

# Words and Music

## Summer 2017

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First, it is important that if you intend to compete either as a band or as an individual, you need to know what the rules are and then you need

to follow them.

I feel that we have and are making the rules so complicated that sometimes you feel you need a lawyer just to make sense of WUSPBA contest rules.

There are rules that I as president have to uphold and follow even if I voted against these rules at the AGM. These contest rules were voted on legally and should be followed.

If you aren't sure of any rule please feel free to contact your branch president, a member of the Music Board, or someone from the Executive Committee, and we can help you understand better.

### What To Do if Short a Player?

This applies to bands even more than to the soloists. Bands have more regulations to follow and should be more careful about knowing and following them.

## Words from the President: The Need to Follow the Rules

Andrew Morrill, President, WUSPBA  
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I would like to address a topic that might make some uncomfortable, but as the president I need to bring up the subject. That is the responsibility to know and follow the rules that have been voted on by our association.

Many bands don't have a large number of pipers or drummers, so if something happens to anyone in the band, they won't have the minimum number of players needed.

We have all been there and have had someone have a problem the day of the games. I have seen it all; from wives going into labor, someone becoming deathly ill the minute before the contest, or having a car accident on the way to the games.

As a result of this kind of problem, you can't legally compete, and the question becomes what to do? The right thing is to notify the games sponsors, so that instead of competing, you can go on and still be critiqued.

### **A Problem Right Before You Go On?**

If a problem arises just before you compete, let the steward and the judges know so that they can plan a critique. I was at a games recently where I saw a band go on without enough players, and as the president of WUSPBA, I felt I should deal with the issue. Now it isn't fun for anyone to have to disqualify a band for any reason, but the problem should have been dealt with at the line before the band competed.

As a result of the band not saying anything to officials, scores had to be changed and it brought a lot of problems to the games committee, and to those working behind the scene.

### **Integrity is Important**

This brings me to my last issue, and it is integrity.

One of the reasons we have so many rules and regulations is because so many individuals try to game the system. All we should really need is about 10 to 15 simple rules if everyone followed them in good faith.

Unfortunately, too many bands and individuals try to win at all costs, and as a result more and more rules are made to keep the competitions fair. Following the rules isn't always easy and sometimes it would be easier to skirt the rules, not say anything and hope you don't get caught.

There was a band that played illegal players and won the contest, and when they were confronted over this issue, their response was, "It didn't hurt anyone." My response was that it hurt the second, third and fourth place bands that followed the rules and finished a place below where they belonged.

### **An Ethical Dilemma**

My band had an issue arise a few years ago that caused us to have to really soul-search what we should do.

Before each contest, our band recorder sends out the band rosters for the PM and PS to look at so that if anything needs to be changed before a contest we can correct the issue, and follow the regulations. Both the PM and the PS noticed a player's name had been left off the roster, so we asked to have that name put on the roster. We went to the games, took two firsts and were feeling pretty good about ourselves.

Before the next contest, the rosters were sent out for us to check again. Both the PM and PS noticed that this same player's name

was still not on the roster. By an oversight, the recorder had not updated the roster when requested. This player had played at the last contest and wasn't on our roster.

Here was the dilemma: do we say anything or just move on and not say anything? We decided to turn ourselves in and take the consequences. I have to say I thought the consequences were a little harsh, but in the end we were glad we did the right thing.

### **Compete for the Joy of Piping!**

We should compete in good faith and teach our bands members that we perform and compete out of the joy of piping, and not just for a prize.

Prizes are nice but will not bring the lasting joy that performing our art well can bring to an individual.

Good luck for the rest of the season!

## **Fundamentals of Competition: Or How to Make the Judges Love Your Competition Sets**

*By Tom Foley, WUSPBA Drumming and Ensemble Adjudicator, and Commissioner of Drumming Education*  
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*Editor's note: We felt this was important enough to reprint it from the April, 2014, issue of Words & Music*

A recent WUSPBA newsletter presented a very comprehensive and most welcome overview of the assessment protocol

employed by the Music Board in the placement of bands in the various grades. This type of educational information is extremely valuable to the continuing



growth of WUSPBA and its membership. With that in mind, the following article is intended to assist our lower-grade bands. The topics discussed are, however, potentially applicable to bands

at all levels and, I believe, worthy of re-examination and consideration.

