



## Wearing of the Green

On Saturday, March 16, the Optimists Alumni held its second annual “Wearing of the Green” party and Dance at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 344. As well as celebrating **St Patrick’s Day** this event recognizes the **7th anniversary** of the Alumni Corps wearing its **green uniforms**.



Special thanks to Laurie Brown and Holly Adam who spent so much time and effort to making **The Wearing Of The Green** such a spectacular **success!**



Allison Roblin and Glenda Tokiwa.

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## WEARING OF THE GREEN (CONTINUED)

*Sing it out... "At The YYYYYYYY-M-C-A"*



Mike Lang, George and Rose Wright.



Debbie Bruce, Jackie Nicholls, Mike Lang and Joe Gianna.



Michael Sharpe and Brenda MacKay.



Jeff MacKay with daughter Lauren and wife Brenda.



Back L to R: Carol Palumbo and Randy Roblin.  
Front L to R: Aubrey Senior, Jean Senior, John McHaffie and Diane Storey.



Ken Taylor (Back, 3rd left) and "The Tenth Line Drum Line".



Ashleigh with father Brian Collingdon and Nadar Moradi.



## WEARING OF THE GREEN (CONTINUED)

*And again...*



Kana, Lauren MacKay, Doug Roblin and Ayaka Miyake.



Doug Darwin, Michael Sharpe and Kathleen Gander.



Carol Palumbo with Julie and Michael Brown.



Back L to R:  
Jim Kerr, Allison  
and Rick Roblin.

Front L to R:  
Diane Kerr, Frank  
Mitchell with friend  
Lynn and Glenda  
Tokiwa.



Back L to R: Judy Davidson, Heather and Jim Hyslop.  
Front L to R: Jan Forsythe, Roger and Sally Rafson.



Back L to R: George and Rose Wright. Front L to R: Rick Shearer, Marylin Sturino and Ashleigh Collingdon.



## WEARING OF THE GREEN (CONTINUED)



"More champagne, why thank you."



Jackie Nicholls and Lauren MacKay



Laurie Brown and Debbie Bruce.



Hazel and Warren Berger.



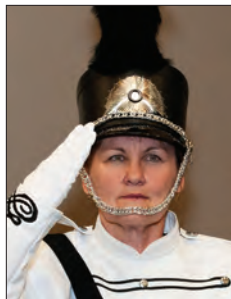
Joe and Margaret Gianna.



Roger and Sally Rafson.

# The Drum Major's Rapport

By Jackie Nicholls



*Optimists Drum Major,  
Jackie Nicholls.*

**W**ELL.....the winter months are behind us. We survived the Wearing of the Green and we have almost made it through our 2013 dri...I mean staging. We ladies and gentlemen are in a good place!

I am extremely pleased with how you all have stepped up to work with Randy Billings our new visual man.

Dave Bruce and I made the trek to Randy's house a while back to discuss the new show and how we should approach our visual plan. Our discussions touched on our strengths as a group and dare I say fears? As a seasoned "drum corps guy" Randy understood what we were looking for. Even though he has pushed our comfort zone, you have risen to the challenge. He has taken us to a new level with minimal "kicking and screaming". I can not express how proud I am of all you. I think when you see the finished product and become more comfortable with the show, you will reap the rewards. These will come as personal satisfaction and the applause of the crowds.

Along with our hard work, we have also had the chance to relax and enjoy each other's company at social events. I know I certainly enjoyed The Wearing of the Green and donning my familiar green tutu! It was a night of many forms of entertainment both drum corps and dance related. (Enough said on that front)

We certainly are a fun group! I would like to thank my favourite dance partner of the evening Miss Lauren MacKay!



Before you know it, we will be out on the grass perfecting our 2013 program and riding to our first performance. With that in mind it's time to buckle down. We all need to memorize our music, go over the drill in our heads

and get fit. I know you've heard before but, we are only as strong as our weakest link. Don't be the weakest link! We are on track to a strong season and lots of fantastic 10th Anniversary moments. It's going to be a great summer.

