He has created an identity for the Seneca Optimists.

Next year he intends to use several parachutes, intermixing and co-ordinating them into a program which, as he puts it, “Will knock people out”. If you liked one parachute last season, wait until you see SEVEN in the coming season!



Illustration by Paul McCusker



Seneca Optimists Snares (CYO Nationals, 1977)



Seneca Optimists' Congas (CYO Nationals, 1977)





A few Scores for Optimists and some of our competitors as the summer of 1977 progressed							
Contest ► Corps Name ▼	Rochester June 11	Allentown July 9	CYOs July 10	DCI Ypsilanti Aug 4	US Open Aug 6	DCI Finals Aug 19	Canadian Nationals Aug 26
Seneca Optimists	67.95	74.40	74.35	79.30	85.05	82.40	85.80
Oakland Crusaders	55.70		63.45	70.75	79.90		82.90
Northstar					71.15		76.20
Cardinals							75.65
Blue Devils						92.05	
Phantom Regiment		79.60	80.75	83.00		90.30	
SC Vanguard						89.85	
27th Lancers		78.30	81.90	82.10		87.45	
Garfield	69.55	70.80	73.75			78.15	
Crossmen		75.95	77.20		84.85	81.30	

**For a list of scores for this or other years, go to our website:
<https://www.TorontoOptimistsHistory.ca/>**

Chapter 28: What Goes Up, Must Come Down

If Nothing Had Changed...

For this Corps, right at the end of last year, things could not have looked better. If nothing had changed, they could have carried on where they had left off, probably surpassing the accomplishments of last year. If nothing had changed, that is.

The biggest change, and the one that counted most, was the loss of half of the marching members of the Corps. This sort of thing happens, sooner or later, to many Corps. If a well-trained feeder unit can be used to fill the gap, the effects can be alleviated somewhat. If no such organization exists, then there can be problems. This was the case now.

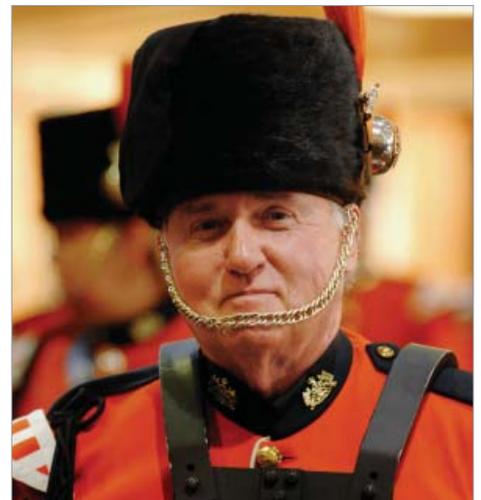
For most of their existence, the Toronto Optimists had maintained such a group, and it had often proven its worth. Here, no one had thought to, or bothered to, start and maintain a feeder Corps. The Optimists and Seneca Corps had both had feeder Corps, but they had been allowed to lapse when the merger took place. (Some still called it a takeover.)



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

Now, this situation was to lead to one of the most unusual situations ever seen, anywhere, in Canadian Drum Corps. The need finally being noted, a Parade Corps was started at Seneca College, for boys and girls 9-14. They would practice every Sunday from 10:00 – 1:00, at the College sports centre. They would be called the “Seneca Optimists Cadets”, a division of the “Seneca Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps”. Mr. John O’Leary would be the director. This was the right way to go, but would be too little too late to be of much use to the Junior “A” Corps. What was done to help resolve this situation we shall cover when, in time, it happened.

Meanwhile, the Corps kept on going. The new director, to replace the retired Al Tierney, was Gord O’Halloran. He went back in Drum Corps to 1956, with the Danforth Crusaders. Later, he played and marched with the Toronto Optimists, Canadian Commanders, was a drum major, drummer, instructor, and all around Drum Corps person. Probably the only things he had not done were play a bugle and be a director. Now he was a director!



Gord O’Halloran in Toronto Sigs (2008)

Money was a big problem this year and Gord had a personal one-on-one with every member to encourage regular payment of dues. These were now necessary. There was even a scheme floated for each member of the staff to donate a thousand dollars to the Corps. This did not find enough favour to become reality.

In October 1977, a Drum Corps Rules Congress took place, accommodating over 800 participants. Representatives from Canada were:

- Seneca Optimists Al Tierney
- Oakland Crusaders Bob Duggan
- O.D.C.A. Jim Towie
- C.D.C.A. Wayne Elliot
- Quebec Jr. “A” Circuit Maurice Corey



DM, Mike Grimes, and friends (1978)

The weekend of January 20th, 1978, saw Symposium 6, the showcase of the C.D.C.A. and O.D.C.A., held at the Sheraton Centre Hotel.

Mr. Evert Botterweg gave a presentation on inventory control and purchasing. He stressed the problems that Canadian Corps had with customs. He was the one to listen to, as he knew exactly how to handle this. He passed his knowledge along to his successors, and, when his instructions were followed, there were never any problems.

Al Tierney spoke on “Corps conduct and pride”, an important topic, what with all the trips to different places. He also presented the association awards for this year. The “Award of Merit” went, deservedly, to Dick Brown, now the Director of Hyliters Drum Corps.

Gary Czapinski and Ralph Pace (27th Lancers) conducted the M&M clinic. Colour Guards by Len Knuszecki, Marie Grana, and Stan Knoub.



Evert Botterweg, Seneca Optimists’ Equipment Manager (1977)

Twelve people conducted the management seminar, among them Don Pesceone, Jack Roberts, Al Tierney, Bob Duggan, John Jones, Jacqui Kennedy and Evert Botterweg. There was more – a mini-corps.

Reports from across town said that the Oakland Crusaders were stepping up rehearsals to one night a week, plus long sessions on the weekend. Getting 90 members out, and expecting 125 by spring, they had experienced a very small turnover of personnel. It seemed they were on the road to recovery. Seneca Optimists were undergoing the opposite, having lost half of their people. Some of these were instructors. Sam Kays and Doug Bass, percussion, were now with the Oakland Crusaders.