Having been privileged to act as an adjudicator for both drumming and ensemble for many years, and having heard some otherwise good performances damaged by basic "misunderstandings," for want of a better word, there are some competition fundamentals that need to be well understood. These are fundamentals that will lead to more settled performances and create a good impression with adjudicators.

### **The Music**

Pipe band music is, as we know, definitely different -- different sound, different rhythms, different dynamics and so on. There is a natural vitality about the music, and unless all players understand this and concentrate, that natural vitality can easily be lost or improperly presented.

A perfect example of this lost vitality regularly appears in Quick March Medley two-four or four-four selections where the pulse from the bass drum is reduced to a two-in-a-bar, or sometimes one-in-a-bar

beat, producing an uncomfortable "plodding" feeling. This is very easy to correct by employing a strong-weak-medium-weak pulse. A significant improvement in the swing of the music will result from this simple change. Six-eight tunes also get a major lift from the same method.

In recent years, the RSPBA in Scotland introduced the MAP (Musical Appreciation and Presentation) program for lower-grade competitions in a deliberate attempt to reinforce the basic pipe band fundamentals. A list of appropriate and required tunes was published. "Back in the day", such tunes were often referred to as "Kilt Swingers." You get the picture, I'm sure.

Another major "vitality sapper" arises from playing too slowly, or too quickly. At the lowest grade levels, it can be a significant achievement to field a band and succeed in just getting through the performance. However, it must be kept in mind that even the simplest pieces of music need to be presented properly.

Concentration is required to get the most out of any piece. Playing too slowly (or too quickly) can, and frequently does, create difficulties in ensemble performance when, for example, the drummers are struggling to play material that was perhaps composed for a different tempo.

At the risk of stating the obvious, it is absolutely essential that the pipe major and lead drummer are agreed on the tempo to be played and that the entire band (the ensemble) has that tempo ingrained by playing together at every opportunity. At practice and at the contest field, pipes and

drums need to play more together. Even when pipes are being tuned, the drum corps should play along instead of just standing around or playing in another area. Try to keep in mind that a band is one unit and not three separate entities, i.e. pipes, snares and mid-section.

## **Introductions**

Getting off to a solid start is a great soother of nerves and there is really no substitute for repetitive practicing of attacks on the march. This is true at every level of competition and has a great bearing on what comes afterward. Standing behind their clipboards, adjudicators are very attuned to how well the drums execute the opening rolls or how cleanly and accurately the pipes strike in.

There are other simple considerations worth mention as well.

It is not uncommon to observe drummers (and pipers, too) walking out of step with each other or out of time with the tempo called by the pipe major. This makes a clean set of opening rolls difficult to achieve. Give yourself some space so that you do not get jammed up with the players in front (it happens). Practice marching into the circle with someone observing. It will help keep everyone together.

Frequently the bass and tenor opening beats are not in sync with each other, resulting in an untidy-sounding introduction. If the tenors are assigned to beat on the three pace rolls, they need to be spot-on. Drummers need to keep in mind that the pipers are reliant on them for a steady opening pulse. This is one of the

easier things to fix, and once it is mastered, it rarely becomes an issue again.

Often the tempo of the opening tune will drop (or speed up) immediately following the three-pace rolls. In some cases this is due to the pipe corps settling on a tempo at which they feel comfortable -- or perhaps the drum corps is the culprit. Either way, the adjudicator will likely note this as a flaw in the ensemble performance.

### **Awareness and Focus**

Immediately prior to the start of the performance, every player must be focused and concentrating on the opening bars of the music. There should be silence with everyone "switched on." Each player must be aware of not only his or her own playing, but everyone else's as well. Throughout the performance, the pipe major and lead drummer should have eye contact.

Be aware of your surroundings but concentrate on your own playing. Don't be distracted. Above all, don't allow your own mistake or another person's mistake to rattle you. If that happens, chances are that a "domino" effect will begin, with the result that the overall performance suffers. It is possible that an adjudicator may not have heard the initial mistake.

### **Placement**

Pay attention to how players are placed in the band. If the spacing is too large (say, in a small band), the stronger-blowing pipers will be heard more clearly, creating an unbalanced sound. The same is true of drummers, especially where some drummers tend to face toward the lead

drummer. In that case, a mix of sound from top and bottom heads is projected, often with less-than-desirable results. A spacing of twelve to fifteen inches apart is a good guide.

