

# Words and Music

## Spring 2016

### The Judges Speak! The Top 5 Reasons Pipers Fail to Reach the Next Grade Level

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Finally, some answers!

I recently spent some time "surveying" bagpipe judges from around the world, and taking mental notes

on key concepts regarding pipers reaching the next grade level.

This wasn't an official double-blind, triple tested, bell-curve study - I simply asked judges that I knew one simple question:

**"What are the top reasons pipers fail to reach the next level?"**

Out of the 20 or so judges I spoke to, I probed each of them enough to get three to five specific reasons out of them. Here are a few other things I included in my un-scientific (but, I think somewhat "clever") questioning:

- I asked them to think about players they heard often during a season, not just players they heard once.
- I asked them to think about score-sheet patterns that popped up on players who were (stereotypically, not definitely) "doomed" not to progress.
- I asked them to try to "group" smaller items into larger groups. For example, crossing noises and sloppy embellishments were grouped into "sloppy fingerwork" to keep the list manageable.

What's interesting is, that with very few exceptions, the same five items popped up in every conversation.

#### **Sloppy Fingerwork**

I suppose we all knew this was coming.

However, I think it's important to mention that, in this case, this means the rule, not the exception. In other words, sloppiness in finger-work was the prevailing pattern in unsuccessful performances (as opposed to the occasional sloppy passage in a tune).

Obviously, sloppiness can and will creep into essentially anyone's performance from time to time. However, players that fail to reach the next level will have "chronic," consistent issues with:

- Regularly occurring, glaring crossing noises.
- Gracenote sloppiness - usually, gracenotes are too big and/or *out-of-sync* with the melody.
- Embellishments played poorly.
- Not only are embellishments themselves tricky, but they are also made up of gracenotes and note-changes, which are *VERY* easy to mess up if you're not careful (and well prepared for competition).

### **Lack of Instrument Control/Steadiness**

Even when I asked specifically about higher grade levels, this was still a big issue.

The bottom line? People are unsteady; "sagging" or "surging" on their blowing on such a regular basis that it severely distracts from the music.

It's very easy to get lost in the fingerwork aspect of playing, and lose track of the concept of steady blowing. When I asked the judges, they all agreed that some sort of feedback, whether it be a private teacher and/or a consistent routine with a manometer, was what the successful players had in common.

### **Consistent Lack of Rhythmic Control**

What is meant by this? Well, it's fairly simple really - players that are successful are able to keep a steady tempo throughout a tune, and unsuccessful ones can't.

Many players will slow down during difficult sections, and speed up during the "easy" parts. Sometimes, the opposite is true.

# Spring 2016

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Another common mishap is a *continual acceleration throughout a performance*, due to a habit of regularly rushing the beat.

Judges commented that players known to have a private teacher, or a game-plan that utilized a metronome on a regular basis were able to prevent these issues.

### **Inability to Complete a Performance without "Blunders"**

The definition of a "blunder" is simply a big enough mistake to disqualify a performance.

Examples might include:

- A "break down" where the piper stops before the end of the tune/set.
- Forgetting to repeat a part.
- Major note errors that take the tune irreconcilably off track. (Note, minor note errors are seldom a huge problem for most of the judges)
- Going "off the tune" in any other significant ways not listed above.

What causes these blunders? Lack of preparedness? Lack of confidence? Remember, in general the judges are citing *a repeated inability for a player to get through a performance without blundering*.

So, if you're having trouble with this issue - it's time to get serious about not blundering.

### **Apparent Fear of Judge/Performance**

One of the more interesting common responses from the judges I interviewed was that performance anxiety tended to be a huge reason why pipers were unable to put together good performances.

Being fearful of playing in front of the judge tends to cause major issues concerning the first four problems; sloppy fingering, unsettled quality of instrument, rhythmic problems, and blunders.

What causes players to be scared of performing for the judge? What sort of remedy would help a player learn to transcend this issue?

### **Interesting Omissions from the List**

While the following did come up from time to time, it was quite interesting to me that none of these were regularly occurring reasons that a piper didn't reach the next level:

- **Expression/Phrasing Issues.** That's right! An overwhelming few judges mentioned this in our conversations.
- **Tuning** - Precision of tuning was NOT an issue for most judges when it came to distinguishing between successful pipers and unsuccessful pipers.
- **Style/Interpretation** - ZERO people actually mentioned a specific style of playing or setting/interpretation of tunes to be the reason for lack of success.
- **Tempo** - I asked many judges if playing too slowly was a barrier to success in their experience. The answer was always overwhelmingly "No."

