

The Desert Branch of WUSPBA covering Clark County Nevada and the State of Arizona is home to 11 member bands plus nearly 200 individual members. We've had an eventful 2022 with exciting changes and growth. We held at least one event each quarter in historic or scenic venues.

Our year started in March with a successful change in venue for the Phoenix Scottish Games now hosted at Gilbert Regional Park. This brand-new venue features a 10-acre event lawn, along with modern facilities for light, sound, power, and a professional amphitheater stage.

The games kicked off on Friday night with the PSG Twilight Tattoo! Acts taking the stage that night included the Mesa Caledonian Pipe Band, the 103rd Arizona Regimental Band, and the Los Angeles Fifes & Drums. Music performed at the Twilight Tattoo included original compositions by WUSPBA members! The audience exceeded 1000 people that night.

Saturday and Sunday of Phoenix featured a full range of solo contests and pipe band competition held on the stage in concert formation. This decision allowed the bands to compete as part of the overall musical entertainment for the games. The result was perhaps the largest audience we had seen for competitions; their reactions were incredible! Seven pipe bands competed in grades 5 through 3 including the Kevin R Blandford Memorial Pipe Band who visited for the first time since 1996. Congratulations to the Phoenix Pipe Band, Glendale Pipes & Drums, and Mesa for taking home numerous prizes. We also hosted a Drum Major competition which allowed Colleen Wilson and Greg Rochford to demonstrate their skills. Well done to all!

April saw the return of the Las Vegas Celtic Festival. It was better than ever! Their contest attracted bands & soloists from Arizona, California, Nevada, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming. Las Vegas also features the only Professional/Open Piping contest in our branch. Competitors were treated to a knowledgeable adjudication team of Andrew Carlisle, Jim Dillahey, Bruce Hitchings, Dixie Ingram, and Jim Sim. Congratulations go to Pasadena Scottish, Blandford, and Glendora for their top prizes in the band competitions.

Our next big event came in July with the Arizona Highland Celtic Festival in Flagstaff. This contest venue is tied in with the Jim Thomson School of Piping – a weeklong instruction course held at Northern Arizona University. Competitors came from all over our region including New Mexico. The cooler mountain temperatures and a bit of rain made it all feel a bit like the old country. Competing bands included Phoenix Pipe Band and Glendale Pipes & Drums.

Our last branch contest was just held in late September at Prescott on the shoreline of Watson Lake. Congratulations to Mesa Caledonian's Grade 5 band for their victories in both sets that day.

Our Game of Drones workshop and competition took place on Saturday October 1st. Instructors included Jack Lee, Eric MacNeil, Ryan Balchuck, Rod Bain, Cailey Jones, and Kevin Conquest. What a success! The workshop had over 55 attendees from multiple states. The afterparty and open format competition took place at Lake Pleasant Brewing Company who partnered with the

branch to host an all-out bash. The evening was an absolute hit! We received several comments from our visiting instructors on how well everyone in the branch gets along. All the bands helped to make the entire weekend absolutely brilliant!

The Desert Branch welcomes members from the other branches of WUSPBA to consider our events for 2023. We'd love to have you here!

Sincerely,
The Desert Branch Leadership