

Chapter 25: 1975 – The Last Roundup

News about the corps

The 1975 season, for the Optimists, actually began on September 2, 1974. On that date, Doug MacKenzie announced that he had been appointed Corps Director for the coming year. He would replace the over-worked Don Daber. In a short talk, he laid out his plans and vowed that the Corps would be more successful in the year to come. As if to confirm this, during the parades and exhibitions that followed the '74 Nationals, the Corp pulled itself together. A solid unit set for 1975.

Terry McKolskey, who had returned to his original Corps, this one, left again. His various talents and interests kept him on the move. Taking over full control of the bugles was Peter Byrne. He would prove more than capable.

Jack Roberts and Greg Oxenham returned on drill, which was to be designed by Gary Czapinski. His experience was extensive. He had written, and taught, the drill of the Santa Clara Vanguard, 1974 D.C.I. Champions.

His cohort, Marie Kas, had been with the Norwood Park Imperials for fourteen years. She brought her knowledge to the colour guard, as consultant.

Ron Kaiser was still Chief Drum Instructor. Winter rehearsals were to go well for the bugle line, and it got built up somewhat. The colour guard lacked only numbers during this period. Drums had the numbers but lacked ambition. They did not labour as hard as they might, which would show later in the season. At this time, though, things looked good all around. Maybe, too good!



1975: Toronto Optimists

December saw the final meeting of the York-Toronto Optimist Club for 1974. A guest speaker, Mr. Tony Kunz, a realtor, was

introduced by Optimist John Bright, and thanked by Optimist Peter Shore, a lawyer. Special guests of Doug MacKenzie were Bud Jemmett and Vic Score, Corps staff members. Club members Rex Martin, Joe Gianna, President, Peter Shore, and Frank Redmond all reported on events past or planned. This club certainly kept things rolling.

New Music

In late December, over the Christmas holiday weekend, the Corps conducted a three-day rehearsal in the Shrine Temple. Although the Shriners no longer were involved with Drum Corps, the Optimists were still allowed to use their facilities. This favourable situation would

continue indefinitely. It was owing to Mr. Gord Robinson. He was the recording secretary of the Shrine. More relevant, he was a long-time supporter of the Corps. The long practice was used to learn a new concert. "Indian Lady", as well as a medley of Judy Garland numbers. Attendance was high. Wayne Downey, of Blue Devils fame, had arranged some of it and made a special trip here to teach all this. The permanent bugle instructor was still Peter Byrne. Gord Robinson was officially thanked for his co-operation.

Ron Kaiser, with twenty-seven in his drum line, also had outside assistance. Joe Morello, of Reading Buccaneers, assisted with arrangements.

January saw the first club meeting of the New Year, held at the Holiday Inn on Warden Avenue at Highway 401. This was now the usual meeting place. It was a convivial atmosphere with formal or informal surroundings, as desired, which encouraged people to attend.

One of their ideas, unfolded on January 31st, was an Optimist Alumni reunion at a Masonic Lodge. Well attended, it was somewhat subdued. Many of these people did not know each other as, by now, the existence of the Corps had spanned a couple of generations.

Merging of Cadets and Lancers

Earlier in this month, a decision was enacted. After much soul-searching and consultation with parents, it was determined that the Cadets and Lancers would march together in 1975. If capable, they would enter competition at the Junior "C" level. It would be a trial year. With the two units at opposite ends of the city; the distances involved could work against this.

A decision to either maintain this arrangement or split up again would be made after the 1975 Nationals. The executives of both units had held good rapport and would be twinned all the way. Co-directors would be Ted Baker and Dick Brown. Towards all this, three combined rehearsals had already been held, January 8th, 15th, and 19th. One hundred and ten people were involved. Because it was a trial affair, the name would be "Cadets and Lancers".



