



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

AUDIO TAPE LOG

Accession No.: MH-01-22-D Date(s): 8/16/01

Fieldworker(s): Maggie Holtzberg and Julie DeBenedictis

Interviewee(s): Mark DeMariano, Kevin O'Brien a.k.a.OB, Paul O'Brien, Paul McConvill, Franny

Event: Weekly rehearsal of the 103rd Electrician's Pipe and Drums Band

Place of Recording: IBEW Union Hall, 256 Freeport St, Dorchester

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Related Accession Numbers: EW-01-09 The Scots Highland Light Pipe Band

Brief summary of tape contents: Conversation in the break room, introductions, pipe sergeants, Joe Delaney the pipe major, Tulach Ard of Lexington, how the 103rd got started, other pipe bands in Massachusetts, Grade Five versus Grade Two bands, The City of Washington Grade One band, US bands can't compete with Canadian, Scottish and Irish bands, being an AFL-CIO affiliated band, pride, relationship to Local 103, ironworker's death, playing for memorial, civic and political gigs, pranks played on greenhorn electricians and pipe band members, more on competitions, women electricians, apprentices and schooling, the trade being handed down in the family, more history of the 103rd getting going, new reeds and endurance, learning to march and play at the same time, city parades, the cost of uniform and pipes (\$3,500), buying a set of Naill pipes for Joe Delaney, Tulach Ard weekly practices, where individuals find to practice, OB playing on the roof/construction site, story of band's beginnings again, big attrition rate. Band rehearsal takes place, first in the function hall and then outside. At very end of tape, Joe and the drummer play a jig and a strathspey.

Counter/ABS	Contents
10	MH: O.k., why don't we start by everybody introducing themselves. And tell us where we are.
	KO: I'm Kevin O'Brien. We're down at the Local 103 hall in Dorchester, Mass.
	MD: I'm Mark DeMariano. I'm the band manager and treasurer of the 103rd.
	PM: I'm Paul McConvill [?] I'm one of the newer members of the band.
	Fran: I'm not necessary; I'm still in training.
	PO: Paul O'Brien, pipe sergeant. Pipes and drums.
	MH: And pipe sergeant means what exactly?
34	MD: The pipe sergeant basically just assists the pipe major, who runs the band. There are four sergeants. Myself, Paul, O.B. and John Colhane, who's not here yet.

MH: And the man we're waiting on, Joe – Delaney – tell me a little bit about him.

1:55

MD: Joe is our pipe major. He's been with us since day one. He's from Limerick, Ireland. And a matter of fact, he's getting married September 1st. A couple of us are going over for the wedding, myself included. Joe's a hell of a guy. He was an all-Ireland champion a couple of years. He's a world class piper – played for a Grade One pipe band: St. Lawrence O'Toole out of Dublin. He's been to the Worlds in Glasgow. The World Pipe Band Championships numerous times. He just came back last weekend from the Championships in Maxville, Ontario. And he plays for a Grade Two band from Lexington called Tulach Àrd.

MH: I've heard them. [Patriot's Day, Lexington, 2000]

MD: They are a very good band. They compete directly with Oranmore out of Schenectady, New York. They compete with the Saffron Kilts of New York. Up until about a month ago, they competed with Worcester Kiltie Band, who are now defunct. They lost all their drummers.

MH: They were good too, right?

2:24 MD: They're a very good band. As a matter of fact, they used to beat Tulach Àrd nine times out of ten. Their pipe major was in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards for 13 years. His name is Ian Massey. Very good piper. And he'll be the first to tell you that too. Joe is just the opposite. He's 180. Joe is so laid back and easy going. And he's a hot ticket. He's one of us; he's like a brother to us. He loves this band. We love him. Were where we are today because of him.

MH: How did you find him?

2:37 MD: It was through Mike Monahan, the president of the band. He's the business agent. He's here all the time. There was another fellow who was kind of instrumental in getting the band going in the first place. Although it was Mike's idea, initially. In 1996 he went to a construction conference in Washington, D.C. There was a New York band, from our sister Local. Local 25 out of Long Island. It's what kind of lit the fire. He got together with another fellow who's no longer with us and somehow Joe's name ^{popped} came up. He'd only been in the country a couple of years. That's what Joe does. He loves to do it. He loves the pipes, he loves to play. He likes to teach people. And the rest is history. He's taught many bands.

