

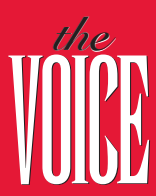
SPRING *the* 2009

# VOICE

\$6.25 US  
\$7.25 CAN  
£3.50 UK

The Official Publication  
*of the*  
Eastern United States Pipe Band Association





VOL. 38 NO. 1

SPRING 2009

THE VOICE IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION.

VINCENT JANOSKI EDITOR

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING INQUIRIES: The Voice PMB 316 560 Peoples Plaza Newark, DE 19702-4798 USA

Email: voice@euspba.org (609) 203-1751

The Voice welcomes submissions, news items, and photographs. Please send your submissions to the email or address above.

VISIT THE EUSPBA ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB: www.euspba.org

VISIT THE THE VOICELOG, THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF THE VOICE MAGAZINE www.thevoicelog.com

© 2009 EASTERN UNITED STATES PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS MAGAZINE MAY BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE PUBLISHER.

THE VOICE (ISSN 1534-097X) IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, AND DECEMBER BY THE EASTERN UNITED STATES PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION, PRODUCED BY TRADITIONAL ROUTES, INC., 5 COLUMBIA AVENUE HOPEWELL, NEW JERSEY 08525. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT HOPEWELL, NJ AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE VOICE, PMB 316, 560 PEOPLE'S PLAZA, NEWARK, DE 19702-4798.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EUSPBA, ITS OFFICERS, OR ITS EDITORS.

# Contents

History Generations by Janny Wurts 10
A profile of the piping legacy of Roddy MacDonald.

Basics The Self-Made Piper by Vincent Janoski 22
Creating a plan for self-directed learning.

Interview Piping Re-Evolved 28
An interview with Jori Chisholm.

Scouting the Scene 15

Pipes Aweigh! The Father of Waters Piping Cruise 16

Set Tunes for 2010 The Piobaireachd Society Set Tunes 25

Workshop: How to Think Navigate your piping brain. 26

Caption This Photo! 41

Tune "Matt Smith's Revenge" by Steven Knox 42

Cool Tools The MC2 moisture control system. 43

Reviews: On the Screen, on the Player... 44

## Departments

From the President 5 Events Calendar 19

Zecnotes 6 Upcoming competitions and games

Elections • Rule reminders Comix 61

News 8 PIPRZ Piob Jumble 59

Top Tunes 9 The Cut-Off 46

by Peter Gordon

Circuit Rider 12

Metro Cup • Sandy Jones Invitational

On the Cover: Willie McCallum in full performance mode at The Metro Cup Championship on his way to a second overall win.

## President Profile: Generations

*A brief history of the piping legacy of Roddy MacDonald.*

*by Janny Wurts*

Competitions on the eastern U.S. games circuit run smoothly. A full board of experienced and qualified judges are on hand to adjudicate a large slate of solo and band competitions. Competitors are divided by appropriate playing level with ample opportunity to play and progress. These are things we pipers and drummers take for granted. It is important to understand that it was not always so, but was brought to form by many of the same persons we see today behind the judge's table. Highland piping is steeped in tradition. In forty-five years, the EUSPBA has begun to cement what could be considered its own tradition, framed in the history of the people and regions that nurtured piping and drumming in the U.S., allowed it to thrive, and helped bring it to where it is today.

Past presidents of the EUSPBA list a great number of accomplished pipers in the 45-plus years of the association's history. Roddy MacDonald was president in the association's earliest days in 1974 and also served various duties on the association's committee during those years. His experience as an accomplished player helped form the basis of the growth in piping and drumming we enjoy today in the eastern U.S. The following essay was submitted by Janny Wurts as part of the EUSPBA's Certification, Level 1. —*The Voice*

**WITH FAMILY ROOTS** from Tarsakvaig on the Isle of Skye, Roddy MacDonald was encouraged to start piping at the tender age of nine by his father. His piping career began under Neil Henderson of Dunoon, the nephew of John "Jock" MacLellan, who was the well respected composer of many pipe tunes now steadfastly regarded as classics. Further years of lessons from the renowned soloist, Donald McLeod, provided and deepened Roddy's extensive knowledge of Piobaireachd.

At seventeen years of age, Roddy became the youngest competitor to win the 154 Highland Brigade Piping Cup. Other highlights his accomplishments as a solo competitor in Scotland include

The Burgh Cup and the Jura Cup. He also won the North American Championship both times he competed at Maxville, Canada.

His band history in Scotland includes playing with the 8th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders under Ronald McCallum, and was among those selected to play with the Invergordon Distillery Pipe Band, which went on to win the Scottish, British, European and Cowal Championships, and took third Place in the World Pipe Band Championships in Grade 1.