In a tribute to the past, ex-Optimists George Wright and Bob Trimble started a Colour Guard. It was formed of old Toronto Optimist members, and had appeared in Christmas parades. Joining the Canadian Colour Guard circuit and the International Colour Guard circuit, they planned to compete and were looking for members.

From February 20th through April 10th, eight half-hour TV specials ran on cable TV. April 3rd saw the Seneca Optimist 1977 field show screened. Three C.J.A. judges, Al Anderson on drums, Ted Keys on bugles, and Greg Oxenham on drill, discussed the Seneca performance for the enlightenment of the viewers.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

The Seneca Optimists held a dance on March 25th. Regardless of the loss of so many members, things were carrying on. The Corps was booked into a lot of contests, including all the D.C.I. ones that they had entered in the last two years. Somebody must have known something. Somebody did, though how far ahead of subsequent events is anybody’s guess. No matter, it was to lead to one of the most unusual arrangements ever seen in Drum Corps, even by today’s standards. It all took place, on the surface, in May of 1978, though it must have been thought of long before.

An Opportunity

It was all made possible by the fact that the Peterborough Krescendos had decided to go inactive for a year. They were a fine Corps, and its members were proud of it, its people, its history and traditions. They had



Peter Byrne

marched and suffered side by side through good and bad and were a close knit family. They had worked their way up and eventually became Junior “A”. Maybe hastily, as this was a tough division. Finally reverting to Junior “B”, they had decided, this year, to stand down. Possibly reorganize, revamp, re-orient and take another run at things at another time.

Peter Byrne, Bugle Instructor of the Seneca Optimists, approached Gerry Hemsley, Director of the Krescendos, about a deal. The Seneca Optimists needed people this year, not only to compete but also to get on the field. What was proposed was a temporary amalgamation of the two Corps for the rest of the 1978 season only.

A meeting was held at a Holiday Inn, attended by the entire executive of the Krescendos and representatives of the Seneca Optimists. Due to this, the people in the Peterborough Corps knew that something was up, because this was a rare occurrence. Between these two factions, bolstered by the instructors from both Corps, a total of 13 hours of meetings took place. As a result of this, a formal agreement was signed, on a Saturday night.

It stipulated that final acceptance rested on at least 25 of the members of the Krescendos agreeing to it.

Mr. Hemsley, the Director, presented the proposal to his group the following day, Sunday. He explained that they would have to adjust their loyalties for the next three and a half months. After that, they would again become the “Krescendos”.

Many of the Krescendos saw an opportunity to belong to a D.C.I. Corps, if only for a short period. Indeed, at this time, Seneca Optimists were the only D.C.I. Corps in Canada. They realized that

there would probably never be another opportunity like this. Many of them hungered for the opportunity. Some of them had long before this. It meant much more travel and exposure to big time Drum Corps competition. As a result, at least forty members approved of this realignment, far more than stated in the agreement.



Peterborough Krescendos (1976)

Krescendos and Seneca Optimists Form a Relationship

So, with the stroke of a pen, the Peterborough Krescendos were now part of a D.C.I. Corps. For most of them, though big adjustments were involved, it was to be a heady experience. As a premonition of this, many of them wondered what the people from Toronto would be like. As it turned out, they were no different from anybody else. Maybe just a bit more “Corps”.

The official “lend-lease” would get underway at Camp ‘78 to be held in Minden, Ontario, at Camp Kilcoo.

The Seneca Optimists would arrive there, with the “inactive” Peterborough Krescendos arriving the next morning. The camp was a nice place, with a large mess hall adjacent to a lake. Other visitors, of course, were mosquitoes and blackflies.



Krescendos (1977)



Seneca Optimists (1977)

After breakfast, the Seneca Corps went to the practice field, and lo and behold, the Krescendos were already there. A lot of them, lined up and waiting! When the latecomers joined them, the Seneca Optimists, as they all now were, looked huge.

This was not haphazard. All had been planned at a staff meeting in Peterborough, earlier. Not much was left to chance. The two Corps had now met each other. After this, the executive, instructors, and junior executive of both Corps were introduced. Representatives of each branch made a speech and even champagne was served. Finally, there was a toast to “The New Seneca Optimists”, appropriate, no matter how temporary.



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

The rest of the long weekend was devoted to practice. There was much to be done. First of all, the new people had to learn the entire Seneca drill and music, from top to bottom. Learning the drill was hampered by rainfall, so the time was spent learning and polishing the music.

A lot was done that weekend, with the Peterborough people picking up the new stuff and fitting in very rapidly. The size of the Corps was very impressive.

The following Thursday, the Krescendos people had another meeting, mainly to see what the reaction of their members was to the whole thing. There were a few bitches, but it was noted how small the problems were. Therefore, it was decided that it would work, and it went ahead as originally planned.

It was May 1978 when all this took place. Had it been any later; it would have been impractical, even impossible. The contest season was very close already. Now, a great part of the Corps had to learn and perform the show, and then fit it in with those who already knew it. In double quick time. That it was done, and done quite well, maybe as well as could be expected, was a tribute to both Corps, especially the newcomers. The American Corps had all gotten stronger over the winter, and the cross-town rivals, Oakland Crusaders, had not experienced any big changes. Because of the late date of all this, there would be some unusual, but not entirely unexpected, results.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

One result, off the field, was that a lot of bussing took place. People from Peterborough had to be bussed to Toronto for shows, departures, and, mostly, rehearsals. It is evident that such an arrangement could not have worked without the utmost co-operation from both sides. This attitude had been fostered at the camp, with a sign in the mess hall that proclaimed: “*Seneca Optimists and Krescendos equals Super Corps*”

In size, yes. Other directions would have to wait awhile. Also, a T.A.S. night was had, hoping to induce a unified spirit, although tradition and allegiance, strictly speaking, were now somewhat diluted. However, this was not apparent. What helped, though, was the almost universal desire of Corps-oriented people to march and play. It was as competitive as Bay Street, as compulsive as Saturday Night Fever.



