



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The Optimists Alumni Drum & Bugle Corps wish you and your families the best for the holiday season and the New Year.



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Simcoe - May 9

On May 9th we began our 2015 performance season with “And The Bands Played On...”, an annual show sponsored by Simcoe United Alumni. It’s a great time to get back into the “drum corps groove”, reconnect with friends in other corps and perform for an appreciative audience. Other than a parade, this was the only performance by the Optimists Alumni in the 2015 season. A shortage of members resulted in the corps cancelling performances for the duration of the summer.



Corps Director, Mike Lang



The dictionary defines change as “to transform or convert (usually followed by into)”. We are already beginning that process again with what we have planned for 2016.

First let's reflect on our history to date. We started as a “stage performance” group which appeared in Fall 2003 at our own picnic and the following May 2004 at the G.A.S. (Great Alliance of Seniors) Convention in Hamilton ON. By G.A.S. We were wearing white golf shirts, black pants and a black baseball cap with logo. Three years later in May 2007 we appeared for the first time in our green tunic, black bibs, shako, plume and Dinkles on stage at “And The Bands Played On” in Simcoe Ontario.

We then put music to motion (drill) to finish our 2007 season at the DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester NY on the Labour Day Weekend. So while the music has continued to improve since then our ability to put it to motion has diminished (yes growing older sucks sometimes).

Now we're back up and running again (we took the Summer of 2015 off) and bringing in changes we expect will improve our

crowd appeal wherever we appear next year. The brass have converted to B flat (F for mellophone) horns using instruments that in most cases are much younger than the equipment we've retired (yes we're actively selling them). We will present a theme based show in 2016 entitled “The Optimists Alumni present Mardi Gras”. We will be setting our cadet style uniforms aside and donning “Mummer Costumes” that will be different than anything an Alumni group like ourselves has attempted before.

Our all new show will be shorter at just under seven minutes and any staging we do while performing will be minimized and

strategically timed. Most importantly our plans call for us to perform at the DCI SoundSport show in Indianapolis the weekend of DCI Championships in August for the first time ever (start making your plans to be there). There are still more enhancements and performances dates we are targeting to add as we go so don't say we didn't warn you.

So watch for us in 2016 this is a performance you are not going to want to miss. We'll be looking for you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and may this season bring happiness and joy to you and yours.

Mardi Gras by choice.



Matt Davis wearing one of the Mardi gras uniforms. All the uniforms are different



Acton Santa parade.



Mississauga Santa parade.

Highland Creek - June 14

The Highland Creek Heritage Festival parade is the “Biggest Little Parade in Toronto”. The parade opens the annual festival in Highland Creek village and the Optimists Alumni have participated in this parade for the last couple of years.



Colour Guard: Marilyn Sturino and John Parkinson.



Judy Ferguson, John Parkinson and Lorne Ferrazzutti.



That's a wrap. Let's eat!

Oshawa – June 14

After the Highland Creek parade, Rick and Laurie Brown hosted a “Take A Summer Break” barbeque for the Corps. Lots of good food and good company.



Ric and Laurie.



“The Two And A Half Amigos” Scott Butcher, Richard Lang and John Parkinson.



L to R: Judy Ferguson, Glenda Tokiwa, Doug Roblin and Richard Lang. Inset: A Marilyn Sturino impersonator.



Standing L to R: Barry Bell, Doug Roblin. Sitting L to R: David Bruce and Brian Collingdon.



“The Original Two Amigos” L: Judy Davidson and sister Jan Forsythe.



“OK, OK. Listen up. At the sound of the gong, it’s time to go home”.

Acton – November 21

The light rain stopped and the Santa Claus Parade started. There were community groups and service organizations, colourful bands and performers, public and high school bands, riders on horses – all marching and singing through the middle of town



Waiting for Santa.



The Northstar Colours always add sparkle to our presentation. They're a treat .



That was fun, wave to the camera. it's a wrap! Let's eat!

Mississauga – November 29

What would a Santa Claus parade be without reindeer, walking Christmas trees, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, numerous community groups and organizations, high school and public school bands, various military bands, church groups and community service organizations and... Santa Claus.



That's a wrap. Let's eat!

2003 to 2015

Here's a retrospective look at the corps from it's first public performance at the 2003 Reunion through to 2015. It's been quite the journey with stage shows, field shows, rain, snow, sizzling hot parades, freezing parades, flat tires and highway food. More importantly, it's been a fun time reconnecting with old friends, making new ones and, once again, performing. On the music front the Alumni Corps began with a focus on arrangements by Truman Crawford who had arranged most of our music between 1962 and 1967.

