

Words and Music

Summer 2015

Festival News: Pleasanton to Host New Grade One Format

By John Biggar, Past President, WUSPBA
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As the Piping and Drumming Chairman for the Caledonian Club of San Francisco, I am constantly faced with the pressure to meet the budget figure handed to me by the Chief and current slate of officers. As the years go by, some officers are big fans of the pipe band scene and others have different favorites, such as

dancing or heavy athletics.

Pleasanton's 150th Anniversary!

Few onlookers are aware that there are 36 different committees all competing to present a case for increasing their budget. We need to have a big crowd of people pay at the gate to fund all the Scottish things that we do to entertain and educate the public.

The Club spends a boatload of money to provide a great venue for the hobby we love, and sometimes we don't make it all back at the gate. Fortunately we plan ahead and can absorb the occasional loss.

That being said, we are excited to be celebrating our 150th Annual Gathering and Games in Pleasanton on September 4th, 5th, and 6th, 2015.

The Cost of Bringing in Grade One Bands

Many of you remember the old days of Santa Rosa, when we routinely held a Grade One competition featuring bands from several regions of Canada and the U.S. Many of my close friends express disappointment with me for not hosting the kind of band contest they enjoyed 20 years ago.

I want to express my disappointment with the economy, the strength of the currency exchange with Canada, and the evolution of the "big band" concept adopted by the Grade One bands.

These three things are beyond the control of all the games sponsors, and have led to the death of the Grade One contests in the WUSPBA region.

The Death of Grade One Contests in the WUSPBA

We all know the names of the great-sounding pipe bands hitting the circle with 28 pipes, 12 sides and 6 tenors. They put on an incredible show, but it requires a king's ransom to fly, house and feed 40 to 50 people, many of whom are out-of- area players that I assume are being subsidized!

I don't blame the Grade One bands for trying to balance the band books by asking for the big travel dollars, but unless they are within driving distance, the sponsors just cannot afford to have them.

This then is a self-limiting experience, as there are fewer opportunities to compete before heading off to the World's Championship. In Scotland, where travel and prize money is thin, most major competitions are a short train or coach ride away!

Design of a New Invitational Contest

Faced with all the financial concerns enumerated above, I have designed a contest that should be worth watching this year in Pleasanton. In an invitational three-band contest, each Grade One unit is limited to 8 pipers, 4 sides, 2 tenors and a bass. The bands can bring as many back-ups as they want, but can only place 15 members in the circle.

This concept makes the travel money go further, equalizes the size (helping smaller bands), and allows the pipe major to feature his or her best players.

Three Top Bands Invited

The bands invited to Pleasanton this September are the L.A. Scots, Triumph

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Street and the Glasgow Police (Strathclyde). Inviting these bands still carries a hefty price tag, but I was allowed to do this because the Caledonian Club wants to do a lot of special things this year to celebrate our sesquicentennial. If this new Grade One competition approach is successful, maybe the Club will allow me to do it again in the future!

Plan to Attend; Sign Up Now

So please make plans to witness this new format, and the only Grade One venue south of Portland. In addition we will have close to 40 pipe bands in total, spread over all five grades. If your band has not signed up to compete, please enter online at “[www. The ScottishGames.com](http://www.TheScottishGames.com)” Questions can be addressed to John Biggar (Chairman) or Jeff Mann (Co-Chair).

The True Artists

Jeff Mann, President, WUSPBA
Jeffrey.Mann@hsc.utah.edu



Over the years I have had the opportunity to meet many wonderful artists. These individuals have become disciplined in their art...in their

discipline.

They have been able to take some notes and symbols, learn a lot of technical applications and somehow weave all of that

together with their interpretation of the music and make it their own.

They paint with music, they weave with rhythm, and they sculpt with phrasing. They are creators!!! They create that music that is within them. The ability to express that music within oneself is the art.

In my mind, the ones that stick with it, even when things get hard and practice sucks, are the true artists. They are performing not just for the notes or technical applications. They are not there because of duty or responsibility.

They are there practicing, putting the hours in because of their passion for that music within. They do it for the love of the music and the love of their instruments.

Music Allows Expression of Emotions

In many ways true artists' instruments become their best friends because they can play what they feel and feel what they play. Their instruments know them inside and out. When they are sad, they can play a soulful piobaireachd or slow air. Happy, then jigs, reels, 6/8s and all the rest. Drummers add the color and the rhythm. They, too, have the ability to play what they feel.

True Artists Have a Passion for the Music

In my mind, the true artists are also true to themselves. They do not betray their music or their artistry in order to get gain or to be something that they are not. The true artists recognize their strengths and their weaknesses and works HARD to develop who and what they are. They learn to have patience with their abilities.

