

Words and Music

Fall 2018

News You Can Use!

2019 WUSPBA officers

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- Jeff Henderson, Great Basin Branch President
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- Jamie Cuthill, Intermountain Branch President
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- Suzan Karayel, Northern Branch President
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- Ed Best, Southern Branch President
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WUSPBA Budget for 2019

At the WUSPBA AGM on October 27, Treasurer Nate Lorenz reviewed revenues and expenditures for 2018, and noted that a volunteer auditor had reviewed that budget and had no concerns. He called having an audit “a second level of scrutiny” over his work.

Nate proposed a budget for 2019 that was slightly lower than 2018 (see page 9 below), and which was unanimously approved by the members present.

Questions may be directed to Nate at nclorenz@hotmail.com.

Report from the Annual General Meeting

Susan Thornton, Assistant Editor Susan@ThinkStrategicallyFirst.com

The AGM of the Western U.S. Pipe Band Association was held October 27 in Denver, Colorado.

Band Registrar Jeff Mann reported it was the largest turnout of bands to an AGM in recent years.

The meeting began with officers' reports from 2018. A summary of their comments is below:

Officers' Reports

President Kevin Conquest reported the association had 63 bands in 2018 and 600 solo members spread over seven states. He noted progress being made in the WUSPBA, stating that the Pasadena Scots won Grade 3B at the World Pipe Band Championships, that for the first time three American drum majors were among the top 10 competitors there, and that piper Linda Snoddy played in the Tattoo. With a grin, he displayed a special green cap the Executive Committee had given him, emblazoned with a "Make WUSPBA Great Again" logo.

Vice President Drew McPheeters took care of the website in 2018 and organized the 2018 AGM. He praised President Conquest for being goal-oriented and "getting things done."

Ed Best, President of the Southern Branch, said the branch had focused on getting a WUSPBA representative program going, getting the branch AGM going, and developing bylaws. A future project is to establish a scholarship fund.

Jamie Cuthill, Intermountain Branch president, noted that the branch is unique in collecting dues, which are used for branch-wide educational workshops and a "Smackdown" competition in the spring that has been steadily growing. The band also sponsors a number of socials each year for members.

Suzan Karayel, president of the Northern Branch, said the branch had 17 bands and

eight contests in 2018. WUSPBA reps attended each of the contests and put unofficial results on Facebook very quickly after the competitions. The branch has an awards dinner each January.

Jeff Henderson, President of the Great Basin Branch, spoke about moving the Utah Scottish Festival to a site closer to Salt Lake City, and conducting an educational workshop for members.

Music Board Reports

Ryan Balchuck, standing in for Music Board President Ken Sutherland, spoke of the role of the Music Board (recommending adjudication panels, grading and re-grading bands and soloists, and focusing on education/professional development). The Adjudication Committee, he said, is planning educational workshops for judges via Skype, and will revise the list of judges to make hiring easier by games organizers.

BJ Gunn, who heads the Grading Committee, described the enormous amounts of data he collects following every competition, and how it is used to help with grading and re-grading of bands and soloists.

Ross Morrel, head of the Music Board's Education Committee, said that a number of educational YouTube videos had been developed for judges, stewards and games organizers, with more videos being planned.

Planning for 2019

Executive Committee and Music Board members described a number of priorities for the coming year:

A special committee will be established to draft language regarding suspension of a band or member, should that be needed, with plans to have legal review of that language before it is brought to an AGM for a vote.

Another priority will be to establish clear rules for disqualification or other penalty if a band is late “coming to the line.”

And the WUSPBA hopes to reach out more fully to members via social media in the months ahead.

Unofficial Summary of Bylaws and Contest Rules from the AGM

Susan Thornton, Assistant Editor
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A number of proposals from the Executive Committee and WUSPBA members were read in full, debated and voted upon at the October AGM.