2003



2003. Optimists Alumni's first public performance during the 2003 Corps reunion at the Bruce's Mill Conservation area. Our guests were Scout House Alumni. (inset)



2003. Performance at the Legion on Lakeshore Boulevard West. Vern Johansson is directing.

2004

2004 G.A.S. (Great Alliance of Seniors) was supposed to be the only show for Optimists Alumni but things changed. Our first show became St Joe's Classic, after which we performed at G.A.S. This was followed by a promo for Lotto 649 (see the photo below) as well as a Canada Day parade in Cambridge. Musically we expanded our repertoire but stayed with Truman Crawford arrangements.



2004. "Oh man it was cold".



2004. Lorne Ferrazzutti and the drum line.



2004 performance at GAS in Hamilton, Ontario.



2004. Performing in Lotto 649 television commercial.

2005

In 2005 we expanded our performance venues, playing at the Toronto Achilles Run, the Barrie Jazz Festival, the Belleville Waterfront Festival, Scout House's show in Waterloo, the Octoberfest parade in Kitchener, the Bowmanville Santa Parade and United Alumni's inaugural "And The Bands Played On" in Waterford. We also returned to St Joe's Classic and the Cambridge Canada Day Parade. Musically we started moving away from the Truman Crawford arrangements by introducing two numbers from the early 1970s penned by Larry Kerchner: "Paint Your Wagon" and a "Big Band Concert".



2005. Performing in Waterloo at Scout House's "Juno Beach" show.



2005. Rehearsing "Caravan" reprise at Scout House show.



2005 Bowmanville Santa Claus Parade.

2006

In 2006 we added even more parades and shows including performances in Coldwater, at the Seneca Optimists Reunion, the MuchMusic Awards and the Toronto St Patrick's Day parade. On the musical front we added a completely new arrangement of Tabu.



2006. Waterloo. Inset: Coldwater.



2006. Waterloo.

2007

2007 saw a big change in the corps. We got “real” uniforms, started doing a field show plus we went farther afield – to Glen falls, NY and to Rochester, NY for our first DCA Alumni Spectacular. Musically we added another number from 1972, “*More and More*”.



2007. Taken in Simcoe before the first public performance in our new uniforms.



2007. Above: Shows part of the drill for “Paint Your Wagon” at the DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, NY. Below: Formal corps photo – Rochester.



2008

It's 2008 and we're still chugging along. This year we added Woodstock to our schedule plus we made a return visit to Octoberfest. We made our second appearance at G.A.S. which was in Mississauga. For most of us the highlight of the year was a parade to and concert at Cawthra Gardens where we performed for Wayne Dean, a former Optimist, and the other residents. Musically we added a couple of numbers from 1963, "Lawrence of Arabia" and "El Cid" plus "San Francisco", a number from 1969/70, as a closer. In addition, we had "help" in Rochester when some members from Toronto Signals joined our National Party.



2008. The DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, New York.



2008. Waiting to perform in Rochester. You can see a couple of members of Toronto Sigs with the National Flags of Canada and the USA.



2008. Joe Gianna greets Wayne and Mary Ann Dean at Cawthra Gardens.

2009

By 2009 our “tour” was pretty much established. We started the year with St Joe’s show or Simcoe, Victoria Day in Woodstock, our Legends of Drum Corps show, Scout House’s Show and the DCA Alumni Spectacular. Of course there were also the Canada Day parades plus the Santa Claus parades. This year, for the first time, we performed in exhibition at a DCI show in Buffalo. Musically we kept most of the 2008 show; however, we replaced “*Ontario*” with the theme from “*Patton*”.



2009. DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, New York.



2009. All the contrabass players were relegated to the Penalty Box for not memorizing their music.



2009. Oshawa at the Legends show.

2010

2010 might have been our busiest year. In addition to our usual events we also performed at City Hall for the participants in a run. Starting this year the Northstar Colours became an integral part of our show. In July we travelled to Michigan City, Indiana, our longest trip to date, to perform in exhibition at a DCI show. At that show we also joined with Classic Cavaliers (Cavaliers Alumni Corps) to play “*Over The Rainbow*”. On the way home we stopped to do a parade in 100°F + weather. Musically we added “*Over The Rainbow*” as our opener while we closed the show with “*What Kind Of Fool Am I*”.



