

Chapter 26: 1976 – An End and A Beginning

News on the Drum Corps front

A survey of all seasonal events and parades in the Toronto area showed that all three major Junior Corps were alive and well – Oakland Crusaders, Toronto Optimists and the Seneca Princemen. These were, now, the three main Canadian Junior “A” Corps. La Salle Cadets and Metropolitans had, like a host of others over the years, departed the scene. Soon, though, another very powerful group was to emerge from a remote area of Quebec.

The current champion, Oakland Crusaders, was not fielding a competitive guard this year. In fact, it was not known if any shows at all would be held this year. The Optimists had added Tom Furiano to work with their colour guard. He was a De La Salle graduate and had worked with their guard and that of the Seneca Princemen.

The Cadet/Lancers, now of Etobicoke, had received Ontario Lottery (Wintario) grants for the purchase of new instruments and uniforms. Years later, such government largesse would dry up, due to tight, if necessary, financial readjustments.

Although D.C.I. was now the major player on the scene, its worthy predecessors, the V.F.W. and American Legion, still played an effective role in Drum Corps. The American Legion Nationals for 1976 were slated to be held from August 20th to 22nd, in Seattle, Washington. It was their 51st year of National drum corps competition. Without these two organizations, it's possible that there would be no Corps today.

Blessed Sacrament Golden Knights, after an attempted revival as a Senior Corps, were finally laid to rest. Forever. In January of 1976, Scout House was to be revived. This was one of several attempts before final demise. This one lasted for a while, as they were seen in parades.

Al Tierney was elected President of the C.D.C.A. for the 1976-77 season. He was a real workhorse. The super workhorse, Don Daber, was re-elected as Vice-President. Mr. Tierney, whose Corps career has already been briefly outlined, was a University of Toronto graduate with wartime army service. He was married with children, two of whom were responsible for him getting involved with drum corps. In December of 1975 he had left St. Johns Girls of Brantford. More relevant to our story was that he had been appointed Director of the Optimists for the 1976 competitive season. Retrospect shows that he was a good person to have around, to oversee all the changes that were in the offing.

Dick Brown, founder of the Etobicoke Lancers, had been elected Etobian of the week. This award, well intentioned, hardly reflects his work. He put together the Junior “C”



1976: Seneca Optimists rehearsing

championships, founded the Lancers and oversaw its development. Like Al Baggs, he had started in Scouting, playing in the Toronto Region Scout Trumpet Band. Also like Al Baggs, he got hooked on Drum and Bugle Corps. He was a founding member of the Midtowners Drum Corps in 1956. Later, he founded the Golden Monarchs, another Corps, under the North York Lions Club. He was Monarchs' Corps Director in 1962, and National Secretary of the C.D.C.A. In 1968, he became Treasurer of the Toronto Optimists. Shortly after, in the fall of 1969, he founded the Lancers. There is more, but I think you get the picture.



1976: Seneca Optimists (Michigan City)

The C.D.C.A. award of merit this year went to John Robins. He had been associated with Drum Corps for over twenty years. Awarded at the Annual C.D.C.A. "Symposium", Don Daber had been the first recipient. Other news from this August gathering was that Vince Macciocchi would remain as Chief Judge. New Caption Chief, bugles, would be Mr. Peter Brown while the new Caption Chief, percussion, would be Ron Kaiser. Jack Roberts held his post on M&M, while Larry Blondell retained his position for colour guards. A decision made was that D.C.I. age rules would now apply regarding Canadian Nationals.

Toronto Optimists and Seneca Princemen merge

All of this news, interesting and relevant as it is, was overshadowed by the major news of 1976. Brought about by a chance remark, its ramifications were extensive. This was the merger of the Toronto Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps and the Seneca Princemen Drum and Bugle Corps. One immediate effect, of course, meant that there was now one less Corps on the scene.

Background

The beginning of all this had its roots in 1975. Al Tierney and Wolfgang Petschke, directors of the Optimists and Princemen, while watching a show, observed that without size no Corps had much of a chance of getting anywhere. From there, it was a short step to discussing a merger. Many details had to be ironed out, politically as well as technically.

These Corps were considered two of the best in Canada and each had



1976: Seneca Optimists concert

earned these considerations because of its own traditions and methods. All this had to be reconciled. It turned out to be much easier than might have been imagined.