The driver for all of this is their passion.

When things get hard, true artists' passions kick in and they work harder and practice their art with more focus and discipline. If they are still struggling, they try to find resources to help them in their development. They do not listen to others' scoffs and negativity. Putdowns are a dime a dozen. True artists know themselves and get past all of that rubbish.

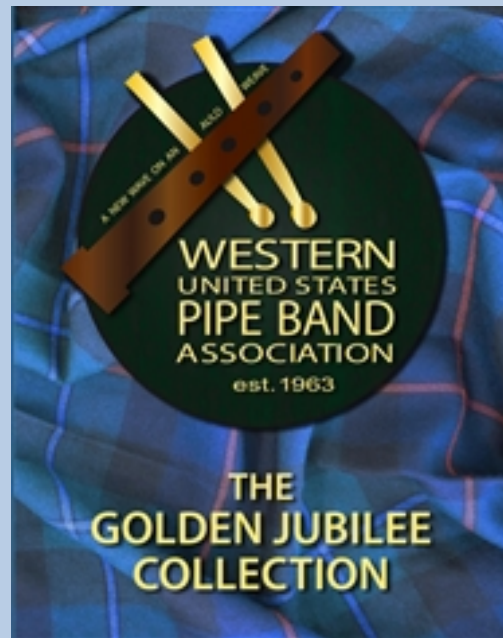
I would submit to you that everyone who works hard, puts in the time and energy, and has the passion is an artist in his or her own right. Everyone has the right to be an artist. There will always be enough room for one more artist!

A Personal Reflection

The other item for consideration that I would like to share with you is this: You do not have to be an Open or Grade 1 player to be an artist.

About a year ago I had an incredible opportunity to be in Northern California and listen to a Grade IV and V band play at practice. It was in a beautiful setting in a park area and as the bands were going through their music, the sun was beginning to set. People walking through the park were stopping to give a listen to the bands.

I was in heaven. Such a beautiful setting, listening to awesome music and being with good friends. What more could I want? That is one of those moments that I will never forget. These people, like most of you, have passion. They weren't Grade 1 or Open players, but to me they were artists.



**First-ever publication of music
from the WUSPBA !**

***Golden Jubilee Collection*
Now Available!**

The Western United States Pipe Band Association's *Golden Jubilee Collection* of new tunes by WUSPBA composers is now available! You'll definitely want this publication in your permanent collection!

Developed to celebrate the WUSPBA's 50th Anniversary in 2013, the publication includes 90 original tunes selected by the Association's Music Board.

**Just \$25 from
www.thebookpatch.com.**

I know that when I am close to perfecting a tune on the piano, for example, I can zone out all of the outside noise and distraction. I can start painting that scene as I begin to play. My mind goes to a different place where I feel what I am playing. The passion and the feeling of the music take over.

I do not need to worry about what notes to play or the tempo or the rubato or any of the technical stuff; the passion and the music just take over. I feel what I play.

Thank You for 19+ Years

It has been an incredible 19+ years being associated with all of you artists. I have truly enjoyed my involvement with the Western United States Pipe Band Association and the opportunity to serve you as the president of the association.

I hope perhaps to bump into you in the future. I wish you all the best and give you my heartfelt thanks for allowing me to have a glimpse into your lives and your artistry.

What I know now I could have never learned from a book. I have learned it all from my association with many of you. I will never be able to say thanks enough for that. And to that end, I wish you all of the very best.

Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines

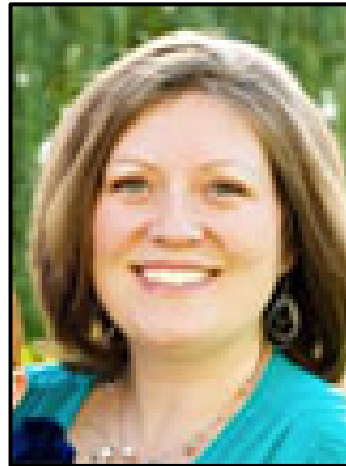
Fall 2015 Issue: September 10

Winter 2015 issue: December 10

Important WUSPBA Dates

Erin Gunn, Executive Secretary

Egunn.ec@gmail.com



Although it is the middle of the competition season, the Executive Committee is gearing up for the WUSPBA's Annual General Meeting.

Leading up to the AGM weekend, I wanted to make you aware of a few important dates to keep in mind:

Wednesday September 2nd -Bylaw and Contest Rule Proposals Due

Please include the following items when submitting a proposal:

- The correct article and paragraph numbering
- The wording as it currently appears in the Bylaws or Contest rules
- The proposed new wording
- An explanation or rationale for the change
- Please also note if any other pipe band association has a similar Bylaw or Contest Rule.