2010. DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, NY.



2010. DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, NY.



2010. Optimists Alumni and Classic Cavaliers play “*Over the Rainbow*” in Michigan City, Indiana.



2010. Optimists Colour Guard and the Northstar Colours – DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester, NY.

2011

In 2011 we added a show in Sudbury to our tour. We kept much of our music from 2010; however, we did drop “*Patton*” from our Colour Presentation and added “*Maple Leaf Forever*”. We also added “*Temptation*”, a number that the corps had played back in the late 1960s.



2011. DCA Alumni Spectacular, Rochester, New York.



2011. Just another fun filled Sunday afternoon rehearsal. Everyone can't wait till break, so they can relax and put their feet up, enjoy a refreshing beverage and soak up the sunshine.



2011. Northstar colours getting last minute instructions before going on the field at the DCA Alumni Spectacular in Rochester.



2011. DCA Alumni Spectacular, Rochester, New York.



2011. Legends of Drum Corps show, Oshawa, Ontario.

2012

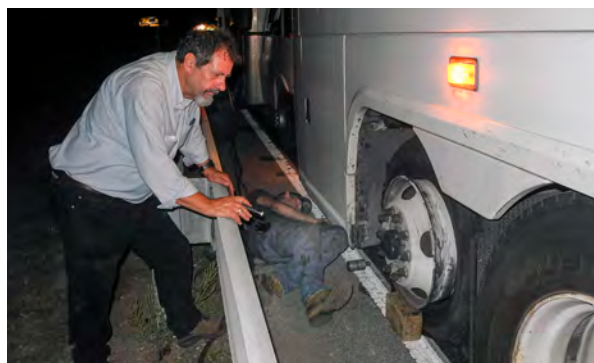
In 2012 the DCA Alumni Spectacular was moved to Annapolis, MD. Getting there, however, was quite the venture. When we reached the border we were put in the wrong line for US Immigration and lost a couple of hours. Later, the bus had a blowout somewhere in Pennsylvania. We left Toronto around 8 am and arrived, very hungry and tired, at our hotel around 3 am the next day. After rehearsing all day Saturday in the heat and humidity I doubt that any of us will be complaining about Toronto's weather. Musically we opened our show with Optimists' 1975 Judy Garland Medley. We kept our concert and colour presentation and closed our show with "*Beautiful People*".



2012. DCA Alumni Spectacular, Annapolis, Maryland.



2012. The Northstar Colours.



2012. Our bus driver assisting the mechanic change a tire.



2012. The Scout House Alumni Band show in Kitchener. The group sitting on the sideline are junior members of The Nortstar Colours.

2013

2013 was much the same as 2012. Musically we kept the same opener, added a new arrangement of “*Caravan*” for concert, played a rewritten “*Maple Leaf Forever*” as a Colour Presentation and closed the show with “*I Have a Love*” and “*Somewhere*” from *West Side Story*.



2013. Annapolis, Maryland.



2013. Annapolis, Maryland. Inset: The Great Snow Parade in Aurora.

2014

Perhaps the highlight for 2014 was a birthday celebration for Barry Bell and Lorne Ferrazzutti, both of whom turned 80! Musically we opened our show with the theme from “*Spiderman*” and added another song from West Side Story, “*The Jet Song*”, to the last half of our show.



2014 Rochester.



2014 L to R: Barry Bell and Lorne Ferrazzutti celebrate their 80th birthdays.



2014 Evening parade day before the big show on Saturday.

2015

2015 didn't work out quite as planned. The intent had been to design a new show and perform in Indianapolis at DCI Soundsport; however, this did not happen. The corps performed at Simcoe, marched in the Highland Creek Heritage Parade, then took a break for the summer. We finished the year with a couple of Santa parades.



2015. Simcoe

2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 101 in Etobicoke Ontario.

Highlights

- The corps members unanimously agreed to waive the election process this year only and re-appointed all of the current Executive for a one year term.

President	Ric Brown
Vice-President	Doug Darwin
Treasurer	Mike Lang
Secretary	Kathleen Gander
Director at Large	Dave Bruce
Director at Large	Matt Davis
Director at Large	“vacant”

- The new Corps Director for the upcoming season is Mike Lang. Day to day responsibilities will be the key focus of this position.

