

# Tartan Press

Newsletter of The Manitoba Highland Dancers Association

March 2010

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George Hamilton [ghamilton@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:ghamilton@mbhighlanddance.com)

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Cathy Domke 488-1341 [domke@mts.net](mailto:domke@mts.net)

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Craig Oliphant 663-1118 - [coliphant@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:coliphant@retsd.mb.ca)

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Diana Simpson [dsimpson@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:dsimpson@mbhighlanddance.com)

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Kathleen Burfoot [kburfoot@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:kburfoot@mbhighlanddance.com)

### Competition Director

VACANT

### Finance Director

Deanne Magnus [dmagnus@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:dmagnus@mbhighlanddance.com)

### ScotDance Representatives

Kathy Hopper [khopper@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:khopper@mbhighlanddance.com)

Kathy Ramesar [kramesar@mbhighlanddance.com](mailto:kramesar@mbhighlanddance.com)

of a recently retired adult dancer. Susanne Robertson, Reagan's mom, was keeping me posted on her daughter's recent accomplishments in her journey through medical school. And coincidentally that same afternoon, Reagan was in Edmonton at an interview for a surgical residency.

Reagan, having recognized the benefits she gained from highland dance had always included something of what it taught her on her resume (something that benefitted her through job interviews, med school interviews, and now finally residency interviews). And as she nervously went into this, her first of many residency interviews that she'd been granted across the country, someone on the interview committee noticed the reference to highland on her resume, and with bagpipes on their iPhone, asked if she could dance for them. So off slipped the heels and on she went into the first step of the Highland Fling! No doubt she impressed them with staying cool under unexpected pressure, and doing something that comes so naturally to Reagan, probably found hers elf more relaxed and ready to nail the interview!

So...you never know where highland dance might pop up through your life and the benefits it may bring you. Therein lies the glory of it all.

Reagan's highland dance teacher and friend,  
Donna Cram

## The Glory of Highland Dancing



Sitting at a competition recently, I was reminded of how amazing the whole experience with highland dance can be for our dancers.

As a dance teacher I've had many occasions over the years where highland dance has had a positive effect on a child's life well beyond the dancing experience itself. I've provided numerous references letters for my young adult dancers and can always easily speak to the dedication, perseverance, and ability to set and achieve goals that highland has developed in the individual.

But how was I reminded of all this at a competition?

As I watched my competitors on the day, I received a text message from one of 'my moms'

## Robert Burns Charity Dinner

It was a blustery evening but for the forty or so that attended the Robert Burns Dinner at the Irish Club on Sunday, January 24th, hearts were warm as people came together to raise money to support the Haiti Earthquake Relief fund. The entertainment for the evening was provided by Highland Heart and Soul who offered a eclectic and wide variety of performances in song, dance and story. Heart and Soul is a performing group made up of dancers Zoe Wreggitt and Jessica Oliphant, and singer/musicians Craig and Heather Oliphant. As well, several selections on the bagpipes were performed by James McLean.





The evening began with a rousing "Address to the Haggis", led in by a procession of pipers, from the Erin Street Band. The "address" spoken in the old Scots tongue of the time, was translated

into modern day English by Heather Oliphant. A scrumptious traditional Scottish dinner followed that included heaping plates of mince, turnip, potatoes, gravy and cabbage, topped off with the main dish, the Haggis. Craig and Heather sang classic Robert Burns songs such as "Scots Wi Hae", "Coming through the Rye", "Rantin Rovin Robin" and others. Dancers Jessica and Zoe kicked up their heels with beautiful choreographies of Broadwords, Seamus and their signature number, Heart and Soul. \$300 was raised for Haiti.

Thanks to the Irish Club for hosting this event and to the wonderful cooks. As well, thanks to everyone who made it out that evening to celebrate Robert Burns day, and raise money for a worthy cause.

## All Things Scottish Sale

The Winnipeg Scottish Country Dancers will be holding an All Things Scottish Sale!