All proposals must be electronically submitted to me at egunn.ec@gmail.com. Proposals will be accepted from now until September 2nd. If you need assistance writing a proposal, or would like to have the Executive Committee review a draft

New Format & Location for the WUSPBA's 2015 Annual General Meeting

Save October 16 - 18, 2015!

**The AGM will be held in beautiful Park City, Utah,
Ski Country and home of the Sundance Film Festival.**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 17th,
starting promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Several offices will be up for election, including WUSPBA President.
There will be several Bylaw and Contest Rule changes as well.

*The AGM is the most important place to make your voice heard.
All are welcome.*

In addition to the AGM,
this year the WUSPBA is sponsoring a series of workshops,
and a special concert on Saturday evening!

The workshops series will begin Friday evening and be led by:

- Dr. Jack Lee from Simon Fraser University Pipe Band
- Ken Eller, (The Captain) from the Pipers and Pipe Band Society of Ontario and the Voice of Winter Storm
- Duncan Millar from Simon Fraser University Pipe Band

Other workshops are in the planning stages as well.
Additional information will be forthcoming soon.

Rooms are going fast! Copy the link below to book.

http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=WUSPBA%20AGM%20and%20Glenwild%20Exhibition%5Eslpc%60gccgcca%60109.00%60USD%60false%604%6010/16/15%6010/18/15%609/25/15&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes

proposal prior to submitting the final version, please contact me.

Thursday September 17th -All Proposals to Be Posted

Check the WUSPBA website for a complete listing of the Bylaw and Contest rule proposals that will be discussed during the general membership meeting.

Sunday September 20th –All Re-grade Applications Due

All band and solo re-grade applications are due. Applications can be found on the WUSPBA website under the music tab, on the music board page (scroll towards the bottom). In addition to the application, you may provide supporting materials such as a letter of recommendation or a video/audio recording.

All applications and supporting items should be submitted to me at egunn.ec@gmail.com no later than this date.

Saturday October 17th -General Membership Meeting

During this meeting, we will hold officer elections (President, Treasurer, Executive Secretary, and Band Registrar). In addition, Bylaw and Contest Rule proposals will be discussed and voted on.

The Annual General Meeting will take place at the Marriott Hotel in Park City Utah. As we get closer to the event, a guide detailing transportation and the full schedule of events for the weekend will be sent out.

We hope you will take the opportunity to attend the AGM if you are a soloist, represent a band, or are a contest organizer. Let your voice be heard and your vote counted!

New Treasurer Sought for Next Year

By Holley Morrill, Treasurer, WUSPBA
hrmorrill@live.com

Piping and drumming season is well underway and I have been privileged to have attended three fun and successful Highland games Thanks to all those people who spend countless hours organizing and running these events. And thanks to all games sponsors who have gotten their sanction fees in, as well.



A Great Learning Opportunity

We are preparing for the 2015 AGM to be held this year in October in Park City, Utah. As I am working on

preparing the financial reports for this year and how things will look financially for next year, I wanted to get the word out that this will be my last year as the WUSPBA treasurer.

It has been a great learning opportunity and I have met many wonderful and dedicated people! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity, but feel it is time to give others the experience.

I would like for it to be a better transition than when I took over as treasurer, so I wanted to get the word out early to ensure that people could be thinking about this.

Put Yourself Forward!

If this may be something you are interested in, or you know someone with some financial and computer experience, submit your (or his/her) name to the Executive Board for consideration. It would be good for the new treasurer to have time to do some training and transferring of information with me, as this is a very important position.

The Western United States Pipe Band Association is truly vital in keeping the piping, drumming, and band competitions going, and it requires volunteer time from many people in the western region to keep it running successfully.

Important Competition Season Reminders

By Lezlie Mann, Registrar WUSPBA
mannlezlie@gmail.com

Just a few reminders as we begin the competition season:

Solo Competitors

If you haven't registered, please do so. Every soloist should have a WUSPBA

membership and number before competing in a sanctioned competition. Email me if you have any problems or questions.



Games Sponsors

It is always important to send the solo results in a timely manner so that those results can be

posted. Solo competitors are always eager to see where they stand in comparison with others!

Before sending in the solo results, please make sure that everything is organized and together, each event is stapled or clipped together with the summary sheet on top of each event completely filled out and eligible.

Judges

When there are six or more competitors, please make sure you have six placings.

