

Chapter 23: 1973 – What Now

“What now?”, of course, meant trying to carry on where the previous year left off. This would by no means be easy, as the results of the last show revealed. Also, between now and the next clash, much lay in between. What had never ceased since its beginning, still chugged along. Green Capsule Comments still reported all the news. No doubt, it was full of last year’s outcome, tempered with cautious looks into future events. Always, though, optimistic. Some new names had appeared in its publication, though the eternal Don Daber was still editor.

Advertising.	Ken Fossey
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Now that Mr. Daber was no longer Corps Director, he had more time for subsidiary activities. Among these was the availability of booster material, most of which he had originated.

Some of the items available were:

T-Shirts: official Corps, crest in... LG, MED, SM... \$2.00	
front, in green. Boys LG.....	\$1.75
1972 Record (both field show and studio versions). ..	\$2.00
Number “12” Buttons – 3” size.....	\$0.75
Decal, in green, black, white.....	\$0.25
Pennant, white on green 6" x 18".....	0.50
G.C.C.....	25¢ each, \$2.50 per subscription
Optimist Pens.	\$1.00

These prices are, seen from today, incredible. All this activity, G.C.C. and booster material had been going on for a long time, all requiring time and effort.

News and Changes

From the end of 1972 into 1973, another change took place. George Wright, who had been director for most of the previous year, stepped down from this position due to business pressures. As noted in previous cases, one's job must come first. So now, the ship was without a rudder. That is, until Don Daber, once again, stepped into the breach. He again became the Corps Director, after an absence of only one year. Due to this, he relinquished his position as Vice-President of the York-Toronto Optimist Club. They had held a dinner meeting on November 2nd that was poorly attended. This was due to a change of date given late notice. At a board meeting on November 22, 1972, Don Daber became the Corps Director for 1973, his tenth year at it. He had been with the Optimist Drum Corps since 1960, longer than anyone else, even Al Baggs. Along the way, he had spread his largesse, generosity, and talent to many other Corps and aspects of Drum Corps, both in Canada and the USA. This would eventually be recognized.



1973: Some corps members

Rex Martin moved up in the club ranks to become a vice-president.

He had already been involved. Now, he was responsible for communications, publicity, dinner meetings, speakers and Sgt. at Arms. A big job, but the club felt he was up to it. He was!

Doug MacKenzie, former soloist of earlier note, and his crew ran a successful dance in November. The Ladies Auxiliary provided the excellent food. A "Barbados" draw was held. This was possibly a result of Ted Baker, of the Cadets staff, having a connection with a travel agent. The winner, Mrs. R., had elected for the cash portion only. This left a paid trip, which was auctioned off later.



1973: Mike Arsenault, Toronto Optimists' Drum Major

December 3, 1972 saw a bowling night organized by Mr. and Mrs. Ken Burrage of the Junior Corps Booster Club. The Corps, during the day, had attended the Grey Cup Parade in Hamilton. All units had to pay a fee to enter, and International Acceptance Corporation, the company of Mr. Greg Tierney, sponsored the Optimists. The Optimist Lancers had also participated, being sponsored by Miles Laboratories. It was always good publicity to be televised nationally.

At the next club meeting, on December 7, 1972, attendance was much better due to a news bulletin by Rex Martin, and calls from a telephone committee. Doug MacKenzie purchased the still valid “Barbados” trip, for one Don Gill, for \$325. Later in the month he donated his rec room for a club Christmas Party. This man had nerve.

During late December, the club began taking delivery of new horns, purchased by them. They were proving to be a stalwart organization. What was needed, however, were new members, as the Corps itself was looking for new executive staff.

Club meetings continued, with many gimmicks thrown in to alleviate boredom. January 4, 1973 saw a small turnout with lots of laughs. One main object was to look for new ideas and variety to keep the meetings interesting.

One factor that helped was holding meetings at restaurants, or similar places, where one could partake heartily of the fare. Business, though, was never forgotten, as the meetings often ended with the ringing reminder of “get one’s dues in – Now!”



1973: Toronto Optimists Rifle Line

These dues went directly to the club, who used them in any manner necessary to support the Corps. In fact, nearly all recreational events were fund raisers. Of course some funds were sent to the Optimists International and the Ontario Chapter. They were, after all, a charter member.

Prior to this, an 11th Annual Awards Dinner had been held at St. Simons Hall in West Hill, a suburb of Toronto. The Board of Directors of the Optimist Club of York-Toronto was present. The President was now Bill Stevenson. Also in attendance were the executive and staff of the Junior Corps and the directors of the Lancers and the Cadets. Al Baggs was the Master of Ceremonies. The Ladies Auxiliary provided and cooked the food, as well as paying for the hall. This was done using proceeds from a rummage sale.