The pipers who stand next to the drummers are very important, as the rest of the band takes a cue from their position when forming the circle. Trying for a "wall of sound" right round the band is an excellent goal. If the players are set up too far apart from each other, or if there is a clear division between the pipes and drums, that goal is very difficult to achieve with any consistency.

### **Sound**

Think of the band as a wheel with a hub and spokes where the bass drum is the hub. To get the balanced effect you need, try to have the pipers and snare drummers equidistant from the bass. Appoint someone to stand outside the circle from time to time to check on the volume of the bass and tenors, making sure they are not too dominant but can be heard just outside the circle. In that way, everyone in the band can hear and feel the pulse without being overpowered. Study the placement of bass and tenors so that the snares and pipes are in contact with each other. Losing, or not establishing, this contact can cause one section to get out of "sync" and likely will destroy the integration.

Be attentive to the sound and volume from the tenors. Their main task is to provide additional "color" to the overall sound. The tone and timbre should be pleasing to the ear. Dependent on the skill level, tenors can also add a visual component to highlight certain phrases or passages in the music.

Here again, care must be taken to avoid creating a distraction.

Keep in mind that the harmonics produced by the chanters is the lead sound. Drones, bass drum and tenor drums should be blended to this sound. This also applies to the snare drums, keeping in mind that the snare drum sound projected outside the circle is mostly from the bottom heads. Snare drummers need to be sure that they are playing directly on the snare. Too often a drummer has one stick positioned off the snare, creating a noticeable difference in the projected sound.

### Transitions and Breaks

Transitions and breaks between tunes need to be definite and "clean." Often a rhythmic "bridge" provided by the snares can add some sense of anticipation for the next tune. Be careful not to overdo it or become repetitive. Also make sure that the bass and lead drummers have visual contact at the breaks so that integration is maintained.

### Tune Selection

When picking tunes for a Medley or MSR, communication between the pipe major and the lead drummer is essential. There is little point in a lead drummer being forced to be creative and write a drum score for a tune or tempo that he/she either dislikes or believes is not suited to his/her style of playing, interpretation, or even the capabilities of the drum corps. This is important because the players need to enjoy what they are playing, a feeling that does communicate itself to the listening audience.

### Teamwork

We should remind ourselves that being a band member is truly being a member of a team. Successful bands understand and appreciate the value of every member. Everyone has a part to play, and the band must always be thought of as a unit, with each member striving for the best ways to complement each other.

Remember, however, the pipe major will always have the final word. Someone has to "steer the ship."

*The writer would like to express his appreciation to RSPBA Adjudicator Jim Baxter for his help in creating this article.*

## Time to Step Up to the Plate

Drew McPheeters,  
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Although it is just now July, we on the WUSPBA Executive Committee are turning our focus to the planning for the 2017 AGM, to be held in Phoenix at the Irish Cultural Center on November 18th.



Several positions are up for election, and it would be nice to have a number of people already declared as candidates prior to the AGM.

This past year, some serious persuading had to occur to

get nominations for all the vacant and expiring positions.

### **Unfair Criticism**

One vocal and persistent critic of the WUSPBA has often made statements of the sentiment that, "If the people won't do their jobs, they should quit and give the job to someone who will."

This sounds like a fair statement, but I can tell you without exaggerating that in the past five years, we have had exactly one position where more than one person was up for election to a position. More often than not, people have had to be persuaded to accept a nomination.

This same critic has voiced his displeasure that the organization was run by the (insert non flattering adjective here) Utah Gang/Cabal/Mafia/etc. That is because most presidents turn to people they know (family and friends) to fill positions when no one is nominated.

The same, small group of volunteers has served as President, Vice-President or other positions for more than the last decade. Erin Gunn has done a tremendous job, and has served more than two full terms as Executive Secretary, and before this she was the solo registrar. We have had the same Solo and Band Registrars for more than one consecutive term.

### **Time for New Blood!**

Jeff Mann and Andrew Morrill have put in a huge amount of time and efforts over the past decade. It is unfair that we ask these same people over and over again to fill officers' positions.

