

# Don Daber, drum corps' first public relations promoter

Don Daber was born in Kirkland Lake, ONT, on May 2, 1929. In 1949 he moved to Toronto to study at the Ontario College of Art (*now the Ontario College of Art and Design*). After graduating, he began a career in graphics and photography.

He moved to Ottawa, ONT, for his first full-time job at Crawley Films where he worked as a graphic artist. In 1956, Don and a partner started their own company called Advertising Art Associates. One of their clients was The Boy Scouts Association of Canada. He did a lot of artwork and photography for them, including comic books about Scouting adventures, work that is very similar to what he later did for the Toronto Optimists.

In 1960, he discovered drum and bugle corps and his involvement with corps progressed at lightning speed. His first direct contact appears to have been at a Scout House show in May 1960. Seeing this show inspired him to write an article on drum corps in hopes that it would be published in *Weekend Magazine*, a publication that was distributed with the Saturday edition of the *Toronto Telegram* newspaper.

About a week after seeing Scout House, Don happened upon De La Salle drum corps (*they were giving an outdoor performance on their school's football field*) and a couple of weeks later he was at a Toronto Optimists practice. Within a few days of that practice he went to a contest in Kitchener, ONT, with the Optimists and the following week he joined Opti on a trip to Rochester, NY.

In early July that year, he asked Al Baggs, the Optimists' corps director, whether he could be official photographer for the Optimists. Two weeks later Mr. Baggs asked Don to join them on every trip and, at the beginning of August, Don's connection with the Optimists was cemented when he was presented with a very large membership card (3' x 2') for the Optimists.

Don also made it to the 1960 Dream contest in Jersey City, NJ. Since he didn't drive, no one is sure how he made it. However, he took some photos at that show and submitted a preliminary outline of his article on drum corps to *Weekend Magazine*. Unfortunately, they told him they had reached their quota of "music stories" for the year.

However, they did ask him to submit the concept the following year (*in 1964 the Toronto Telegram published a two-page spread on the Toronto Optimists*). Although the *Weekend Magazine* article failed to materialize, Don's relationship with the Optimists was very successful and continues to this day.

Don's connection with the greater drum corps community began in July 1960 when he joined two members of the Optimists executive, Al Baggs and Clare Reid, at a meeting of what was then called the Canadian Trumpet Band Association. As a result of this meeting, he was given a contract to do the artwork and program book for the upcoming championship contest.

Don also designed the cover for the record album of the 1960 Canadian Championships.

During his years with the Optimists (*Toronto Optimists and Seneca Optimists*), Don was a photographer, the publicity director and the corps director (more than once). He was also the creator and editor of *GCC*, *Green Capsule Comments* with the Toronto Optimists and *Gold Capsule Comments* with the Seneca Optimists.

Don's cartoons were frequently included in editions of *GCC* and many were featured in the tabloid newspaper *Drum Corps World* between 1971 and 2000, all of which can be found in the pages of Steve Vickers' book, "The Art of *Drum Corps World*."


In addition to his work with the Optimists, he found time to work with both the Ontario and Canadian Drum Corps Associations, serving as a photographer, publicity director and board member. In his spare time he wrote articles for various drum corps publications, produced the artwork for a number of record albums (*almost three dozen for the Revere, MA-based Fleetwood label*) as well as designing posters and doing the program artwork for a variety of contests.

A section in the Optimists Alumni Photo Gallery is dedicated to Don (*it can be found under "The Old Days"*). This section contains images of some of Don's artwork as well as samples of the promotional material that he created. The section of the Web site covers the years 1952 through about 1980 featuring content for the Toronto Optimists, Seneca Optimists, the Optimists' feeder corps as well as numerous other Canadian and U.S. corps.

The majority of photos in these albums were taken by Don and also contains many images taken by Doug Smith. If the name of the photographer is known, it is shown beneath the medium-size version of the image (*not visible under either the thumbnail or the full-size image.*)


To view the extensive gallery of work by Don Daber and others, go to [www.optimists-alumni.org/](http://www.optimists-alumni.org/) and selection "Photo gallery." Or go to the Publications listing on DCX and look at The Art of Drum Corps World book.






## CORPS WORLD FAX

**IT'S A FACT-** In 1976 the 27TH LANCERS appeared on The MIKE DOUGLAS TV Show. Lancer D.M. Jerry Boyle was interviewed and Comedian VICTOR BERGE wore the Lancer Uniform and also marched with the Corps during the show!



**THIS SMALL TRUCK CARRIED ALL EQUIPMENT** (It was before the use of Contra Bugles & Tymps.)

**MOST SHOWMANSHIP CORPS** in the '50's and '60's were the Cdn. Champion **PRESTON SCOUT HOUSE**. Their uniforms were distinctive... their Style of Marching was unique and they were in constant demand by most major contests in Canada and the United States.