### **More Than Just Practicing Some Tunes and Playing Them In Front of a Judge**

So, if you're a person who's struggling in your own piping to reach the next level - are you being held back by any of the above? If so, what is the solution to this problem?

Let's turn to the successful pipers (at all levels) for guidance as to the right way to

approach solo competitions. It's so much more than just practicing some tunes and then playing them in front of a judge.

What do the players that are winning and/or reaching the next level do to be so successful?

Here are some common "denominators:"

- Many have private teachers that they work with, online or in person, on a regular basis.
- Many spare no expense to travel around to **a lot** of contests.
- Many of them spend a lot of time immersing themselves in bagpipe music and the piping social scene.

What do all of these denominators show us? To me, the answer is clear: in order to be successful in reaching for new heights in our playing, we're going to need a detailed roadmap to success (like a private teacher might provide), we're going to need a lot of repetition (like playing lots of contests... although there are other ways to get performance repetitions), and we're going to need to immerse ourselves in the art form as much as we can.

*Note: Dojo University offers online training course for pipers at all levels. If you're interested in learning how to reach the next grade level in 6 months, you can download a free guide at [www.DojoUniversity.com](http://www.DojoUniversity.com)*

## President's Report

Andrew Morrill, President WUSPBA  
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I hope everyone is getting their music up and ready for this upcoming season. I would like to remind the Grade 4 bands that

this year we will be competing with the Mini-MSR instead of the QMM.

### Re-Grading Process in 2016



I would like to talk with you about the re-grading process and how it will work for this next season.

Since being elected president of this association, the one issue that has taken up most of my time is the re-grading of soloists. This is a new process for our association and it is evolving and solidifying as we put it into practice.

The Executive Committee (EC) and the Music Board (MB) have had many discussions together and separately regarding this issue. We have come up with a process we feel will be fair, help individuals develop, and streamline the process.

### Two Ways for Soloists to Move Up a grade

There are two ways that an individual can be moved up a grade. The first is by a recommendation from the MB, or by filling out a re-grading application. If the MB at the end of the year notices an individual receiving high marks and consistently receiving recommendations by adjudicators for him/her to move up, the MB will send his/her name to the EC for us to vote on moving that piper or drummer up a grade.

The other option is for an individual to fill out an application and send it into the MB to be considered to be moved up. This

application must be sent in by September 18 of this year for us to take it under consideration; any late applications cannot be considered.

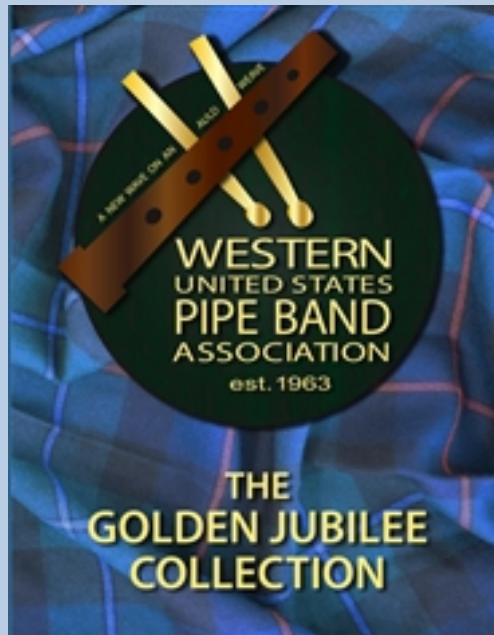
Many have questioned this timing, because we have games that occur after this date, but you need to send those applications in with your results up to that time period. This will help the MB to take a closer look at your body of work and help them to send the EC their recommendation for your grade level.

Our goal is to have all re-grading done by our AGM, so we need to get those applications started if we want to meet our goal. If you wish to move up and find out that your request hasn't been accepted, you can always fill out an appeal. We would like the appeals to come in by November so that the MB and the EC can get these looked at and decided upon as quickly as possible.