Registration

Thanks to everyone for your patience with the WUSPBA's new registration system. I feel for the most part it has been positive in that it does help to make my job a little easier as far as the registration process goes. My hope/goal is that in the near future we will have fewer and fewer registration problems and it will be easier and more convenient for everyone. Thanks again!!!

Online Registration System Working Well

Nancy Theriault, Band Registrar
bandreg@comcast.net



The competition season is under way and I hope you've all been enjoying the events thus far.

I would like to take a moment to remind Pipe Majors and Band Managers to be very

mindful of contest rules and deadlines, both for WUSPBA paperwork and for submission of rosters for competition.

Information is available on the WUSPBA website so that you can look over contest rules and guidelines.

System Allows Registration for Membership and Competitions

The new system of online roster management has been a great success this year. There has been a small learning curve, but the overwhelming consensus has been very favorable once people have a chance to use the system.

There is now the ability to register online, not only for WUSPBA membership, but also for competitions. If you haven't used that feature, yet, please give it a try.

We hope you will find it much more convenient to be able to pay and track everything in one place. You will have access to your payments and be able to see

the events you're registered for all on your band profile page.

Submit Rosters in Time for Processing

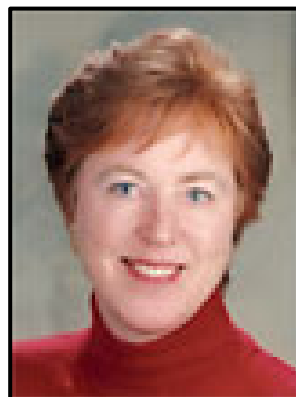
One important point to note is that while the system does allow you to print a working copy of your roster, this is purely for your own use – it is not validated and is not acceptable for competition. To be an official, validated copy, a roster must have the Band Registrar's signature on the bottom.

These must be requested once you have updated your roster information, and I do try to get them printed and sent out as quickly as possible, but it is not always possible for me to do this at the last minute. It is your responsibility to make sure your requests for official rosters are submitted with time for processing and delivery.

As always, if you have any questions or need help with anything just send me a message. Best of luck to you all!

Report from the Presidents' Council

By Susan Thornton, Presidents' Council Chair
susan@thinkstrategicallyfirst.com



The Presidents' Council, which is made up of former WUSPBA presidents, was established to advise the current president of the WUSPBA when difficult or

complicated issues arise.

Fortunately, our assistance is rarely needed, but we were able to assist with one issue this quarter.

In addition, the Council made recommendations on who should be recognized for the 2015 Circle of Honor.

Council members were pleased that the Executive Committee approved all three recommendations.

Stay tuned to learn the names of those to be honored for making long-term, important contributions to the development of our art form and the WUSPBA.

Music Board

Andrew Morrill, Music Board Chair
amorrill@dsdmail.net



The Music Board is working on many projects at this time:

Grading Committee

The Grading Committee is looking over the CPL's for both bands and soloists and will

continue this through the season.

Committee members are also looking at the bylaws to see if everything is in place for the Committee to be able to place bands and individuals. Soon the Grading Committee will be putting out a video detailing how the CPL's work and how the Committee makes its decisions.

Education Committee

The Education Committee is working on a certification program for piping and drumming. This program will allow individuals to show their abilities and receive recognition as they improve in their knowledge and ability.

Adjudication Committee

The Adjudication Committee has been working with individuals who are working on testing and shadow judging. This is a big task with so many attempting to become judges.

The Adjudication Committee is also working on a recertification programs for the judges currently on the WUSPBA panel. The hope here is to help judges stay current and to help with education as well.

The Music Board has also been busy answering many questions from WUSPBA members over a variety of issues involving competing and grade placement. So far the season is off to a great start, and we hope it continues that way!

Sept. 20 Deadline Seeking Re-Grading

By B.J. Gunn, Grading Committee Chair
drumminggunn@msn.com



The Grading Committee has begun to put the 2015 grading spread sheets together.

I want to thank all the judges for taking the time to properly fill out the solo CPL

on each judging sheet, and the band CPLs on the blue sheets.

Having as much data as possible makes our grading decisions easier when we are looking at each soloist and band during our annual re-grades.

Recommendations Include Many Factors

As we get closer to the AGM, the Grading Committee will meet and discuss individuals and bands that we are going to re-grade, and we review all re-grade applications.

When making our re-grading recommendations we consider:

- Soloist or band CPL score
- Adjudicator recommendations
- Music Board members' personal observations
- Letters of recommendation submitted with applications
- Video and/or audio recordings

Our re-grade recommendations are then submitted to the Executive Committee and announced at the AGM.

All band and solo re-grade applications need to be submitted to the WUSPBA Executive Secretary by the 20th of September. That is less than three months away.