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

One extreme example of this was Allan Plumb. For him, there was only one Corps, the Seneca Optimists. He had paid his own way here, sacrificing a chance of a summer job, to march with “his” Corps. Where was he from? Oh! Only Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.

Competition Season

Now, with all the amalgamating, predicting, compromising, and whatever else took place, over, it was time for competition. Time to see where all this would lead. There would be surprises. Not all of them were concerning the Seneca Optimists.

June 10th, Kitchener, saw a nice, neat Canadian Corps from Scarborough, Ontario, upset an applectart.

1st	Squires	56.40
2nd	Cardinals	55.15
3rd	Oakland Crusaders	50.80
4th	Ventures	50.75

The Squires were American. The upset was that the Cardinals defeated the mighty Oakland Crusaders.



Cardinals (June, 1978)

Cardinals had been around a long time. Always neat, always trying. Never yet making the “big time”, but always a presence. They were proud of the fact, rightly so, that they had never merged with anybody, retaining their identity. All these mergers could be described as short-term pain for short-term gain. Corps always disappeared during such maneuvers. Of all the Corps that had merged, not very many are around today. Cardinals are. Still not big, or great, or what have you, but still there. It happened, again, the next day and this time with Cardinals eight points up on the Crusaders.

A week later, it was Seneca Optimists turn. By five points. Seneca were over Oakland by one point. Both, supposed big guns, were being humbled by the Cardinals. Seneca at least had the excuse of a late start, and that this contest was in Ajax, hex town for any Optimist Corps. So deeply was this believed that they had pulled out of it in 1977, when of all years, they should have won it. Reality, though, said that this state of affairs could not continue, and gradually, it began to change.



Oakland Crusaders (1978)

Welland, June 24th

1st	Oakland Crusaders.....	58.4
2nd	Cardinals.....	58.3
3rd	Seneca Optimists	54.0

A tour was coming up for the Seneca Optimists. Tour One began on July 8th, in Allentown, PA, and was to be instructive. This was D.C.I. East, in with the big boys again. In fact, this tour was to encompass all D.C.I. calibre contests, ending in Toronto.

Myron Melnyck was back with this Corps, which was a good factor. He had left for awhile. Other additions included Bob Steward, formerly of the 27th Lancers.

Seneca, understandably, were off to a slow start but were slowly improving.

After Allentown, where nothing extraordinary took place, the next three days were spent competing in Garfield, N.J., Boston, Mass., and Montreal, Quebec. Verdun, to be exact. This was July 11th, and we can now see how things stood.

In a field of all-American D.C.I. Corps, the Seneca Optimists were eighth, out of eight. A score of 65.20 was a long way from the first place Madison Scouts, with 86.35. Over 21 points! This was a big disappointment, but not totally unexpected. They had not really got going until May.

At Montreal, the crowd loved them, as they always had, and they had put on one of their best shows to-date. The results pointed up the fact that this year would be a race against time. They were still a fine Corps, but a far cry from last year.



Madison Scouts (Allentown, 1978)

The tour ended at Lamport Stadium, in Toronto. This was the show put on by Seneca College, featuring eight 1977 D.C.I. finalists. Of these, Seneca Optimists were

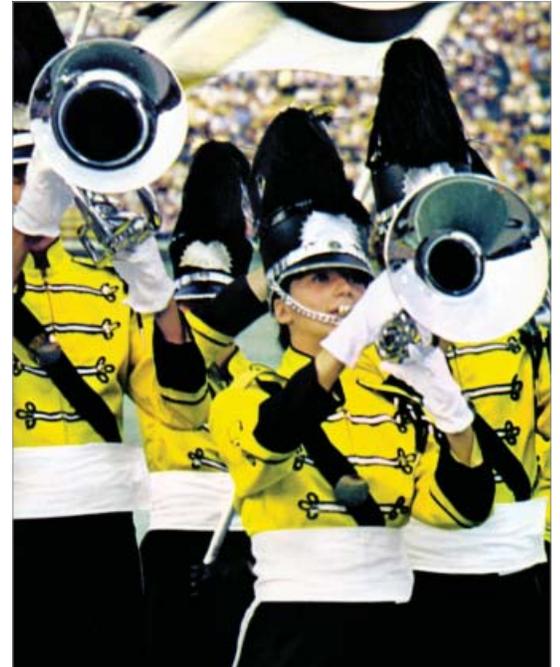
again in eighth position, a little improved score-wise over Quebec. A 66.5, that to some, seemed not quite deserved. Should have been higher. They were three and a half points behind 7th place Garfield who they had hoped to beat.

Three things had conspired to help bring about this situation.

A talented horn line was suffering from a lack of numbers. Despite the amalgamation, there was still a shortage. They would have to rely on age and experience to pull them through. Tenuous factors at this level.

Another problem was percussion. Although, after the union, the section was huge, thirty-seven to be exact, it was not yet clicking or pulling its weight. It was, if only a little, out of its depth.

Thirdly, some of the material was not going over as expected, with the crowd and judges. Although 1978 “Parachute Power” T-shirts were for sale at \$4.00 each, what they represented was not going over. When first introduced last year, it had brought nothing but gasps and applause. Now, it seemed to provoke yawns. Those who knew said that it failed in the “artistic sense”.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

Musically, the program, most of which was new and some of which was challenging to the new people, left something to be desired.

The off-the-line was the most pleasant number this Corps played, by a horn line that had blend and balance. Not size, though. “Puttin’ of the Ritz” was, maybe, a bit difficult. It must be realized that, no matter how much the Peterborough people wanted to be in D.C.I., not all of them were of that calibre. Some of the Seneca people were not either, so we had a D.C.I. Corps, that entered D.C.I. shows, but without a full complement of D.C.I. calibre people.



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

The five day tour, though, was considered a success. A great improvement had taken place between the start of it and the finish. It had served to point out where changes might be necessary. As a result of this, the 1976 number “Farandole” was brought back, and inserted in the second half of the show.