It is time for new blood. It is time for others to provide new insight, different thinking, and fresh approaches to the issues we are having.

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**Deadline for  
Fall 2017 issue: September 10**

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## Needed: A Desire to Make a Difference

What is required? Only a desire to help, to participate, to make a difference. What skills are needed? Mostly the ability to correspond via email and attend a monthly (more or less-often) conference call.

If you have other skills and can do other things, great.

## Instead of Complaining, Volunteer!

So please think about this. Is the WUSPBA not doing something you'd like to see done? Is there something the WUSPBA does that you'd like to see done differently? Are you frustrated with things you see from WUSPBA (or don't see from WUSPBA)?

Instead of complaining, volunteer, or find a like-minded friend and convince him or her to volunteer.

We can answer all questions about what is expected or required for candidates.

## Elections Coming at the November Annual General Meeting

Erin Gunn, WUSPBA Executive Secretary  
[egunn.ec@gmail.com](mailto:egunn.ec@gmail.com)



I hope your 2017 season is going well. Although we are only half-way through the season, we want to make you aware of some important dates at the end of the season.

## Mark your calendar

Put these dates on your calendars now.

- **September 17<sup>th</sup>** - All band and solo re-grade applications are due. Please see the following page for the band and solo re-grade applications: <https://wuspba.org/solo-and-band-grading-applications/>. If you are interested in playing in a different grade for the 2018 season, make sure you submit an application.
- **October 3** - All bylaw and contest rule proposals are due. Please email all proposals to [egunn.ec@gmail.com](mailto:egunn.ec@gmail.com). Please see the following page with instructions on how to write a bylaw or contest rule proposal: <https://wuspba.org/how-to-write-a-proposal/>
- **November 18<sup>th</sup>** – WUSPBA's AGM will be held in Phoenix AZ. More information to come soon!

## Consider Running for Executive Secretary

As part of the AGM in November, officer elections will be held for President, Executive Secretary and Band Registrar. I am not running for re-election, so we are seeking candidates who would be interested in taking on the Executive Secretary position. Here is a brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Secretary:

Throughout the year the Executive Secretary:

- Responds to email correspondence, or forwards the inquiry to the appropriate member of the



Executive Committee or Music Board.

- If the Executive Committee is required to vote on an issue, the Executive Secretary is responsible for conducting the vote either at the monthly conference call or via email between conference calls.
- Communicates with the membership through email blasts when required.

Monthly:

- Sends the Executive Committee meeting reminders about our monthly conference call.
- Compiles agenda items and take meeting notes.

At the end of the season:

- By the third Sunday in September, receives all band and solo re-grade applications via email. In addition to the re-grade applications, applicants may also submit letters of recommendation and audio/video recordings. Once the application deadline has passed the Executive Secretary compiles all re-grade materials and passes them along to the Music Board chair and the Grading Committee for review. In 2016, there were approximately 45 soloists and bands that submitted re-grade applications and supporting materials.
- No later than 45 days before the AGM, receives all Bylaw and Contest Rule proposals. Prepares all proposals to be posted on the WUSPBA website no later than 30

days before the AGM.

- Creates a Power Point for the AGM that includes the meeting agenda, previous meeting minutes, and bylaw and contest rule proposals.
- Updates the Bylaws and Contest Rules after the AGM and publishes them on the WUSPBA website.
- Writes up the AGM meeting minutes and publishes them on the WUSPBA website.

I want to wish everyone the best of luck for the remainder of the season. I hope to see you all in Phoenix at the AGM!

## Good News from Accounting

*Nate Lorenz, Treasurer*  
[treas@wuspba.org](mailto:treas@wuspba.org)



I continue to be glad I don't have anything exciting to report from the accounting for WUSPBA. It means things are moving along well as we approach the AGM.

I have been able to help a few branches to move bank accounts under one WUSPBA profile. This helps the transferability of finances as administrations and officers change. I will reach out to the last branches soon and see if this works arrangement works for them as well.

## **Plan to Attend the AGM**

I am excited that we are holding the AGM this year on November 18 in Phoenix, Arizona, in the newly created Desert Branch. It should be able to allow members who don't typically attend because of the travel come and see what the organization doing. It is always interesting to see how controversies get discussed and ultimately worked out, and how we develop new by-laws.