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... AND IT ALMOST NEVER STOPPED









**2003** was the year the Alumni Corps gave it's first performance. This year GCC will feature a series of stories about the the year leading up to their first performance. GCC asked some members to tell their stories of those heady days leading up to the GAS (Great Alliance of Seniors) performance in Hamilton.

### From Joe Gianna, (Soprano)

SOMETIME PRIOR TO the formation of the Optimist Alumni, Vern Johansson and Marcel Smolinski came to see me and invited me to join the corps. I was hesitant as I had not played the horn in 40 years but I agreed to join, provided that Barry Bell would also join. They advised that they would be seeing Barry very shortly to get his confirmation.

The first rehearsal was exciting, seeing all the old faces of the past like Barry Bell, Lorne Ferrazzutti, Paul Thompson, Ray Roussel, to name a few.

As the season progressed we learned some of the tunes that the corps played in the early 60's; for people that had not played in 40 plus years, a relatively aggressive undertaking. However, we persevered and were able to pull it off by the first performance, in Optimist Style, even though I was very concerned and nervous. Looking back we did quite well and should be proud of ourselves. 🟢



2003 rehearsal at the Legion.

"FERRAZZ the drums are upstairs"! That explained O'Halloran's face at the windows.

I was late for that first rehearsal. As I walked up the stairs I heard someone drumming a roll exercise, it was crisp and clean as a whistle. I opened the door and there they were... 10 snare drummers drumming on high tension drums, sounding like one drummer. I was amazed! I recognized only Bob Cook who I had met at a previous planning meeting. The rest of the line were doing sectionals in different rooms and on the 3rd floor.

Bob asked me if I had the drum charts for our first song (Taboo) which I had.

The drummers that were present at this very first rehearsal were:

- 12 snare drummers
- 6 bass drummers
- 5 tenor drummers
- 4 quad drummers
- 5 cymbals

Most with DCI experience, all from different corps.

By the end of the rehearsal led by Bob Cook and Doug Bass the drum section played TABOO downstairs along with 45 horns. WHAT A SOUND!!!!

We sound even better now with fewer horns. 🟢

### Lorne Ferrazzutti (Percussion)

THE PHONE RANG. "Hi Ferrazz". It was Dick Brown who has a nickname for everyone. He continued with "we're forming an Alumni Corps to perform in Hamilton next year. It will be called the OPTIMIST ALUMNI DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS. I'm calling for your support. We will be going for a one year bash".

10 years later we are still at it and I'm writing this article.

When I arrived at the Shrine, now the Legion, for our first practice, I parked at the bottom of the hill and as I walk up to the building something compelled me to glance at the 3rd floor windows. We all knew the place was haunted... ghostly faces were known to appear. As I looked up low and behold I saw a face behind the window. At a closer look it was only Gord O'Halloran.

As I walked inside I immediately got yelled at..."GET THAT HAT OFF!!! YOU OWE EVERYONE A BEER!!!! I saw a lot of people with horns but no drummers. Dick Brown yells:

### From Mel Dey (Contrabass)

I MISSED THE VERY 1st rehearsal (senior's moment, forgot the date) of the Alumni Corps in Oct 2002. I did show up for the next rehearsal. It was quite an experience to meet so many people I had marched with way back when, plus many more "younger" former members, and a lot of others who came out.

I remember we worked pretty hard to get some kind of sound (after 35 to 40 years), and after about seven rehearsals it was decided we would make our 1st appearance at The Legion in May 2003.



## 10TH ANNIVERSARY (CONTINUED)

That was quite a night. We warmed up the horn line on the 2nd floor and sang the Corps song (1st time in many years for a lot of us).

There were a large number of people at the performance and I remember the crowd cheering at the end of the first

number. When I looked out I saw people wiping tears and yelling wildly. Everyone in the room (the Corps included) got caught up in what was happening.