Featured speaker was Al Tierney, past President of the club, former Assistant Director of the Corps, former Director of the Cadets. He had left the Optimist organization and was now Business Manager for the St. John’s Girls’ Drum Corps of Brantford, Ontario. His company had moved from Toronto to Brantford.

Corps rings were given out, and this was where Don Daber officially became Corps Director again, as George Wright stepped down. George would stay as part of a fund raising committee, a less demanding position. All marching members were issued membership certificates.

Rookie of the year was Corrie Branton, one of the original Optimist’s Guard. Corpsman of the year was one Peter Byrne, a man with a future. The Corps had worked hard in 1972, but was made aware that it now was committed to make vision ’73 a reality.

Vision '73 was the title under which the coming year was to be approached. Only half humorously. Had the 1958 Corps been asked to honour such a title, they would have thought it meant new glasses.

Al Tierney

We must give some more coverage to Al Tierney, who had accomplishments to his credit that belied the term of his involvement. He first became involved in 1966 when, with two sons in the Optimists, his interest was kindled. He proceeded to drive a station wagon for the Corps and help out in the equipment department. Then he was placed in charge of the new Cadets, which at the time consisted of 15 buglers and 10 drummers. He ran the first Guard Show in the city of Toronto, and shortly after became Assistant Director of the Junior Corps, under Don Daber.

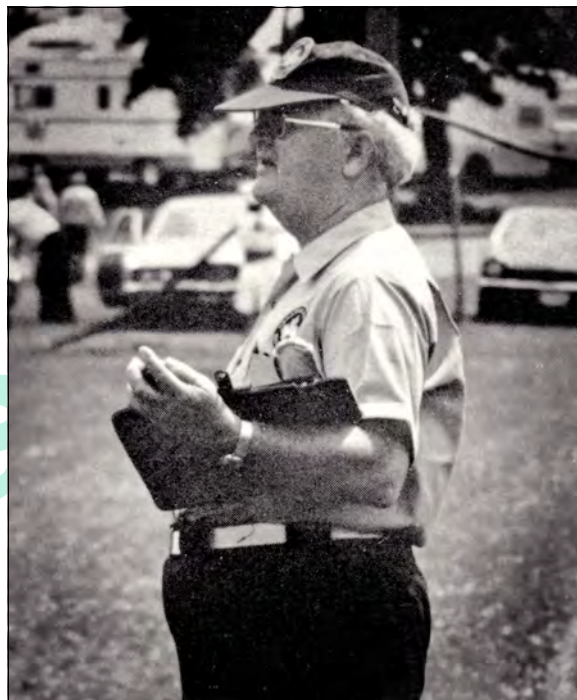
In the fall of 1967, the Cadets were raised to the status of a Parade Corps. Al was the organizer and first director of this. With a grant of \$1,000 from the Downtown Optimist Club, at the time still the sponsor, plus dues and a fund-raising program, things got moving. Within nine months, this unit was uniformed and equipped with instruments. Enough for ninety boys. When he moved to Brantford, the Cadets were turned

over to his brother Greg. He had been the right hand man all along. Still retaining the position of Assistant Director to the Junior Corps, he became Canadian editor of Drum Corps News "Chief Bailer" for the C.D.C.A. and served two years as President of "A Junior C".

Late in 1969, Don Daber retired as Corps Director for the first time, and Al became the interim Director. When the original sponsor quit, they gave the Corps a year's notice, in order to decide



1973: Toronto Optimists



Al Tierney

what to do. It was under Al that a steering committee was formed, from which emerged the new York-Toronto Optimist Club. Forty members of the executive, and parents, constituted this first club, with Al Tierney being elected as Charter President. He resigned as Corps Director, and the position reverted to Don Daber. He got no rest. Actually, the first step of the new club was to start the Lancers, with \$500 from the club and a further \$500 from the Cadets.

Later that spring, the club took over the Cadets and, in September, the Junior Corps. Al remained as President of the club until September 1971 when he was succeeded by Bill Stevenson. When Al had to move to the Brantford area, he still remained a member of both the club and the Board of Directors. Even then, he became the first (temporary) Commissioner of Drum Corps in Canada and was appointed to the Board of Directors of the C.D.C.A.. On top of this, he became Director of "Information Drum Corps", the official newsletter of the C.D.C.A. Phew! Quite a record! We shall, believe it or not, see him again.