KO: Well he was the instructor of the Boston police at that time.

3:24 MD: He instructed the police. He instructed the firefighters for awhile. The New Hampshire State Police he did.

MH: So in Massachusetts, the firefighters also have a pipe band?

MD and KO: Mm-mmm.

MD: That's a statewide brigade. But you have to be a firefighter to be a part of the band. Whether it's Boston or a municipality. Weymouth or any of the surrounding towns. Any town for that matter that's in the brigade in the state of Massachusetts. And the Boston Police have the Gaelic Column. And there's Cran Tara, they're out of Norwood. A Grade Five band similar to us. And then there's two or three bands up on the North Shore, a couple more out in the western part of the state. There's two or three bands down in Rhode Island. There's one on the Cape – Brian Boru. The Scots Highland Light is down on the Cape. So I'd say, in the state of Massachusetts, just guessing, there's probably about ten, ten to twelve Grade Five bands. There are a couple of Grade Fours, a couple of Grade Twos. Two Grade Two bands.

MH: So Tulach Àrd is a Grade One?

MD: Tulach Ard is a Grade Two. There is only one Grade One band in the country.

KO: There's two. L.A. Scots.

MD: L.A. Scots are gone.

KO: Oh that's right.

MH: New York – wouldn't New York have some?

MD: They have a lot of Grade Two and Three bands. But no Grade One bands.

5:11

The city of Washington is a culmination of a lot of guys from the New York, New Jersey, the tri-state area. They got together. And they had a sponsor – Iceland Air. And they travel all over the world. They're very good but they can't compete with the Canadian and the Scottish and the Irish bands. And as a matter of fact, they went to the Worlds and word has it they didn't place very well. They qualified, which is a big thing in itself but you get these Canadian and Scottish bands, forget it. There's just no comparison.

5:44

KO: I think that's because if you go up to Canada or Scotland or Ireland, they start so young, that it's right in the blood.

MD: That's right. They have colleges that offer scholarships. They have the bagpipe college up in Nova Scotia. They have a lot of army bands, police bands, firefighters. It's just goes on and on and on.

6:10

MH: Now somebody was talking about this being the only band that is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

MD: We are the only band in New England affiliated with AFL-CIO. We're all, well, 90 percent of us are construction workers, blue collar workers. Paul's a firefighter. Franny works over at the airport [he's wearing a Massport badge], but he's 103.

MH: Oh, explain then what 103 is – it's not just the electricians? It's not just IBEW?

6:13

MD: It is. It is the international. That's the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. We're the local of that international. There's another local in Worcester, there's another local down in Rhode Island, Springfield. There's locals all over the place. We are the only bagpipe band in New England that's affiliated with a construction, building trade local. There's two in New York City, Local 3 in New York City. It's a club band, very similar to ours. They're not all electricians. And there's Local 25 on Long Island. Eastern Long Island. They're a Grade Five band but they're all electricians. They're sponsored by the Local.

[womens' voices in the background. They have come to use the break room for a phone bank.]

We don't take any compensation from this Local. We use the name and most of us are electricians and we're very proud of that fact. And they're nice enough to let us use the hall. We come in and practice. And we do things for them. We do political things and barmitzvahs and whatnot.

MH: You talked about when the steelworker, or ironworker who was killed on the site.

MD: A lot of the different building trades will contact us for different things. We had an ironworker that we lost, what was it, last September, October?

KO: Yeah.

MD: He fell off the Millenium. They got a hold of Mike Monahan, cause he's here in the office every day. We put a small mini band together. There was a bout 8 or 9 pipers and we went over and piped. It was nice. It was sad but – that kind of

thing, we don't look for that kind of thing but we do do it. But there's a lot of other things. A lot of civic things and political things that we do.

8:22

KO: We do a lot of charity stuff. Special Olympics we do. The kids from Chernobyl had a party down here a couple of weeks ago, from the fall-out. I think they come over here every summer. They had a going away party, they were going back, so we came down here and played for them. Which was good. It's nice to be able to give a little back. Especially the look on their faces, you know?

8:55

MD: They had never seen bagpipes. Never heard them, never seen them. They were flabbergasted. It was fun.

MH: This is a little off the subject of piping but in other trades I've found that there are pranks that they play on the greenhorn, first day on the job. Do you have that in your trade? Can you give me an example of one?