1975: Cadet Lancers

Green Capsule Comments

Drum Corps News columnist, Harvey Berish, had compared "Green Capsule Comments" to some other Corps publications. He concluded that G.C.C. was the one to which he would award the Drum Corps Pulitzer Prize, had one existed, for fine journalism, continuous publication, and overall excellence. This was a tribute to Don Daber. An anniversary issue had just been put out, in the format of a regular tabloid-sized newspaper. It was the fifteenth anniversary. Don Daber was listed as editor, still. He was now ably assisted by the McCusker brothers, with stories by Vern Johansson, Vic Decloux, and John McCullough.

Comments in other publications were revealing. Ian Stott, of Ports of Call in Drum Corps News comments on lack of familiarity of today's Drum Corps music. A judge says that Scout House was the greatest crowd pleaser of all time. True. No matter where they went, or who was there, they had the crowd. It would happen today if they were still around and good. They were so different.



1975: Peter Byrne as Drum Major (Barantford)

C.D.C.A.

Symposium 3, the plus annual session of the C.D.C.A. was held from January 31 to February 2, at Howard Johnsons. Bill Ryder was registrar.

The Optimists Club

The Optimist Club of York-Toronto reconvened on February 18, 1975. This was a general meeting, with 23 in attendance. Three new members were inducted by past president, Rex Martin. They were Len Perrin, Doug Yarker and Kevin Martin. A stated goal was for each member to bring in one new one.

This was the scene of “The Great China Experience”, a creation of Peter Shore. An earlier meeting of the club had revealed some picture of the scope of their activities. A planned calendar of events showed a host of ideas that were put into effect.

Some were:

- February 7th. Millionaires Night
- March 17th. “Wearing of the Green” Dance
- March 27th. Social Evening – Carlings Brewery
- April? Progressive Euchre
- May 24th. “Victoria Day” Dance
- June? B.B.Q.
- July? Cookout, then to a concert
- Aug. ?. Charter Bus to D.C.I. Finals
- Sept. 13th. Rummage and Bake Sale
Social Evening at East York Curling Club
- Oct.? Junior Corps 1975 Banquet
- Nov.? Fall Dance
- Dec.? “Have a Merry Holiday Season”
- January 1976. Party for Junior Corps

Most of these events were social and recreational, combined with money raising. This list showed that the York-Toronto Optimist Club was a most effective working organization. As with the original Downtown Optimist Club, there would have been no Corps without them.

De la Salle College drops sponsorship of their Drum Corps

The most startling news of the off-season appeared in the Toronto Star, on February 8th. De La Salle, after 65 years, 17 as a Drum Corps, folded. This was news, indeed! It was an old story. They had, due to their success, outgrown their sponsor, De La Salle College. The school was no longer prepared to foot the bill. Drum Corps, especially good ones, as was De La Salle, can be very expensive to maintain. The school kept the equipment, and it looked as if there would be a big gap on the Canadian Junior scene. It did



1975: Etobicoke Oakland Crusaders

not happen, as a new entity rose from the ashes. The newly dispossessed members of De La Salle merged with the up and coming Etobicoke Crusaders. De La Salle's full name had been "De La Salle Oaklands", so the new Corps became the "Etobicoke Oakland Crusaders" Drum and Bugle Corps. Later to be known as the "Oakland Crusaders, or "Oakies". A new set of bugles and uniforms were to come, creating a unit distinctive from either of the founding Corps. The Director of the Crusaders, Mr. Bob Duggan, became the Executive Director of the new Corps. Mr. Bob Cobham, former De La Salle Director, would become Co-Director of the Crusaders. The new Corps would become a powerhouse.

This year's annual C.J.A. award for most improved Drum Corps went to the Peterborough Krescendos. In the future they would play a big part in our unfolding story.

Another club meeting in March saw Al Baggs and Harold Coulson of the Downtown Club present the Corps with a cheque for \$1,000, on behalf of the club. They were special guests,



1975: Toronto Optimists Drums

along with several alumnae; Ron Cook, Brian Hogan, Al LaVigne, Rick Robida and Rob Trimble. If we had to list all Corps Alumna, we would need another book.