We know that a change in grade requires a whole new set of required tunes and we want to give every individual as much time as possible to prepare for the upcoming season. I would like to let you all know that countless hours are spent looking over results to come up with our decisions. Both the MB and the EC really do want each individual to compete in the grade that they can grow, learn and progress in a positive way.

### **How Band Re-Grading Will Work**

Let me talk for a minute about the band re-grading and how it will work. The MB is very careful and meticulous in its examination of the bands. If a band is in a



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position to move up, the MB and EC will vote on them and I will notify the band of our wish for them to move up. If the band feels they would like to remain in their current grade, they can appeal the process and have both the EC and MB look at their case again.

When we see a band starting to struggle and feel that it may be competing in a grade too difficult for its abilities, the MB and EC will recommend that the band move down a grade. Because this affects so many people, I will then notify the band that we are putting them on probation for a year. This gives the band one year to show improvement and show that they should remain in their current grade.

If on the other hand a band wishes to move down, we can do the move immediately. A band can always make requests to move down based upon many circumstances, and we will take its request under advisement.

### **Best Wishes for the New Season**

I wish all of you my best as the new season quickly presents itself. Many have competed already at the Queen Mary games, and other games will be happening in the next couple of months.

Work hard, stay positive, and hopefully success will follow. See you at the games!!

Thank you for all you do.

## **Executive Secretary's Report**

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



As we begin the 2016 competition season, I want to make you aware of the changes you will see with the WUSPBA competition forms. These changes affect soloists, bands, adjudicators, contest organizers and WUSPBA representatives. Contest organizers: please discard any old forms you may have. You may order new forms once your event has been sanctioned.

### **Solo Judging Form**

The MB has requested that the competitors performance level (CPL) be removed from the copy of the judging sheet that is given to the competitor. However, the adjudicator will still be marking the CPL on the yellow copy that WUSPBA keeps. This will allow adjudicators to communicate with the MB, and give an honest assessment of the soloist's performance level.

Adjudicators, on the bottom of the judging sheet there is a reminder to lift the white copy and mark the CPL. Contest organizers and WUSPBA representatives, please verify that all soloists are given a CPL. Soloists will be given their CPL season average.

### **Drum Major Judging Form**

The Drum Major Committee has redesigned the Drum Major judging sheet. The new



form allows for more space where the adjudicator makes their comments. No changes have been made to the way Drum Major contests are adjudicated.

### **Band Summary Form**

At the 2015 annual general meeting a proposal to remove points in favor of placings (rank) for band contests was passed. The new band summary sheet reflects this change. This change does not affect the way band contest results are tabulated. Tally committees were taking the points awarded and interpreting them into rankings.

This change has removed one step in the process, and has made band contest tabulation much easier.

### **Band Piping, Ensemble and Drumming Judging Forms**

A minor change has been made to these forms. Instead of asking the adjudicator to award points adjudicators are now asked to award a rank (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc.).

These and all other WUSPBA competition forms are available to view on the following site: <http://erdmanncathy.wix.com/wuspbarep> . Contest organizers, please discard any old forms you may have. To order new forms for your event please contact Chief Stewards Larry and Cathy Erdmann [erdmann.cathy@gmail.com](mailto:erdmann.cathy@gmail.com) . You may order forms as soon as you have received sanctioning from WUSPBA. If you are holding a band competition, please let Cathy know if you will have one or two piping judges.

If you have any questions about changes to the WUSPBA competition forms please feel free to contact me or a member of the WUSPBA Executive Committee.

## **Treasurer's Report**

*Nate Lorenz, Treasurer WUSPBA*  
[nclorenz66@hotmail.com](mailto:nclorenz66@hotmail.com)



The WUSPBA is looking into the feasibility of bringing some consistency to the banking among branches. To this end, discussion has begun about ways to minimize the

impact that the changing of a treasurer brings.

### **Potential to Reduce Difficult Situations**

Giving the main hub of the organization minimal access to branch treasuries could reduce or eliminate difficult situations, such as losing contact with a branch, and make ongoing transactions, such as funding to the branches, smoother.

If a WUSPBA representative can be given access to each branch bank account, it would help maintain consistency from as a Treasurer from a branch rolls off. It would also help the WUSPBA distribute funds to the branches without having to send a check; an electronic fund transfer or e-deposit could be made. This approach

would also avoid situations where lost or “stale” checks have to be tracked down from months ago.