Saturday, April 17, 2010  
St. Paul's Anglican Church Hall  
830 North Drive  
1:30 – 4:30 PM

New and gently used Scottish items will be for sale, including clothing, dancing shoes & apparel, jewellery, books, music (records / CDs), knick knacks and dishes. Admission is free. Refreshments and baking will be available.

Do you have Scottish items that you would like to donate to the sale or sell on consignment (for a fee of 10% of sales)? Or would you like to increase your Scottish collection? Then plan to attend and/or participate in this exciting event.

For further information, please contact :  
Debbie Forrest (284-4667) or  
Heather Ferguson (257-9885).

## The W.J. Newlands Esq. Sword Winner

COLLEEN MCGREGOR formally started her highland dancing career at the age of three, by accompanying her mother Gaelyn to lessons because it was easier not to have to hire a babysitter! As she mastered the first technique of "Hop Scotch" then gradually all the other techniques, she competed in her first Primary Class at the age of five at the Fort Augustus Highland Games near Oban, Scotland winning 4 Gold medals! And that was just the beginning.....not bad considering her Mom wasn't going to put her into Highland

Dance competitions at all. She was only ever going to take part in her Mom's lessons....for exercise!

Nearly 14 years later, Colleen has won 8 consecutive Closed Provincial Championships, 7 Mid-Canada Championships, 4 Open Provincial Championships, 2 Red River Championships within Manitoba alone. Perhaps her most accomplished awards happened in 2003 when she won the North American Canadian Championship in St. Catherine's, Ontario at the ScotDance Canadian Championship Series and 1st Runner-up in the Scottish Championship at the World Championships in Cowal, Scotland. Some of her other main accomplishments have included the Susan Merry Chudzy award for the "Most Promising 13 year Premier Dancer", Best Overseas Dancer at the Royal Braemar Gathering in Scotland, 2009 Winner of the Newland Sword Challenge Cup, 2009 Winner of the Stephen Juba Trophy for best Sean Triubhas and countless Premier Dancer of the Day, Best Overseas Dancer, and Highest Aggregate Award distinctions in Canada and Scotland.

Colleen has travelled to Scotland every summer since the age of 5 winning many trophies and special awards, but most important to her is establishing many lifelong friendships!

Besides her passion for Highland Dancing, Colleen has many other passions, especially for singing and acting! She has taken formal classical and musical theatre vocal training since 6 years of age. She is an active participant in the Winnipeg Music Festival having won many vocal trophies including best voice for 10 years & under, 14 years & under, 1st Runner-up in the 16 yrs & under and the Rainbow Stage Trophy and Scholarship for best Musical Theatre Performance. She recently won best voice in the Provincial Music Festival for Canadian and Manitoba composers. She participates in many school productions and in local theatre with Up Front Productions and was honored to play "Shprintze" in the Manitoba Theatre Centre's production of "Fiddler on the Roof". She fulfilled her lifelong dream of attending the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, England last summer by being one of 16 worldwide chosen to participate in the young actor's Musical Theatre summer school. She plans to continue her dream of being on stage by attending a Theatre/Music University in the future whether here or abroad! For the past number of years, Colleen has been honored to sing at the St. Andrew's Society Pipe Band Concerts.



Colleen presently is involved in Hip Hop at “Kick It” Studios and has recently been chosen to be part of a competitive Hip Hop Trio! Colleen has achieved Grade 4 RAD Ballet and was part of the Competitive Jazz/Lyric and Hip Hop teams at Contemporary Dancers winning Gold status and Judge’s choice, but because of the demands of keeping up Heads Honor Roll status at Balmoral Hall School as well as everything else, she has had to “trim” her schedule. Her passion for Highland Dance has never waned and last year she passed her Associate Professional Exam! Above the rush of being on stage during competition or performing at many “dance outs” throughout the year, most important to Colleen is her “highland dance” family made up of the most amazing friends who support her on stage and off!