- The corps will perform using horns in the Key of B flat (mellophones in F) starting in November. Several current members will likely use their Yamaha trumpets while most of the rest of the brass we need is being made available through a swap agreement with NorthStar. Their horns are all Kanstuls and “younger” than ours (except for our “like new” five Powerbore sopranos).

- The corps will not perform in the existing uniform (green cadet jacket over black bibbers with shako, plume and Dinkles) during the upcoming season. Our 2016 Show is tentatively entitled “The Optimists Alumni present Mardi Gras”. It will be a completely new musical show fitting this theme that’s short enough for SoundSport and features the entire corps in various Mummer Costumes. See a photo of just one in The Director’s Report on page 3.

SOME GOOD MEMORIES

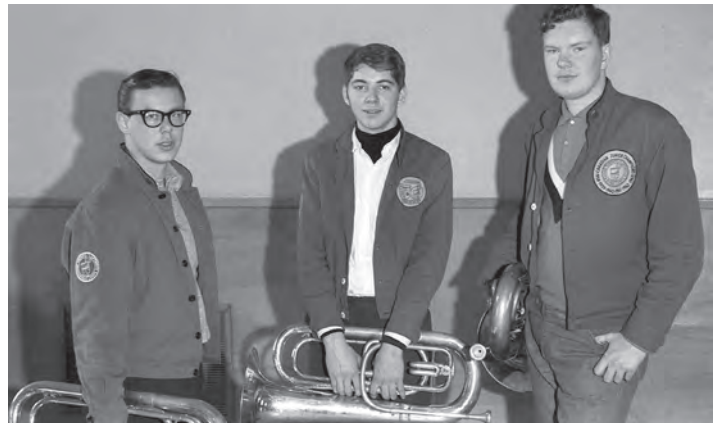


Paul Thompson

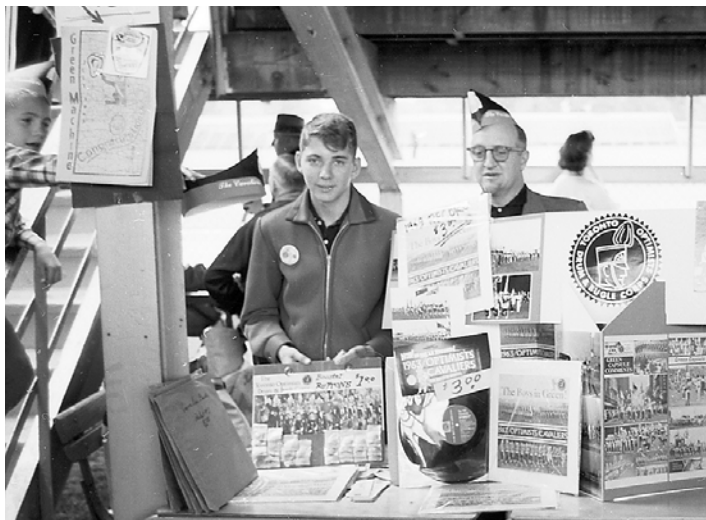
PAUL BEGAN his connection with the Optimists in 1963 working with his father at the Optimists booster table. In 1964 he joined the corps playing Euphonium and, from 1965 until 1969, Paul played Contrabass.



After aging out Paul continued working with the corps as an instructor and, at times, took on the role of drum major. Paul was also involved in instructing the Optimist Cadets. Paul and Ray Roussel even wrote a Bugle Manual that was used, not just



Dave Watt, Paul Thompson and Bob Rivers (1964)



Paul and his Dad at the Booster Table (Nationals, 1963)

by the Optimists, but by a number of other corps. In addition, Paul was one of the architects of the 1972 corps which won Optimists 12th Nationals.

Later on Paul instructed the Cardinals. Paul and Don Daber were two of the people who encouraged Colin Hedworth to write his history of the Optimists.

When the Alumni corps began Paul was there, doing his best to help out. He assisted with the music, ran the Thursday night music rehearsals until they were cancelled, obtained the rights for us to play our music and, until health issues forced him to stop, played contrabass. Paul will be missed.



Paul Thompson, Optimists Music Director, introducing the corps (Wearing of the Green, 1971).

Here are a few comments from some of those who knew Paul.

“Paul was a driving force behind the rebirth of the corps and, as a result of his determination, there were many guys who became superb horn players under his guidance. He lived and breathed the corps and worked his backside off to make us better.”