### **Being Interconnected by Using the Same Bank**

It would help if each branch were banking with the same bank. WUSPBA uses Wells Fargo, which has a substantial presence and history as well as being experienced with nonprofit organizations. Being able to interconnect the WUSPBA and the branches would be fairly easy with minimal frustrations.

### **Treasurers to be Contacted**

I will be contacting representatives of each branch to see where they do their banking and what their thoughts are about connecting with WUSPBA representative for this kind of access.

Thank you, and I hope this comes as a bit of good news in terms of streamlining the finances of the WUSPBA organization among branches.

## **Advice for Band Managers and Pipe Majors**

*Nancy Theriault, Band Registrar*  
[bandreg@comcast.net](mailto:bandreg@comcast.net)



I hope 2016 is off to a good start for everyone. We've been blessed with wonderful weather and some great competition already!

### **Carry a Copy of Your band's Signed Roster**

As you are all preparing for coming events, I want to remind band managers to request signed rosters in plenty of time before they're required.

In addition, be sure either the manager or the pipe major keeps an updated copy with them at all competitions so that he or she is prepared to show it if asked.

### **Band Online Registration System**

The WUSPBA is now very close to 100% participation with the online registration system, with very few glitches.

The one issue people do have frequently is when they lose access to their band's login information and are unable to get into the system. This has caused great concern to some folks, so I want everyone to be aware that this situation is easily fixed.

If this happens to you, you just need to let me know and I can reset your password and/or give you your User ID.

Pipe Majors may want to be aware of this issue and keep a copy of the information so that, in the event that a new manager takes over, the access information can be passed along to them.

Do remember that you cannot access your band account with your solo profile, so registration and roster management need to be done with the band ID. As always, with this or any other issue, if you run into any trouble, just send me a note and I can help.



## So Many Thanks!

*Jeff Mann, Past President, WUSPBA*  
[Jeffrey.mann@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.mann@hsc.utah.edu)



At the 2015 AGM, the WUSPBA held a series of 19 workshops and a concert in conjunction with The Glenwild Conservatory of Music and

Exhibition. That first year we only expected about 45 attendees, but actually doubled that in attendance. About 125 people attended the concert, which was considered a great success.

In 2016, the Glenwild is introducing a competition to be held on the Friday prior to the AGM, which will be on October 22, 2016.

### Thanks to Andrew Morrill

I want to take a moment and congratulate Andrew Morrill, the newly elected WUSPBA President. Andrew is not new in any way shape or form to WUSPBA. He is actually the individual who enticed me to join in the first place.

### Thanks to Past Administration

I want to thank members of my past administration, who worked tirelessly to help make WUSPBA one of the top four associations in North America. This would include the Executive Committee, including the branch presidents, the Music Board, the

registrars, the President's Council, the chief stewards, the Words & Music editors, the webmaster, the Drum Major Committee, the MDAP Committee, the finance committee and auditors.

I would be amiss if I also didn't take this moment and thank my right hand girl, Erin Gunn. She kept me on task, contacted and sent out my communications, was always typing something up, kept my meeting agendas and meeting minutes. She knows the Bylaws and Contest rules backwards and forwards. She is an incredible woman. Thanks again, Erin!

### Thanks to the Glenwild Board

Finally, I want to thank the Glenwild Board, which helped out immensely and worked hard to make this first year such a success. We are looking forward to an even better Glenwild next year.

## Intermountain Branch

*John Moruzzi, Intermountain Branch President, [im@wuspaba.org](mailto:im@wuspaba.org)*



Spring is in the air and with that comes the preparation of another competition season for bands and soloists.

### Smackdown

This year, the IMB will be holding its annual Smackdown on April 9th. The Smackdown is an informal "contest" where soloists and pipe bands get

together to play in a stress-free environment to prepare for the upcoming season.

Typically, the event has always been held in February or March, but we wanted to give bands and soloists a little more time to prepare this year.