The Optimists held 12 Canadian National titles, 4 International titles, and 10 Ontario titles. They were the only Corps, ever, to win 11 consecutive National titles.

The Seneca Princemen also had an imposing history. Formed in 1961, as the Scarborough Firefighters Trumpet Band, they had worked up to a Drum Corps. They had outdone most other units by winning National titles at three levels. Novice Class in 1965, Junior “B” Class in 1970, and Junior “A” Class in 1974. In 1972, Seneca College became their sponsor. They hence had their own long, proud tradition.



1975: Seneca Princemen

In some quarters, this was regarded as a takeover of one Corps by a bigger Corps. Had it been seen as such, it would not have worked as well as it did, with executive and members of both units meshing almost immediately and working smoothly, together. There was some dissatisfaction, which resulted in a falling away of some people. This is almost inevitable. We saw it in 1958 with the Optimist Trumpet Band and Danforth Crusaders. Eventually, on February 8th, after much planning, politicking, and maneuvering, here is how things settled.

Sponsorship, Instructors, etc.

This would be: The Seneca Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps, Toronto, Ontario Canada. Headquarters and main indoor rehearsal place, Seneca College, Don Mills, Ontario.

- Corps Director. Allan J. Tierney
- Assistant Director. Wolfgang Petschke
- Sponsors. Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology
The Optimist Club of York-Toronto Inc.
- Publicity. Don Daber
- Instructors
 - Program Co-Ordinator. . . . Gary “Chops” Czapinski
 - Bugles. Peter Byrne, Myron Melnyk
 - Percussion. Sam Kays, Al Murray, Pat Irvine
 - Guard Co-Ordinator. Marie Kas
 - Silks. Wendy Paquin
 - Rifle Instructor. Debbie Miller
 - Drill. Gord Oxenham, Tom Furiano, Gilles Paquin
 - Drum Majors. Mike Williams, Dawn Canning

Colour Guard Captain. . . . Laura King

Marching Members: 128

- Bugles 58
- Percussion 30
- Colour Guard 26 flags, 10 rifles
- National Colours 2
- Commanders 2

There it was, the new Corps. Marching members, instructors, executive, all of them experienced. Could this big new Corps challenge the one year older Corps across town? Could it make inroads into previously uncharted territory? We shall see. Anybody, who is aware of the local Corps scene, as it existed at the time, can see that the names listed are heavily in favour of the Optimists. This is true, and helped reinforce the rumour of a takeover. However, to the best of my knowledge, all of the Seneca people stayed, were used, and proved to be invaluable. The lack of friction was evident from the beginning, as the new unit, from day one, got down to work.

A Distinct Uniform

What helped all this to happen was the selection of a uniform distinct from that of either of the founding Corps. A brilliant yellow, cadet-style uniform, replaced the green of the Optimists and the red of the Princemen. If any tears were shed, they were not evident.

What was evident was a common desire to get on with it, win Nationals, make D.C.I. These goals fuelled the machine and inspired the events of the next few years.

The Author and the Equipment Department

We have left out one important, if subsidiary, detail. The equipment department. Mr. Evert Botterweg took the people that he needed from both Corps, moulding them into the kind of instrument that he wanted. He had been with the Optimists for many years, as had, his wife, Doreen. This couple brought with them to this new creation extensive knowledge and experience.

One more item before we move on. In 1975, your author returned to Drum Corps. I would often go to watch the Optimists, my old Corps, practice and, in the process, became familiar with some of them. At first I knew no one. Eventually, I became acquainted with



1976: the author, Colin Hedworth (centre), and the publisher, Bob Carell (striped top), with the rest of the Seneca Optimists equipment department

Mr. Evert Botterweg. Evert said that if I was going to come out as often as I did, I might as well come and work for them. I agreed, and thus, thirteen years after leaving, I was back at it. Due to all the changes, it was almost a whole new ball game, with much to be learned. So, this was how I got to be in at the start of the Seneca Optimists. And I was also in at the start of the Toronto Optimists. Then, as now, I was an eyewitness, so for the next of our tale, we shall have this to aid us.

Corps Schedule, Music, etc

Awaiting this Corps was an impressive schedule. It included two exhibitions, four parades, and twenty-five contests, thirteen of them in the United States. Mr. Tierney, like Mr. Baggs of yesteryear, plunged his Corps right into the thick of it.