After all this negativity, there is a positive side. What the two amalgamated Corps had accomplished in such short a time was nothing short of amazing. The Krescendo people had made the utmost effort. Without this, coupled with the efforts of the Seneca people, they would not be where they were now. Discipline and appearance were excellent all round. In other words, Class. Despite all the losses, they were still optimistic, if that word still applies. Spirit was still undaunted.



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

July 15th, Peterborough showed cause for optimism. Cardinals were back in third place, after their brief but commendable fling with victory. Seneca was second, with 70.15 to the Oakland Crusaders 72.75. A difference of 2.60.

Changes

A camp intervened and planned changes were to be put into effect. In an attempt to breathe new life into the second half of the show, two numbers would be dropped, so that “Farandole” could be inserted. Camp was in Peterborough, a sign that the operation, successful or not, was working. Bussing and all, which went on, back and forth, for the duration.

The next trial was the Provincial Championship taken back now by the Oakland Crusaders. The scores are revealing.

1st	Oakland Crusaders	74.95
2nd	Seneca Optimists.....	73.05
3rd	Cardinals	63.45

The Seneca Corps was now only 1.9 behind Oakland, a sign that things were coming together. You would think. The Provincials were on July 22nd, and on July 30th, in Simcoe, Ontario, the Crusaders opened their lead up to six points.



March Past (Simcoe, 1978)

Tour Two

Tour two now approached, which meant meeting, again, top U.S. Corps plus Canadian rivals.

The first stop on this jaunt was Ypsilanti, Michigan, for the D.C.I. North contest. The Corps had to accept the fact that they were not as good as last year. This was apparent to others, as well. It did not, however, stop them from giving their best at each stop. Three potential Canadian champion Corps were following roughly similar schedules, and we shall try to touch on all three, seeing how they compare at the finish. The three were:

- 1st Seneca Optimists
- 2nd Oakland Crusaders
- 3rd Offensive Lions.

Ypsilanti, D.C.I. North was won by Phantom Regiment with 86.65. Far back, in eighth, were Oakland Crusaders with 69.4 Seneca Optimists ended in tenth, with 64.95. A pattern was set that would vary, but not change.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

On August 11th, The Offensive Lions were second to Phantom Regiment, but by 14 points. Northstar, of Kitchener, was back another 11 points from the Quebec Corps. With scores like this, it was improbable that any Canadian Corps would defeat anyone of note, though one or two could possibly make the top twelve.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

“From Toronto... The Optimists!” by Colin Hedworth. Chapter 28. (continued)

In Alton, Illinois, on August 9th, Crusaders and Lions met, with Crusaders on top by three. Yet the next day, they were only 1.5 up on the Lions. The Quebec Corps was beginning to move.

Seneca competed in Sioux City, Iowa, on August 10th, coming 5th with a 69.00. They seemed mired in low placing, with low scores. They had pulled out of the U.S. Open in Marion, Ohio, which they had won last year. If it was to avoid defeat, they were suffering it now.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

There were other dates before D.C.I. finals, and this was to lead to a serious split. One of these dates was an exhibition. Half the Corps wanted to do it. They were booked in. The other half wanted to skip it in order to practice for the upcoming D.C.I. contest. The Corps Director, Gord O’Halloran, had a dilemma on his hands that should not have arisen. As it turned out, they did the exhibition, as they should, but not without some lingering resentment.

After this had settled down, it was off to Denver, at last, for the 1978 show of the year. An article in the August issue of Drum Corps World, noted that ten Corps appeared to have a spot in the finals all but locked up. All others were seen to be struggling. Among these were listed the three Canadian Corps that we have been discussing. They would have to work like crazy to get anywhere this year, but it was a bit late for that now.

The D.C.I. show was August 15th through 18th, and competition for the perceived final two places would be intense.

The preliminaries sifted out those who were fated to go on, and those who were not. Among the latter were our Canadian Corps.

- 17th Oakland Crusaders...76.70
- 18th Offensive Lions.....76.45
- 23rd Seneca Optimists.....71.40

So, Canada, and Toronto, that used to have two top twelve D.C.I. Corps in existence, now had none. They would now head back to Canada to battle it out for local honours at the Canadian Championship.



Seneca Optimists (1978)

Canadian Nationals

This brought out the best in everybody, and along with it some changes.

For the first time in living memory, the Canadian Junior “A” Drum and Bugle Corps Championship was won by a Corps from Quebec. The Offensive Lions, from Jonquiere, Quebec, 500 miles north of Quebec City, were Junior “A” Champions for 1978. They had been creeping up all year, to finally conquer. Being from such a remote area adds lustre to their achievement. They were to be congratulated. Technically, they impressed the most people, with all sections looking and sounding very solid. An impressive, entertaining show capped it off, with a score of 83.3 for first place.



Al Tierney with Drum Majors of Offensive Lions (Nationals, 1978)

Second place went to the Oakland Crusaders, not far behind with 82.05. They used much appealing solo work, combined with an overall solid horn and drum line. From their pedestal of last year, the Seneca Optimists dropped to a lowly third, over six points back of the Crusaders. Everybody had tried hard, all year, but it was not enough. The makeshift arrangement of May, with all its fanfare and hopes, was maybe a bit too late. After this, the last important contest of the year, the arrangement was due to expire, as had been agreed upon at the beginning. What happened then, we shall see in the next chapter.



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

“From Toronto... The Optimists!” by Colin Hedworth. Chapter 28. (continued)

One bit of unsettling news that had not helped Seneca in its drive for another title was the departure of two Drum Instructors. Two young men had come, from California, to instruct the drum line. When things did not quite work out as they expected, they departed, leaving the Corps in the lurch.

The August 1978 issue of Gold Capsule Comments showed who was now in charge.

Editor	Mike Grimes
Associate Editor	Mhairi Cumming
Photographs	Don Daber, Gareth Skip, Steve Trevor
Layouts & Art	Don Daber, Paul McCusker
Production	Mike Grimes, Don Daber
Feature Writers	Mark Lewis, Gareth Skip, Arlene Janicki, Steve Vickers, Mike Grimes, Mhairi Cumming



*Mike Grimes and Keith Gallacher,
Seneca Optimists' Drum Majors*

The editorial offices for GCC were now at 126 Lakeshore Drive, Toronto.