If you are considering applying for re-grade now is the time to begin gathering your supporting items such as letters of recommendation and recordings.

Dates to keep in mind:

- Sunday September 20:
Re-grade applications due (band and solo). Re-grade applications can be found on the WUSPBA website on the Music Board page.
- Saturday October 17:
WUSPBA AGM general meeting. All re-grade decisions will be announced by this date.
- Tuesday December 1:
All appeals must be received. Appeal forms can be found on the WUSPBA website on the Music Board page.

The WUSPBA's Online Membership and Registration System

By Drew McPheeters, Vice President,
WUSPBA
dbmcpheeters@gmail.com



This year, the WUSPBA has been in the process of switching over to a new online membership and event registration system. We know there have been several

issues, and some of these still need to be addressed, and we have several enhancements we hope to have in order to make this system easier to use, manage, and understand.

I am sure many of you are wondering why this is necessary, and why must this be so difficult. To answer that, I'd like to give you a little history.

WUSPBA's Initial Database

Way back in the late '90s when I was the Secretary of the WUSPBA, I inherited the beginnings of a small database system done in Microsoft Access that was created to track solo memberships.

I expanded this simple database system to manage band rosters, associate members, contest results, games sanctioning, mass mailing, and a few other tasks. Microsoft Access is a fine desktop database for a single user, but I was the only person using the database to do these functions.

Registration Issues within the WUSPBA

Thankfully, today we have a Band Registrar, a Solo Registrar, a Games Sanctioning Secretary and an Executive Secretary to

share this tremendous workload. However, spreading the tasks has created the problem with multiple single databases that now have redundant and sometimes conflicting data.

A soloist will send one address for a player to the Solo Registrar, and when bands submit their roster, sometimes we get old addresses submitted to the Band Registrar for the same person. Sometimes, we get Bob and Robert, Jim and James, and numerous variations in addresses.

Even if the data were consistent and correct, we still have duplication of work by multiple people entering data into multiple databases.

Issues Outside of WUSPBA'S Control

And there are other issues outside of the control of WUSPBA that we are trying to address as well:

- Many games don't offer online registration, and soloists prefer to register online. So we are trying to support these games and soloists by providing online registration where none exist.
- Games systems, websites and availability change for some games year after year because volunteers leave, and such. We hope this system will provide some stability, predictability and consistency for soloists.
- Games were accepting registrations from competitors who were never registered with WUSPBA, or whose membership is not current. The WUSPBA doesn't know this until

after the fact and despite our best efforts, some contestants never register. We ask the games not to accept un-registered soloists, but they don't have access to current membership, and many still do. This is unfair to the majority of soloist who are members in good standing with the WUSPBA.

- Some games would reuse the same registration forms year after year, and these would not reflect current rules, which would cause the soloists to not get credit for competing in a contest.
- Some people would enter using copies of previous years' forms.
- When games did their own online systems, the events being offered couldn't be checked.
- Games would accept registrations from competitors outside of their grade. This is not allowed and skews the results for other competitors.
- WUSPBA is constantly turning over volunteers and these systemic problems are hard to address when people are learning the tasks every couple of years.
- Software needed to be updated and we would have to buy multiple copies of this software for different users.

The New Centralized System

In an effort to solve these and other issues, a centralized and online system run by a commercial vendor offers a path to a good solution.

Many of you will notice that this system is more geared towards sports events and

other activities apart from bagpiping and pipe bands. We are helping the company understand our unique situations and tailor their system to our needs. That said, the company is very widely used around the world for many different activities and organizations.

We hope the members will work with us to make this system useful and better year after year.

WUSPBA Offers Valuable Resources to Festivals

By Michael D. Gibbs, President, Great Basin Branch
pipermdg@msn.com



In my three decades of piping, I have had the opportunity to attend many Scottish festivals throughout the Western United States as well as the Pacific Coast, B. C., and even Alaska.

Attending as a competitor, as a spectator and as an organizer, I have been impressed overall with the general way that games are run.

Basic Tools Can Prevent Problems

However, there have been a few exceptions. We have had a few major problems here in the last few years, and it has only been thru the timely intervention and lucky placement of key Executive Committee members and Music Committee personnel that utter and complete disaster

was avoided at several games within the region.

After my election as President of the Great Basin Branch, and after helping to run/organize a few of the local games, I took a much deeper and closer look into how and why the games and competitions run and function the way they do.

I would encourage any and all games organizers to look at a few basic tools that their local Branch president and local WUSPBA reps can provide. There are many challenges that organizers face, and the more "boots on the ground" you have at your disposal the better.