From the first day, there was much enthusiasm. Since attendance at winter and spring rehearsals averaged 90% the program moved forward at a fast pace. Numbers even grew a bit, as others, from outside, were attracted. Anyone could join; you did not have to be from either of the original Corps.

The music, reflecting current trends, was a few long numbers tilted toward classical, semi classical, and popular.

- ▶ Mahler's 7th Symphony Finale
- ▶ Farandole
- ▶ Indian Lady
- ▶ Road Ode

To help put all this together, drills had been practised in the spacious gym at Seneca College, and a camp weekend was arranged. On April 24th and 25th a first weekend music camp was held at the Seneca College, King Campus in Aurora, Ontario. The regular May weekend camp of music and drill, would be held at Flesherton, Ontario, a former Optimist location.

In a light-hearted fashion, Bob Duggan, Director of the Oakland Crusaders, presented Al Tierney with a certificate good for five points at any contest in June 1976. Tierney wondered if it was worth anything without the signature of Vince Macciocchi, Chief Judge.

The Krescendos Corps from Peterborough, now had a larger Corps and were having their music arranged by California arrangers. They, along with the Dutchmen of Kitchener and the Seneca Optimists, would all be wearing new uniforms this year.

Bugles now in use included: Contra Bass, French Horn, Soprano, Bass Baritone, Mellophone, Baritone and Flugelhorn. In 1958, there had just been Baritone, French Horn and Soprano.



1976: Seneca Optimists first drill rehearsal

A Corps in Aurora, the Ambassadors, under the direction of Paul and Bev Ranson, had on their instructional staff:

Horns: Ray Bassett, Steve Dunn

Drums: Dave Phillips, Mike Robinson

These people were all members of the Seneca Optimists. There was no restriction on this kind of activity, as the Optimists had once seen fit to impose.

Information Drum Corps, a C.D.C.A. publication since 1972, under the direction of Al Tierney, advertised the Toronto Optimists 1975 yearbook. It was forty pages,

a pictorial record of the year, that sold for \$3.00 For any that were in it, it was more than good value for the money. Green Capsule Comments had ceased to exist in its original format. There was no green Corps anymore, as there was no Optimists anymore. The famous publication, in a clever move, was reconstituted as “Gold Capsule Comments”, its new name alluding to the yellow uniforms now in use. Thus renamed, it continued, equally as good, equally informative.

Information Drum Corps, itself, was a newsletter for all members of C.D.C.A. Corps. It had a circulation of 4,500. Its editor was who else but Don Daber.

By this time, it was noted, by those in the know, that the anticipated problems regarding the Seneca Optimists had not developed. Conversely, some problems not expected arose. Many of these were teething pains that would be resolved as time wore on.

The Oakland Crusaders were, this year, the host of the 1976 Individuals Contest, held at Etobicoke Collegiate. It turned out to be one of the biggest and best in years, a real tribute to the Crusaders.

The Seneca Optimists did well in the percussion division, but did not fare well in the brass. Oakland had six wins in the brass division, Seneca none. Where they did do well was in the rifle and sabre division.

The Individual results were not totally an indication of what would happen on the field this year, though the guard captions were.



1976: Seneca Optimists rehearsing



1976: Seneca Optimists (Michigan City)



1976: Seneca Optimists rehearsing

The Cadet/Lancers, growing in quality, had a tour booked in the United States this year, from July 1st to July 5th. They would be doing parades and contests in New York and Pennsylvania.

A man, whose name will appear later in this story, was John Jones. He started in Drum Corps with the Pickering Blue Notes, and then went to De La Salle. Staying with them, he, eventually, became the Personnel Director, Director, then Business Manager. Due to the merger of last year, he was now Business Manager for the Oakland Crusaders.

The tales of the two Corps that we have been discussing are the only ones that really apply now. This year, in the Canadian Junior scene, they were the only ones that would have any meaning, competition wise, as they strove to outdo each other. Other Corps were of good quality, providing entertaining shows, but these two were in their own league, score-wise, in Canada. As best we can, with the scanty information available, we shall follow their fortunes. The Oakland Crusaders had already cracked the charmed circle of the D.C.I. top twelve. The Seneca Optimists had that as one of their goals for this year. The latest up and comer, Offensive Lions, from Jonquiere, Quebec, would make their presence felt quite a bit later.