A rough description of the proposals is below. *(Note: any errors are solely mine! Official changes to the bylaws and/or contest rules will be published by the WUSPBA. Susan)*

- Proposal to require branches to hold an annual AGM (with no date specified) passed unanimously.
- Proposal to clarify the definition of Juvenile Bands passed unanimously.
- Proposal that outside bands must play in the grade given them in their home association passed unanimously.

- Exempting bands from late fees in certain situations passed unanimously.
- Provision for a fee rebate if a band registers at the beginning of the competition year and then cannot compete passed unanimously.

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Deadlines

Winter 2019 issue: January 10, 2019
Spring 2019 issue: March 10, 2019

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- Suspension of membership proposal failed.
- Proposal re participation in unsanctioned bylaws passed unanimously.
- Clarification regarding the ability of pipers to compete in different grades for light music and for piobaireachd passed unanimously.
- Clarification of the march in a march/strathspey/reel competition passed unanimously.
- Change of requirement for games sponsors re inviting soloists failed.
- Clarification of solo drumming accompaniment passed unanimously.
- Proposal to permit bass drum substitutions in certain emergency situations passed unanimously.
- Change in band contest rules for Grade 4 and Juvenile Bands failed.
- Proposal that all contests are open to members in good standing failed.
- Proposal to eliminate the MSR and add a Quick March Medley failed.
- Proposal to change the registered instructor definition failed.
- Proposal to clarify rules about musicians who play different instruments in different bands passed unanimously.
- Clarification of the contest rules for Grade 4 MSR passed unanimously.
- Arrival time and contest starting time proposal was withdrawn by the Executive Committee.
- Proposal to establish a midsection competition passed unanimously.

WUSPBA's Own Pasadena Scottish Pipes & Drums Win 3B at the Worlds!

Congratulations to the [Pasadena Scottish Pipes & Drums](#), who won the World Pipe Band Championships in Grade 3B this year. Bruce Gandy, Glen Thompson and Glenn Kvidahl worked with the band, but band members did the hard work to present a winning performance in Scotland.

Congratulations to everyone involved!

The First One Hundred Years: A History of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society¹

By Susan Thornton
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This publication, describing the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society from 1881-1981, was given to me by Sir James Morrison-Low from Fife, Scotland. James introduced me to the Great Highland Bagpipe, for which I will be forever grateful. He also gave me this small historic publication, and I thought I would share few bits of information about the history of our instrument from it.

Level in Piping in Scotland Not Always as High as Today

The History begins by describing the level of piping in the Piobaireachd Society at the end of the 19th century.

One colorful description is this: “There was a tradition that the ‘pre-1914’ members, to call them so, did not achieve a high level of piping and had little regard for such trivialities as ‘grace’ notes though a high G was allowed on occasion if not vulgarly overdone. . . . [However,] there were also accomplished and knowledgeable players, some of whom were the driving force in the Piobaireachd Society from its inception for many years afterwards.

“There were of course, as there always will be, indifferent players, and we had two gentlemen whose genes were lacking for the inheritance of piping skills. One professed cheerfully to be the worst piper on earth, the other, more modestly, only claimed to be not in the top flight. There was ample evidence to support the claims of both.”

Official Dinners

The Society held annual official annual dinners that were highlighted by a band marching in to entertain those who had assembled. “The annual dinners were grand affairs . . . always formal in evening dress with a distinguished chairman, guests and speakers. The toast list was never allowed to be so long as to be an ordeal to the diners and was followed by a piobaireachd usually played by Pipe Major Willie Ross.

“The proceedings opened with the [Society’s] band in full force, the more skillful players strategically placed in the front row and flanks, while the less gifted were in the centre, less in the public ear. It happened occasionally that a drone or chanter reed badly out of unison had to be

replaced by a plug of paper and matchstick immediately before the first march and this remedy also worked for the few with chronic uncoordination of the fingers and/or musical amnesia and very well they looked, marching in soldierly fashion as they graced the official photograph for posterity to see.”

