

2017 MWPBA Chief Steward Report

The season began 1/13/17 with Winter Storm and our first regional solo contest which took place at winter storm for the 1st time, it progressed over the winter months in St Paul, Milwaukee, Alma, and Lexington and concluded 4/1/17 with the Terry Mc Hugh memorial piping competition Finals in Palatine, IL. This event took place during the day and in the afternoon and into the evening we had our 2nd annual professional piping competition but we renamed it to the P.M. Ian Swinton Professional solo piping competition. It was something that was long overdue and appropriate to honor Ian for all that he has done over the decades for piping in the Midwest. Ian was present and presented the awards to the winners that evening. We had fantastic turnout of 11 professional pipers for the contest. The year before was 7 Professionals attending.

Alma Highland Games

May 27-28

Our first highland games contest led off with Alma on May 27th and 28th. This was Alma's 50th Anniversary. They made a push for more bands this year to attend. They were a little more successful. With 17 bands attending. It was nice to see a jump in the Gr 1 bands this year with 3 attending. Last year we had 13 bands attend. The weather was nice both days. Overall the bands are still very far away from everything. There are still no concessions, no beer stand. They did bring in Port-pottys which was a convenience for the crowd.

Milwaukee Highland Games

June 3

The morning began with heavy rain, and lighting strikes. Solo's were delayed for a bit and then continued under the bleachers and under pop up tents. It wasn't ideal but the alternative was to cancel the solos or risk it under the bleachers. All of the soloists expressed unanimously to continue under the bleachers. By the afternoon band contest the sun was shining. We had a nice turnout of 15 bands. Last year was 9 bands.

Midwest Pipe Band Championship

Chicago Scots Scottish Festival and Highland Games

Held in Itasca: June 16th and 17th.

This event has grown so large now it has become a two day event. With solo's beginning on Friday afternoon and concluding on Saturday morning. We had a total of 364 solo competitions. Last year was 300 solo performances. We had 31 bands this year, last year we had 23 bands. The grade 2 and 3 bands competed twice again this year playing the medley selection in concert formation, for a total of 45 band performances. This was all done within 1 pipe band circle. So kudo's to Jim for all his hard work, all of our Judges for their efforts over two days and to all our stewards for their hard work. Once again the rains hit hard before we had completed the

Grade 2 medley competition. The fire dept. had shut things down. After a significant delay we did get the ok to finish the Gr 2 competition and we announced the awards at the pipe band tent. The rest of the games and park had been shut down. So unfortunately what would have been a very fun Saturday night in the beer tent didn't get to happen.

A few thankyou's in regards to the games here: first to Jim Sim for all of his hard work and involvement with the games committee. The McKee family and SYKB for sponsoring the GR 3 traveling trophy, The PM Dave McKee memorial award. I would also like to recognize and thank Jamie Stewart and Mayor Drum supply for sponsoring all of the drumming awards. And I would like to thank all of the bands and competitors for their cooperation and patience and for working with us on a very busy 2 days.

Minnesota Scottish Fair and Highland Games

July 15th:

A beautiful day of weather in Minnesota. A good turnout of solo competitors. 9 bands competed, the Gr 3 and 4 bands played twice, each playing their MSR and their Medley for a total of 13 band performances. Last year was 5 bands and 8 performances. So it was nice to see more bands attend this year. Word is they are moving the event to a new venue next year to the center of their downtown center in Egan Falls hoping to attract more of the public to the event.

Last year after the Minnesota games was the Springfield games. If you recall the games called off the band and solo competitions due to heavy rains and field damage. Springfield did not have the games this year.

Wisconsin Highland Games

Waukesha, WI

Sep. 2nd

A good turnout of solo players with 8 solo stations set up. We had 11 bands entered, which is the same number of bands we had last year. . This being a champion supreme games once again, we had no Gr 3 bands or Gr 2 bands attend which was disappointing to see. I did not hear any complaints regarding gate issues this year so hopefully that is a thing of the past. The weather was beautiful and held for most of the day until the scheduled massed bands. The storms came in and the massed bands and closing ceremonies were canceled. We had the results and awards and the pipe band tent.