WUSPBA-Appointed Representatives

An appointed WUSPBA representative proves invaluable at any contest. These individuals are able to map out the competition circles and staging areas, conduct official time keeping for competitions, etc., as well as help handle any disputes that may arise. These are all tasks that draw time away from other important functions and duties of a games organizer.

We here in the Great Basin Branch are a bit spoiled, as the Chief Steward, Larry Erdmann, resides in our boundaries. We never have to worry about rule clarification and protocol. Larry is ever-present and well-informed about the rules and regulations.

The Chief Steward's office is a tool that can be used by local Branch officers and Games

organizers throughout the WUSPBA to help train local reps within their organization. Properly trained and educated reps, on the day, can be worth their weight in gold.

Branch Presidents and Officers

The local Branch president and officers are another tool that very few games take advantage of. An example of how a Branch can help... having a Branch "sponsor" and run a competition has the ability to waive off sanctioning fees. This can be very important to the smaller or brand new games that have trouble with funding. Knowing your Branch officers, knowing their skills and background, can and will prove to be an asset in a competition, or an asset when a problem arises that is beyond the control of an organizer.

I would highly encourage all Games Organizers, but particularly those in some of the smaller games, newer "just starting out" games, or any who are in need of more help on the day of the competitions, to look to your Branch officers and the WUSPBA reps for help, guidance, encouragement and suggestions. Again, the more "boots on the ground", the better.

Most of the time, the average spectator has no idea that complications or problems have developed at any given games. The only folks who are really impacted directly or indirectly are our pipers and drummers and other competitors. Poorly run competitions can easily turn into a negative experience that can negatively affect attendance in following years.

Working Together to Ensure Positive Results

As members of the governing body of the WUSPBA, we have an obligation to promote and further the art of this crazy little hobby we call Pipes and Drums. Please take the time to contact your local Branch president and see what he or she can offer.

I would encourage the other Branch presidents to reach out to your local games as well. Offer support and suggestions, and make yourselves available on a game day to help out if need be. We all just want to have a smooth competition and good experience for the pipe bands and individual competitors in attendance, and working together is the most expedient way to make that happen.

Intermountain Branch

John Moruzzi, Intermountain Branch President
moruzzi33@gmail.com



Queen City Pipe Band of Denver, Colorado, kicked off their competition season early this year, as the band traveled to Woodland, California, to participate in their first Grade 2 contest since its promotion.

The weekend was extra-special because all four Grade 2 pipe bands in the WUSPBA were present (Prince Charles, Irish Pipers,

Wasatch & District, and Queen City). Overall, Queen City placed third in the Timed Medley, and second in the MSR.

The next competition where all four of the Grade 2 WUSPBA bands compete will be at Pleasanton.

Queen City was formed in 2011 as a Grade 3 band (see a history of the band in the Spring 2015 issue of *Words & Music*). In the fall/winter of 2014, the band was promoted to Grade 2. The band is under the leadership of Pipe Major Jamie Cuthill and Drum Sergeant Darren Marshall.

Congratulations to Queen City for its promotion to Grade 2 and for placing second and third in their first Grade 2 competition!

Denver & District Pipe Band, Grade 3

The Denver & District Pipe Band of Denver, Colorado, was promoted this off-season to Grade 3. The band competed in its first Grade 3 competition at the Pikes Peak Celtic Festival on June 20th and the Irish Festival on July 11th.

The band does not plan to travel outside the state this year, and instead is focusing on launching a Grade 4 competition unit this season as well. The new Grade 4 unit also competed at the Pikes Peak and Colorado Irish festivals early this season. Denver & District has been attracting a large number of students and beginning musicians.

Denver & District was formed in 2009 as a result of the merger of two of the oldest bagpipe bands in the greater Denver area: the City of Denver Pipe Band and the

Colorado Isle of Mull/Saint Andrew's Pipes and Drums. The band is under the leadership of Pipe Major Lise Nelson and Drum Sergeant Drew McPheeters.

Congratulations to Denver & District for its promotion to Grade 3!

Branch Sponsors the Colorado Irish Festival

The Intermountain Branch is proud to once again sponsor the Colorado Irish Festival on July 11th. Outside of sponsoring the solo and band competitions, the Branch also held a cèilidh at the end of the day that was open to all.

Colorado Scottish Festival

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Colorado Scottish Festival is moving to Snowmass Village, Colorado, this summer. In addition to having the Festival in a spectacular mountain setting, we are excited to have a full set of 'A Panel' judges for the games, as well as an Open Piping Competition.

Band competitions will consist of Grades 4 and 3, and Colorado's first-ever Grade 2 competition with Wasatch and District Pipe Band (Utah) and Queen City Pipe Band (Colorado).