## 2016 IMB Festivals

Here is the current list of competitions that will be held in the IMB during 2016:

Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival  
Balloon Fiesta Park, Albuquerque, NM  
May 21st & May 22nd  
[www.celtfestabq.com](http://www.celtfestabq.com)

Pike's Peak Highland Games  
Memorial Park, Colorado Springs, CO  
June 18th & 19th  
[pikespeakcelticfestival.com](http://pikespeakcelticfestival.com)

Colorado Irish Festival  
Clement Park, Littleton, CO  
July 9th & 10th  
[www.ColoradoIrishFestival.org](http://www.ColoradoIrishFestival.org)

Elizabeth Celtic Festival  
Casey Jones Park, Elizabeth, CO  
July 16th and 17th  
[sites.google.com/site/elizabethcelticfestival](http://sites.google.com/site/elizabethcelticfestival)

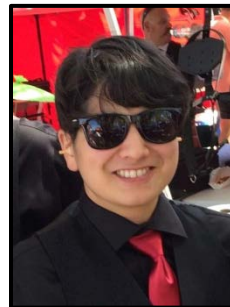
Colorado Scottish Festival and Rocky Mountain Highland Games  
Snowmass Village, CO  
August 5th, 6th and 7th  
[www.ScottishGames.org](http://www.ScottishGames.org)

Longs Peak Scottish Festival  
Estes Park, CO  
August 9th, 10th, and 11th  
[www.scotfest.com](http://www.scotfest.com)

The IMB is always looking for ways to improve the education and involvement from its members. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [im@wuspba.org](mailto:im@wuspba.org) if you have ideas or thoughts you would like to share.

## Northern Branch

*Suzan Karayel, President, Northern Branch*  
[wuspbanb@wuspbanb.org](mailto:wuspbanb@wuspbanb.org)



As the newly-elected President of the Northern Branch, I hope you're as excited as I am for 2016!

### Season Underway

Our competition season is already underway here in the Northern Branch. It started with the Redding Solo Bagpipe Competition, held Saturday, March 5th.

Redding is the only all-indoor contest on the Northern Branch annual calendar, and a great way to start off the competition season for pipers in Grades 2, 3, and 4.

### Coming Events

Here are some more events we've got coming up in the next few months:

- April 2 – Northern Branch Solo Piping Contest at Ardenwood Farm
- April 23-24 – Sacramento Valley Scottish Games
- June 4 – Modesto Scottish Highland Games
- June 18-19 – The Mother Lode Highland Games

The Mother Lode Highland Games is a new event for this year. It will include band

competitions for Grade 4 and 5 bands in addition to solo piping, solo drumming, and a drum major competition.

### **Check Us Out Online**

For the latest updates on news and events in the Northern Branch, check out our website at [www.wuspbanb.org](http://www.wuspbanb.org), or our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/WUSPBANorthernBranch](http://www.facebook.com/WUSPBANorthernBranch).

### **Your Feedback Welcomed**

Lastly, if you have ideas on things the Northern Branch can do to better serve you, the members, please feel free to email me at [wuspbanb@wuspbanb.org](mailto:wuspbanb@wuspbanb.org).

Your feedback is most welcome, and I will do my best to ensure that the Branch provides services that are useful and relevant to its members.

Have a great year, everyone!

## **States Acting to Regulate Ivory: Pipers with Old Ivory Pipes, Be Aware!**

*Lisa Memmott*  
[lisagez@yahoo.com](mailto:lisagez@yahoo.com)

Although the U.S. Government has long regulated the import of ivory into this country, several states are now considering legislation to regulate the ivory trade within state borders.

As part of an effort to protect endangered species by devaluing ivory and other animal parts, state legislatures in Arizona,

Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin are considering bills regulating the possession, import, and/or sale of ivory within their borders.

### **Save the Date for the WUSPBA AGM, Competitions, Workshops and Concert!**

WUSPBA's 2016 annual general meeting will be held on October 22 in Park City, Utah.

Plan to arrive Thursday evening to be prepared for Friday morning solo contests. The competitions will end around 4:30 or 5:00 p.m., with a Friday evening awards ceremony (and perhaps the start of workshops). Judges confirmed so far are Jack Lee and Ken Eller.

Workshops will be held on Saturday, with a Saturday evening concert, the Glenwild 2016. Sunday will feature two more workshops, ending at noon.