## **Networking Opportunities and More**

The opportunity for networking is huge. Games organizers come to learn about things WUSPBA can do to help, and share ideas about what works and doesn't for a festival. Discussions about competition, layout, fundraising, and invites are all part of what the networking can generate.

It is also a chance to learn about what the Music Board has been up to for a year. The program is involved in judging, education, grading and tracking of the membership. It is great to know what the association is doing to help.

I look forward to seeing everyone who can make it to the AGM and learn what the branches are up to, including the new Desert Branch.

## **Competition Results Posted; Deadline for Solo Grade Changes**

Lezlie Mann, Solo Registrar  
[mannlezlie@gmail.com](mailto:mannlezlie@gmail.com)

I can't believe we are already in the middle of the competition season!



As of this writing, all competition results that I have received have been posted to the website. Please don't hesitate to contact me (email is best) if you have any questions,

concerns or problems pertaining to results or membership.

## **Deadline to Request a Change in Solo Grade!**

Just an important reminder to soloists who are interested in competing in another grade for next year:

The Executive Committee highly suggests that you submit an application; don't assume that you will automatically be moved up or down. It is always good to send in your application to make sure you can compete in your preferred grade the following year.

The due date for these applications is September 17th (late applications will not be accepted!). In addition to the application, letters of recommendation and recordings (audio/video) may be submitted as well. These need to be sent to Erin Gunn at [egunn.ec@gmail.com](mailto:egunn.ec@gmail.com).

Continue having a great year!

# Find Your Band's Horoscope for July through September!

*The Old Philosopher*

*The Old Philosopher offers the following horoscopes for WUSPBA bands. All are guaranteed to be 100 percent accurate. So pay attention!*

*If the name of your band starts with P:*

Beware wasting practice time. Use a metronome! Your band's playing will improve, and the love life of your Pipe Major will be greatly enhanced.

*If the name of your band starts with L:*

Today is the day to re-think your competition set. Is it working? Do dogs howl when you strike in? If the answer is yes, consider replacing a tune or two. Then take the night off and join friends at the local pub.

*If the name of your band starts with C:*

Stay the course. Practice relentlessly. Be kind to your PM and DS. At the end of the competition season, they will buy you drinks for all your good work. Friendships and happiness will abound.

*If the name of your band starts with T:*

Stay alert! Here be dragons! Early "E"s, failing chanter reeds and false finger await all who dare to disobey the Pipe Major! Treat him or her with kindness, and see how your ensemble scores improve.

*If the name of your band starts with K:*

Strut your stuff! You're good, and you know it. Show the world. What's the worst

thing that can happen, other than the lead tip stepping in a hole at the line?

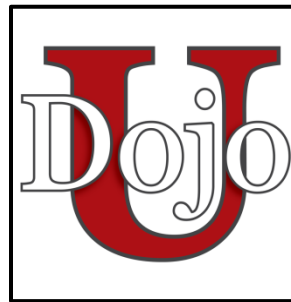
*If the name of your band starts with S:*

Get together to party and bond after every practice. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you into the circle, and you will dwell in the record books forever.

Stay tuned for more exciting horoscopes from The Old Philosopher in future issues of *Words & Music*. Now go and practice!

## Pipe Major Donald MacLeod

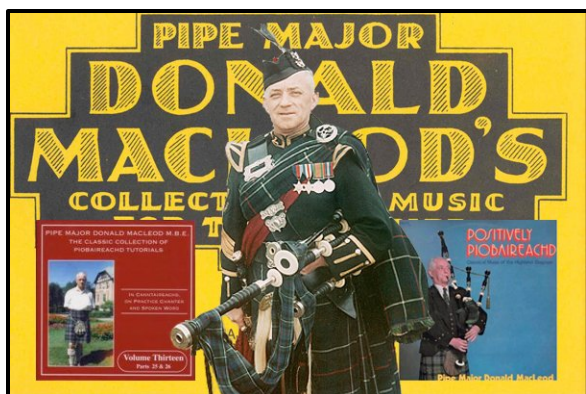
*The following article is reprinted with permission from Dojo University, [www.PipersDojo.com](http://www.PipersDojo.com).*



Pipe Major Donald MacLeod, M.B.E. was one of the greatest pipers and composers of the 20th century.