Congratulations to the Alumni Corps on your 10th anniversary – On, March On! 🎉

### ***Inspirational comments from brass instructor Kevin Matthew on the Saturday, May 31, 2003, BBQ and the Sunday, June 1, 2003, alumni corps rehearsal.***

Well, I think it is my turn to give my personal report on this group. I have been with the Toronto Optimist for five months now. In that time, I have gone from hearing a group that sounded like a lopsided bunch of lead soprano players and couple of other horn players to, this past weekend, hearing a horn-line! A horn-line with three sections in the Sopranos, two sections in the Mellophones, 3 sections in the baritone line and of course, "The Contras". I love the Contra's!

I got three chills this weekend while teaching, once during a chord sequence during warm-up. The boys were listening and accomplished a balanced chord that was the prettiest thing I have heard you play.

Once during the new tune "Battle Cry", and once upstairs in a room full of people who met each other, 40 to 50 some years ago. I had never heard your corps song before and didn't know that you had one. I looked around to see everyone singing the song, except for a few Newbee's. (Including myself)

I asked a few people when they had last sang this song. Except for a couple that said 4 or 5 years ago at another reunion, most said 40 some years ago.". All they needed was the first couple of words and then they remembered it like it was yesterday that they had last sung it.

To hear people around me talking about when their "next sectional is", and at "who's house", it simply blew me away! I have taught for over 12 years now and have never heard any of my students say those words. I see something special happening here that I have never seen happen before.

A common goal, to be great once again! –

Well, you are on the path to greatness. All I can offer you now is a bit of advice.

- Decide what you want.
- Take action — desire is not enough.
- Figure out what's working for you, and drop what isn't.
- Continually change your approach until you achieve what you want.

You can use this advice in all aspects of life. Of course there's much more to this formula than these simple steps. But this is a great foundation from which to start.

To achieve greatness, requires goals and practice!

Thanks for allowing me to be a part of this!

*Kevin Matthew*

## WE REMEMBER

### **Bill Ukas 1941 - 2013**

Bill played tenor in the Toronto Optimists from 1959 to 1961. Prior to joining the Optimists Bill was a member of the the Highland Creek Boys Band, the 180 Mosquito Squadron and the Don Mills Sky Raiders. After aging out with Optimists he moved to Jesters where he helped out with the founding of that corps. Ed Law remembers Bill learning the entire Jester's show in a week and a half!

Many years later Bill played in the Canadian GAS ensemble, CADRE and, for a short time, he was a member of the Optimists Alumni. At the time of his passing, Bill was researching the roots of rudimental drumming and writing a book on 14th century drumming.

Bill was a tribute to both corps. He was unassuming, quiet and hard working. Once you got past the shy exterior you discovered the warm and humorous individual that was Bill Ukas. He was a good friend! – Ed Law



*Some members of the Toronto Optimists drum line, Bill is 2nd from the right.*



## THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE – RIC BROWN

**W**HERE HAS THE time gone? It seems that just a few weeks ago I was writing about the positive outlook following show committee meetings and musical selections. Now, we have completed learning the musical portion of the show with the staging portion 75% complete. We have one month to our first stage performance of the season in Simcoe at "And the Bands Played On". The goal is to perform the complete show without music stands for this performance.

I would like to offer our congratulations to the St. John's Colour Guard on a fine indoor season. Although I personally was unable to get to see them a number of people told me how entertaining and creative their show was.

Unfortunately, Bobcaygeon is not having their annual "Opening of the Locks" parade this year so we are working on performing at a couple of Durham Hawkeye football games in June... more details to follow.

There is committee being formed to coordinate our Legends V show if anyone is interested please contact me.

Looking forward to a great spring and summer!!

**1, 2, 3 GREEN**

## NEW MEMBERS



*Jeremy Goldie, Soprano*

Jeremy marched with the Oshawa Rebels/Northwind Rebels from 1990 to 1992 and again in 1995. He didn't realize that there was anything after Junior Corps until a friend invited Jeremy to go with him to a Kingston Grenadiers rehearsal. He marched with the "Grennies" from 2001 to 2003 and in 2008. Jeremy says "The great thing about marching in the senior division is, some of the people I competed against in junior were now playing in the line with me".