### **Four States Already Ban Ivory**

New Jersey's law bans the import of ivory into the state unless the owner is permitted to do so under Federal law (e.g. by obtaining a CITES permit). New York's law bans all ivory sales, containing an exception for instruments if the owner can provide documentary proof of the instrument's manufacture prior to 1975. California's law prohibits the sale of ivory-mounted

instruments unless the seller can provide documentation of the instrument's manufacture prior to 1977. In Washington, the voter initiative that passed in November 2015 bans ivory sales but contains an exception for musical instruments containing less than 15 percent ivory by volume. There is no requirement in Washington State that musical instruments have documentation of provenance.

Although pending legislation in Connecticut would criminalize the possession of ivory unless the owner obtains a certificate of possession, most pending legislation seeks to regulate the trade and import of ivory into states rather than merely addressing possession. Notably, legislation banning "import" of ivory may prohibit pipers from merely bringing ivory-mounted pipes into those states, even if there is no intention to sell the instrument.

It is possible that pending legislation will be amended before it is enacted. Residents of any state considering legislation may participate in the legislative process by writing their elected officials or attending legislative committee meetings. Please watch *Words & Music's* summer issue for an analysis of legislation finalized and enacted during the states' 2016 legislative sessions.

*Lisa Memmott is a piper with Queen City Pipe Band in Denver.*

## **Shasta Piping Society Seeking Donated Pipes**

The mission of the Shasta Piping Society, located near Redding, California, is to foster interest and proficiency in the traditional

music of Scotland. The main function of the Society is to provide refurbished bagpipes to disadvantaged youth across North America.



### **Pipes for Disadvantaged Youth**

The dedication many K-12th graders exhibit to learn the Great Highland Bagpipe is often dampened by the cost of the expensive instrument and its necessary care and maintenance items.

The goal of the Society is to provide serviceable bagpipes to students under financial hardship, so they can focus on becoming proficient players, knowledgeable about the traditions and musicianship of traditional Scottish culture.

Please consider donating any materials, no matter the condition, to move the Society forward its goals. If you have used pipes, parts or maintenance items, please contact [shastapipingsociety@gmail.com](mailto:shastapipingsociety@gmail.com) about how they can be used to encourage future players. The Society is in process of establishing nonprofit status.

## Encouraging “Lost” Piping Repertoires

Another goal of the Society is to encourage existing players to expand their repertoire to include musical scores and settings no longer widely heard by players or audiences. Many of the most ancient arrangements have been lost to history, but others merely lie dormant and unheard because they do not fit into the modern musical structures suitable for the competition stage.



It is this loss of musical variety that the Society hopes to reverse by encouraging public recitals presenting Scottish pipe music that may not have been heard for generations.

The Society's April 9<sup>th</sup> piping recital in Redding is designed both as a fundraiser and as a venue for playing ancient pipe tunes. Please consider attending or competing.

## Focus on the Kevin R. Blandford Pipe Band

*Pipe Major Martha Hall  
martha.bagpiper@gmail.com*

The original R. P. Blandford & Son Pipe Band was formed in 1986 by founding Pipe Major Kevin R. Blandford. Kevin gave private lessons at his family's British Imports store in Redlands and was the pipe band director at Upland High School as well.

In 1994, the band (along with Kevin's students) entered in its first pipe band contest. In just a few years, Kevin led the band to several West Coast championship titles and a second place award at the 2000 World Championship in Scotland.

### Band Renamed in Kevin Blandford's Honor

In June of 2003, Kevin was diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer, and sadly, in November of that year, he passed away. As a way to honor Kevin and his legacy, the band changed its name to the Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band.



*Kevin R. Blandford Pipe Band at the Seattle Highland Games, 2014*



Kevin's close friend and successor, Matt Nonnemacher, led the band to many more prestigious titles, including a third and fifth place finish at the World Championships in 2004 and 2007, respectively.

In 2009, Scott Larson, also a friend and former student of Kevin's, succeeded Matt and continued to lead the band to many more titles, including the 2013 WUSPBA Aggregate Grade 4 Band.

Then in 2014, long-time band member Martha Hall became pipe major of the band.

### **Competing in Grades 3 and 5**

The Blandford organization currently has two competitive units: a Grade 3 with approximately 20 members and a Grade 5 with 13 members.

The band draws most of its members from throughout the "Inland Empire" region of Southern California and boasts of a membership representative of California's diversity.

The band is blessed to have many members who successfully compete in solo piping, drumming and drum majoring contests. This past season, Gina Nguyen and Dylan Chrismer earned the WUSPBA Championship titles for Adult Drum Major and Grade 1 Piping, respectively.