9:19

KO: In the band?

MH: Well, both. As electricians.

KO: Oh as electricians? [they break into smiles] Don't look at me.

Pranks?

You mean the apprentice?

MH: Yes.

KO: Probably for the first year.

MH: But are there classic things you would send them to go fetch?

9:39

KO: Oh yeah.

MD: Bucket of blue steam. Left-handed sky hook. Prophylactic tape.

KO: Wire stretcher. Left-handed light bulb. Loads.

MD: Oh yeah. Been there, done that.

KO: Loads.

MH: Well, it's a dangerous trade isn't it? I mean, working with electricity?

KO: Well, yeah, you know, you just got to respect it, you know. Most of us don't think it's very dangerous but if you don't know what you're doing... Problem is you can't see it. Paul will attest to that, right? Met many electricians out front of buildings, right? [Paul is a firefighter]

Paul: I think it's a very dangerous profession.

Franny: [who has white hair and a weathered face.] I'm only 27. [laughter]

MD: What a hard life, huh, friend?

Fran: An uphill paper route.

MH: But what about in the band? Do you...are there...

MD: Well that goes without saying. We have a couple of whipping boys, they're not here yet. But when they are, you'll know. Joe is unmerciful. But it's all in good fun. And the guys produce.

10:51

Paul: Basically, we might give him a reed that he couldn't blow if he had two [they all chime in - hard to decipher] four lungs.

Fran: That's my problem!

Paul: We give him that for a couple of weeks and know he can't do anything with it and then we might cut it down a little. We may or we may not, depending on his attitude.

MD: Depending on how he [Joe] feels.

11:11

MD: Or he'll take somebody's reed out. I've been playing mine - mine's ready to go anyway or he'll take OB's out and say, "You like this reed?" We'll say "Yeah!" [whistle - hand motion of tossing something over his shoulder] Right in the trash. He'll give you a new one then you'll be blowing your brains out for the next two weeks.

-Piece of roof slate to play.

PRANKS

MH: Is it hard to break a reed in?

MD: Yeah, it's very hard. But once you get one broken in you like to stay with it as long as you can. You baby it.

KO: It'll almost brings you to tears when he throws it over your shoulder.

MD: It's awful. It's awful. But what happened to him in Rockland County, three, four weeks ago. He was playing for Tulach Ard, Grade two. Of course, that competition is, it just goes without saying, it's so stressful. And the pipe major of that band is a fella named Jim Lundt, who as a matter of fact, filled in for Joe down here numerous times when we first started on the chanters. So Jimmy says, "Take your reed out." It was a little flat, a little sharp, whatever it was. Pull out the reed, says "You like this reed, Joe?" [whistle] Right in the woods. Joe woulda... Stuck a new reed in his pipes.

MH: In a competition no less.

MD: Just five minutes before they were on.

Fran: Even Joe wouldn't do that.

MD: Joe was all red in the face.

KO: They give you a brand new reed that is tough to play.

MD: And then Jimmy's pipes himself were acting up. And during the whole competition, a seven minute medley, he played maybe three minutes of it. His pipes were cutting in, cutting out, cuttin' it, cuttin' out. He was flabbergasted. But that's stuff you got to deal with. That happens.

MH: Now, do they play pibroch.

MD: They don't play pibroch, no. pibroch is normally played on solo competitions. And that's the classical bagpiping. And it's very repetitious, very monotonous. A lot of people like it. I like it personally. It's very difficult. It's like doing a whole bunch of exercises over and over and over and over. And that is very stringent. Those guys – you gotta be spot on. And they usually march up and down a little boardwalk, back and forth, back and forth, yeah, right in front of the judge. He's writing all the time.

MH: At what point do you start playing a strathspey.

MD: Strathspeys are usually – it depends. The USPBA alternates every other year. The grade 2 and grade 3, grade 1,2, and 3 – they'll go, one year they'll do a march, strathspey, and reel. You'll have to play one of each as your competition. You'll pick out what you want to play or they'll pick it for you. This is what I want, this is the march, this is the strathspey, this is the reel. The next year they'll do a medley. You'll have to do a seven and a half minute medley of march, strathspeys and reels, in that order. You don't do any pibrochs, or any slow airs, or anything like that, you have to stay on those guidelines or they'll knock you right out of the competition.

MH: Are there any women that play?

MD: Oh sure.

