

B.C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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NOVEMBER, 1976

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B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

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The B. C. Pipers' Newsletter is published monthly at #307 - 707 Hamilton Street, New Westminster, V3M 2M7, by the British Columbia Pipers' Association and distributed to all members. Address all communications concerning the Newsletter to the above address. All other communications should be sent to Mr. R. Herring, #1402-750 Jervis, Vancouver, V6E 2A9.

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Table of Contents

Letters to the Editor.....	Page 1
Editorial.....	2
Last Month In and Around the Association	
Knock-Out and General Meeting.....	4
Mini-Gathering.....	5
Triumph Street Junior Pipe Band.....	5
Next Month	
Knock-Out and General Meeting.....	6
Triumph Street Band Contest.....	6
Triumph Street Programme & Entry Form.....	7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Just a couple of observations from the last two bi-monthly competitions. It is gratifying to see such a good standard of playing, particularly in the juvenile and junior classes -- I don't recall hearing such a good overall standard in these classes for some time, and it is a good sign for the future (although the numbers are down from before).

What does disturb me, however, as it has in times past, is the senior amateur class, where only once in the entire year has anyone made any attempt at all at tuning their pipes before starting to play. Surely, it must be obvious to someone, especially in the senior amateur class, when their pipes are not remotely in tune, yet for one reason or another, they play blithely on, sometimes on pipes that are absolutely grotesque. The audience at the bi-monthlies had to suffer through some performances on instruments so badly out of tune as to be a caricature of the bagpipe, and I consider it a disgraceful reflection on both the competitor and their instructor when the listener has to be put through such an ordeal.

Pipers complain about cheap jokes made about the howling sound of the bagpipes, yet the casual listener at one of these performances would have little reason to believe it otherwise. It is certainly time for the pipers in senior amateur to "get with it" and learn something about the instrument they are playing on; a senior amateur piper is supposed to be next to the professional class, but right now, their appreciation of the sound of their instruments would not do justice to a novice. I hope this situation changes soon, for they are not bringing much credit to their music.

Hal Senyk

Dear Sir,

I am writing in regard to something I find very alarming in the piping profession. A large number of young pipers are getting a bad start in their piping careers. Some teachers do not have enough experience to teach.

Often I get kids wanting lessons who have had one or more years of instruction; on asking them to play doublings, etc., they just fumble through with false fingering, and then when you ask about valuations, the poor kid thinks you are talking a foreign language (perhaps I do).

I feel the B. C. Pipers' Association should have a Registered Teachers Certificate. The names of such Teachers should be published in the magazine for parents to see.

A teacher's certificate should be an easy thing to get organized, as we have in our midst a very noted and well known piper who has carried this Certificate for a number of years.

Fred Brodie

EDITORIAL

The B. C. Pipers' Association is dead! Motionless from the backside up. If not, then it's the only living evidence of mass rigor mortis in this ever surprising world. But, you say; the knock-outs are progressing quite nicely, the Annual Gathering usually goes off without a hitch, the mini-gatherings, the White Heather, the Annual Dinner are all surviving. If the B. C. Pipers' were a small pipers' club, limited financially (as in the early 50's when Willie Ross and John Burgess came out), then the above would certainly be an achievement. But it isn't a small pipers' club anymore and the programmes offered by the Association are bush league! The B. C. Pipers' is one of the largest organizations in the piping world and certainly one of, if not the, richest. It should be acting like one.

Take for example the last Board of Directors meeting of this large and financially "well-off" organization. A large part of the meeting was spent in useless discussion over whether competitors in the Knock-out open competition should receive three free drink tickets. Fifty thousand dollars in the bank and they're worried about giving a dollar's worth of drinks to five competitors. Sometimes I really wonder.

Perhaps I've gone a wee bit strange but the reason I've sat on the Board and published the Newsletter for the past five years was to try to improve piping and its related social activities in this area. As someone mentioned in a letter to the editor a few editions back, when the Colonel McEwings with their very limited resources put the B. C. Pipers' to shame with their particular programmes, then it's time to take stock of the situation. Perhaps those disgruntled with the Association (and believe me there are many) will show their feelings at election time and stand for office.