At the same meeting, a treasurer's report for the York-Toronto Optimist Club showed \$2,000 put in the Junior Corps account for 1975 expenses. Rex Martin, Booster Club President, said \$1,700 from the "Wearing of the Green Dance" would go to the Corps. A suggestion was made that the alumnae could be a source of funds. Maybe, but they were a much looser, more informal group.

In March, the Dutchmen, of Kitchener, Ontario, ran a Colour Guard Contest. Eight units participated. The Optimist Guard placed second with 70.3. A 4.2 penalty did not help but they would not have won anyway. First place went to the Ventures with 79.20.

An Optimist directory was now almost a necessity to keep track of all operations. They were, at this time:

Optimist Club of York-Toronto

President: Joe Gianna
Secretary Treasurer: Frank Redmond

Optimist Cadets/Lancer Drum and Bugle Corps

Directors: Ted Baker, Dick Brown

Optimist Cadets Booster Club

President: Dalton Moore

Toronto Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps

Director: Doug MacKenzie
Assistant Director, Treasurer: Bernie White

Toronto Optimist Booster Club

President: Rex Martin

Green Capsule Comments/Publicity

Don Daber

All this organization had but one mutual object, to put the Corps on the field every year. Dominion Store tapes now went to Bud Jemmett. Canadian Tire Store coupons were collected to help with equipment truck upkeep. A Mr. McCullough was to be called if anybody had items for a rummage sale.

Seneca Princemen

A preview of other competition showed that the 1974 champions, the Seneca Princemen, had a full slate of instructors. On brass was Ted Key and Myron Melnyk. Mr. Key went as far back as 1956 with the Danforth Crusaders, then the Toronto Optimists. Mr. Melnyk was a De La Salle alumna. Tony Capizzano, Bob Stone, and Tom Furiano were on drill. John Cameron and Rick Hogan handled percussion.

An effective executive included:

Wolfgang Petschke. Director
John Henderson. Assistant Director
Les Hopkins. Secretary Treasurer
Ron Smith. Business Manager
Eric Ellis. Assistant Business Manager
Julia N. Martin. Publicity and Public Relations

Others were Gus Lemon, June and Frank Blakeney and John Johnson. This Corps wanted continued success.

Other News

At the C.D.C.A. National Individual Championship, the Optimist Bugle sextet was a favourite with both the crowd and the judges. They won the prelims and the night finals. Duet rifle won the prelims, but lost the finals to Seneca. Susan Sklar won the individual rifle at the finals. A snare drum duet, Jim Stevenson and Mike O'Connor won their category, prelims and finals. Mr. Stevenson won individual snare. Such talents boded well for the general Corps future.

The Optimists had formed a circuit guard this year, as distinct from the Junior Corps colour guard. It consisted of 12 flags with 6 rifles, and was captained by Cheryl Blandford. Greg Oxenham was the guard instructor.



1975: Toronto Optimists in Brantford

Some letters in G.C.C. were interesting.

One, from a girl, complained that girls were not invited to the alumnae reunion on January 31st. It was signed "left out girl in the guard". Many of the alumnae had served in the Corps, and left it, long before girls were in. If some of this group were the reunion organizers, it could explain this omission.

A thank you note was sent to the Junior Corps Booster

Club, on behalf of the executive and membership of the Corps of 1975. It expressed the gratitude of all for a terrific evening at the March "Wearing of the Green" Dance. The authors were Doug MacKenzie and the executive of the Toronto Optimists.

Tuesday, May 27th saw the 2nd "Special Dinner Meeting". These were designed to add spice to meetings, which, had they been all business, could have become tedious. This time, the club had an "Italian Night", held at an Italian sidewalk café. All procedures were observed, guest speaker being Dr. Gordon Stewart, past moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

This was a "good" club. Optimist Peter Shore thanked him for his effort. The club now had charitable licences, listed as "The Optimist Youth Development Foundation". People who made cash contributions could now use a charitable licence number to claim tax credits.