An excellent yearbook would come out this year. They had always been very good, with pictures of every marching member, scores, rundowns, etc., etc.

Oakland Crusaders, who had a disappointing season in 1977, had not had a great one this year. A mid-season change of instructors, loss of personnel, and internal problems could account for 1977. What had happened this year?



Seneca Optimists (1978)

Seneca’s music program this year had made the D.C.I. top twelve hit parade for 1978, if the Corps itself did not.

“Sorcerer and the Latin”

“West Side Story”

“Puttin’ on the Ritz”

“Barn Dance”

“Soulero”

Two numbers in the second half were later removed for the re-insertion of “Farandole” from the 1976 show. This program was popular.

A most interesting article had appeared this year in Drum Corps News Magazine, on June 21st to be exact. It was a brief story, covering the existence of the Toronto Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps from 1958 to 1976. It was generally positive; saying that win, lose, or draw, this Corps always displayed class. This was true. It was promoted from within. It also said it set records that might never be broken. Also true. They haven’t yet. Saying it was prominent for 17 years,

it omitted to say that it had existed for 18. Ten consecutive titles were cited, when it was eleven. The biggest fallacy was saying that the founders of the Optimists had spent considerable time studying the operation and management of the Chicago Cavaliers. Further to this, it said that the Corps was a carbon copy of the Cavaliers. This last claim was false. Anyone who has read this far knows the true story. Probably, though, many people did think that all this was true, even without articles such as this. I guess it depends who you believe.



*The Scores at the Booster Table (1978)
with Jack and Susan Roberts to the left*



Seneca Optimists (1978)

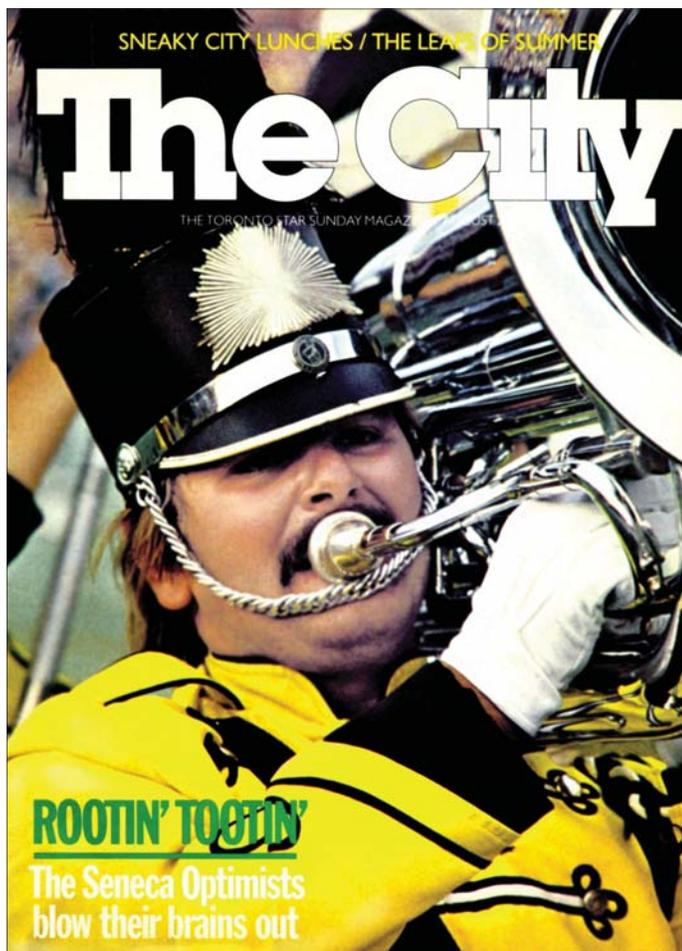
Further, the writer said that, along with many others, he considered the 1962 Corps the finest Canadian Corps ever fielded. This is saying something after the rise of De La Salle, Oakland Crusaders, and Seneca Optimists. More. When the Optimists lost the Nationals in 1969, the entire Corps showed class in defeat. They did, according De La Salle full honours. It also said the average age of the Corps that year was 15. Very young, against older, more experienced Corps. Going on to outline the Corps until its merger in 1976, the article overall was highly complimentary, just some of the facts were a little wrong.

A glaring omission, there are many in this chapter, due to lack of data, is that the Drum Major of the Seneca Optimists this year was Keith Gallacher. He had done a fine job during a trying year.

Seneca had a couple of entries in a Drum Corps book of world records, now in print. They have the oldest continuous Drum Corps newsletter. G.C.C. begun in 1960 as Green Capsule Comments. Now Gold Capsule Comments. All told, it had seen 18 years of publication.



Keith Galacher, Drum Major



Seneca was the first Canadian Corps to win the Open Class at the U.S. Open. Toronto itself had a mention as the first city to place two Corps in D.C.I. finals in the same year. It only lasted one year.

Late August saw the Seneca Optimists featured on the front cover of the Toronto Star, Sunday magazine. It showed a contra-bass player, playing his horn, in full uniform. The caption read “The Seneca Optimists blow their brains out”. More seriously, it stated that “our crack Drum and Bugle Corps has been waging up and down battle all summer to stay among the top twelve in North America. This was right on, but as the article was likely written sometime before publication, it did not say that it was a battle they lost.

One final cheery note on which to end this chapter is that Bernie Beer was inducted into the D.C.A. Hall of Fame, along with five other notables. D.C.A. is the Association for Senior Corps.