The Festival will be held on July 31 - August 2 and will include a free Hot Piping and Hot Drumline contest on Friday evening and a free Celtic rock concert with the Irish group, Swagger, on Saturday night. Details are at www.ScottishGames.org.

Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Festival

In addition to the Colorado Irish Festival and Colorado Scottish Festival, the major remaining game in the IMB this summer is the Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Festival. Solo and band competitions will be held on September 12th-13th at Estes Park, Colorado (www.scotfest.com).

Branch to Host World's Party!

The Intermountain Branch is planning to host a World Pipe Band Championship viewing party on August 15th.

Since a number of bands usually host individual parties, we felt this would be an excellent opportunity for everyone in our community to get together in one location and enjoy the "best-of-the-best" in piping and drumming.

We are finalizing the details and will let everyone in the Branch know the specifics soon.

Meet Wasatch and District Pipe Band

Words & Music asked Daniel Schneider, chairman of Wasatch & District Pipe Band's board, to tell our readers a bit about Wasatch & District Pipe Band.

The Utah-based band has bands in Grades 4 and 5, and last year their Grade III band was elevated by the WUSPBA Music Board to Grade 2. Daniel can be reached at chairman@wdpb.org.



**When was the band formed?
Who were the founding members?**

The founding members first met in Andrew Morrill's living room in August of

2004. It was there where we decided on a band name, picked Andrew as the pipe major, and agreed upon a structure for the organization.

In addition to Andrew Morrill, the other founding members included me (Daniel Schneider), Mike Postma, Jeff Mann, Bruce Baxter, Kim Nmezi, David Hovey, Kylene Tanner, Brady Liddell, Sharlene Morrill, Leland Morrill, Brandon Phillips, Justin Howland, Megan McDonald, Schuyler Pack, Jo Wayman, Brant Wayman and Sara Ridges (I may have missed a few).

Were you the first (one of the first?) pipe bands in Utah?

Utah has had a long history of pipe bands, so I would say Wasatch is one of the newest. Utah Pipe Band (UPB), which I believe is the state's longest-running pipe band, has been around since the 1930s, reaching their 80th anniversary in 2017. That's quite an accomplishment, and one that has left a strong piping legacy in Utah.

In addition to UPB, the Salt Lake Scots have been around for many years, as have White Peaks, Utah State University's pipe band, and Utah's juvenile pipe bands, Payson High School and Ben Lomond High School.

Though we are fairly young in comparison to our peers, we are quite pleased with the growth and success we have been able to achieve in 10 years. We attribute a lot of this success to some very talented members and leaders who share a common philosophy.

Talk about the band's philosophy. What is your main goal as a band? Is it competition? Performances? Or both?

Our vision and goal as an organization is to help our members develop and be successful as musicians. We have three different bands—Grades 5, 4 and 2—and have a development plan that is designed to meet the needs of the members in each band to help them progress musically. Because of this, many of our members are self-grown.

Though we do not consider that our main goal is to do well in competition, it is, nonetheless, an important part of what we do. We spend most of our time working on competition sets. However, we have a great repertoire of music, and consider performances in general to be one of the most important things that we do.

Performances, in addition to competitions, are a place for us to test our abilities and share our art with those who appreciate it.

After having been in Grade 4 for three years with a lot of success, we were upgraded in 2007 to Grade 3. Because we had a lot of members at the time, and because part of our philosophy is to grow and develop members, we decided to keep the Grade 4 band. Doug Hunter stepped in as our pipe major for that band, and Andrew Morrill went on to lead the Grade 3 band.



You have a Grade 5 band, a Grade 4 band, and a Grade 2 band. How did all that come about?

Just a few years later we formed our Grade 5 band, with Megan McDonald leading that group, to help us meet the needs of our ever-growing membership.

What are some early band memories?

One of the earliest memories was our very first trip as a band. We were invited in 2004 to perform at the Jackson Hole Highland games. We were small, and having been around for only a couple of weeks, many of us did not have a complete uniform, nor did we have a full set of drums. Despite lacking the necessary equipment, we set our nervousness aside, scraped together what we could and made the best of this opportunity.

This was an important event for us, because it helped us answer an important question: “Can we do this?” Looking back that didn’t

seem so hard, but we recognize it was a first giant step in our progress.

Two years later we hit another milestone for our group when we decided to take our band to Maxville. We knew we had to prepare musically for such a trip, but also understood the administrative challenges this trip presented. Again, we asked ourselves if we could do this.

After careful planning and preparation, we competed at the North American Pipe Band Championship and the Montreal Highland Games in 2007. Those who were there speak fondly of standing in closing massed bands in Maxville and hearing our group placed fourth in that day’s competition. Our first-place finish in Montreal was the crowning moment for that trip.

