

Past President's Year-End Report – 2023

Dear WUSPBA Members,

Reflecting on the past four years as your Past President, there were so many remarkable achievements by our membership during that time with lasting impact to the piping & drumming world. 2023 was no exception.

Cultural Outreach and Engagement:

Our talented pipers, drummers, and drum majors unknowingly serve as ambassadors of our culture, captivating audiences and fostering a deeper connection with their heritage. Through performances at highland games, festivals, and community concerts, we showcased the unique qualities of our music and played a vital role in furthering the Celtic heritage attached.

Educational Initiatives:

Education remains a cornerstone of our association's mission. In 2023, the Youth Educational Council (YEC) and the individual WUSPBA branches deserve congratulations for their exemplary work in fostering musical growth. Their collective efforts resulted in several workshops and masterclasses which will help shape the next generation of pipers and drummers.

Community Building:

The sense of community within our association is crucial in creating a vibrant, supportive environment for our members. An improvement this year could be found with our branches working together more to encourage attendance at contests from outside their area. This camaraderie helped break down some existing territorialism, resulting in diversity at competitions with refreshed judging panels and bands attending different contests for the first time.

Global Impact:

Through competition, collaboration, and participation in international events, our association has also left an historical mark on the global stage. In 2023, we hosted several international bands at our contests including from Canada the North Stratton and Winnipeg Police Pipe Bands, and the Isle of Skye Pipe Band from Scotland. Likewise, a heartfelt congratulations to the Glendora Pipe Band and Los Angeles Scots for their competition trips to Scotland, and to the Hugh O'Connor Memorial Pipe Band who traveled to the All-Ireland, taking best bass section in Grade 4B. I also need to mention that WUSPBA members actively joined bands from Canada and the UK, further enhancing our association's global outreach. All these facts bolstered our connection to the piping & drumming diaspora.

(next page)

Looking Ahead:

I encourage all WUSPBA members to tune in on New Year's Day to witness an historic moment in the Tournament of Roses Parade. A massed band, consisting of members from WUSPBA, EUSPBA, MWPBA, Canada, Australia, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, along with 16 international highland dancers, will represent the largest piping and drumming presence in the parade since its inception. This opportunity will reach 750,000 people on the street and 24 million people via television and internet. "Pipes on Parade" is also performing at Disneyland on New Year's Eve and will perform a tattoo-style set at Pasadena City College on December 30th as part of TORP's Bandfest. This marks the first time this style of performance will be featured at a scholastic marching band festival, introducing pipes & drums to several thousand marching band students from home and abroad. If you will be in Southern California during this time, I encourage you to attend this groundbreaking event and support them.

As several of us pass the torch to the incoming WUSPBA leadership, I hope the association will continue to thrive and contribute even more. Our association needs strong minds with broad vision to continue building outreach, competition, and education. Pipe band associations are taking scrutiny these days, some of that very justified. My wish is that more people will get involved and encourage change from within.

In closing, thank you, to all the membership, for your piping and drumming efforts in 2023. Together, you are preserving tradition and forging new pathways for the future. I look forward to seeing you on the competition park. I wish you all the best for the holidays and into 2024.

Very Respectfully,

Kevin Conquest

Past President, Western United States Pipe Band Association