During the years between junior and senior corps Jeremy played in a number of community groups but he never gained the excitement of competition or fellowship like he did in drum corps. Jeremy is glad to be new member of the Optimists because says "I'm having fun again".



*Kathleen Gander, Cymbals*

Kathleen began drum corps in 1986 in Sarnia when asked to get up at 4:00 am to make four big hungry guys breakfast so they could hit the road to attend a DCI show in Madison, Wisconsin. Kathleen's late husband, Ken Gander and his family were drum corps people. Her marching experience began in 1987 as a member of the National Party for the Guelph Royalaires.

Kathleen's "Drum Corps Mom" title started in 1993 when her step-son, Ken Jr. joined The Kiwanis Cavaliers and continued throughout the years with her son Darren and daughter Jennifer marching in St. John's, Dutch Boy and Kiwanis Cavaliers. Kathleen was also a board member with The Kiwanis Cavaliers for a number of years.

Missing the activity and friendships, she decided to take Ric Brown up on his offer of being in the cymbal line. Kathleen is looking forward to the challenges, fun and friendships this activity brings into her life.



*Doug Johns, Soprano*

Doug started playing the horn when he was 11 with the 68th Scout Band in Toronto. In 1961 he joined the Army Service Corp Band and in 1963 went to the 2nd Field Engineers Band. In 1965 Doug joined the senior corps, The Commanders.

He played in Canada's Marching Ambassadors from 1966 to 1967. In the fall of 1967, Doug joined the Signals Trumpet Band. He's been a playing with them in the horn for 45 years.

Doug is also a member of DOCA (De La Salle Oakland Crusaders Alumni).



*Ayaka Miyake, Percussion*

Ayaka was born in Japan and is in Canada studying English.

She played snare drum and Quad for three years in her elementary school band. After graduating Ayaka took private drum classes, but just for few months because she had to study to pass the high school entrance exam. Ayaka is in the percussion line playing rudimental bass drum and says "I'm happy to be member of the Optimist Alumni Drum Corps".



*Legends of Drum Corps V*

**Saturday,  
August 17, 2013**

Oshawa Civic Fields, Oshawa

Show starts at 6:30

Contact Brian Adam  
for tickets:  
brian.adam@rogers.com



## STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR FAMILY

### Keep in touch!

**Have you ever wondered how many different people marched with the various corps in the Optimists organization?** We have; however, since we have no current records all we can do is wonder.

Periodically we get messages saying something like "I used to march with Joe Bloggs and I'd like to contact him. Do you know how to contact him?" Of course, if we did have the information we'd first ask Joe if it was OK; however, since we have very little info we usually have to answer "no".

**A**S PEOPLE MOVE, much of the information we have no longer applies. While a few people have filled out the form on our website, we're missing both the names and the contact info for hundreds of people. Our goal is bring this information up to date but we need your help. In fact, without your help, nothing will happen.

#### So, how can you help?

Please don't be worried about getting lots of junk mail. At this point we are only sending out emails four times a year – whenever a new issue of GCC has been published. With the cost of postage, unless there's something major, it's unlikely that we'll be sending out anything by regular mail.

By the way, the "We Remember" section on our website honours corps members and staff who have passed so please let us know about those who are no longer with us.

We're also searching for pieces of our shared history. For example, we've heard rumours of a video of the 1978 Seneca Optimists; however, we can't find anyone who has a copy. Perhaps you have a copy in a treasure chest or an old banker's box that contains memories of your youth. Have you looked in it lately? If you looked you might find old photos or film of the Corps. Maybe it contains newspaper clippings about the corps or a journal or a scrapbook or even a corps uniform? One of our members even found an old corps flag.

Who knows what you'll find if you look! If you do find something to share, please let us know! If you're interested in seeing some of what others have contributed, please visit our website or our Photo Gallery.

#### Keep in touch.

**Let's hear from you.** If you choose to share your contact info, we will happily add it to our alumni records and include you in future mailings.