Bernie Beer (1960)







A few Scores for Optimists and some of our competitors as the summer of 1978 progressed							
Contest ► Corps Name ▼	CYOs July 7	Montreal July 11	DCI Toronto July 13	ODCA July 22	DCI North Aug 3	DCI Prelims Aug 11	Canadian Nationals Aug 26
Seneca Optimists	62.70	65.20	66.50	73.05	64.95	71.40	75.78
Oakland Crusaders				75.95	69.20	76.70	82.05
Offensive Lions							83.30
Cardinals				63.45			72.50
Phantom Regiment	83.95	84.30			86.65	91.50	
SC Vanguard		84.25	83.85			91.50	
Blue Devils	85.30	86.25	86.05			91.00	
Madison Scouts	84.20	86.35	85.10			89.45	
Garfield	65.80	71.10	70.10		69.40	79.05	

**For a list of scores for this or other years, go to our website:
<https://www.TorontoOptimistsHistory.ca/>**

Windsor Guardsmen Drum & Bugle Corps

SPOTLIGHT

(The text taken from Drum Corps Wiki)

The Guardsmen of Windsor were formed in 1966 by Don Robitaille and Paul Davenport, as a drill team and drum line. The first uniforms were much like those of Preston Scout House, except that the colours were green and white, whereas Preston's were red and black. Instructors were Leon and Sylvester Smith of the Harrow Community Band - percussion, Jack Jones of the Amherstburg Community Band - brass, and Linda Di Nard of Praesidium All Girls Drum Corps - colour guard and drill. As a corps surrounded by bands it was a hard road. Windsor in the 1960's had lots of musical options, like the Optimist Band, the Lions Club Band, the Kingsville Essex Associated Band, the Amherstburg Band and the Leamington Townsman Drum Corps.

1968 was the first evolution. The corps was now officially a "Drum & Bugle Corps". More changes included new corps colours and uniforms. Corps colours were now blue on black. The new uniforms were blue satin

high colour tops, black pants with blue kick pleat and Black and silver shako with white plumes. Colour guard wore same except black skirts with blue pleats. Officers uniforms were same except white satin tops. While the Guardsmen were now a drum corps, the horn line was un-uniformed and still learning to play (this is in the era of teaching kids with "NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE").

In 1976, the corps was Great Lakes Jr. A Champion. The following year, The Guardsmen presented a totally new look. For the 1977 season, the corps was garbed in dazzling new custom made blue-on-black uniforms. The Guardsmen fielded a corps of 100 members, including a horn line of 45, a drum line of 30 and a colour guard of 25.

Some Trivia:

- The original corps colours were green and white.
- There were six different uniforms over 12 years.
- 1966 started with single tenor drums and 1978 quinte tenors.
- Some of the corps first horns were one valve, Canadian made by Whaley, Royce & Co., and donated by the Toronto Optimists.



Guardsmen (1976)

Spotlight: on the Guardsmen Drum Corps (continued)



Guardsmen's Snares (1977)



Guardsmen's horns (1977)

Spotlight: on Guardsmen Drum Corps (continued)



Guardsmen's Rifles (1977)



Guardsmen's tympanis (1977)

Spotlight: on Guardsmen Drum Corps (continued)



Guardsmen Drums with pots and pans (1977)



Guardsmen (1977)

Wendy Paquin and the Seneca Optimists

by Wendy Paquin

In the Fall of 1975 Peter Byrne (who was Seneca's horn instructor for all three short years of Seneca's existence) asked me and my ex, Gilles, to come to Toronto and teach the Toronto Optimists (we were living in Montreal and teaching Les Chatelaines after being heavily involved in their reformation).



Wendy Paquin (Colorado, 1977)

We did move to Toronto and were there only a few weeks when the Toronto Optimists/Seneca Princemen merger was announced. Debbie Miller and I became fast and close friends and teaching the guard heightened when the Seneca Princemen showed up in our ranks. Those girls had a good start on what we trying to do. All of the newly merged corps were very hungry to do well and the teaching staff was extremely close knit, making it a wild and fun ride. Once the corps got going many kids from Quebec showed up (having a couple of French speaking instructors helped). I believe one year there were about six kids from Quebec including Johanne Briere who played snare. Three of the instructors – Peter Byrne (horns), Sam Kays and Al Murray (drums) who were all Canadian had marched in 74 Kingsmen. Kingsmen was a huge influence (and believe me the uniform was not a coincidence). Being called Banaheim was a pleasant surprise. The girls in the guard were just the best to teach –

extremely hardworking... a wonderful rag-tag mish-mash of “take no prisoners” girls. As Kelly said lot's of girls showed up from St. John's (my original corps in 64-72) and it was a wonderfully wacky cross town rivalry/friendship with Oaklands. In fact Debbie Miller, who taught the rifle line, shared an apartment with her sister Cheryl who taught Oaklands flag line.

Ken Mulgrew who had lost his hand in an industrial accident (after someone turned a machine on while his hand was in it) had his hook configured to continue playing and there were many wacky incidents with that hook.

The parachute was a major feat in getting the entire corps underneath. One thing people may not realize is that the guard captain had to pop up thru the hole in the middle and spread her arms out to anchor it, as it had a tendency to want to take off and if weather was windy it would lift up. Many times the guard captain had to be anchored by people under the parachute holding her legs down as well



“The Parachute” (CYO Nationals, 1977)

Wendy Paquin and Seneca Optimists (continued)

Fast forward to 2006/7. Now living in Los Angeles, I knew it was the opportunity 40 years in the waiting to march with the Kingsmen in the Alumni Corps, and met many great people and Kingsmen legends... two other ex-Seneca signed up Mhairi Cumming (flag) and Jim Kane (conga/tymp also brother-in-law) made the trek from Toronto to join the KAC... but 1977 came back to us when we met up with Carl Allison of the Freelancers who in 77 had a rivalry with Seneca always barely above or below each other... he said the Freelancers would cringe when they would hear the crowd cheer for the parachute since he felt the parachute was our “ace in the hole” and they may have beat us more often if we didn’t have it. There was a great tease back and forth with the ex Freelancer and ex Seneca (Banaheim) factions of the KAC.