As a composer, he won the Prince Charles Trophy for musical composition for the strathspey and reel, "Fiona MacDonald" and "Calum

Iain," and afterwards went on the subsequent tour with the BBC. The reel has become a favorite tune, often heard in band competition today. Roddy also published a collection of original pipe music, including his own tunes, and another written by Jock MacLellan with a fourth part added, because the tune as first written was beautiful enough to deserve to be heard in competition, but could not be played because it had only three parts. Other tunes for the book were written by close friends, students, and respected colleagues.

Other honors include being invited to play as the guest soloist for the concerto written for Highland Bagpipes and Strings, King Arthur's Return, written by Dr. John Davison and performed by Concerto Soloists, Philadelphia's distinguished chamber orchestra in the Academy of Music on September 28, 1983. Roddy also played for the dedication of the Clan Donald Museum on the Isle of Skye, and again, for the opening of the new wing.

Since he emigrated from Scotland and set down roots in Newark, Delaware, the forty-six years of his residence in the United States have added significant contributions to the establishment of high standards. He was at the inception, and among the inaugural members of the EUSPBA, serving there as a past president, on the first judge's panel, and elected to the Advisory Committee which established individual piping criterion for competition, based upon level of achievement, not age. He helped to administer the judge's training program, was involved with the Delco Workshops for ten years, and brought



# The Self-Made Piper

*Creating a resource plan for self-directed learning.*

**M**ANY PIPERS can attest to the value of one-on-one, face-to-face instruction. Many will also tout the absolute importance of having an instructor to work with you throughout your musical development. However, there are only so many good and willing instructors and the world is large. While some may be lucky enough to live within manageable distance to good instruction there is a body of competent and enthusiastic learners who are pretty much stuck with themselves as the only means to push their piping development. Good instruction may also only begin and end with the finer points of playing the bagpipe. The nature of piping instruction creates a lot of piping students but sometimes runs counter to creating “students of piping.” For that, you must become a “self-made piper.”

No matter what type of schooling you had, or what kind of musical instruction you get, it is inevitably up to you to make the most of it to broaden your scope and keep yourself motivated for continued success. To learn Highland bagpipes is an endless process. No matter where you find yourself in your piping career, there is always more to learn and more to know. Like anything else in life, constant improvement is always there as an option.

Learning on your own is both challenging and gratifying. By directing your own learning you have the opportunity to search for and select your own learning material. Students in a traditional classroom usually don't get to decide how they are going to master a course. Instructors decide for them what direction to take. They choose the textbook, they develop the quizzes, the tests, the group projects, etc. Piping is

no different. Your instructor decides on the tunes, tells you what to work on, and basically tells you how to do things in particular ways. As an independent learner, you can make your study time more effective by employing the learning methods that work best for you.

Your personal “scholarship” also does not end with bagpipe-specific subjects. Being a self-made piper allows you to expand your learning beyond simply playing bagpipes into any other area you deem suitable. You can delve into the deeper aspects of music in general or explore the history of the music in ways that traditional piping tuition does not offer.

## THE PIPER'S PLAN

The personal Piper's Plan is a personal resource document used to brainstorm the learning material you can use as you move through your studies. Think of every resource that is available to you (books, websites, knowledgeable people, places, etc.). Narrow down the most useful resources and have them ready to include in your plan.

Creating a personal Piper's Plan is not difficult. All you need is a piece of paper and a pen (but the form on page 24 can get you started). You'll want to write down or print this plan document and refer to it often. It is the skeleton on which you will grow the flesh of your overall development.

Once you've completed your piper's plan, you can start breaking up your goals into smaller, everyday goals. Your plan should be handy at all times so you can check it as you need to as you move through your studies. If you've done a thorough job, it will become an invaluable part of your progress.

**INEFFECTIVE GOAL:** *Learn piobaireachd*

**EFFECTIVE GOAL:** *Learn the history and origins of three tunes and acquire instruction to play each from memory.*

**INEFFECTIVE GOAL:** *Learn music theory*

**EFFECTIVE GOAL:** *Learn the basics of chord progression and the fundamentals of modal harmony.*

*The first step to creating your “piper's plan” is to set a single, narrow and well defined goal. A broad and general goal is vague and ineffective. Be specific and your plan will be more effective.*

## STEP 1: SET A GOAL

The first step to creating a personal piper's resource plan is to decide on a single goal. Each plan should have only one goal but you may have several plans. Choosing a concrete goal will make it easier for you to focus your studies and will help you judge your progress. If you want to learn piobaireachd, develop your reel playing, or improve your instrument, make a separate plan for each. Make your goal as narrow and well defined as possible. For example: instead of simply stating “improve reel playing” as your goal, phrase it as something such as “improve phrasing on two, four-parted reels for competition.” (See above.)