Please send mail to: Bob Carell, 1407 – 3050 Dufferin Street, Toronto, Ontario M6B 4G3

E-mail: [toronto\\_optimist@rogers.com](mailto:toronto_optimist@rogers.com)

Website: [www.optimists-alumni.org](http://www.optimists-alumni.org)

Photo Gallery: [www.optimists-alumni.org/photos/](http://www.optimists-alumni.org/photos/)



## MARCH REHEARSALS AT HUMBER COLLEGE



Cymbal players (L to R) Debbie Bruce, Kathleen Gander, and Susan Roberts get some pointers from Snare drummer Judy Ferguson (R).



Staging instructors Dave Lockie (top) and Randy Billings.



# See our first performance of the 2013 season, Saturday, May 11!

At the Simcoe Composite School, 40 Wilson Ave in Simcoe, Ontario.



Optimists Alumni performing in 2012 at the "And The Bands Played On - 8". The show is hosted by the Simcoe United Alumni Drum and Bugle Corps.

## 2013 OPTIMISTS ALUMNI SCHEDULE – FOLLOW THE CORPS

The schedule below is under review at time of publication. Please check the website for an updated schedule.

Saturday	May 11	Performance	Confirmed	Show 7:00 pm	And The Bands played On	Simcoe, Ontario
Monday	May 20	Parade & Performance	Confirmed	10:00 am	Victoria Day Show	Woodstock, Ontario
Saturday	June 1	Performance	Confirmed	8-9:30 pm	Durham Hawkeyes opening ceremonies and halftime performance	Oshawa Civic Fields Oshawa, Ontario
Saturday	June 22	Performance	Confirmed	8-9:30 pm	Durham Hawkeyes opening ceremonies and halftime performance	Oshawa Civic Fields Oshawa, Ontario
Sunday	June 23	Parade	Confirmed	12:00 noon	The Rose Festival	Welland, Ontario
Monday	July 1	Parade	Confirmed	11:00 am	Canada Day	Port Credit, Ontario
Saturday	July 27	Performance	1:00 - 4:00 pm		Spectacle of Sound	Sudbury, Ontario
Sunday	July 28	Rehearsal	Sudbury, Ontario			
Saturday	August 10	Performance	Confirmed	6:30 pm	Scout House Show	Waterloo, Ontario
Saturday	August 17	Performance	Confirmed	6:30 pm	Optimists Alumni – Legends 5	Oshawa, Ontario
Sunday	September 1	Performance	Confirmed	10:00 am	DCA (Drum Corps Associates)	Annapolis, Maryland
Sunday	September 15	Performance	Confirmed	TBD	St. John's Reunion	Brantford, Ontario

## GCC Staff

**Editor:** Bob Carell.

**Editorial Staff:** Brian Byrne, David Johns and Eric McConachie.

**Photographs by:** Don Daber, David Johns, Eric McConachie and Frans Rood.

**Consultant:** Don Daber.

A special **thank you** to all those who contributed to this issue: Ric Brown, Mel Dey, Lorne Ferrazzutti, Joe Gianna and Jackie Nicholls.

**CORRECTIONS:** We tried to get everything right. If not, please let us know: [openrd2002@yahoo.ca](mailto:openrd2002@yahoo.ca)

Thank you to all those who send photographs.

## Let's hear from you...

GCC is published four times a year. Contributor deadline for the **July** issue is **Friday, June 7, 2013**.

For the moment, please submit your material to David Johns at: [openrd2002@yahoo.ca](mailto:openrd2002@yahoo.ca) in one of the following formats:

**E-MAIL.** A Microsoft Word document, saved as "Rich Text Format" or "text only".

Or **MAIL** to Bob Carell, 1407 - 3050 Dufferin Street, Toronto, Ontario M6B 4G3.

**E-PHOTOS** should be sent to: [Toronto\\_Optimist@rogers.com](mailto:Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com)

If your photos were taken using a digital camera, please save them to your hard drive then email the unedited photos.

**PRINTS** contact Bob Carell at: [Toronto\\_Optimist@rogers.com](mailto:Toronto_Optimist@rogers.com).

**NOTE:** GCC may need to edit your stories for space allowances. We will make every effort to retain the spirit and intent of your submission.