## Dancer Profile

**Julie Medwid**, a premier student at the McGregor School of Dance since 2009, was born and raised in Dauphin Manitoba. Julie has been dancing for 12 years, starting at the age of 6. She started out dancing at many performances/dance outs around her own community and eventually surrounding communities in the Parklands. Her ambition to dance was remarkable. Five years ago, she travelled 1 ½ hours away from home once a month to take lessons because that was the nearest available teacher at the time. Her desire and passion for dance has enabled her to achieve her Highland Associates and Nationals. She has attended Canadians in Winnipeg and Calgary. Besides actively competing, Julie also volunteers for MHDA and SDTA competitions.

In September 2009, Julie was accepted as student at the University of Manitoba where she is pursuing a Degree in Kinesiology and then hopefully a Masters in Physical Therapy. Although most students return home during the summer break from University, she has chosen to remain in Winnipeg to complete the dance season and participate in Folklorama.

### We asked Julie what Highland dancing means to her?

“I love highland dancing because of the athleticism in the dance, but most importantly the strong Scottish culture that is preserved within the dance and the community. I’ve always loved going to dance competitions and performances because I got to see many of my friends that I’ve met through dance.”

“I’ve always been a goal maker and that is what drives me to improve and do better. I’m intrinsically motivated and continually evaluate myself and past performances and using that to make more goals to improve. Highland Dancing is a great lifestyle to be involved in because you can ALWAYS improve. That is the main driving force for me, is to be the absolute best that I can be, hoping that one day I’ll be near my full potential.”

“I am proud to be a Manitoba Highland Dancer because of what it means to me, coming from a small town to still feel part of a community. I’ve been privileged to have a dance teacher in a small city like Dauphin and another small community like Minnedoesa. There aren’t many activities that are offered in small communities.”

“I’m very excited to be dancing in Winnipeg this year. I have more opportunities to go to more competitions because I’m closer to them now. My goal is still to reach my full potential. I would like to continue taking my professional levels of exams. I’ve been noticing better results in Competitions and my goal one day is to be able to represent Manitoba at the Canadians. My dream someday would be to have my own studio so I can pass along the culture and passion in highland dance and keep the Highland Dancing Community strong.”

**We would like to thank Julie for sharing her story with fellow Manitoba Highland Dancers. If you’d like to share your story, please email Sharon at [jsleonard@shaw.ca](mailto:jsleonard@shaw.ca) and include a photo. (Stories are subject to editing)**



## RED RIVER CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND DANCE

### Open Competition

Saturday, April 17th, 2010

Sifton Theatre  
Balmoral Hall School  
630 Westminister Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Hosted by:  
School of Scottish Arts, Inc.

### Over \$7,500 in Prize Money

(Prize money applies to both Pre-Premier and Premier dancers  
– does not include demonstration dances)

8:30 – Pre-Premier Registration

12:00 – Premier Registration

Mail entries to:

Gaelyn McGregor  
3375 Vialoux Dr.

Winnipeg, MB Canada R3R 0A5

Download entry form at [www.mbhighlanddance.com](http://www.mbhighlanddance.com)

For further information, email Gaelyn - [ballater@mts.net](mailto:ballater@mts.net)

Entries accepted: Postmarked not earlier than February 15th,  
2010

Closing date: Postmarked not later than April 5th, 2010.

### DEMONSTRATION PAS DE BASQUES

If you would like your child to perform Demo Pas de Basques  
(no fee required), please include it on the entry form  
or contact Gaelyn – [ballater@mts.net](mailto:ballater@mts.net)



## For Sale

~ Black Vest ~

Good condition, never worn, never altered.  
Zipper closure, silver details, buttons and trim.  
Will fit an 11 to 15 year old. \$30

~ Dark purple Vest ~

Good condition, never altered.  
Silver details.  
Will fit a 6-9 year old. \$25

Contact Nicole Schnell H. 736-3976 evenings

## Tartan Press Submissions

Items to be published in the Tartan Press will be accepted up to two weeks prior to every M.H.D.A. competition.

Items may be sent by email to: Laureen Wreggitt [lwreggitt@mts.net](mailto:lwreggitt@mts.net)

