



# The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Newsletter

*Spring 2009*



## The President Speaks

The snowy and cold weather in Avery County and the surrounding area makes MacRae Meadows a harsh place to be right now, but all will be gone in a few more months and we can review the meadows first hand. We are very sad that one of our dear friends died in January 2009 and we will clearly miss her. Rosa Hayward McDonald CBE passed away in January. A complete summary of her life will be in the 2009 Games program. As you know Tartan Day is coming up on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and all of us should celebrate this important day in honor of our Scottish heritage and culture.

I want to take this opportunity to reassure all of you who may be concerned that the recent sale of a part of Grandfather Mountain to the state of North Carolina will not involve us or impact the Games in any way. We can still use the Meadows as we have done for all of the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. We appreciate how the Morton family has shared these hallowed grounds with us for the Games and thank them immensely for this.

Despite the current economic condition, we will continue to do our very best, as we always have, to ensure your pleasure, knowledge and safety. As you know it takes a lot of planning, hard work, good people and money to put on these outstanding highland games. We appreciate each and every person that attends or takes a part in these games and hope that they will continue to support the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

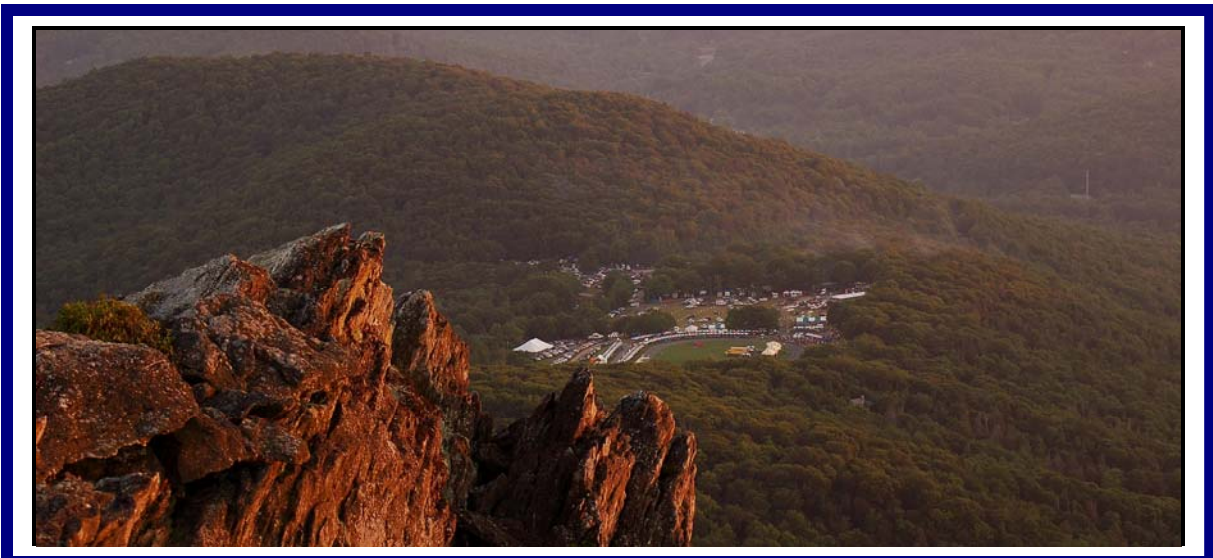
See you at other Games this year!

Sincerely,

*Ross Morrison, Jr.*

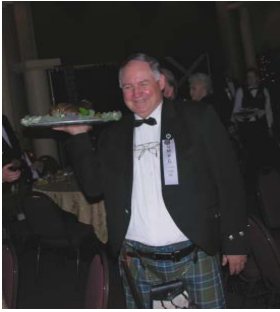
Ross Morrison, Jr.  
GMHG President

Photograph by Helen Hopper



*"A Wee Bit of the Scottish Highlands in North Carolina!"*

## General Manager's Perspective



The 54<sup>th</sup> annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games are fast approaching. The harsh winter has stirred up thoughts of summer on the mountain. I for one can't wait to get on the meadow and begin to clean up from winter.

I like to use this newsletter as an opportunity to communicate with our faithful visitors who annually make their pilgrimage to the mountain. With that in mind, I will once again remind our Clan Sponsors and Patrons that if they require handicap cart service to the field once they arrive, they can call the Field Office at (828) 733-1169. We will do everything in our power to accommodate you. If you arrive via shuttle bus and require handicap cart service, please let one of our staff members know and they will arrange for someone to take you where you need to go. Please understand, however, that any time large crowds gather in such a compact space there are unavoidable delays. I myself do not use a cart during the Games for that very reason. I can negotiate the crowds and get around much faster on foot. In order for us to best serve the public, cart service should be reserved for those who have a genuine medical need.

I will also include a brief reminder for our many wonderful clan sponsors. To avoid difficulty in setting up Clan Tents, all sponsoring clans must unload on the field between **7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.** After 8:00, the crowds are simply too large for us to allow vehicles on clan tent row. Furthermore, clan sponsors are urged to unload quickly and park their vehicle before setting up. This will prevent blockage of clan tent row and ensure that each of the 120 clans and societies can have an opportunity to unload. I greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter, as it plays a major role in making the Games run smoothly. I will also remind sponsoring clans that they should not leave any valuables in their tents overnight. We do provide 24-hour security, but we obviously cannot be everywhere all of the time.