I have the parachute. After the final show in 1978 and we were told the corps would be over – it was a sad ending and I was about to get into my car and drive away. I was parked next to the equipment truck and saw the parachute sitting on the ground all by itself, in its cheap sleeping bag duffle. It looked quite sad all by itself... so not unlike picking up a stray kitty I snagged it and threw it into my car. I moved to LA in December of 1978 and could not bear to leave it and so it drove across the continent with me again, the two of us driving thru many towns previously visited together – like a couple of old retired farts with our memories. It has made very few appearances since but the most incognito one would be that I wore it for two years to the grand Hollywood



Wendy Paquin, Mhairi Cumming and Jim Kane in their Anaheim Kingsmen Alumni uniforms (2007)



Wendy with the parachute (Seneca Optimists reunion, 2006)

Halloween parade of weirdos and freaks on Santa Monica Boulevard on Halloween night as a costume. Since I’m 6 ft tall anyways my friend fashioned it as a dress and with high heels and a train it made quite a presence and I was photographed by the media (okay I had rubber rats and snakes etc hanging from it as well) I will post photo.

One more thing – the Mt. Rushmore event had a little more to it than sitting on Lincoln’s nose with the police helicopters swirling above. Pictures were taken from below with a zoom camera and the corps kids up there had their pants down and were mooning. So there are bare bums off of Lincoln’s nose. I have those pics and haven’t really showed them in 40 yrs for fear of someone thinking it disrespectful. Those guys did get down and did not get discovered hmmm.

Ken Mulgrew – Courage epitomizes Seneca Optimists Corps member

*(This article was originally published
in a 1977 issue of DCI today.)*

Courage is defined by Webster’s dictionary as stubborn persistence or unwillingness to recognize defeat.

Ken Mulgrew, a 16 year-old baritone horn player in the Seneca Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, must have enough of it to last a lifetime. His lifetime.

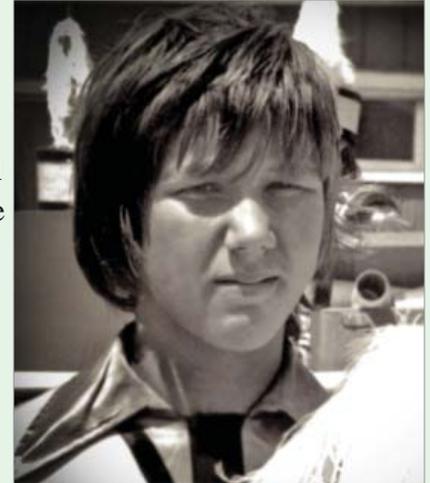
He’s got a head start on the rest of his life, for the quiet-spoken young man has already suffered one of the most traumatic experiences anyone could imagine.

Young Ken was a member of the solid horn line with the 1975 Toronto Optimists and the even stronger bugle section of the 1976 Seneca Optimists. The Seneca Optimists became a reality in February, 1976, when the Seneca Princemen and Toronto Optimists merged. Part of the name of each corps was retained to appease all concerned. The merger resulted in the Seneca Optimists finishing 10th at the Drum Corps International finals at Philadelphia in 1976.

Mulgrew, a grade 11 student at Porter Collegiate Institute in Toronto, enjoyed the sensation with the rest of his corps “family” at the conclusion of the DCI finals when the Optimists became members of the elite Top 12. However, when the corps returned to Toronto, Mulgrew perhaps had second thoughts about his future in the corps.

“Ken didn’t show for practices from October to December,” said corps director, Al Tierney. “I didn’t know — perhaps he was contemplating quitting.” Then, on December 10, 1976, tragedy struck. While working at a sanitary company, Ken

was stuffing trash into a huge garbage disposal unit. One of his co-workers inadvertently pushed the button to activate the machine. The blade came down on Mulgrew’s right wrist and his hand was severed. The pressure of the machine was so strong that it pulled him forward. His chin got caught in the “teeth” and was badly crushed.



Further injury was averted only because Mulgrew was wearing safety shoes. The Blade struck his foot but no damage was done. The pain was nearly unbearable, but Mulgrew never lost consciousness.

“I walked into the hospital,” he said. “I was in the operating room for five hours for surgery on my wrist and jaw.” What about the hand? “They used a crowbar to pry it out,” said Mulgrew. “it was so badly mangled that it couldn’t be saved.” At the hospital, Mulgrew had an extra inch of his wrist severed for fear of infection. His jaw was wired shut. He now has a one inch diameter steel plate in it. “I couldn’t open my mouth for two months,” said Mulgrew. “I was on a liquid diet all that time.”

Early in March, the wires were removed from his jaw. “I lost 15 pounds between the accident and when I was able to eat solid food again,” said Mulgrew. “I must have lost five of those pounds in my arm.”

How did he feel when he was — at long last — able to open his mouth again and start eating? “Great! God, it felt good. Guess I’m getting used to it now. I’m starting to get pimples again,” he laughingly admitted. When Ken didn’t show, two of his friends in the corps, Bill Pullin and Kevin O’Connor called to inquire why he wasn’t attending practice sessions.

Ken Mulgrew (continued)

“I didn’t tell anybody about the accident and only after phoning did Bill and Kevin know what happened,” revealed Mulgrew. “I guess the guys in the corps thought I had just quit.” Quit, he didn’t.

While in the hospital, Ken’s thoughts quite naturally turned to the corps. “I thought after the accident my horn playing days were over,” he recalled. “I thought I’d be in the national (flag) squad. I thought I’d never be able to do anything but carry a flag and stand in the corner of the field while we were competing.

“I also thought I might be able to play the cymbals. When my arm got well enough, a hook was attached to it. I tried out the cymbals at home, but the strain was too much. I couldn’t handle the cymbal properly. It would slide down my hook and I couldn’t manipulate it.” Mulgrew mentioned that his right arm became much smaller than his left one. “Even the right side of my chest got smaller than my left side,” said Mulgrew.

Seneca’s equipment manager, Evert Botterweg, came up with an idea that gave Ken renewed hope. “Mr. Botterweg fixed up my horn by putting an extension on the rotor so it could be played from the reverse side,” stated Ken. Tierney and the Optimist staff thought at first of asking the Drum Corps International office for permission to use two valves on the horn for Mulgrew. That idea was scrapped thanks to Botterweg .