If you do stand for office and are elected, then perhaps you could consider the following:

The winter programme presented by the B. C. Pipers' merely supplements the Summer Games. It is a good strong competition that makes this Association tick. Without it then we all go down the tube. The Games as they stand now are absolutely atrocious. Our novice and juvenile classes are at a disturbingly low ebb. Our pipe bands are in a disgraceful state numbers wise. What we need to rectify the situation is at least one major Highland Games in Vancouver.

One giant step was taken a couple of weeks ago. A member of the Association contacted a member of the B. C. Highland in a "strictly off the cuff" situation to discuss dual sponsorship of the July 1st Games. Big bloody deal. If these people can't see past their noses then they shouldn't be looking after our affairs. If it's going to be done it has to be big. We have to get off our collective butts and sell ourselves. We have all the ingredients; the Heather Jolleys, the Don Bellamys, the Eddie Glennies, to lay the groundwork and seek out prospective sponsors, and the dozen or so Scottish societies and interested pipe bands to assist financially and manpower wise. Prospective customers? Tourists alone in a typical Vancouver summer would constitute a large bulk of the crowd.

Naturally, we would be unable to field enough bands of our own to provide a good show. Perhaps we should have a look at the C.N.E. (Intercontinental Championships) for the answer. If they can import 20 overseas bands, surely we can bring four or five from Scotland and perhaps a couple from the East.

Today's youth is a lot smarter than his counterpart of ten years ago. He won't stand for the kind of nonsense he receives at our typical Highland Games. Unless things change, and soon, we won't have to worry about teachers' certificates and judges' certificates because we'll have nobody left to teach, let alone judge.

I defy anyone to cite one reason why a "Big Games" wouldn't work. I look forward to your letters.

* * * *

The Association was saddened at hearing of the death of one of its most respected members, Duncan Watson. Duncan who had lived in Canada for twenty-three years, and was a member of the Association for most of that time, passed away on September 5th.

He will be remembered by many as the wee man with the tape recorder at the Indoor Meet as well as a perennial winner of the Over 65 competition at the Annual Gathering. He will also be remembered by his pupils, many of whom are still competing, among them the Palmers - Glen, Robyn and Alison, Kelvin and Marion Wood, Jean and Jill Laurie, and Pat and Gail Dawson.

On behalf of the Association, we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to the Watson family.

* * * *

LAST MONTH IN AND AROUND THE ASSOCIATION

Knock-Out and General Meeting

The second event in the Knock-out series was held on November 5, 1976 in the Scottish Auditorium. As the formalities of the evening were rather late in starting, it was close to 9:00 p.m. before the first of the evening's two trios marched on. Victoria #2, led by Jamie Troy, was first to play. This particular contest was billed as probably the most exciting of the year, but combined with Victoria's rather uninspirational playing and the fact that Triumph Street #1 committed a first in the world of trios - breaking down - the competition was a big disappointment.

The judges for the evening had no trouble in selecting Victoria #2 as a candidate for the next round.

Graham Davidson was a last minute replacement to perform this month's piobaireachd.

The open competition this month attracted five contestants playing two jigs. Judge Jim McPherson chose Allan MacLeod as the eventual winner.

Mini-Gathering

The Mini-Gathering was held on November 6, 1976.

Results

Novice 6/8 March

1. Autumn Oberg
2. Wesley Eaton
3. Brenda Lowden

Juvenile Strathspey & Reel

1. Maureen Lee
2. Geordie Young
3. Pauline Alakija
4. Gordon Redman

Junior Piobaireachd

1. David Winter
2. Jack Eckersley
3. Owen Reid

Amateur Hornpipe

1. Alison Palmer
2. Christine Waddell
3. James Stewart

The judges for the day were Alex Young and Bill Elder.

* * * *

TRIUMPH STREET JUNIOR PIPE BAND

The Triumph Street Junior Pipe Band is off to a good start. The response of younger players wishing to join and be a part of a new juvenile band is most encouraging, and practices have now begun. Under the direction of Jim McPherson and members of the Triumph Street Band, the pipers and drummers are being given a good groundwork at practices, and we hope to have a strong contending juvenile band by summer.

We still need more players, however, and anyone under 18 years of age (boys or girls) wishing to come down and belong to this new group are invited to call Jim McPherson at 524-6721 or Hal Senyk at 253-1743.

* * * *

NEXT MONTH

Knock-out and General Meeting

Next month's knock-out competition will feature a "double header" with Richmond Junior #4, Seaforth #1 and Victoria #1 squaring off and Richmond Junior #2 and Richmond Senior #1 competing in the second event.