©1987 DRUM CORPS WORLD

**11 YEARS**  
IN SEPTEMBER  
OF 1957 THE TORONTO



OPTIMISTS WERE FORMED FROM A MERGER OF A BOY SCOUT PARADE CORPS AND MEMBERS OF A HIGH SCHOOL AIR CADET BAND. THEIR FIRST YEAR IN JR. "A" THEY BEAT OUT THE THEN CHAMPION PRESTON SCOUT HOUSE TO BECOME CANADA'S NATIONAL



JR. CHAMPION-FOR AN AMAZING **11** STRAIGHT YEARS-1950-1960. EVERY YEAR THEY WERE CLOSELY CHASED BY TORONTO'S DE LA SALLE OAKLANDS (A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL CORPS) WHO FINALLY WON THE TOP HONOR IN 1969. IS THIS ALSO A RECORD FOR PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION?

## new crests!

PARTIALLY TO IRRITATE THEIR COMPETITORS, THE OPTIMISTS RESIDENT ARTIST, DON DABER, CREATED A NEW CREST FOR EACH CHAMPIONSHIP YEAR ALONG



## The Boston Bugler

A Salute to Boston & Area Drum Corps  
Conquest of The East!



**DRUM CORPS**  
567



## TOM HEALY "Keeping Corps Memories Alive"

### 1989 REUNION

TOM HEALY ATTENDED A REUNION OF THE CORPS OF HIS YOUTH THE MAJESTIC KNIGHTS OF CHARLESTOWN, MA. THAT MEMORABLE EVENING EVERYONE TURNED BACK TIME 30 YEARS TO 1959 AND INTO THE 60'S. AS THE BEER CONTINUED TO FLOW INTO THE EVENING TALK WENT TO A NEWSLETTER TO COVER THE "GOOD OLD DAYS" OF THE ACTIVITY IN THE BOSTON AREA. IN THE SOBER WEEK THAT FOLLOWED THEY ACTUALLY FOLLOWED THROUGH AND A FEW ISSUES WERE TYPESET AND PRINTED. MOSTLY THROUGH WORD-OF-MOUTH DRUM CORPS 5-6-7 CAUGHT ON. ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO BE ISSUED 4 TIMES A YEAR, THERE WERE SO MANY STORIES THAT IT WENT MONTHLY. THE CONTENTS INCLUDED A "MEMORIES" COLUMN... A "TRIVIA" LIST... "FLASH BACK" SCORES... "PEOPLE & PERSONALITIES"... AND CURRENT EVENTS COMING UP! OLD PHOTOS?... YES THERE ARE MANY INCLUDED IN NUMBERS OF EDITIONS.

### MASSACHUSETTS DRUM CORPS HALL OF FAME

ANOTHER POSITIVE FROM "D.C. 5-6-7" WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MASS. HALL OF FAME AND ANYONE FROM THE BOSTON AREA OF THE PAST CAN BE NOMINATED BY THE READERS. A CLEAR & CONCISE BIO OF THE PERSON NOMINATED IS A REQUIREMENT FOR THE "HALL OF FAME" COMMITTEE. ED HAYWARD, A FORMER MEMBER OF ST. KEVINS, OWNS THE COMPANY THAT PRINTS THE PAPER.

Advanced Print  
Management, Inc.

10 Waltham Street  
Wilmington, MA 01887  
Telephone (508) 657-7878  
Fax (508) 657-0070

Ed Hayward

## 2 Green Machines!

CHICAGO CAVALIERS and OPTIMISTS • BOTH CORPS HAD THE SAME COLORS- GREEN, BLACK AND WHITE • UNIFORMS WERE SIMILAR • THE OPTIMISTS COMPETED IN THE MIDWEST AND THE CAVALIERS IN CANADA - OFTEN BOTH IN THE SAME CONTEST. • MANY MEMBERS OF BOTH CORPS BECAME GOOD FRIENDS. • AS A GAG BOTH CORPS MARCHED OUT TOGETHER AT RETREAT - AT THE "BLUE & GOLD" CHAMPIONSHIP. • THE PHOTO OF THIS MERGER BECAME A L.P./33 RECORD COVER FEATURING BOTH CORPS - "THE GREEN MACHINES" ALBUM TITLE: "THE BOYS IN GREEN"



WITH BUTTONS FOR THEIR PANTS. MANY OF THE MEMBERS REPLACED THEIR JACKET CRESTS EACH YEAR WITH THE NEWER ONE.

THE WAYME WERE  
1950-60-70: Mr. Daber

97-9

# daber's doodles



(C) 2001 DRUM CORPS WORLD/Don Daber 416.604.0913

*PRETEND YOU'RE THE CORPS' BULLY—  
I WANT TO TRY SOMETHING—*



AND FRIEND

KNIGHTS  
GARFIELD  
SAC  
OPTIMIST  
CAVALIER  
DEL  
CYO  
WASH  
EAST MASS  
SKY-  
LINE  
CABS  
OPTI  
KNIGHTS

KNIGHTS  
27  
MARION  
CADETS  
VANGUARD  
TROOPER  
VFW  
12  
INDIAN  
BOSTON  
CRUSADER  
LA  
SALLE  
ST. PAUL  
SCOUTS  
BLUE  
STARS  
REBS  
ST. JOES  
SABES  
V.C.  
BLUE  
ANGELS  
MONARCH  
KNIGHTS

COLT  
G.S.  
MARK  
TWAIN  
IMP  
32  
BRISS  
GABES  
LA  
SALLE  
NUT  
ST. JOES  
REBS  
V.C.  
REBORN  
MONARCH  
KNIGHTS

DON TABER

DON. DABER