The Ways and Means Committee was now headed by Len Perrin and Doug Yarker. Other members included Ross Cation, Jack Roberts, Ron Cook and Richard Robida. All of the people were former marching members, some as far back as 1958 and before.

Events in May, before the opening of the season, saw the Corps in concert at Birchmount Collegiate. The crowd was not as large as expected, but all monies made were turned over to the Corps.

May 17th-19th, using car pools, the Corps took off to Flesherton, Ontario, for a work camp weekend. It was considered a roaring success. Competition was less than a month away.

Less of a roaring success was a “get acquainted” dance at East York Curling Club. It was for parents and friends to get acquainted with those involved in helping the Corps year round. Only 27 parents showed up.

The Competition Season

The biggest unanswered question this year had to be “How would the new Corps, the Oakland Crusaders, stack up?” It would soon be answered.

Welland

The Rose Festival in Welland, Ontario, on June 7th was the first meeting of the Optimists and the Oakland Crusaders. The Optimists had progressed, uninterrupted, over the winter, carrying on as usual. The new Corps, however, had not really begun to get underway until March, after the merger took place and things were organized. So although they were expected to be good, the results of this first outing were not entirely unexpected.

1st	Optimists.....	68.40
2nd	Oakland Crusaders.....	65.35
4th	Seneca Princemen.	52.50
5th	Peterborough Krescendos.	45.40

The Optimists bugle line scored 3.55 over the Oakland Corps, showing that they had not been idle while the Crusaders won drums, both captions. This showed that the Optimist line, always a strong point, had maybe relaxed a bit over the winter. Drums were, though, to become a strong point of the Oakland Corps. Both were even on marching and maneuvering. So the big difference was on bugles. And size. The Crusaders were a big corps with forty-eight horns and twenty-nine drums dressed in striking, new, blue uniforms. The Optimists had thirty-nine horns and twenty-seven drums. The horns were excellent while the drums were only down 0.5 and 0.3 in execution and general effect, respectively.

The merger of De La Salle and Etobicoke had not yet produced the superior Corps expected. Yet. The Optimists, though better prepared, were not near peaking. Yet. The Seneca Corps had, as of now, a long way to go. However, the season was just beginning and much could happen. It should be very interesting.

A week later, they were at it again.



1975: Toronto Optimists

Waterloo

Waterloo, June 14th

1st Optimists.....	72.80
2nd Oakland Crusaders...	72.65
3rd Seneca Princemen. . .	62.70

Same placings, but with scores much closer. Comments already making the rounds were: "Optimists great! Like the Corps of old! Horn line ranks with the all time Optimist greats. Drum line large and proficient."

However, partly because of this, and the fact that they had started well and were new, the Oakland Crusaders were eliciting most general interest.

Next, in Ajax, June 24th

Ajax

For the Optimists, this was "jinx town, looser city". In four years they had yet to win this town. So it remained. The Oakland Crusaders won their first contest, downing the Optimists for the first time in the process, 72.10 to 71.75. After a week of poor rehearsals, the Optimists came up with a hot show back in Toronto. They turned the tables, upsetting the Crusaders 77.65 to 76.35. All these scores, this early, were indecisive; however, it was starting to look as if, in Canada, this would be a "two Corps" season.

After the Ajax show, everybody from the Optimist camp went to a B.B.Q. in Morningside Park, in Scarborough. It was a great evening, with great weather, lots of food, and over two hundred in attendance, members, parents, friends, etc.



1975: Oakland Crusaders Rifles

Tour One

Both Corps under discussion now departed on tours in the USA. For the Optimists, this was known as tour one, and lasted from July 3rd to July 6th. Leaving Toronto on July 2nd, the next day saw them in Racine, Wisconsin. This, as always, was a different league and the Corps was not totally ready. Regardless, they acquitted themselves well, placing fourth, seven points behind the Racine Kilties, in first. A score of 62.75 put them three and a half over the once unbeatable Casper Troopers.

