



# The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Newsletter

*Winter 2008*



## The President Speaks

I send you greetings for a new year and pray that your health and happiness will continue to be good. We are working hard for all to have a very wonderful experience during our upcoming 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Scottish games this July 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Please make your plans now to be included in “America’s Braemar” on MacRae Meadows.

Our honored clan for 2008 will be The Clan Maxwell Society of the United States of America and our Distinguished Guest will be Sir Michael Maxwell, Baronet. The Clan Maxwell Society and their membership have long been in attendance and very active at the Grandfather Mountain Games.

We will also continue to have a large number of new cultural and educational venues for these games and many will focus on the children’s Scottish activities. Marjorie Warren will again teach children the ancient skill of weaving at the children’s tent.

Flora MacDonald Gammon will have a fabulous Ceilidh for all attendees at the Lees-McRae College Auditorium on Friday and Saturday evening.

All of our event directors and games administration led by our most capable Frank Vance, General Manager for the games, are now making plans for this year’s games for your enjoyment and learning pleasure.

Be sure to buy the fabulous 487-page book by Donald MacDonald for your best reference about the Grandfather Mountain Scottish Games and the Scots of North Carolina.

We again thank the Grandfather Mountain folks for allowing the games to be held on beautiful MacRae Meadows, part of a globally recognized nature preserve. Do yourself a big favor and visit Grandfather Mountain during the games.

Slainte mhath!

Sincerely,

*Ross Morrison, Jr.*

Ross Morrison, Jr.  
GMHG President



*Above:* Main Entrance to the Games with Grandfather Mountain in the background  
*Left:* Hammer Throw Competition at the 2007 Games

Photos by James Shaffer

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



## General Manager's Perspective

As I sit at the window of my office in the Ellice & Rosa McDonald Scottish Heritage Center in Linville, I am looking out on a wonderful winter scene. We had a blustery snowstorm last night, and we now have about 3-5 inches of powdery snow on the ground. Looking out on this scene, I begin to realize how appropriate it is that one of the pioneers of all-wheel drive technology, Howard C. Marmon, lived here in Avery County!

I would like to begin by mentioning that Mr. Harvey Ritch, proprietor of Everything Scottish here in Linville, has been hospitalized since Christmas Eve and I am sure would appreciate any cards, prayers and encouragement that you could offer.

Correspondence may be directed to: Harvey Ritch c/o Everything Scottish, Ltd., P.O. Box 398, Linville, NC 28646.

As we turn the calendar over to 2008, I begin to look with more anticipation towards the upcoming Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The GMHG staff will be working throughout these winter months, preparing for one of the grandest celebrations of Scottish culture and heritage in the United States. It is my sincere hope that you plan to join us for this year's festivities!

In his commentary, President Ross Morrison mentions that Clan Maxwell will serve as honored clan for 2008, and that their Baronet, Sir Michael Maxwell, will be a distinguished guest. In addition, we will also have Mr. John J. Batty as a distinguished guest. Mr. Batty is a long-time curator for the National Trust for Scotland who was involved in the preservation and restoration of over 100 properties in Scotland. In addition, Mr. Batty is also a much sought-after lecturer with expertise in many areas of Scottish interest including the Battle of Culloden, weaponry (particularly during the '45 rising), clockmaking and many other topics. Mr. Batty currently operates his own touring company, specializing in Scottish hunting, fishing and history.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind our sponsoring clans that if you have a distinguished guest from Scotland coming to the games this year, please send in a picture and some biographical information as soon as possible so I can arrange to put it in the souvenir program. We have found over the years that clans with distinguished guests in attendance tend to show an increase in new memberships during the weekend.

If anyone is looking for a wonderful guest speaker for an upcoming Burns Supper or other such event, I would like to highly recommend Mr. Donald F. MacDonald, co-founder of these games and a noted expert on all things Scottish. Mr. MacDonald, who resides in Edinburgh, will be arriving in the States around January 20<sup>th</sup> and should be staying for approximately one month. If you would be interested in having Mr. MacDonald as a guest at your upcoming Scottish event, you can leave a message at the GMHG office at (828) 733-1333.