He served in 51st Highland Division in WWII and was appointed Pipe Major of the Seaforth Highlanders at the age of 25.

He published 6 books of light music and one book of piobaireachd. He also released over 40 volumes of piobaireachd tutorials as well as several other recordings.



Pipe Major Donald MacLeod

Donald MacLeod was born in 1916 in Stornaway, on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles of Scotland. His first teacher was his father Donald "Doyle" MacLeod. He was later tutored by PM Willie Ross, for almost 27 years, and John MacDonald of Inverness.

A member of the Seaforth Highlands, he joined in 1932. During WWII he was a member of the 51st Highland Division. In June of 1940 he was part of the Battle of St. Valery-en-Caux, which has the distinction of being the British Army's biggest defeat of the war. He was one of over 10,000 troops who surrendered on the 12th of June.

Donald MacLeod was able to escape from the German army during a 120 mile forced march to a prisoner of war camp. He was picked up by the Resistance, and according to legend, was able to pass himself off as eastern European by speaking in Gaelic.

After returning to Great Britain he joined the 7th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, part of the reconstituted 51 Highland Regiment and returned to France in 1944. During Operation Plunder, in 1945, he is said to have piped his battalion across the

Rhine against the orders of his commanding officer.

Donald MacLeod was made Pipe Major of Seaforth Highlanders four years after joining the regiment. After the end of the war he was active in the competition scene. He won the Gold Medal in piobaireachd at Inverness and Oban.

At the Northern Meeting he won eight clasps and eight silver stars, the top march/strathspey/reel award. By the time he stopped competing in 1963, he had established a competitive record that is unsurpassed to this day.

When he left the Army in 1963 he became a partner and manager at the Grainger and Campbell bagpipe shop in Glasgow. Around this time he started offering free classes at the Cardonald Gardens Glasgow, where he lived. According to one of his students at the time, the classes were kept very informal. He was able to play a large selection of tunes from memory without referring to books. He also taught tunes the same way.

During his career he published 6 volumes of bagpipe music. These contained over 320 tunes, 120 of them were original compositions. Some of his more well know tunes are the march "Dr Ross's Welcome to the Argyllshire Gathering," and the jigs "The Seagull" and "Glasgow City Police Pipers."

He was able to take old or forgotten tunes and bring them back. At times he would add extra parts to the tunes to improve the original. Examples of this are the strathspey "Lady Mackenzie of Gairloch" and the march "The Meeting of the Waters."

In 1979 he published the book *Donald MacLeod's Collection of Piobaireachd Book 1*. This book contained 20 original piobaireachd compositions, adding to the 7 others published in his early books. Overall he composed 30 pieces of piobaireachd. This is an amazing number when compared to the modern day repertory of roughly 300 works, some of which date back as far as the 1500's.

Donald MacLeod made a series of recordings of piobaireachd, *Donald MacLeod's - the Classic Collection of Piobaireachd Recordings*. When they were originally published it took 40 cassette tapes to hold them, containing almost 230 piobaireachds. These recordings can still be purchased today. (*Editor's note: A quick Internet search showed that some or all of these are still available.*) They are available in 21 volumes, each one containing 2 CDs. He also released several other recordings, including *Pipers Ceilidh* and *Positively Piobaireachd*.

In 1978 he was awarded the MBE (the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for his services to piping.

Donald MacLeod passed away in 1982. In 1994 the Lewis & Harris Piping Society established the Donald Macleod Memorial Competition in his memory. It's goal is to honor "one of the best pipers of the 20th century."

## Meet the City of Sacramento Pipe Band

*Words & Music interviewed Liz Tubbs, pipe major of City of Sacramento Pipe Band, in April of 2017. A long-time pipe major, Liz is*

*a member of the WUSPBA's adjudication panel and has been named to the WUSPBA's Circle of Honor for her contributions to the Association.*



**W&M:** When was the City of Sacramento Pipe Band founded? Were you the founder?

**Liz:** It was founded in December of 1989. And yes, I was a founding member along with the late Clutch Sutton, and I was the band's first pipe major.

**W&M:** Have you been pipe major of the band the entire time since 1989?

**Liz:** I've been pipe major most of those years. There were a couple of years when my son-in-law, Ryan Murray, was PM.

**W&M:** City of Sacramento is a Grade 4 band now, correct? About how many members do you have, and where do you practice?