Next day, there were two parades. It was July 4th, American Independence Day. This was in Columbus, Wisconsin, and an improvement was recorded. In third place were the Optimists,

now nine points out of first, which was held by the Royal Crusaders (not the Oakland Crusaders). Strange business this. Or was it?

After a stay over in Columbus, it was on to Manitowoc. During the parade, the Corps was cheered. After the contest, the judges were booed. Royal Crusaders, with 72.45, were first, over Kilties, over Phantom Regiment and over the Optimists. Way back in fourth, the Optimists had 64.9. From here, west to Appleton, Wisconsin, it was the same story. Fourth, with the Kilties over the Royal Crusaders, in first, eight points over the Optimists, who had put on their best show thus far. Thankfully, it was now back to Toronto.

This tour had been a mirror image of many previous Midwest jaunts. Loved by the crowds, but not so favourable with the judges. Well, what can you do? Grin and bear it!

The Oakland Crusaders did not break any records on their tour either. A 66.75 in Alton, Illinois and, ominously a 73.6 in Michigan City, Indiana. This gave them second and third places, respectively. They were improving, so the next meeting of the two Canadian rivals should prove more than just interesting.



1975: Seneca Princemen Rifles

The last Canadian contest for the Optimists had been in Brantford on July 1st, before the tour. They had won an easy victory, eighteen points over the Peterborough Krescendos. Their score of 74.90 showed a marked decrease from their last outing in Canada.

Now, loomed the first meeting between the Optimists and the Oakland Crusaders since both had been on tour. It was at Birchmount Stadium in Scarborough, as good a field as anywhere. This new version of an old rivalry, Optimist vs De La Salle, had sparked a lot of interest and over two thousand people were in attendance. In Canada, especially for a non-championship contest, this was a lot.

Birchmount Stadium

What they saw was not totally unexpected.

1st	Oakland Crusaders.....	81.00
2nd	Optimists.	78.10
3rd	Seneca Princemen.	69.10
4th	Peterborough Krescendos. .	56.35

The Crusaders had opened up a three-point gap, with top scores on drums and bugles. Their bigger size helped, plus the fact that after the late start they were now beginning to gel. The Optimists were not finished yet, by a long shot. It was seen, though, that things would not

be easy from here on in. When had they ever been? Evening during their long unbeaten streaks, it had always required maximum effort to keep them intact.

On to Toledo

After this, it was three weeks until the next contest, in Toledo, Ohio. Things did not slide, although it could have been a vacation. The old spirit showed as turnouts for rehearsals were good, rehearsals were consistent. When they went, there were no bus problems, as had plagued tour one.

The name of the contest was the “Key to the Sea”, somewhat unusual considering Toledo’s location. However, much in Drum Corps is unusual, so maybe this was unusually usual. Significantly, this contest would be the first meeting outside of Canada, of the Optimists and Oakland Crusaders. Neutral territory.

Toledo, Ohio – August 2nd

Open Class Prelims

Here, that rarity in Drum Corps, a tie for first place. The Crusaders (Oakland) tied the Crusaders (Royal), each scoring 79.05. Our group was back in second with 75.55, just maintaining the pace vis-à-vis the Oakland Crusaders. The night finals, however, would tell a different story.

Oakland, it appeared, were improving each time out and there were no tie scores this time.

1st	Oakland Crusaders..	81.45
2nd	Royal Crusaders....	79.45
3rd	Optimists.	75.10

The pattern emerging here was that everybody was moving ahead; however, the Oakland Corps were moving ahead at a greater rate. The Optimists were seen to be gradually slipping behind. Oddly, the Optimist night show was much better than their afternoon show, but their score went down. At night, the Crusaders were described as “deadly”, meaning accurate. Their lead was now over six points. An effect of this “downer” was that at the next contest stop, Cleveland, Ohio, everybody, instructors included, was on each other’s backs. A tight rehearsal preceded the trip, in uniform, to the stadium, where the rain let loose.

