

A NEW ??? CANADIAN CORPS HITS TORONTO AREA...

A SATURDAY MORNING
PHOTO STORY

PHOTOS BY DON DABER.



Sadie Mau Mau Exits ‘61 — Enters ‘62 with the “Pear Pickers” *(from the Jan 1962 issue of Green Capsule Comments)*

Well, after much jollification and mirth, gorging and gaiety here we are settling back into our everyday humdrum little lives. Oh, we still have the festivities of the “New Year” to entice us into surviving the ill effects of our Christmas folly. However, I still insist that a week is barely sufficient time in which to recoup. New Years should definitely be postponed for at least one month after Christmas.

Christmas certainly hit us with all its enormity this year. It seems that one day there was nothing...then PANIC. Unfortunately, everyone seemed to push their own little private panic buttons on the same day...all of a sudden there were CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, CHRISTMAS TREES, CHRISTMAS JACKED—UP PRICES, Christmas frantic shoppers and above all, Christmas PARADES. Yes, parades. The delight of little children (usually past their twenties) with their shining eyes and red cheeks, clattering up the sidewalks and making any last minute shopping even more unbearable. I myself, had the misfortune (or maybe it was fortune) of accidentally becoming involved with a Santa Clause Parade.

Being a great bargain hunter, I had traveled some 40 miles to the west end of Toronto where I had been informed by a disreputable person that an even more disreputable Meat Market now had a tremendous sale of rhinoceros steaks, and rhinoceros steaks being one of my weaknesses, I partook to make the long journey. West Toronto seemed like the rest of Toronto...overrun with children, and on this day they had all been let loose from their basements In order to watch this small, annual Santa Clause Parade.

Now, I don’t usually stand like an idiot, during mid-winter, on a crowded sidewalk in West Toronto, to watch a mythical old man in red make a fool of himself. However on this one day I was caught, and I did (stand on the sidewalk and watch, that is.) Then I heard THAT SOUND. ..the undeniable sound of DRUM CORPS...the music was GREAT; a little unpolished, but great...so naturally I just had to find out who they were. I managed to stand on someone’s shoulders for a while in order to get a good view...and one thing I will say about West Toronto, the kids here are kind of weak...and so, not being able to get a little elevation, I grabbed a popsicle from a small girl and pushed my way to the front of the crowd, just in time to see The Port Credit Saints go marching smartly by. And the rest of the parade went on, and on...till, near the end, prancing down the street in all their glory can a real weird outfit, Who they were I didn’t know, but if the Salvation Army had been on hand, the nearest hostel would have been put to immediate use...these boys were undoubtedly poverty stricken...their clothes hung in rags and tatters, and some had odd shoes, and some....well, I tell you, I could have cried when I saw those pathetic boys!!

As they passed by me, and in between dabbing the freezing tears from my eyes, and licking my popsicle, I managed to look closely at those poor little souls, and believe it or not, they were happy. I tell you, HAPPINESS shone from those anemic eyes. They were completely oblivious of their shoddy dress, and my heart went out to those boys. But their Drum Major!!! If I ever felt PRIDE for a person, I felt pride for him. Dedication, I tell you there was dedication written all over that man.

Here was a lost soul, aged and bent, desperately in need of care and attention leading his boys in their wonderful part of the parade. ...And to think, that every Christmas I have cried over the “Little Match Girl”. Here was a whole Corps of “Little Match Boys”. I could picture them later, burning their flag poles in order to keep warm, and then, when the flag poles were all burned, this wonderful old man, burning his treasured mace so that they might all be warm to the end. I left the scene with sadness burning in my heart.

I later learned, from a reliable source, that these were THE PORT CREDIT PEAR PICKERS. Where they came from nobody knows...or where they have gone. From the name, we can only gather that this wonderful Corps wander from orchard to orchard...gathering pears where they can!

I just pray that the “Pear Pickers” will somehow find the strength to survive the cruel winter, and may have the fortune to make themselves better known during the coming Corps season. Just a little financial help from some kind person would give these boys the encouragement they need. I say financial help, because undoubtedly, if a Corps ever needed a new uniform, the Pear Pickers do...or at least matching rags.

And so, to the “Port Credit Pear Pickers”, in whatever snow-bound Orchard you may be, a Happy New Year...and may you have a wonderful and successful Corps season,... and matching rags. Naturally, the same good wish is extended to the OPTIMISTS, who although wallowing in wealth, have everything Corps-wise that the PEAR PICKERS have.

—Sadie.



*Port Credit Pear Pickers
1961*