## STEP 2: COLLECT MATERIALS

The next step is to brainstorm all of the physical and virtual materials you can use to help achieve your goal. They are not hard to imagine and take the form

## Piping Re-Evolved

*A talk with Jori Chisholm.*

**JORI CHISHOLM** has not been on the piping scene for very long, but in that time he has accomplished much and has made sure his presence is felt for as far as the internet can carry it. A native of Oregon, Jori started piping at 11 with instruction from Colin MacKenzie. His quick rise on the solo boards carried him to the top contests in the world where he has been seen in the prize lists of the major events at the Argyllshire Gathering and Northern Meeting, including the first American to win the Glen Caladh Trophy for A Grade piobaireachd at the Cowal Gathering and a second place in the Highland Society of London's Silver Medal. The top band prizes are no stranger either as member of the five-time, and current defending world champion Simon Fraser University Pipe Band.

The epitome of the modern American Highland bagpiper, he took his piping to the world wide web and launched *BagpipeLessons.com* in 2001, the first site to allow organized, long-distance online piping lessons and lesson downloads using the latest internet-based video and audio technology. In late 2008, he released his first solo CD, *Bagpipe Revolution*. And in early 2009, he launched *Pipebandtunes.com*, a modern approach to pipe band ensemble that allows downloads of professionally arranged and set bagpipe and drum scores for pipe bands.

Jori recently shared his thoughts on making music, recording, teaching, and the impact of modern technologies on bagpiping.



**THE VOICE:** *Your CD is entitled "Bagpipe Revolution." Do you think it is time for a revolution in modern piping and pipe music?*

**JORI CHISHOLM:** *[Laughs]* I'm not some iconoclast out to destroy piping. I guess I just thought it could be kind of fun title. I show a pretty wide range of what you can do with the pipes, though. I mean there's a piobaireachd on there, there's a lot of traditional music, and there's a lot of new music. My goal with the album was to present these arrangements as pretty new, and some of the pairing with some of backing instruments would be new. So, you hear some stuff that you haven't heard before—pedal steel guitar, dobro with small pipes, the Billy Joel song.... The tunes themselves are innovative. But, what I tried to do is have every track be a little different in terms of the instrumentation, not only on the pipes, but then also back end stuff.

*What was the impulse that led you to compile and record your CD?*

**JC:** Well, you know, when you are an up-and-coming piper, you listen to a lot of your idols on albums, and it's sort of something in the back of your mind that maybe someday I hope I'll be good enough that I can put out an album. So, all of these ideas, it's sort of been in the back of my mind, percolating over the years. And then, I had the opportunity to record at the studio, at Sage Arts, which is owned by a friend of mine who is actually a piper. And I had the opportunity to record up there and went for it.

# Cool Tools

## Highland Reeds MC2 Drone Moisture Control System

Ever since the first genius who skinned his kill and sewed its hide into a sack and attached it to his music maker, pipers have been battling the moisture and wetness that invariably comes with blowing warm air into a closed space. The advent



of synthetic bags has created an even greater need for an effective way to control the wetness that builds up and adversely affects reeds and sound. Highland Reeds' clever and aptly named Drone Moisture Control System is the first to stand on even footing with the benchmark set by the canister and bag systems that has been so ubiquitous over the last decade.

The Highland Reeds system cleverly removes the bulky canister and separates the chambers filled with heat exchanging desiccant that insert into the bottom of each drone stock in the form of individual plastic "elbows."

The inserts in each drone stock act as a "regulator" and heat exchanger, maintaining a constant flow of pressure on the reeds and thus providing a smoother, more forgiving sound from the drones. Acting more on the same principal as the Ross system, air comes straight from the blowstick into the bag and is pushed through tube inserts with desiccant crystals. The odd yellow tubes are not much to look at, but perform admirably. The inserts can be hemped and inserted into the bottom of each stock, or the system's new flexible rubber gasket/bushings can be used. Fair warning if the inserts are hemped in that they must be checked after the pipes are jostled around in your pipe case or by being carried as they can come loose. Those who choose to eliminate this possibility can opt for the rubber stock caps that fit into the slot of each stock. This may not be feasible for your current set up, but may be worth considering when it's time to change pipe bags.

The supplied crystals do not act as a "moisture absorber" as do many of the current systems on the market, but rather as a "moisture regulator." The crystals alter the temperature of the air flowing over your reeds and keeps the condensation within the individual tubes and away from the reeds within a synthetic bag/reed combination. As a result, moisture is not eliminated entirely, but allows it to work with you and your sound, not against you. Building a stable and consistent sound is a natural process. Moisture does build up within the bag, and eventually, no moisture control system is going to stop it from going from your bag to your reeds, but that would be after a substantial playing session. You will likely be flappy-lipped and exhausted before that happens!