Relaxing in the dressing room, the Corps loosened up, to good effect. Came the sun, and the Optimists went out and put on their best show of the year so far. Although the Oakland Crusaders were still ahead, the margin was now a much slimmer two points.



1975: Toronto Optimists bass Drums

Now it was back to Toronto, with the “bugle” bus arriving first. The other one was delayed due to a station wagon breakdown. Not considered a tour, this trip had seen the Corps start to pull up.

Tour Two

North Tonawanda

Now, it was off on the official “tour two”. It began in North Tonawanda, NY, on August 12th. There was another bus breakdown, before leaving Toronto, delaying what should have been a 6:30 a.m. departure until 8:00 a.m. Due to this, the Corps arrived at the stadium just in time to change for the contest. A consequence of this, along with over confidence, was the worst performance of the year. This was still enough to gain third place, with a score of 75.00; however, this was the preliminaries. A good horn rehearsal and doing the show a few times amounted to good preparation for the night show. And what a show it turned out to be!



1975: Toronto Optimists

Adequate preparation paid big dividends with championship form, drive, spirit, execution and excitement. All these elements combined to bring the crowd to their feet. It also brought the Optimists first place with 83.50. Finally they were starting to get into the higher scores. This Corps was far from finished, showing spirit reminiscent of other days. If they could maintain this, anything could happen. What better place to test one’s resolve than the next show, the now accepted “Holy Grail” of modern Drum Corps, D.C.I. Nationals, Philadelphia.

DCI, Philadelphia, USA

Valley Forge – Sheraton Hotel. A fabulous place to stay. Certainly better than when George Washington had wintered his Continental army there. As far as Drum Corps were concerned, its drawback was that you could not practice there. The next day, August 14th, saw the corps, somehow, somewhere, conduct an all-day rehearsal. This was appropriate, as they were entered in the prelims on Friday, the 15th. At this, now “THE” contest, they



1975: Toronto Optimists

were on second. From a great show only days earlier, they did not perform as they were expected. Drive, which was needed to push them into the eighties, was lacking. That, and a low drum score, gave them a score of 75.0. Nobody could figure out why this had happened.

Don Whiteley, D.C.I. Publicity Director, was seen talking to Doug MacKenzie, Director, and other members of the Optimist executive. As a result of these discussions, the Corps walked a few blocks from the stadium to the Philadelphia Sick Children's Hospital. They had been asked, and agreed, to do a show for the critically ill kids.

Some of these were mentally and physically challenged. Some were even near death. The Corps had to play softly because they were only five feet from their audience, on a cramped balcony. After this good deed, it was back to the hotel to change out of uniform. This done, most of the Corps returned to the stadium to see the rest of the prelims. They were now in eleventh place. Only twelve made it to the finals.



1975: Toronto Optimists

Saturday saw the Corps practising again, in expectation of further competition. Until, that is, a fateful phone call informed them

that they were out of the finals, beaten out by the Precisionaires . The Optimists had beaten them before, four times, and each time by not less than ten points. This was an indication of their unsteady performance at the preliminaries.

Regardless, the Corps returned to the stadium to watch the night finals. These shows are too good to miss. Sunday saw them packed and ready to return home. A meeting was held with Doug MacKenzie and the executive.

Talk was of the 1976 season, even though this one was not yet over. In Canada, anyway. Jack Watt, the Business Manager, said he was pleased with the conduct of the Corps, as was the hotel. D.C.I. Nationals were now over. Optimists had jumped from 34th in 1974 to 16th where they had finally ended up this year. If it was any consolation, this was a bigger jump than anyone else had made.

Etobicoke

Wednesday, August 20th – Etobicoke

With both Corps doing a poor show, the Crusaders nipped the Optimists by four full points. It continued. Ontario Championships.

1st Crusaders. . . . 84
2nd Optimists. . . . 77

One Week to Nationals

A letter was received from the “Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia”. It expressed the thanks of the “Children’s Activity Department Play Therapy Program” for the show put on by the Corps. It said that the children had loved the music, costumes, and seeing a “parade” in a hospital.