The meeting, held in the Scottish Auditorium, will get underway at 8:00 p.m. The requirement for this month's open competition will be a slow air and 6/8 march.

Participation in this particular event has declined a little over last year's version, so bring down your pipes and give it a "go".

It promises to be a good one, especially with our Island friends in for the evening. See you there!

Triumph Street Pipe Band Contest

The fifth annual Triumph Street Band Contest is scheduled for December 4, 1976 commencing at 11:00 a.m. The contest will be held this year in St. Thomas More School, 12th Avenue and Kingsway in Burnaby. Once again, the band will be presenting a full programme of trio, drumming and miniature pipe band events. Included in the mini-band section will be a slow air - 6/8 march competition which will be open to all classes of bands. Bands will not be required to play into the circle in this event.

The drumming events will include classes for novice, junior and senior amateur as well as professional. The drum section event requires a drum salute without a piper and is open to all classes.

As has been the case previously, the dress and deportment and tenor and bass events will be judged during the miniature band competition.

Following the afternoon's festivities, the traditional Ceilidh will be held in the evening in the school hall. Bar service and light refreshments will be available. Tickets can be obtained from any band member or by phoning 526-9006 or 253-1743.

PROGRAMME & ENTRY FORM

EVENTS:

1. Grade I Miniature Bands - 5-7 minute medley
2. Grade II Miniature Bands - 5-7 minute medley
3. Grade III Miniature Bands - selection of band's choice - no time limit
4. Open Slow Air - 6/8 March
5. Senior Trios - Waltz, Hornpipe, Jig
6. Junior Trios - 6/8 March, Slow Air, Jig
7. Drum Section (Open)
8. Novice Drumming - March with piper
9. Junior Amateur - March, Strathspey & Reel with piper
10. Senior Amateur - Medley with piper
11. Professional Drumming - Medley with piper
12. Tenor Drumming - judged during Bands
13. Bass Drumming - judged during Bands
14. Dress & Deportment - judged during Bands

ENTRY FEE:

Bands - \$10.00
 Trios - \$ 2.00
 Drum Section - \$ 2.00
 Amateur Drumming - \$ 1.00
 Prof. Drumming - \$ 2.00

No entry fee required for event #'s 12, 13, 14

Professional Drumming:
 1st prize - \$25.00
 2nd prize - \$15.00

PRIZES:

Grade I Bands - 1st - \$125.00
 2nd - \$ 75.00
 3rd - \$ 50.00
 Grade II Bands - 1st - \$ 75.00
 2nd - \$ 50.00
 3rd - \$ 40.00
 Grade III Bands - 1st - \$ 50.00
 Open - 1st - \$ 40.00

There must be one more entry than prizes given.

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ENTRY FORM

Please enter:

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in events.....for which.....is enclosed.

Mail all entries to: Hal Senyk,
 1635 East 6th Avenue,
 Vancouver, B. C.
 V5N 1P2

Please try to have entries in the hands of the Secretary before day of competition.

#307 - 707 Hamilton Street,
New Westminster, B. C.
V3M 2M7

December 5, 1976.

Dear Members of the B. C. Pipers' Association,

As some of you are already aware, the editor of the Newsletter was removed from his position at a special Board of Directors meeting convened before the last knock-out competition. For the benefit of our out-of-town members and the local members who didn't learn of it through the "grapevine", I think it my duty to hereby inform you.

The Board of Directors took exception to the Editorial appearing in last month's edition of the Newsletter. The majority of the Directors viewed the article as a personal insult and were, I believe, greatly hurt by the references made therein. I can only say now, as I stated at the special board meeting, that the article was referring to the Association collectively and not to anyone individually. However, I must also state that I firmly believe in what I wrote and would do so again even if I were aware of the consequences.

As the Board of Directors could not see fit to do so, it falls upon myself to thank, publicly, all those who have made the Newsletter possible over the past five years. To our most regular contributors and to the Newsletter staff, thank-you.

In closing all I can say is that the Newsletter staff has attempted to publish a "newsy" and entertaining magazine and that we have invested a lot of time and energy in doing so.

Yours truly,

Angus Macpherson

Angus Macpherson.

P.S. The funds for this mailing have been donated by the staff, not the B. C. Pipers' Association.

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