**Liz:** We have about 20 members and practice at Sheldon High School in Sacramento where I teach individual and performing arts (instrumental music band, piano, and guitar). It's one of the demonstration performing arts high schools in the State of California.





City of Sacramento Grade III Band

**W&M:** *Where do your members typically come from? Are they mostly from Sacramento?*

**Liz:** Many of our members are from the immediate Sacramento area and the surrounding region, but we have had members travel from the Bay Area, the North Bay, the San Joaquin Valley, the Yuba City/Marysville area, and even as far as Nevada.

**W&M:** *Where does the band compete?*

**Liz:** We have competed in Arizona, Florida, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington State, but recently we have competed mostly at California games. We don't travel as much now due to the expense.

**W&M:** *How would you describe the band's philosophy of music development, competition, etc.?*

**Liz:** For 27 years, our primary focus has been competing, as well as fundraiser concerts and local gigs. This year we are changing our direction a bit, doing shows and local performances for fundraising. I am very pleased that our reputation precedes us and we are continuing our tradition of performing for many local organizations as well as local universities.

I personally want to step back and do more judging and teaching.

**W&M:** *How often does the band practice?*

**Liz:** We practice at least once a week for two to three hours, and usually one weekend a month.

**W&M:** *What would you call the band's major successes over the years?*



City of Sacramento at the Worlds

**Liz:** We were WUSPBA Grade 3 champions in 1995.

As a Grade 4 band in 2011, after a slow start at the Queen Mary Games, we had a run of all firsts until the Pleasanton Games. There we missed first place on a tie-breaker in the March Medley, but came back to take a solid 1<sup>st</sup> in the Time Limit Medley and took the aggregate total for overall champion over seven other great bands.

At one time we had grade 3, 4 and 5 bands going, and more than 70 competing members.

In 2003 we traveled to Scotland and place 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, at North Berwick and Perth.

**W&M:** *Many WUSPBA bands have moved up and then down again in grade levels over the years. How do you deal with that?*

**Liz:** You have to step back and look at the players that you have. What is the dedication of core people who share the same values? Even in the lean years, we have tried to recruit new members. It's a lot of hard work. It's a hobby, but people are very, very passionate about it.



City of Sacramento in Scotland

**W&M:** *You've been a pipe major for a long time. What have you learned over the years about leading a band?*

**Liz:** When I first started as pipe major, I tended to be very passionate and demanding about what I wanted the band to do. Over time, I have mellowed a bit in my approach things, although I still have high expectations.

You have to continually have goals that stretch and challenge your players no matter what the level of playing is. I focus on "let's keep up the hard work and make progress every time we get together."

**W&M:** *You mentioned fundraising. Do you have any major sponsors?*

**Liz:** We were really happy to have support from Sacramento County toward a trip to Scotland in 2003, and on our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we received a formal resolution from the County recognizing our work over the years. That was really special.

**W&M:** *Your children have played with the band. Are they still doing so?*

**Liz:** They play occasionally, but have moved on in their lives. Ann played pipes with the band for several years but a new career and family are taking precedence on her participation.

Duncan is a drumming judge, competes professionally and has played in grade one bands over the years. Jane is also a very accomplished side drummer, was the lead drummer for CSPB for many years and is a drum instructor.

Patrick "Gus" was a drum major from a very young age and side drummer, and Molly began playing with the band at a very young age and is an accomplished side, tenor and bass drummer. She has competed in grade one bands and is currently competing with a band from Canada

**W&M:** *How did you, yourself get involved with piping?*

**Liz:** I grew up in Dunedin, Florida. I picked up my first practice chanter in the fall of 1970 and my instructor was Matt Forsyth, the founder of the piping community in Dunedin. Later Sandy McPhee was my teacher and I played the City of Dunedin Pipe Band for many years.

I moved to California in 1980 and began playing with the Prince Charles Pipe Band in 1984. In 1989, as I said earlier, I was a founding member with the brand-new City of Sacramento Pipe Band. It's been a great run ever since then.

The last issue of Words & Music contained an interview with Tom Foley by Andrew Lenz, attributing it to a 1993 issue of the newsletter. Instead, the original article was published in the Winter 2008 edition of Words & Music.