At the D.C.I. finals, the Oakland Crusaders had placed sixth. Maybe this was why the Optimists had been talking about 1976 after their elimination. D.C.I. finals were to become an accepted indication of how the Canadian Nationals would turn out. Maybe it already was. This year, and often, subsequently, this was the case.



1975: Oakland Crusaders (CDCA Nationals)

The Optimists had started this year on top. They had been going strong all winter and had been in good shape at the start of the season. Oakland Crusaders had not really got underway until March, after getting all the details of the merger ironed out. De La Salle had not folded until February. This union of two Corps, one a very promising up and comer, the other a well established powerhouse, had no chance to fail under the proper leadership. That leadership was present. Once this entity had got things in gear, they began to improve in leaps and bounds. They had the talent, instructors and executive. Their rate of improvement had been visually and audibly apparent to all observers. Along with this, their show was one of the most pleasing anywhere.

The Optimists, at times mediocre, at times brilliant, never bad, had shown an unusual inconsistency. This was a flaw often ascribed to others during Optimists days of supremacy. Whatever, it is not a good quality to ensure success. When the Oakland machine picked up steam, the Optimists could not catch them. Even though, at times, they pulled themselves very close.

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The Seneca Princemen, small in size, defending champions, were an example of what was now, maybe always, had been a



1975: Toronto Optimists (Brantford)

major factor. Size. With thirty horns and eighteen drums, they could hardly hope to win against two bigger, equally good or better, units. This factor worked against the Optimists as well. They were big enough to entertain hopes of ultimate victory, but in a toss up between equality of other factors, size would be a negative. As it was, the larger Corps was better, so such a theory was not put to the test.



1975: Toronto Optimists

1975 Nationals

Although the Optimists must have put on one of their best shows of the season, scoring an 84, at the Nationals, they could not upset the odds. In this, for once, general opinion was confirmed. If they, and others, notably the Seneca Princemen, wished to survive and prosper in the future, something would have to be done. Something drastic.

The run down of the 1975 Nationals was as follows.

- 1st Oakland Crusaders... 88.30
- 2nd Optimists... 83.70
- 3rd Seneca Princemen. . . . 71.45
- 4th Krescendos. 62.25

These results, for the Optimists, probably held no surprises; it was why, after D.C.I. they were talking about 1976, not the Nationals. If true, it was a mood that would reappear, thus making the Canadian Nationals somewhat of an anti-climax.

Following is a brief chart of Optimist scores throughout the year. Inconsistency, to some degree, is evident throughout.

Welland. 68.40	Appleton. 66.80
Waterloo. 72.80	Birchmount. . . . 78.10
Ajax. 71.50	Toledo. 75.10
York. 77.65	Cleveland. 77.50
Brantford. 74.00	Tonawanda. 83.50
Racine. 62.00	Philadelphia. . . . 75.60
Columbus. 65.85	Etobicoke. 80.50
Manatowac. 64.90	London. 77.85
Nationals – Waterloo. . . 83.70	

The Cadets had prospered this year, and, with the people involved, this is no great surprise. Some of them were:

Ted Baker

Vic Decloux

Marlene Trace

Jessie Baker

Gord O'Halloran

Doug MacKenzie

Gus Morin

Coleen Deoni

Ron Deoni

Les Gaudar

Cathy McPherson

Jim Dynes

Al Tierney

Guy Vezina

John O'Leary

Nancy Hanselman

Corps Banquet

Regardless of the year and its outcome, there was always the annual banquet. This one was the fourteenth. Gord Robinson was emcee and introduced the head table. Bud Jemmett introduced the guest speaker, none other than that genial giant, doer of good works, local celebrity, Lord Athol Layton. He related his past involvement in Drum Corps, via the Shrine, and indicated an interest in further activity in this field.