The Tour Begins

The first contest for which we have any records took place on July 10, but there were others before that. So, maybe, fortunately, our eyewitness memories can come into play. Two weeks after the Corps camp in Flesherton, the Seneca Optimists entered their first contest of the year. It was on June 5th, at Borough of York Stadium, in Toronto. Also in it were the Oakland Crusaders. This was the first meeting, ever, of these two units. For Seneca, it was also their first public field show and competition.

That the merger had worked well was proven by the fact that the Seneca Optimists defeated the Oakland Crusaders in their first ever competition. A difference between now and last year was that the newest



1976: Oakland Crusaders (DCI Finals)

Corps had started out on top. In 1975, the Oakland Corps had started out in second, picking up steam as the year progressed. Seneca Optimists were off to a good start. It continued. A second victory over the Crusaders was recorded one week later, at Seagram Stadium in Waterloo. Things were looking good until Ajax, one week later. Having a reputation, for any Optimist Corps, as “loser city”, this strange tradition was upheld. For the first time in three contests, Oakland Crusaders won at this location. As if to bear out whatever misgivings that our Corps had about Ajax, the very next day, in Peterborough,



1976: Seneca Optimists (Michigan City)

Ontario, the tables were turned, again. The Seneca Optimists scored a full five-point victory over their rivals. Strange business, this. So strange, in fact, that the future would see some reaction to this situation. Following in rapid succession were contests in Welland and Kitchener, Ontario, against the same Corps. Then Tonawanda, NY, Kingston, NY, Oswego, NY and Fort Wayne, Indiana. These shows were against other Corps, in neutral territory. Seneca Optimists were received well wherever they went, scoring high, never last, even winning one or two. Fort Wayne, Indiana, was part of the final leg of a U.S. tour, after which they went to Michigan City, Indiana. It is for this affair that we now possess some information.



1976: Seneca Optimists (World Open)

On July 10th, less than half way through the season, the Seneca Optimists found themselves up against some of the best, south of the border.

Their show found favour, as they pulled into third place.

1st	Phantom Regiment.....	78.15
2nd	27th Lancers.....	76.35
3rd	Seneca Optimists.	71.85
4th	Cavaliers.....	70.80
5th	Blue Stars.	66.70

These were all good Corps, and Seneca defeated two of them, the Cavaliers and Blue Stars. This was a real first for the new unit. Probably, the first time for all the members of the founding Corps. It was an indication of how well the merger had worked.

Back in Canada, it was to Birchmount Stadium, in Scarborough, and Kitchener, on July 17th and 18th. A football game in Hamilton, Ontario, then provided a brief respite from the pressures of competition.

On July 31st, the Seneca Optimists, the “Mellow Yellow” as they were now being tagged, took off for Ogdensburg, N.Y. Their main Canadian rival, Oakland Crusaders, was on a U.S. tour. During this, they placed fourth, on July 31st, eight points behind the winning Phantom Regiment. Three weeks earlier, Seneca Optimists had lost to them by only 6.30, so the season still looked very promising.



1976: Seneca Optimists (DCI)

Next, in Ottawa, Ontario was the Canadian Capital Open Contest. Seneca competed against a field of Canadian and American juniors, minus the Oakland Crusaders. At this point, it would have been good to be competing against them. Seneca swept the field with one of their classiest displays yet, almost eleven points over the second place Offensive Lions of Jonquiere, Quebec. This result showed it was a one Corps contest. It also showed that the rest of the Canadian season was likely to be a two Corps affair.

Only two days later, the Oakland Corps, still on their U.S. tour, was only four and a half behind Phantom Regiment. There was much action to go on yet, but it was evident how things were shaping up regarding the Canadian scene.

August 10th, Pontiac, Michigan, D.C.I. North. In a field of all D.C.I. Corps, Seneca pulled off a fifth place, scoring 80.5. This put them behind the Cavaliers, whom they had previously, defeated, by over two points. The California Corps, Blue Devils, who were far ahead of everyone this year, won it. Seneca did manage to defeat the 27th Lancers, another first.

Ominously, on the same date, the Oakland Crusaders placed only 0.45 behind Phantom Regiment, of Rockford, Illinois. With a score of 83.65, they were seen to be rapidly improving, just as they had last year. Their U.S. scores were now surpassing those of the Seneca Optimists.