The inserts come with "valve" flaps that are designed to help with full stops in band playing. These can be removed for those players who feel they might restrict air flow in an undesirable way. In general the idea of inserts in the bottom of the stocks seems counterintuitive. (Why would you deliberately obstruct air-flow to your reeds?) This seems like it should negatively affect the performance of your pipe but, like several of the other systems out there, it is a barely noticeable effect.

The Highland Reeds MC2 Moisture Control System is flexible and consistent, performing as intended in different weather conditions. It's an adaptable addition to your preferred bag and reed set up.

## PIOB JUMBLE

Unscramble each word clue and take each highlighted letter to unscramble the secret answer.

**CLUE:** This fallen figure is commemorated in this year's Set Tunes.

N N E T I C A

S F E T O R

A N R B H C

M E R L B U

T G N R S S I

C P L K U

A T M N E L

A R C N H T E

— — — — —

**Answer:** Word clues from top to bottom are ancient forest; branch; lumber; slings; pluck; lament; chanter. All clues point to the answer—"harp tree" from "Lament for the Harp Tree."

# The Expanding Middle

by Vince Janoski

**A RECENT REPORT ISSUED** by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that obesity rates increased more than ever in 23 U.S. states, and fell in none. In 49 states, one in five people are obese. It's very nearly common knowledge that Americans are generally, well, fat. Piping in the eastern U.S.A. mimics the shape of the 20 percent of Americans who would be considered obese. After 45 years, our scene looks a lot like your typical guy approaching middle age: Very little up top and a prodigious middle.

U.S. piping has seen a fairly large groundswell of interest and enthusiasm in the beginning part of the 21st century. The ranks of pipers and drummers under the age of 18 continue to grow and many are making their way into the upper solo grades. The prize list your typical Grade 1 solo piping contest has an average age of about 17, making your "senior" piper feel pretty old even if they are under 30. All good, mind you, but while this swell has reaped benefits in the general quality of solo piping here in this part of the country, we have yet to see it produced in any meaningful way on the band pitch.

Grade 2 bands and higher made up 4 percent of EUSPBA band membership in the year 2000. The total number of bands that year has changed little over the last nine: 167 total bands in 2000; 157 total bands in 2009. One thing has changed in the mix, however. Grade 5 bands still command more than half of the band membership in the eastern U.S., but the number of bands in Grade 3 and 4 have increased a combined 11 percent, more than swallowing the 5 percent decrease in Grade 2 and 5 bands for this year.

Interest and participation in pipe bands seems to be as vibrant as ever, so one would think that the region could boast more than only two Grade 1 pipe bands (with the second appearing with a ten-year gap after the first) and a vacant Grade 2 circle. As a result of this interest, the band field has a prodigious girth around the middle with a healthier than ever active Grade 3 and 4 list of bands. An average games in 2009 will easily see eight or nine Grade 3 bands, with a different list of eight at the next games with only a percentage of overlap.

The general level of play in these grades is also taking shape to be a true competition, one that is difficult to judge,



and one where several bands can either take the prize or lose it depending on the day. It says a lot about the dedication and commitment of bandsmen and bandswomen in these bands. No matter what grade you find yourself playing in, it still takes work to be at the top at the end of the day. The main worry is whether this work continues to bear fruit when confronting a gaping chasm between your best Grade 3 eastern U.S. band and your next best active band—which happens to be in the Grade 1.

But the resources do exist to bridge that chasm. Pipers, drummers, and bands have greater access to high quality teaching and music than at any other time in the 45 years of the EUSPBA's existence.

The playing of the best individuals and bands is but a mouse click away on sites such as YouTube, not to mention what broadband technology has done for distance learning. But feeding our appetite for more and higher quality piping and drumming has seemed to have just made us all fat, an expansion of the middle, rather than trimmed us up into fighting weight. Like an overweight population, such an expansion can only bring unhealthy side effects over time. Is the absence of a Grade 2 field of bands in 2009 one of those side effects?

Maybe the analogy is imperfect, but when good bands rise and fall like they have over the last decade, one has to wonder whether the increased feeding on education and high quality music is doing us all more harm than good. At some point, all this learnin' should produce some results—with more than one band, and faster than a ten-year span from one grade to the next. The solo players are emerging, maybe we just have to wait a bit longer for the bands? Oran Mor's continued success and COW's resurgence may be just what our balding fat guy of a band field needs to trim down.

There are many possible directions for a growing band scene, but there must be a clear path for all this growing quality if it is to continue building momentum toward a (<gasps> is it possible?) third Grade 1 band. At some point, the growing middle will need a place to go, whether there is a healthy (and competitive) Grade 2 field in the eastern U.S. to accommodate it remains to be seen.