MH: Do you have any women electricians?

MD: Yep.

KO: We have two that are kind of on hiatus right now with their schooling and everything. They're apprentices. But they plan to be back.

MD: One's a drummer and one's a piper.

MH: And how many years before you become a journeyman?

KO: Five years. And then most of the time, to keep them in the band, we've juggled our night of practice just to accommodate them for their schooling. Which is, you know, because we've all been there. We've all been in the same boat.

where you couldn't do something because of your schooling. So we have juggled our night and we might have to juggle it again come September.

14:52

MH: How many of you had fathers that were in this business? Electricians?

[Most of them raise their hands.]

MD: A lot of us.

-Yeah, I'm second generation and my son's third generation of Local 103.

MD: I'm second generation. My dad was in.

KO: My father was a union carpenter. He said, "Become an electrician, you won't have to work as hard." I'm still waiting to see that day.

MH: Are the hours long? What's a typical day for -

KO: Actual working? Usually 7 to 3:30 p.m. Unless you're on an overtime job. What are they working - over the Prudential they're working seven days a week, sixteen hours a day. And they just cut back to seven days a week, twelve hours a day.

15:42

MD: Our apprentice drummer, Maureen, was talking to her the other night-- she's going to a job in Cambridge that's starting seven/twelves. But she has to go to school, too. So, that's a long day.

MH: And in this heat, it must be tough.

16:00

KO: But most people don't complain about the heat because the cold is coming.

MD: That's right. Good point.

KO: I don't complain. Hey, I'll be begging for one of these days in February.

MH: So you've been playing for about three/four years?

KO: Five years the band has been together.

16:28

MD: The band has been together since March of '96. We hit the street in March of '98. '96 did I say? I'm sorry. March of '97, we hit the street in March of '98.

MH: That's pretty good.

MD: We were on practice chanters for a year and a half. Pipes for six months. Our first parade was St. Patty's Day, March 1998. Is that correct, March '98?

KO: We started March of '97.

17:06

MD: No, '99. This is our third full season on the street.

MH: And talk about the corking?

KO: Of the Drones?

17:11

MH: Yeah, the drones, when you first start out.

17:16

KO: Well, when you first start out you have to - I find it's basically an endurance thing, you know? When you're playing four reeds - so when you start, you're only playing a chanter reed, which is your melody and that gives you a chance to get used to the bagpipes. Get comfortable with the blowing and the squeezing. Get to learn your instrument. And then slowly but surely, over many many months, you take out one cork at a time. And that almost doubles the amount of air that comes out - that you have to put in, into the bag. Slowly but surely, just like an athlete, you build your endurance. So you're playing full drones. Which you're supposed to, that's the instrument. When we first went out in the streets, I mean, I remember after Southie, we were dead. I mean, you know, 3.8 miles. Cold.

MD: That's the other thing you gotta throw into the mix, too. Once you learn the pipes, now you gotta learn how to march with them. And stay in step.

-Stay in step. It's a big thing.

MH: Really?

-It really is, yeah.

MD: It's not as easy to blow.

18:28

PM: There was one night, I was in the second class, I was only two years. And Kevin took us one night, and he said grab your practice chanters, and we just went out in the foyer. And he said now just line up three across, or whatever, and we'll just play the marine corps hymn walking up and down. And he says, just make believe we're in a parade. So we started. If we were walking, we weren't playing. [laughter] Cause none of us could play while we were walking. So we stopped walking and then we started playing. And it takes a while to get used to putting that together.

19:00

KO: I can remember being in the hall. [to the guys] Remember when we were in the hall, we're playing the bagpipes, we're trying to get in step?

MD: Joe told us to take a shoe off. Take the left shoe off – accentuate that beat.

19:14

KO: Most of us, of course it was winter time we're wearing work boots, so you take the shoe off and it's like a woman walking around without a high heel on. But it accentuates the beat and it gets you to walk in step with your music. It actually worked. It looks kind of silly.

MD: Smells kind of rough, too, now that I think of it.

KO: Bunch of work boots in the corner.

MH: It makes sense, though.

KO: It does work, though.

MH: Cause you're mostly playing in 4/4.

KO: Yeah, you're playing to a march.

[?] All the street beats are 4/4 marches.

MD: Pretty much all of them.

MH: So will you be playing in this Saint Patrick's Day in Boston?