1976: Seneca Optimists rehearsing

In Canada, the Offensive Lions were definitely a good Junior “A” Corps, destined for future honours; however, it was doubtful whether they could make any inroads this year. The Seneca – Oakland rivalry was the one sparking the most interest. As yet, its outcome was undetermined.



1976: Seneca Optimists (DCI Finals)

Rochester, N.Y., was the next arena for our Corps. It was still somewhat of a Corps town, but not the hotbed of activity that it had once been. It would be once again. Lots of D.C.A. shows would be held here. D.C.A. was the senior version of D.C.I., though no doubt with some differences.

One day after Rochester, the Seneca Optimists appeared in Verdun, a suburb of Montreal, Quebec. A top-notch contest, featuring mostly American Drum Corps it was won

by the Santa Clara Vanguard. In second were the Madison Scouts, with 86.35. They were the 1975 D.C.I. champions but were having trouble this year. Blue Devils were conquering all.

Third place at this tough venue was our Corps, the Seneca Optimists, scoring 81.90. This, placing them above the resurgent Casper Troopers, was a good showing against more experienced, longer established Corps from south of the border. Their score also compared favourably with that of the Oakland Crusaders, in the United States. There was still room for optimism.

The Canadian Nationals were less than four weeks away, but there were still some very big contests before that. Very big.

For the Seneca Optimists, two of them were the World Open in Lynn, Massachusetts, and the C.Y.O. Nationals in Boston. Both were top rated shows, but neither were indicative of Drum Corps supremacy in the United States. That distinction now belonged to the D.C.I. Nationals. Before the advent of D.C.I., it had been both the V.F.W. and American Legion Nationals.

Union City, New Jersey, the last home of Blessed Sacrament, was the scene of the final contest before D.C.I. Nationals, for the Seneca Optimists. As the new unit, this would be their first attempt to crack the charmed circle of the big twelve. Everybody wanted to accomplish this feat so not much was allowed to interfere with the smooth running of things. D.C.I. shows are run along very professional lines, and any misdemeanours or lapses can be costly in terms of points, even before you get on the field. These situations are where a good Corps Director proves his worth, and Al Tierney was one of the best. The date for this grand spectacle was August 18th-21st. The location, again, was Veterans Stadium, in Philadelphia.



1976: Seneca Optimists (Michigan City)

D.C.I. Nationals

Adding spice to this for the Seneca Corps, trying to break in for the first time, was the presence of the Oakland Crusaders. They had made the top twelve the year before, placing as high as sixth. Both Corps had done well in the United States this year, and the outcome was bound to be less than predictable.

The preliminaries showed how things were shaping up. It was won by the Blue Devils, with a score of 91.25, but there was no surprise at that outcome. Still trying to preserve their 1975 status, only two points behind were the rising Madison Scouts. Four Corps back, in sixth place, with a score of 86.15 were the Oakland Crusaders.



1976: Seneca Optimists rifles

With numerous corps in the prelims one's score and placing were not known until sometime later, after tabulation was complete. As a result, one did not know who had made the finals until all were finished. Seneca Optimists, after doing one of their best shows of the year, returned to their billet to await the results. These would determine their immediate future.

They were billeted in Valley Forge again, this time in a Military College barracks. There, they relaxed, practised, took it easy, but really everyone was awaiting the outcome of the preliminaries.

A phone call signalled the moment. A great shout of joy went up. They had captured eleventh place, making the finals. The score, 83.50. They were over the Troopers, and only 0.75 out of eighth. Their Canadian rivals, the Oakland Crusaders, were up by 2.65 over the Seneca Optimists.



1976: Seneca Optimists

Now, though, come what may, it was on to the night finals. This was to produce some change in standings. Seneca Optimists slipped back to twelfth place, thereby remaining behind the Oakland Corps who, playing well, retained their middle of the pack standing, with a substantial lead over the Seneca Corps. Still, they were more happy than sad. This outing was a definite plus. In their first year, they had secured a firm footing in the ranks of D.C.I.

Now it was back to Canada. There were still the Canadian Nationals to contend with. This was at Seagram Stadium, Waterloo. By the time it came around, the mood of elation from Philadelphia had evaporated. It was replaced by a lethargic resignation. They had lost to Oakland at Philadelphia, so could not possibly win at the Canadian Nationals. This was the mood that took hold. It was an unhealthy indication of U.S. influence on Canadian Drum Corps.