Columbus Scottish Festival and Highland Games

Columbus Indiana

Sept 9th

It was a beautiful day weather wise. This is the second year of the games having the solo and band competitions back at their festival. Chris Eller and Mark Henderson couldn't have been more accommodating and they were great to work with. We had a good turnout for the solo competitions. We had only 4 bands compete. The 1 Grade 4 band we had played twice for a total of 5 band performances. Last year we had 5 bands compete. So it was disappointing not to see more bands take advantage of the opportunity we try to provide to them. It is possible for our Chicago area bands to make the round trip here all in a day.

Central Kentucky Celtic Festival & Highland Games

Eminence, KY

Sept 16th

Again this year there was no band competition. This is the 3rd year with no band competition. This was just a solo piping competition at the festival this year. Greg Abbott and Chris Apps were our judges this year. We had 54 solo performances scheduled for the event here. Last year we had 73 solo performances scheduled.

St Louis Scottish Games and Cultural Festival

September 29th and 30th

This was our last games of the year. The event started off on Friday night with an Open piping event at Dressel's Public House. It was a really nice and intimate setting for the event. We had 6 terrific competitors for this Piobaireachd, and light music event, playing their MSR's, H/P Jig, and 6/8 selections. Our judges for this event were Chris Apps and Jimmy Bell. It was a very good crowd and they were treated to an evening of fantastic piping. The drinks were flowing and it continued on into the evening after the event.

On Saturday the day of the games the weather was fantastic. You could not have asked for a nicer day. We had 121 solo performances this year and 117 last year, so that held steady. We had 5 bands compete. Our grade 4 bands competed twice with their medley and MSR's for a total of 7 band performances. Last year we had 3 bands compete. So it was nice to see a couple of more bands out this year. What was disappointing was we had a tight race for champion supreme going into the end of the season with our Grade 4 and 5 bands, and that they all didn't turn out to battle it out down to the last games of the year. Kudos' to Grand Traverse Pipe band for making the effort and the long trip to St Louis and on the last games of the season needing to take a 1st place to win Champion supreme they did exactly that. So congrats to them! We had 4 Grade 4 bands within 3 points of each other for champion supreme and none of them took advantage of the last two games of the year to try and win it outright. That was disappointing to see. The St Louis organizers were again disappointed with the band participation at their games again this year.

So that concludes the season. In closing I would like to thank everyone here today, all of the bands and membership, and all of our board members. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your chief steward. It has been a wonderful experience and I truly appreciate everyone's cooperation on the and off the field. I would like to thank first and foremost Julie Parry. Julie has done a tremendous job again this season and deserves a big thank you from all of us for all of her efforts. Her job is not easy and the amount of time and preparation she puts in for each and every event and games is very time consuming, **Julie**, it is appreciated, you do it well and you represent our association at the games with class and your always willing to help, So thank you very much. Also I would like to thank my mainstays, Sheri Sievwright, Bruce Miller, Steve Stuart, Tom Jewell, Stuart Barr, Joann Ripper, Jim Sim and there are many others that come out and are able to work at 1 or 2 games a year. I appreciate all of your help. We could not do this without all of you. I believe Jim as created a certain culture here within our association where we are known for doing things the right way. It's a culture that makes it fun to participate, it's a real camaraderie. I think all of the games organizers and all the judges that we see at the games and solo events throughout the course of the year recognize this and appreciate what we do and how it's done. Many bands and judges we see over the course of the year take our message back to their associations and others they run into over the summer on how we do things the right way here in the Midwest. They all see the spirit within our association and this message is resonating around North America and beyond. So thank you Jim for all your hard work and for all that you do. Your dedication goes above and beyond and is very much appreciated and I was glad to be a small part of this.

Submitted by Keith McDonald, Nov. 4, 2017