“Less Staid” Unofficial Dinners

Members of the Society also organized occasional unofficial dinners. The History reports that these “attracted the less staid and the young , as they were informal. Speeches were minimal and there was consequently more time left for piping and energetic reel dancing, sometimes so strenuous that the furniture was in deadly peril. The dancers of course felt the room too hot after this exertion and one of them once solved this problem effectively and simply by throwing the fire out of the window on a shovel.”

Ladies Need Not Apply

The Society’s rules were clear – “ladies are ineligible for membership.” The minutes of June 28, 1945, stated, “The traditions of our Society are against the admission of women to the premises. We do not even allow our own wives to our practice meetings.”

In 1972, a resolution to admit ladies to practice meetings was rejected by the members, and as late as 1976, the Society “gave thought to the hypothetical question of how to deal with an application for membership from a lady. An answer to the question was thought to be unnecessary and thankfully shelved!”

The Centenary Celebrations

Sir James Morrison-Low, mentioned earlier, wrote one chapter of the History. In it, he described the Society's Centenary Dinner held Nov. 21, 1981, in Edinburgh. Pipers from the Scots Guards performed, as did Pipe Major Angus Macdonald, who played *I Got a Kiss of the King's Hand*.

James' reported that a Ball was held as part of the celebrations, and members "thought it appropriate that our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, should be invited. Her Majesty graciously accepted the invitation," and planning went forward for the Ball on July 1, 1982, with the queen accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, together with "over 600 honorary members and members of the Society, with their guests." For the Ball, James served as Pipe Major for the band of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society, "some sixty in number," who played the *Balmoral Highlanders*, *Louden's Woods and Braes*, *The Piper of Drummond* and *My Home*, with march-out to *The Queen Elizabeth March*.

Dancing followed. Queen Elizabeth is very familiar with pipe tunes and with Scottish Country Dancing, and James reports in the History that she danced the *Eightsome* and *Foursome* reels, and the *Dashing White Sergeant*.

In conversations with me, James said that the queen enjoyed the dancing very much and stayed much later than expected. This put a strain on some of the Society's older members, as no one could leave until the queen left. When she departed, he said, there was quite a dash for the restrooms! According to the History, the Centenary Ball continued till four o'clock in the morning

and was followed by the traditional Scots breakfast, "upholding the finest traditions of the Society in its Centenary year."

¹ N.A. Malcolm Smith, **The First One Hundred Years: A History of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society**, Watt Chapman, Dunfermline, Scotland, 1983.



H.M. the Queen at the Centenary Ball, 1982, with Honorary Pipe Major, Sir James Morrison-Low, Bt., D.L., and his wife Ann (rear right). Photographer unknown.¹

Meet the Michael Collins Pipes & Drums

Daniel Kingsley
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Michael Collins Pipes & Drums Band was founded in Colorado in 1996 by pipers Jay Leasure, Jim McQuiston, and Drum Major David Bonham.

The Band name was chosen to honor Michael Collins, regarded as the father of the Irish Republic, as well as homage to the primary patron in getting us started, the

Ancient Order of Hibernians, Michael Collins Division.



On parade at the Longs Peak Scottish/Irish Festival in Estes Park, Colorado, September 2018.

The current roster includes just under 50 members consisting of pipers, drummers, dancers and students.



Band members pause for an official photograph at the Longs Peak Scottish/Irish Festival in Estes Park, Colorado, September 2018.

Traditional Irish Tunes

The Band's repertoire consists of mainly traditional Irish tunes. This makes us a big draw for Irish pubs year around as well as what we refer to as the St. Patrick's Day season (which actually starts about mid-September, half way until St. Patrick's Day, and ends whenever we feel like it).

In reality, the "season" usually ends whenever competition season starts in late spring. We then have to stop having too much fun and get serious about our competition music.