How often do you practice?

All our bands practice on Thursday evenings. We also meet the first Saturday of each month.

What’s your general plan for how you practice?

Our plan for practices varies for each band. The Grade 5 spends a lot of time on fundamentals and learning their QMM. The Grades 4 and 2 will pay more attention to certain parts of their competition sets and will also spend time learning new performance sets.

The relationship the musical leaders has amongst one another is quite good, which lends to their success.



The bands are continually communicating amongst one another to coordinate their efforts.

How many pipers and drummers do you have?

We have 65 pipers and drummers spread across our three bands.

About how many competitions/performances do you do a year? Do you have a favorite you'd like to tell us about?

Each year, our Grade IV and II bands will travel to three or four games, in addition to the local games in Utah. The Grade V competes only in the local games.

We have quite a few performances during the year. We hold an annual free concert in Bountiful City Park each summer. We play several short concerts during the Memorial Day weekend. We are also a regular act in several other concert series, including the Celtic Celebration in Ogden, and the Concert in the Park series at Brigham Young Park in Salt Lake City.

Many of our members would agree that our favorite competition is the Scottish

Highland Gathering and Games at Pleasanton. This year is their 150th anniversary, and we are very excited to see what this year's event holds for us and the other bands who will attend.

This season your Grade 3 band was moved to Grade 2. How do members feel about that? What led to this big promotion?

Our Grade 2 upgrade was perhaps one of the most challenging things I have had to deal with as a leader. The prospects of being upgraded were exciting, but many of our leaders shared the same sentiments: If we were to be upgraded, we wanted to be sure we were ready and that it was done right.

We were consistently placing at many of our competitions. We were not always taking first, but we understood the level of competition in Grade 3 at the time was quite good. Irish Pipers, Queen City, Blandford and Cameron Highlanders were all strong bands. At the time, we felt that the top bands in Grade 3 could compete in Grade 2. For us, being ready meant more than merely winning or placing at competitions.

First, Grade 2 was almost non-existent, which could be a death sentence for a band. We had to be sure WUSPBA was ready for Grade 2.

Second, we had to be sure we were ready organizationally. Were our musical leaders ready for an upgrade? How would an upgrade affect our Grade 4 and 5 bands? How would our development plan change because of an upgrade? Were our organizational leaders capable of leading an organization with a Grade 2 band?

Last, were we ready musically? Once we received the recommendation to move up from WUSPBA, we spent a lot of time talking with their executive committee and grading committee to make sure we were making the right decision. We felt that the association was doing what they should to ensure a strong Grade 2, so we accepted their invitation.

We know we will have to spend the next few years growing and developing as a grade II band in order to be successful, but we are excited that other bands in the association have also taken the challenge to fill this grade.

Some bands bring in outside experts to provide workshops and help them improve. Have you done this? In your experience, is it valuable?

We have. Jack Lee, Duncan Millar and Bob Worrall have all worked with our bands. In our experience, having a plan and an idea of what you want to accomplish before bringing in an instructor will determine whether it is valuable.

Many people think it must be difficult to manage three bands. For example, how does your leadership deal with leading three band practices? And how do you deal with tuning multiple bands on competition day? Have you found complications?

This is a tough one. Managing three bands is demanding, time-consuming and strenuous. The formidable, and at times, tiresome task of managing does not rest with only a few people, but many talented leaders. We are continually looking at our organizational structure to make sure we have people in place to accomplish what we need to do.

Our musical leaders, the pipe majors, pipe sergeants and drum sergeants have the freedom to run their bands as they see fit, so long as it is consistent with our organization's vision and goals. They all meet often to discuss the musical progress of each band and to plan for their needs.

From time to time, we have members of our Grade 2 band help out with the Grade 4, and members of both the Grade 2 and 4 bands help out with the Grade 5. This has worked out well for us in rehearsals as well as on competition days.

Taking care of three bands also presents some administrative difficulties. Outfitting and equipping three bands is hard. Dealing with vendors who can accommodate us is almost a full-time job.

We have been fortunate to have had great people who are able to keep track of our equipment and inventory, our finances, plan our travel and take care of all our other administrative duties.

One of the complications we have experienced with a multi-band organization is making sure all our leaders knows what is going on and that they understands their individual roles.

Where will your bands be competing this season? What do you hope will be the outcome?

Woodland, Costa Mesa (given we have the funding), Snowmass and Pleasanton. The desired outcome is the same regardless of whether it is a competition, a concert or any other performance, and that is to have performed well.

Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines

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