The Optimist Cadets were very active, with trips here, visits there, etc. Bob Davidson was the drill



1973: Toronto Optimists concert formation

instructor, as he had been in the past. A uniform committee was established to look at designs and material, and people for sewing them. One change was that of allowing girls in. After all, the Junior Corps had them. In fact, their entire guard now consisted of girls, so successful were they. The Cadets now had an "Optimiss" guard. The manager was Mrs. Stevenson, who raised the total from six to twenty-four.

On the other side of the city, the Lancers were trying to get a circuit guard going but were not getting much support. They needed a "Vision '73". They were doing parade work, winning some, and they were directed to aim for the Junior Corps after their time as Lancers was over.

The Ladies Auxiliary never ceased to make its presence felt. This was a new one, formed on October 22, 1972. They had run the club's victory dance for that year, and the rummage sale. This was under Jeanette Arsenault, and the proceeds financed the banquet. Dorothy Kane handled the banquet, probably with capable assistance. They had many things planned for 1973, including catering a Monte Carlo Night, selling coffee and sandwiches at Corps Guard competitions, catering the "Wearing of the Green" dance in March as well as Bridge and Euchre parties. Later, they made

uniform bags and cummerbunds. Leading in this was one Helen Fossey, but there were others whose names must remain obscure. This has happened before. All involved were worth their weight in gold, because without them all these events would not have taken place. Maybe the Corps itself would have ceased without the extra funds that these endeavours either brought in or saved.



1973: Toronto Optimists

As a result of a rules meeting held in Chicago, people could now play through their twenty-first year. This meant that, if you were not twenty-one by September 1st, you could play throughout the following year. Also introduced was the use of hand held cassettes by judges, which allowed ongoing comments by G.E. judges. Just a couple of things settled at this meeting, which was much too extensive to be covered here.

A new frill, a popularity poll of the East and Canada, done by Drum Corps World, showed De La Salle ranked sixth and the Optimists eleventh.

A Guard Show in Peterborough saw the Optimists Guard triumph. First place with 83.05 points. The Optimist Circuit Guard came second at the Optimist International Guard Championship. This was the last circuit guard contest for the Optimists this year.

The Lancers did well in the 1973 individuals, placing four members in the finals. They had assistance from Ric Brown, for one to two hours a night for a week. Rick was the son of the director, Dick Brown. Dick was an I.B.M. technician and had four children associated with Drum Corps. The Optimist Drum Corps, of course. He had been in Drum Corps for twenty years, with the Scouts, Midtowners, Golden Monarchs, Optimists, and Lancers. Starting the Lancers because a Corps was needed in the west-end, he was an asset to whomever he was with.



Promo Shot: members of Lancers, Cadets & Optimists



1973: Larry & Cheryl get engaged

The off the line number this year was to be from Le Coq d'Or by Rimsky Korsakov. In using this, the Optimists were leading a change toward the extensive use of classical music in Corps repertoires. Also, towards music that, if not over the heads of the Corps playing it, was often over the heads of the fans listening to it.

It finally happened. Two people in the Corps got married. Larry and Cheryl Blandford were the first but not the last.

The Ladies Auxiliary endeavours had all been successful and, to-date, they had contributed \$300 to the Junior Corps to be used as they saw fit. Two ladies, Mrs. Noble and Mrs. Rhodes, were grandmothers. New uniform bags for the girls were to cost them \$2.00 each, with them supplying the zippers.

Another clever scheme for money raising was the saving of Dominion store tapes. It was possible to get a colour TV if there were enough of them. The TV could then be

raffled off. These tapes were to be given to Doreen Botterweg. Botterweg! A name that meant a lot and should have been mentioned before. Evert and Doreen Botterweg were the kind of people every Corps should have. Responsible for one member of their household in the Corps, they became responsible for much of the Corps and its activities. Doreen, along with others, was a stalwart member of the Ladies Auxiliary. Evert's specialty became the equipment department. The Optimists had long had an equipment department, run well by good people. Under Evert Botterweg, as the Corps grew in size, the department kept pace in capacity and appropriate organization. A strapping ex-Dutch naval officer, he applied his abilities and built the Optimist equipment department into one of the best in North America. Possibly the best. This was verified by the offers from other top Corps, with commensurate salary, to go and organize the same for them. He knew all the ropes, and things only went wrong if his directions were ignored.



1973: Toronto Optimists

Doreen and Evert Botterweg! Two of many people who gave of themselves to help the Corps.

The Contest Season

Most of this chapter, so far, has concerned subsidiary activities, somewhat neglected in other chapters. There is more but we shall go on.