“He had a great passion for Drum Corps and so many of us benefitted from his contributions, myself included. “

“Paul’s last real marching year with Optimists was my rookie year and he played that contra solo in Let the Sunshine In. When I made it known that I was interested in being considered as Drum Major for the alumni corps, Paul encouraged me and

WE REMEMBER

helped me with conducting technique. A very intense guy with a huge personality. I'm going to miss him."

"Paul was the most passionate member of the Optimists I ever met. I had the utmost admiration for him and I have many fond memories of him, especially during the 1971 season. It was a tough season to begin with but because of his inspirational leadership we were more successful than most of us dreamed we could be."

"Whenever I've thought of Paul, over the last 40+ years, his solo in You Only Live Twice (1968) comes to my mind. Man, he could belt that out, and it was perfect every time. No matter whether it was in a parade, rehearsal, contest or an exhibition he played it exactly the same every time. Few, if any, could play that horn like he did and his work effort was beyond reproach."



Paul Thompson conducting the corps in rehearsal during a reprise of Caravan (Waterloo, 2005)

"Those on the inside knew his contribution, one that wasn't often noticed by those looking in."

"I first met Paul when he was working with Tony Capizzano to rebuild Oakland Crusaders. Not long after, with some gentle nudging from Paul and others, I was encouraged to join the Optimist Alumni Corps. Originally I played in the soprano section but with some encouragement and a helping hand from Paul, I became a valued member of the mellophone section. Thanks Paul...job well done my friend."

"When I remember Paul back in my corps days I recall him having a high level of confidence in my soprano playing ability and encouraged me to have more confidence in myself."



Paul and Barry Bell (Reunion, 2008)

Karl Bossert

Don Mills Sky Raiders and Toronto Optimists

KARL BEGAN his drum corps career in the Don Mills Sky Raiders. After Sky Raiders folded in 1961 Karl and a few other former Sky Raiders (Dave Johns, Dick Ward, Dave Watt, Terry Mckolskey come to mind) moved to Optimists. He played soprano in Optimists from about 1961 through 1963 when he aged out.

Everyone liked Karl. Doug MacKenzie remembers Karl as "a guy who was full of nervous energy, he was always upbeat and a fun guy to be around. I remember when we rehearsed at the Shell Tower he and I and a group of guys would go off in



his father's Falcon station wagon to the Mercury on Bay for burgers and cokes." Bill Thorne remembers that Karl "drove a large (very large) Oldsmobile which he described as a sofa on wheels."

Karl's whole family was musical. His dad owned a music store in Willowdale and there was a music school that went with it. In their 1963 performance at the Preview of Champions Optimists discovered that their show was too long. The easiest solution was to replace the two concert numbers ("I'm in the Mood for Love" and "It Ain't Necessarily So") with one song. Karl's dad and Barry Bell created an arrangement of "Chattanooga Choo Choo", the corps learned the music and, four weeks after the Preview, Optimists performed it for the first time at a contest in Welland. The recording on the Boys In Green album was only the second public performance of the number.

WE REMEMBER

Vic Sciore Jr.



Optimist Cadets, Toronto Optimists and Seneca Optimists

Vic's whole family was involved in the Optimists. His parents, Vic and Flo, ran Optimists' booster table while Vic and his sisters, Darlene and Laura, became fellow corps members.

Vic started off his drum corps career in the Optimist Cadets then moved to the Toronto Optimists. In 1976, when the Toronto Optimists and Seneca Princemen joined forces to form the Seneca Optimists, Vic was there. Vic was a great guy who will be missed by all who knew him.



Peter Coward



The Scout Band and Opti-Corps



GCC STAFF

Editor: Bob Carell.

Editorial Staff:

Brian Byrne, David Johns and Eric McConachie.

Photo Credits:

Peter Burian, Kathy Byrne, Bob Carell, Don Daber, David Johns, Eric McConachie, Peter McCusker, Frans Rood and Marcel Smolinski.



Consultant: Don Daber.

A special **thank you** to all those who contributed to this issue: Mike Lang and Santa Claus.

WEBSITE

Please check our website for the current schedule: optimists-alumni.org

CORRECTIONS: We tried to get everything right.

If not, please let us know: openrd2002@yahoo.ca

Thank you to all those who send photographs.

GCC is published on an occasional basis.

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1407 - 3050 Dufferin Street

Toronto, Ontario M6B 4G3

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NOTE: The editor may need to modify your stories for space allowances. We will make every effort to retain the spirit and intent of your submission.