*Celebrating on Glasgow Green after the World Pipe Band Championships*

### **Managing Practices with Two Bands**

Managing two competitive units is a challenge because each group needs to receive instruction appropriate for their level, but it is also important that both groups play together and learn from each other. The band tries to accomplish this goal by having weekly practices for each grade on different days, then having one or two practices a month on the same day with an overlapping schedule. Quite a few members of the Grade 3 band attend the Grade 5 bands practices and help mentor/instruct them.

For example, on one or two Sundays a month, the Grade 5 will practice from 1 to 3 p.m. and the Grade 3 will practice from 2 to 4 p.m. The hour of overlap allows the two units to play performance sets together. Members of both units are also combined when the band does gigs, concerts, etc. To allow everyone time to get to know one another, the band also holds social events such as an annual Christmas party.





*Pipes, drums and dancers perform at  
The Pipes of Spring Concert*

### Teaching High School Students

The band has benefited from teaching piping and drumming at local high schools, with many of its members coming through teaching programs such as those at Upland High School and Glendora High School. Currently, Cameron Tillery and Anthony DiBenedetto instruct the pipes and drums, respectively, at Upland High School.

Other bands could similarly benefit. If there are people in your band who have time and are good teachers, I would encourage them to contact local middle and/or high schools and have a conversation about starting a pipe band program. Share the opportunities that will be available to students in the pipe band world, like going to Scotland, being on television, getting college scholarships, performing for celebrities/dignitaries, learning leadership skills, etc. Maybe share some photos and videos of your band in competition.

### Numerous Performances

In addition to competing across the Western United States, Canada and Scotland, the band also performs at church

services, concerts, graduations, parties and parades throughout Southern California.

During the winter season, the band is honored with the opportunity to play some of Kevin Blandford and Jeffrey Rickard's beautiful arrangements for organ, brass and bagpipes at the *Pipes of Christmas* concert in Summit, New Jersey, and New York City. Every spring, the band produces and performs in the *Pipes of Spring* concert at the University of Redlands. This year's concert will take place on Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.



### Modern Highland Dress

The band is outfitted in modern Highland dress and wears the red-muted Roxburgh tartan, a favorite of Kevin's.

The band plays McCallum chanters in competition and Gibson B-flat chanters when performing with the organ and brass, while the drummers play Andante, Pearl and Hosbilt drums.

The band is sponsored by Blandford Imports, located at 8439 White Oak Ave, Suite 107, in Rancho Cucamonga, California. Blandford Imports offer the highest quality of imported goods from Great Britain.

### Learning from the Best

The objective of the Kevin R. Blandford Pipe Band is to field one or more bands that are competitive at a world-class level while also furthering the education and enjoyment of

traditional Scottish music in Southern California.

For this reason, the band organizes opportunities for pipers and drummers to learn from the best in the world. In the fall of 2015, the band hosted a “Weekend with SFU” event at the Claremont Community School of Music. The experts hired to teach at this bagpipe and drum clinic were Jack Lee, Seumas Coyne, Duncan Millar and Owen Russell, all of whom are members of the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band (six-time World Pipe Band Champions).

The band currently receives professional musical instruction from Matt Nonnemacher (bagpipe), Justin Hall (snare), and Kristin Tillery (tenor/bass).

The band is able to travel and accomplish its goals because the membership is supported by an amazing Executive Board. The Board President is Sean Keating, a piper in the band and an instructor for the Grade 5 band.

### **Canada This Year, Scotland in 2017**

Under the leadership of Pipe Major Martha Hall, Pipe Sergeant Jeanne Surdak, and Drum Sergeant Marie Pitre, the band hopes to make a return trip to Glasgow, Scotland, in 2017.

During the summer of 2016, the band will travel to the North American Pipe Band Championships in Canada to compete against some of the best pipe bands in the world.

***Editor’s note:** Kevin R. Blandford was inducted into the WUSPBA Circle of Honor posthumously in 2013. More about his background and his contributions to piping can be found at [wuspba.org/circle-of-honor](http://wuspba.org/circle-of-honor).*

## **Newsletter Deadlines**

**Summer 2016 Issue: June 10**  
**Fall 2016 issue: September 10**  
**Winter 2017 issue: January 10**

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