Variety of Gigs and Santa Pub Crawl

The Band also plays a variety of gigs throughout the year. We perform for fund raisers, charitable events, pub gigs, church services, chorale concerts and many more. As the Honorary Band of the Denver St. Patrick's Day Parade, we play gigs for the Parade Committee, as well as their pub crawl just a short time before the parade itself.

That then inspired us to create our own pub crawl around Christmas time. We're in the fourth year of our Santa Pub Crawl, where we hit a few bars and pubs in downtown Denver dressed in our Christmas finest and play some kickass Irish pipe music. We're hoping for this event to grow over time.

Playing with the Chieftains

A few years ago we were invited to play with the world-famous Chieftains for their concert here in Denver. We played a couple tunes with them on stage at Boettcher Concert Hall.

The show was a lot of fun and we retained one of the tunes – *March to Battle* --as our march-out for WUSPBA competitions.

Virtual Pipe Major

Michael Collins Pipes & Drums has been working for the past couple of years to become a strong competitor in Highland games pipes and drums competitions.

We've competed for a while, but until the past couple of years our focus was more on gigs and playing for the public.

Our current Pipe Major for competitions is Chet Choszczyk. We operate a little differently than most bands in that Chet lives in Durango, CO, which is more than six hours away by car. That makes it a little hard for him to drive to practice every week. So he coaches us via video and audio files sent over the internet each week. He also prepares audio and video lessons for us all to follow before practices in order to keep improving.

We bring him up to Denver once a month to run a full Saturday rehearsal, and he stays over Sunday and gives individual lessons. And he also makes all of our competitions throughout the season. We call him our 'Virtual Pipe Major.'



On parade in Monument, Colorado

Jay Leasure, the performance Pipe Major, Ben Ackerman, the Pipe Sergeant, as well as

Wolfgang Honefenger, our Drum Sergeant keeps the band on task during weekly practices. So far the arrangement is working out really well. We've been placing high in competitions and hope we are giving everyone else a run for their money.

A Winning Drum Corps

We can't do any write up without mentioning our kickass drum corps. Wolfgang has turned them into a force to be reckoned with at the Highland competitions. They take first place almost every time we play, and our mid/bass section regularly wins Bass Section of the games, including three years in a row now at the Longs Peak Scottish/Irish Highland Games.

We're very proud of the drummers in Michael Collins Pipes & Drums Band, or should we say Michael Collins Drums & Pipes Band. The pipers do their best to keep up and it's a fun dynamic where we all push each other to do better.

Michael Collins Pipes & Drums Band is a great band to be in because we all share a passion for performance as well as competition. We work hard, but we make sure to have fun, too.

Details of the WUSPBA Budget for 2019

Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Investments		
Interest-Savings	<u>100.00</u>	
Total Investments		100.00
R2 Flowthrough		
R2 Processing Collections	24,000.00	
R2 Processing Distributions	<u>24,000.00</u>	
Total R2 Flowthrough		0.00
Sanction Fees		4,400.00
WUSPBA Registration Fees		
Band WUSPBA Registrations	18,000.00	
Solo WUSPBA Registrations	17,000.00	
Total WUSPBA Registration Fees	35,000.00	
Total Income		39,500.00
Gross Profit		39,500.00
Expense		
1 Program		
AGM - Current Year	19,000.00	
Music Board	860.00	
Education Fund	800.00	
Adjudicator Exam Program	400.00	
Branch Support	2,500.00	
WUSPBA Rep	<u>4,750.00</u>	
Total 1 Program	28,310.00	
2 Operations		
Bank Fees	1,900.00	
Dues & Subscriptions	550.00	
Gifts	200.00	
Info Technology	1,000.00	
R2 Yearly Dues	1,250.00	
Insurance	1,300.00	
Postage, Mailing Service	100.00	
Printing and Copying	3,700.00	
Supplies	50.00	
Discretionary/Miscellaneous	<u>1,140.00</u>	
Total 2 Operations	11,190.00	
Total Expense		<u>39,500.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income		<u>0.00</u>