During the recovery period, and after Mulgrew was dismissed from the hospital, he returned to the corps and took part in marching and timing drills. “Everybody came up to me and offered me all kinds

of food,” Ken said. “Guess they thought I didn’t have enough in the hospital. They started calling me ‘Hook’ and ‘Lefty’.”

Then came another phase of Mulgrew’s long road back. “I got an artificial hand early in April,” said Mulgrew, who had begun playing his horn again on March 20. “At first my left , arm got tired, but it got stronger the more I practiced. In about a year I’ll get a new hand, a bio-electric one. They couldn’t, or wouldn’t get me one after the accident. My arm is still growing because of my age.”

Ken didn’t have much trouble adjusting after the painful ordeal. “About the only thing I couldn’t do was button my left sleeve with the hook,” confessed Ken, whose eyes suddenly became misty. “I was able to write left handed okay, but I still write better with the hook than I do with my good left hand.”

Now that his outlook with the corps is much brighter than it was early in the year, Ken plans to stay with the Optimists. “I’d like to stay in until I’m 21 and too old to play in the junior ranks,” he said.

“Since the accident, he’s a different young man,” said Tierney. “He’s more outgoing. You’d think what happened would have had the opposite effect on him. He’s quite a young man now.” Tierney’s assistant, Rick Brown, tended to agree. “It’s had to say what the accident has done to him,” said Brown. “The trauma of it all might hit some day. Perhaps it already has and he’s been able to handle it.”



One thing: Young Mulgrew knows how to handle courage, for he has lots of it.

Tommy Logan

February 28, 2024

Corps: Simcoe Royal Blues, Simcoe United Alumni, Optimists Alumni



Tommy Logan passed away on February 28, 2024, after a battle with cancer. Tommy started his drum corps career with the Simcoe Royal Blues in 1966 along with his dad Earl. I met Tommy and Earl in 1970 when they played in Burlington Commanders, they were inseparable. When Commanders folded, Tommy and Earl continued as spectators by attending many DCA contests. In 1999 Tommy along with Robert Judd and other interested parties started United Alumni in Simcoe. Tommy was instrumental in getting funding for the instrumentation for the start-up venture. He would go on acquiring the necessary funding for whatever was needed on “his guarantee for repayment”. He joined the Optimists Alumni where we reconnected while still with Simcoe. When Gord Lefevre, Mike Thys and I left Optimists Alumni, Tommy wanted to know if we had an interest in Simcoe. He invited us down and we stayed for two years. Tommy was ecstatic and we had great times together. Tommy told me years later that he was really nervous that we would not show up after telling people we were coming down, what he didn’t know was that we were nervous wondering how we would be received. It all went well.

Tommy was a real go-getter he had a vision to bring the Alumni Corps to Simcoe with no fees. Along with Rob and the executive of Simcoe Alumni, they started The Bands Played On, an annual event of Drum Corps entertainment that saw \$60,000 raised over the years for the Simcoe Lions Club. He even convinced Mighty St. Joe’s to cross the border for the event, at no cost. Fundraising, organizing trips or just social functions Tommy was a quiet and sometimes not-so-quiet dynamo. To be with Tommy was to be in the company of a Drum Corps historian, critic and aficionado. His long list of friends loved Tommy as did his wife Trish and their blended families. His 70th birthday was held last fall, Roz and I felt honoured to share that day with Tommy, Rob Judd, Len Adley Kevin Matthews and many of Tommy’s friends and family. I think I’m safe in saying on behalf of many; “thanks Tommy for all the good times and our friendships”.



R-L: Tommy Logan, Doug MacKenzie, Mike Thys (Simcoe, 2008)

Peace be with you, my friend. (from Doug MacKenzie)

Rob Trimble

March 29, 2024

Corps: Toronto Optimists

Rob was a kind, gentle and humorous soul who was liked by everyone. He joined the Optimists when he was 16 and stayed with the corps until he aged out. While in the corps, he carried the National Flag. He used a special telescoping flagpole that was designed by Ben Burrage. During Optimists' Colour Presentation Rob would extend the height of the flagpole by a few feet, ensuring that our Maple Leaf flew high and proud. Holding the National flag with the extended pole was VERY challenging, especially on a windy day! The corps photo shows Rob holding our flag with the flagpole extended.

Here are a few comments from some of those who knew Rob:

“All that knew him at that time hold him in the highest regard. Rob was a consummate gentleman and a proud Canadian. Nobody had a greater work ethic or pride in a job well done. I often trusted Rob to take new corps members under his wing and help them learn their new roles and he never disappointed. We were all very young back then but, once in a while you encountered someone whom you just knew his life's path would lead to a kindly and loving life where caring and integrity would be as natural as breathing. This is how I remember your Rob (he could also surprise us with his heck of a sense of humour!). The world became a lesser place when Rob left us on March 26 but our lives are richer for having known him.” (Greg Oxenham)

I remember Rob when we would march together. I asked him about the pole, he was so proud to raise that flag and watch the faces in the crowd, it was so tall! (Barry Woods)

Rob was a peach! You couldn't help but love the guy. I echo what Greg said. Great sense of humour. Consummate Corpsman. (Brian Hogan)

I marched with Rob when they first allowed girls to march with Toronto Optimists. I remember what a kind young man he was. I'm very sorry for your loss. He carried our flag proudly. (Corrie Danielson)

Greg's heartfelt words echo the thoughts all of the Optimists that had the opportunity to march with Rob and have found out about his tragic death. I always looked forward to seeing Rob's fantastic smile at every rehearsal, competition and performance. He was the only one who could carry it like that. (Calvin Johansson)

He was a nice, gentle guy. (Ted Wilson)



Rob holding the telescoping National flag pole (Nationals, CNE, 1972)



Rob holding his grand-daughter



Seneca Optimists (Allentown, 1978)

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HOW TO REACH US

CORRECTIONS: We tried to get everything right.

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