June Contests

June 2nd saw an early contest and a surprising one. It was surprising because of the low scores and the placings. Everything was up in the air again. At Lansdowne Park, in Ottawa, the results were:

1st	La Salle Cadets..	60.1
2nd	Optimists..	53.90
3rd	De La Salle..	51.25
4th	4th Brigade..	42.35

This went on all month. Low scores, but the placings changed.

June 3rd

1st	La Salle
2nd	De La Salle
3rd	Optimists



1973: Toronto Optimists

June 9th

- 1st De La Salle
- 2nd La Salle
- 3rd Optimists

Etobicoke Crusaders upset the Seneca Princemen

June 16th

- 1st La Salle
- 2nd Optimists
- 3rd De La Salle
- 6th Peterborough Krescendos

The Optimists had not won any of these but had improved their overall score by three points. They had defeated De La Salle by 3.9 at the last show. These scores were a reflection of last year when all had been close, or even very close, but higher overall. On it went!



1973: Toronto Optimists drums

June 17th

- 1st La Salle
- 2nd Optimists
- 3rd De La Salle

At least, now, the scores were a bit higher.

June 23rd and 24th saw the Corps in the United States, in Bowling Green, Kentucky and Marion, Ohio. This was a pre-tour, a good one for this Corps, with a second and a first, in spite of the equipment truck breaking down.

Off to the Midwest

The real tour took place from June 28th to July 7th. Three buses took one hundred and sixteen people on this trip. Corps themselves were not that size yet, and this entourage included Corps members, executive, instructors, equipment department, chaperones, plus mothers and fathers. Above all, it was the longest tour and trip to-date.

The corps went by the way of Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie, to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, getting there despite a flat tire, fuel and battery problems, navigation, etc. Positions were pre-drawn, so the business managers' meeting was about judging et al. The Optimist show was called, patented, "show-after an epic odyssey".



1973: Toronto Optimists

With a score of 64.45, two tenths behind De La Salle, fourth place was not bad. Ten points ahead, in first, was Santa Clara Vanguard, a California powerhouse. The rest of the next day was spent learning drill changes.

On to Ford Du Lac, Wisconsin.

The changes had improved things, but a 4.7 penalty assured them second place. Three points of this setback were levied for not attending the afternoon street parade, most unusual for this Corps.

East Troy, Wisconsin

After winning a parade prize of \$100, the Corps won the contest with a score of 69.70.

These contests were good. Not the soul-destroying defeats against the mid-west giants, but against Corps of similar calibre. Also, they had not yet run into any really serious problems. Pleasant! But, some people got into beer.

Some locals stole equipment from a corps bus. Local police at 3:00 am apprehended them. At 6:00 a.m. came a tornado, followed by a rainstorm. As already stated no serious problems on this trip.

Then the tenor of the tour changed. Milwaukee had all the big names from the Midwest, West, and Canada. Although De La Salle made the field, the Optimists sat this one out in the stands.

Racine, Wisconsin, the next day

Big names again. Many people, on the strength of their performance, thought Optimists would place third. A jam-packed stadium, with an enthusiastic crowd, saw the Optimists place fifth with 61.50. Nearly twenty points behind the first place Casper Troopers.

This was the end of the tour, contest-wise. Maybe fortunately. It had been reasonably successful. Even so, the bugles held a three hour rehearsal.

The new tour manager, Mr. Donaldson, had phoned ahead to arrange billets, showers, rehearsal area, etc., in Ishpeming, Michigan. As a result, things worked out very well there. Doing a field show exhibition, they were asked to do it again. The Optimists presentation was nearly always liked, anywhere, even if they did not win.

Friday offered a night off and Saturday saw the Corps do one parade in Ishpeming and one in another town. Playing almost continuously, the reception from the crowd was terrific.

After that working holiday, it was back to "Home Sweet Home". And more challenges.



1973: Toronto Optimists Drums

Toronto – Hamilton – Brantford

Toronto

De La Salle had not been idle, winning M&M, Drums and G.E., they took their fourth win of the season.

The results:

1st De La Salle.....	71.80
2nd La Salle Cadets.....	71.55
3rd Optimists.....	68.60

Etobicoke Crusaders and Seneca Princemen were sixth and seventh, respectively. The Optimists did well on general effect, but execution scores were marginal. It was mid-season.

Hamilton

Next night – same problem.

1st La Salle.....	73.45
2nd Del.....	73.05
3rd Optimists.....	72.00

Again, execution left something to be desired.

Brantford

Except for La Salle Cadets, all the Corps from the previous show were in attendance. After a long hot parade, the Optimists finally overcame the jinx that had seen them winless in Canada this year.