Joe Gianna reviewed some of the club activities and issued an invitation to those now over twenty-one, no longer in the Corps, to consider membership. He then presented Corps rings.

Doug MacKenzie spoke about the season past and its success, which really it was. The corps was better than 1974, losing only to an unknown quantity. Plans included more exposure to big American Corps, beating the blue band more often, and new uniforms. This last would come about, but not quite in the way he had in mind at this time.

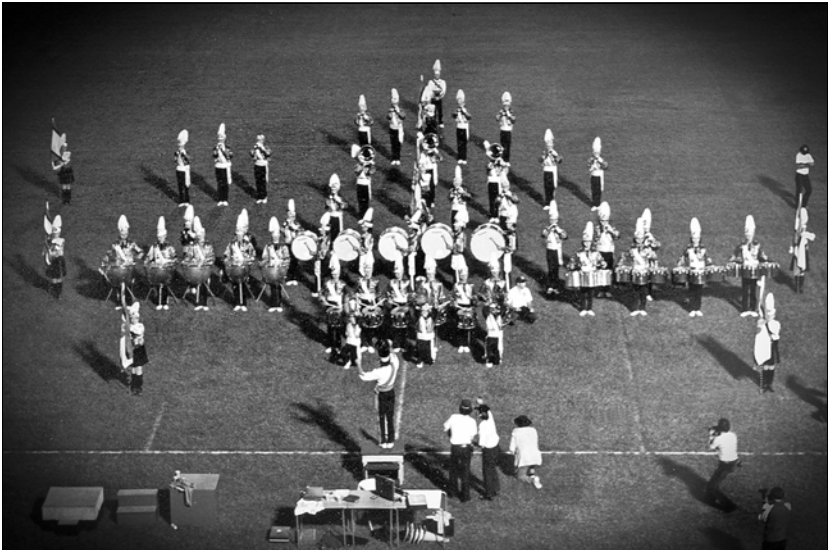


1975: Peter Byrne, George Nasello & Lord Athol Layton

Gord Robinson brought back the famous “21” mugs and gave two to Bernadette Schliebel and Barry Woods. They were now over 21. Unfortunates? Or were they? They would be back. Other recipients were Calvin Johansson and mighty McCusker.

George Nasello presented a silver service tray to Mr. and Mrs. Score, Vic and Flo. Nobody could have been worthier, his or her service having been long, hard, relentless, and unstinting. It would continue for a long time yet. They were two of the most worthy people throughout the life of the Optimists.

The current C.D.C.A. secretary-treasurer made some remarks, and Al Tierney, eloquent fellow that he was, made a good, off the cuff, speech. President Rex Martin, of the Booster Club, presented a cheque for \$1,500, raised over the past few months by rummage sale, dance, etc. The club certainly lived up to its name. He also presented pins to thirty-six rookies.



1975: Toronto Optimists

G.C.C. awards of merit, of its 15th anniversary, went to the more active 1975 staff. Other awards went to certain Corps members, no doubt for contributions. Last, but not least, Doug MacKenzie was given a “This is my last year” certificate. Joking aside, he was a long, long, time member of the Optimist clan. He had been the superb soprano soloist in 1962's the “Party's Over”.

The now traditional awards were presented.

- Rookie of the Year. Shaun Watt
- Guard Award. Eileen MacKinnon
- Most Improved Bugler. . . Allan Gillees (soprano)
- Corpsman of the Year. . . Dave MacKinnon (mellophone)

To begin fund raising again, already (did it ever stop?), Mr. Robinson had a \$100 hamper of perfume and junk to be drawn for that evening. At \$1.00 a ticket, sold by the girl guard, well over \$100 was raised. It was a good beginning.



1975: Toronto Optimists (Brantford)

Winding down, a Corps film of 1975 Nationals was shown. To close the proceedings, a dance was held and a good time was had by all.

With that, the year and, no doubt, the Corps was laid to rest!



1975: Toronto Optimists Montage by Randy Cochrane

Version