For anyone interested in furthering their piping and drumming skills, you may want to check out our website ([www.gmhg.org](http://www.gmhg.org)) for a link to The North American Academy of Piping and Drumming. The school will be held for three weeks prior to the Games and for two weeks following. The entire school of pipers and drummers will perform as a band at our Opening Ceremonies on Thursday evening, July 9, 2009. If you would like to be a part of this Ceremony, please consider registering for the third week, or session of the school. For further information you may contact their website at [www.naapd.org](http://www.naapd.org). It is possible to register from their website, or request a brochure be mailed to you.

As always, thank you so much for your patronage, sponsorship and attendance. Our continued promise to you is to try to maintain the quality and excellence of this gathering as long as our Scottish Americans continue to support their heritage in the high country of Western North Carolina.

Sincerely,

*Frank Vance*

Frank Vance  
GMHG General Manager

**Below: Pictures of participants at the 2008 School of Scottish Arts at the Candlestick Retreat and Enrichment Center in Minneapolis, NC.**



*The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Games Will Be Held July 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

## 2009 Distinguished Guest

**Robert W. Murdoch, FSA Scot**  
National Chairman Emeritus, Tartan Day  
"The Tartan Tenor"

The GMHG is delighted to have Mr. Robert W. Murdoch as a Distinguished Guest for this year's Games.

Bob Murdoch has been involved in Scottish activities and organizations in the Pittsburgh area for over 40 years. He has helped found and support many Scottish organizations in that area. In 2000, Bob was elected a fellow in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Clan Donald presented him with a distinguished service medal in 2004. He was the recipient of the National Tartan Day Award for 2007, the fifth person to receive that prestigious honor.

Mr. Murdoch is also memorable for his diligent efforts to bring a recognized Tartan Day to America. The first Tartan Day was celebrated on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1997 in commemoration of the 677<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath, in which Scotland declared its independence from England. Two years later, Bob was chosen by the Scottish Coalition to serve as the first National Chairman of Tartan Day. He currently holds the title of National Chairman Emeritus for Tartan Day.

In addition to his tireless work to preserve Scottish heritage in this country, Bob is also an accomplished vocalist whose smooth tones have earned him the nickname "The Tartan Tenor". He released a CD of 24 well-known Scottish songs entitled "Ae Fond Kiss from the Tartan Tenor".

Professionally, Bob is a trial lawyer with over 40 years of experience. He specializes in medical malpractice claims. In 1983, he successfully argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Be sure to stop by and say 'hello' to Bob as you pass the Review Stand this summer!

## 2009 Distinguished Author

**Tim Pegram**  
Author

*The Blue Ridge Parkway by Foot: A Park Ranger's Memoir*

As a native of North Carolina, Tim Pegram graduated from the School of Forest Resources at North Carolina State University with dual degrees in Recreation & Park Administration and Natural Resource Recreation Management.

Pegram served as a park ranger at Raven Rock State Park and Crowders Mountain State Park in North Carolina for two and a half years. He later became a National Park Service ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway where he served as an interpretive ranger for 2 summer seasons, and 12 years as a protection ranger. He retired from Federal service in 2002.

In 2003, Pegram became the first person known to have backpacked the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway. His first book chronicling the journey, *The Blue Ridge Parkway by Foot: A Park Ranger's Memoir*, was released by McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers in July 2007.

It was not long before he began writing freelance articles for newspapers (including the Raleigh News & Observer, Greensboro News & Record, Hendersonville Times-News, Wilmington Star, Salisbury Post, Transylvania Times, Mountaineer, Watauga Democrat, Highlander, & Northwest Observer) and magazines including Our State, Blue Ridge Outdoors & NC State.

Tim will be on hand throughout the Games this year. Be sure to stop by and get him to sign a copy of his remarkable book.

### School of Scottish Arts Celebrates 3<sup>rd</sup> Year in Minneapolis

**Highland Dance students will return for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year to the Candlestick Retreat and Enrichment Center in Minneapolis, NC for a wonderful workshop just prior to the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The school runs from the Saturday prior to Grandfather until Thursday, the first day of the games. Judge and former US Champion dancer Kathleen Drummond returns to teach the workshop along with another teacher to be announced. Besides the excellent instruction in Highland dance for most of the day, the students enjoy creating some lovely crafts and learn a bit of Scottish culture, history, songs .... even a little Gaelic! Medal tests and professional exams are available on the final day.**

**Registration forms for the School of Scottish Arts should be available on the GMHG website by the end of February.**

*The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Games Will Be Held July 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

**THE GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND GAMES GRATEFULLY  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS:**

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[WWW.GMHG.ORG](http://WWW.GMHG.ORG) OR CALL (828) 733-1333



**2008 Agnes MacRae Morton Award  
Johnna Morrison Ritchie**



**2008 President's Award  
Dr. Bernard Kaiman**

Photographs by James J. Shaffer

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