In closing, I would like to remind you that it is never too early to begin planning for your annual pilgrimage to the High Country. Brochures are available upon request and you can always access the latest GMHG information by visiting our website, [www.gmhg.org](http://www.gmhg.org) for secure online ordering and updates. I hope to see you in July on the Mountain!

Sincerely,

*Frank Vance*

Frank Vance  
GMHG General Manager

**Right: 2007 Highland Wrestling Competition**

**Photo by James Shaffer**



*The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Games Will Be Held July 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008*



## Celtic Groves / Concert Updates

At the 2007 Games we asked you to provide input on the music that was presented in the Celtic Groves and at the Friday & Saturday night concerts, and you DID! The feedback received this past summer was very complementary to our entertainers and our staff for presenting one of the best musical weekends ever on THE Mountain. Based on your input we are pleased to announce that we will have some of the same great music echoing around the mountain again in 2008.

The names will be familiar again in Grove 2 this year and will rock the ground beneath you! I understand that most of them will be sporting a new CD, so you are sure to hear new tunes from some terrific musicians. **The Killdares, Barleyjuice, Coyote Run & Mother Grove** will grace us once again with their wonderful talents. This combination of artist proved last year that good chemistry among performers delivers an amazing show for all those present. Just ask those that caught the very unplugged, impromptu acoustic sets outside of the slightly damp Grove 2 on Sunday last year. Last year's unique turn has prompted a great idea from one of those present, Sunday morning we will feature the morning sets as unplugged sessions.

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In Grove 1 we will bring back a crowd favorite with a twist. **Ed Miller** will be back on the mountain and joining him for the weekend are two great musicians and friends of the Games, **Jill Chambless** and **Scooter Muse** (both of Henri's Notions). Returning to Grandfather, after a few years absence, will be award winning Scottish singer/songwriter **Jim Malcolm**. Jim's musical career has included both solo performances and a seven-year stint with Scottish band Old Blind Dogs. In 2004 Jim won the Scots Triad Music Award for Songwriter of the Year and the Old Blind Dogs won the Scottish Folk Band of the Year.

Grove 3 will once again highlight music, speaking and singing. The Scottish author/historian **David Ross** will once again be present to deliver talks on everything Scottish. David was a huge draw last year with his wonderful discussions of weapons, clothing, history & heritage and many said they wanted him to return. We will also highlight the best in regional entertainment featuring Old Time and Bluegrass music that was inspired by the Scots that settled the area. **R.G. Absher and Celtic Connection** will join us on Friday with their great mix of Celtic and Appalachian music and the rest of the weekend will feature other regional artists to be announced soon. As always, Grove 3 is proud to host the Gaelic Mod competition that will showcase some great Gaelic singing on Saturday afternoon.

That pretty much wraps it up for the 2008 slate of artists. Check out the web links below to learn more about the groups performing. I think we are set to once again deliver a fantastic weekend of Celtic music at its absolute best! Nowhere else in the world will you find a better mix of energy, beauty, music, heritage & spirit than at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The Celtic Groves help bring it all to life. *The Music that makes the Mountain!* See you in July.

Slainte,  
Donovan Murray  
Director-Celtic Groves & Concerts

P.S. Did I mention that **Albannach** is returning to Grandfather next year? A musical group from Scotland that has been known to cause a little excitement when they perform. Don't miss it!

- [www.albannachonline.com](http://www.albannachonline.com)
- [www.barleyjuice.com](http://www.barleyjuice.com)
- [www.coyoterun.com](http://www.coyoterun.com)
- [www.davidross.org](http://www.davidross.org)
- [www.jimmalcolm.com](http://www.jimmalcolm.com)
- [www.killdares.com](http://www.killdares.com)
- [www.mothersgrove.com](http://www.mothersgrove.com)
- [www.songsotscotland.com](http://www.songsotscotland.com) (Ed Miller)



Right: 2007 Saturday Night Rock Concert. Photo by James Shaffer

*The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Games Will Be Held July 10<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

Children's Activities at the 2007 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games  
Photos by James Shaffer



**Grandfather Mountain Highland Games  
& Gathering of Scottish Clans**

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