As far as this Corps was concerned, they had lost all their incentive and ambition. Nobody wanted to do anything, thinking that now all was preordained. It is not necessarily so, but this mood was to reappear at other times. As with the Optimist Corps of 1961, it took one of the executive to kick the stuffing out and get thing moving again. Mr. Evert Botterweg injected the necessary spirit. He was, always had been, effective in more ways than one.

The Corps picked itself up, dragging itself out of the slough of despair into which it had slid. Practices got underway that would lead to a good contest at the Nationals.

In the Junior "C" Division, the Lancers took first place, scoring 78.80. They were now the Junior "C" Champions for 1976.

The Junior "A" preliminaries showed what could be done, and would not have happened, had the Seneca Optimists continued in their funky condition.

1st	Oakland Crusaders.....	81.85
2nd	Seneca Optimists.	80.80
3rd	Dutchmen.	61.60
4th	Peterborough Krescendos.	49.70

So, the Corps had managed to pull themselves to within 1.05 of first place. If not a victory, it was an improvement, and, more importantly, a sign that success in Canada does not always hinge on events in the U.S.A.

The Finals

Here, a big spread on drums gave the Oakland Crusaders their second National title. Even though Seneca had improved to 83.65 in the night show Crusaders had done better. Seneca finished in second place, 2.45 behind Crusaders' 86.1.



1976: Seneca Optimists (DCI Finals)

A large spread on drums was responsible for much of this. 1.6 behind the Crusaders to be exact. In earlier years, drums had been a strong point of the Optimist Corps. Now the shoe was on the other foot. In fact, the Oakland Crusaders' drum line was to become famous.

Seneca Optimists best caption was marching and maneuvering, taking first in both execution and general effect. These usually go hand in hand. Summaries of the year, by neutral observers, were very revealing.

Seneca Optimists “had one of the finest shows of 1976 with dazzling yellow uniforms and a wonderful Czapinski drill. Pleasing, if not great, music. Show with a few rough edges, but which did bring them firmly into the big time.” and “A magnificent Corps.” Rough edges can be ironed out.

The Oakland Corps commented on by the same observer, were said to have musically, a much better show than Seneca does. Their “Swan Lake” was, to all, a spine-tingling production. At the 1976 Nationals, overall, the Crusaders had looked sharper than the rest. They had deserved their first place score of 86.10.



1976: Seneca Optimists Drum Major, Mike Williams

So that was how things stood, in Canada, at the end of the 1976 competition scene. For the Seneca Optimists, there was next year to look forward to, changes to be made, a good first year to build on. They had beaten some of the best around.

More events were still to take place this year, for others, as well as our Corps. Following what seemed to be a trend, the Flying Dutchmen of Kitchener and the Dutch Boy Cadets merged to form a new Junior “A” Corps, “Northstar”. Their director would be none other than Bob Christie who had, briefly, been Director of the Toronto Optimists. He had lately been with the St. Johns Girls of Brantford.

In Early September, the Seneca Optimists had appeared at the CNE, for an evening of pageantry that had included bands as well as Drum Corps. Also in this display were the Oakland Crusaders. Both were well received, but the music of the Crusaders was more pleasing than that of the Seneca Corps. This bore out earlier observations and would lead to changes.

On September 25th, the Corps helped launch a new parade Corps in Owen Sound. This was the Georgian Lancers, and Seneca played their show at a local school in order to publicize the Drum Corps. There was not much activity in this region.



1976: Seneca Optimists rehearsing

Progressing, the D.C.I. Rules Committee made a decision to allow the use of two-valve bugles. Piston valves, rather than one piston, one rotary. Rotary valves never were perfected, always breaking down. This decision helped overcome the fact that the use of slip slides was illegal. The Drum Corps bugle was still unique, in that there were certain notes it still could not play. Were three valves far off?

A final announcement was that the D.C.I. Nationals were to be held in Denver, Colorado, in 1977, at Mile High Stadium, the home of the Denver Broncos football team. Preliminaries would be in the foothills town of Boulder, Colorado. This would be the first time D.C.I. Nationals had been held west of the Mississippi.

The Canadian Nationals would be at Birchmount Stadium, in Scarborough, Ontario, scene of many a confrontation.

So, for the Seneca Optimists Drum and Bugle Corps, it was back to the drawing board, buckle down to work. There was a large crowd left, ready to go at it again.



1976: Seneca Optimists (DCI Finals)