1st Optimists.....	75.45
2nd De La Salle.....	75.25
3rd Seneca Princemen. . .	66.00

Tour Two

A good preparation for tour two, that now began. This would be Batavia, N.Y. on August 9th, Marion, Ohio on August 10th, Marion, Ohio on August 11th, Windsor, Ontario on August 12th.

Batavia

For the Optimists, this would be the worst weekend of the year. The absence of Don Daber was sorely felt on the first part of the



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tour. They scored poorly in Batavia and the US Open in Marion, with nothing to show for it but \$900 worth of ruined plumes.

They were late on the line in Batavia, a mortal sin in Drum Corps. They needed an Ivor Bramley. When they were ready to go there came a thunderstorm. Thus, the ruined plumes. The affair re-started 45 minutes later. The corps put on one of the most driving shows of the year but execution suffered, thus, last place. This Corps did not have the consistency of previous versions.

Marion, OH

Reflecting this, at Marion, they put on one of the worse shows of the year. Even though, they made the finals. They backed in. Someone must have been even worse. The Saturday finals saw the Corps finish their show, but all the rest were rained out. Doing it again on Sunday, they showed no great improvement. They did not stay for retreat, having to get to Windsor, Ontario, for another contest. Somebody stayed to get the results.



1973: Toronto Optimists Full Corps photo (US Open)

Windsor

All the Corps here had been at Marion, but the Optimists were the only ones, of this group, who had made the finals at that show. Winning this show, then, was no great surprise. Before the show, the scores from Marion were read out. This gave cause for concern.

De La Salle had placed second, with a score of 78.25. The Optimists had placed eleventh, with 65.70. Thirteen points behind De La Salle, and only three weeks to Nationals.

Much work was needed!

Drugs, Resignations and expulsions

Worse was to come. After the rehearsal following the Windsor show, the Director and Music Director handed in resignations. The Corps seemed ready to be folded. After another rehearsal, and an all evening meeting, six members were expelled. Another twelve were cited for less harsh disciplinary measures. The continent-wide plague of drug use had finally caught up with the Optimists. Nothing in the entire history of the Corps had ever caused such an upheaval. Drugs had always been banned from the Corps. The rule had been laid down in May, at camp. It was stated that the executive would resign if this rule was broken. It was. Resignations came. Why should they, or anyone, risk their freedom. It was illegal and still is. Those in charge would have got some backlash had the authorities been aware of this. The people doing it were old enough to know this. Somehow, the breach was papered over, resolved, and the Corps continued. But, it was a serious internal matter that may have had an influence on events later on.



1973: Toronto Optimists

Titusville

A week later, in Titusville, the Corps performed, minus eight members. They stood on the finish line as punishment for the trouble of the week before. A valiant effort, by a diminished unit, gave them second place to Auburn Purple Lancers. The crowd was still wonderful to this Corps. It is a wonder they did not adopt them. All the rumours around said that the Optimists had folded. This show proved that untrue. They had just sagged for awhile.

On to Nationals

One week to go and one more contest before Nationals.

For this Corps, after the prelims, things could not have looked worse. They had lost the night before in Etobicoke. Aside from this, the Optimist mystique was still evident. Everyone was looking to see what they would do.

“Don’t count the Optimists out until Nationals retreat” was an



1973: Toronto Optimists tymps

unspoken thought on many minds. In the finals, the Corps took the spotlight and glitter from all the others. They put on their best show of the year. Spirited and driving.

What one Corps can do so can another. De La Salle also “turned on” as did La Salle. Thus, the outcome.

De La Salle would have been undisputed champions but for 2.9 in penalties. They had been here before. La Salle Cadets took 0.3 in penalties. These blunders produced a situation never before seen at a Canadian Nationals, maybe anywhere.



Two Corps tied for first place. Yes, there would be two legitimate champions for 1973. De La Salle and La Salle Cadets. Each scored 79.60.

Second was the Optimists, with a score of 79.0, only six tenths off the top. Had the upheavals during the year contributed to this? Probably. Consistency had suffered. It was unfortunate, but not disastrous.

Seneca Princemen were next in line, but on this night were outclassed, scoring 71.25.

Thus did the 1973 Nationals conclude. It was a strange end to an unusual year.

For La Salle Cadets, this was the first “true” Nationals victory. They had won it in 1971, but during a period of dissension, when De La Salle and the Optimists were not present. Still, it was their second Nationals title.



1973: Toronto Optimists drumline

This was number three for De La Salle; others were in 1969 and 1970.

For the Optimists, it was the fourth defeat in five years. It was, now, really, for them, an ordinary year. Nobody again, it seemed, would dominate things as they had once done. This fact gives added lustre to that fading era.