MD: Oh sure.

MH: I'll have to come out for that.

MD: We're out a lot.

KO: You'll have to come to the party afterwards. Parade's just part of the...

MD: We're pretty much self-sufficient but parades are our bread and butter right now.

MH: So does the city pay you? How does that work?

20:08

MD: It depends. Some of the city parades we do, for instance, Dorchester Day, they alternate. If you don't get paid by the committee, you get paid by the city. Hyde Park Community Parade, we do that every year, we get paid by the city. Bunker Hill – get paid by the city. Sometime, well, this year alone, I had to wait three and a half months for Bunker Hill's money, Hyde Park, and –there was a third one – Dorchester Day, all three. That's just a serious amount of money and

20:39

we all pay dues monthly to pay for our instruction. Joe and our drumming instructor are paid members of the band. They're contractors. But they get paid for every gig and they get paid for every instruction. So we charge the guys dues. So anything we do over and above that, goes right back into the band. We buy drums, we buy reeds for the pipes, we buy Inverness capes, parts and pieces of the uniforms. We try to help out the newer guys as much as we can. We buy a shirt, or a tie, or a pair of socks. Basically, the kilt and the jacket – which is custom made -- are the expensive items. We're not in a position to do that right now although someday, hopefully, we will be.

21:29

MH: How much does it cost to outfit a piper?

KO: It's over a thousand.

MD: It's about twelve hundred bucks (\$1200) when everything is said and done. Excluding the pipes.

Fran: The union guy, the board member here —what's his name? Mike?-- He said it was \$3500. Pipes and uniform came to about \$3500.

MD: That's about right.

KO: That's out of your own pocket.

MD: Drummers are basically in the same boat, uniform wise, but the band has bought all the drums.

MH: And they're not as expensive I would think.

MD: No. No where near expensive as the pipes. We bought fifteen sets of pipes when we first started our class. They were \$1400 a set. OB and I and a couple of other guys have since bought newer sets, better sets.

22:10 MH: Tell me that story again about the wait. You ordered them. You told me about how long it took to get them, the pipes.

MD: Well, the pipes, it depends on what you buy and where you get them from.

KO: Ours were custom made so you wait on them, you know.

22:44 MD: There is a considerable wait. But the mass produced ones like we got originally was a matter of, what?, two months? Two and a half months, they were here. All fifteen sets. Paul has a set. That's a set of the original pipes. My pipes and OB's pipes are Naills. They're top of the line, they're Cadillacs. They're built in Scotland.

KO: David Naill.

MH: They have silver on them, right?

23:00 MD: Yes. We just bought, the band, collectively bought Joe a brand new set of Naills for his wedding present —from the band. The DN6 Naills - they're top of the line. He was flabbergasted. And he needed 'em, he's got a set of pipes. They're old Hardy pipes, [chanter] built in the 50s. Late forties early fifties. And they were just falling apart. He was putting bicycle patches on them and tire wire. The reeds kept crapping out on him. And he was having a hell of a time. And all the while we're all laughing up our sleeves, you know. We had the party, we presented him with the pipes.

23:37 [man enters] Hi Johnny. This is the fourth Pipe Sergeant, John Culhane. [introductions. Danny Hall, another electrician, comes in for practice. Mark references the Irish Cultural Society in Canton.] [piper plays in background]

MH: Does Tulach Ard play — do they practice every week?

MD: They practice Thursdays, also.

MH: And where are they based?

MD: Knights of Columbus in Lexington.

MH: But I thought you said Joe was in that band?

MD: He is.

MH: So how does he do that?

MD: Very carefully.

Fran: He's so good.

MH: . . . he can be in two places at once. [laughter]

24:51 MD: He is that good. He could get the repertoire and, see this is what we're playing, he'll have it down in a matter of a half an hour. And then he just polish it up. Many times he's gone from here to there. He'll leave here at 8:30, shoot over there for another two hours. Those guys practice til 10, 11 at night. Especially when they're getting ready for the competition season. They really go go go.

MH: So will they be at Loon?

MD: Oh sure. They'll be at Hunter Mountain, too, as a matter of fact. They have two bands, they have a grade four band and a grade two band. Grade four band is

doing very very well. They're like the top of the heap right now, in Grade four, on the whole East coast.

25:34

MH: [To Kevin O'Brien] So you practice during the work day? You really do?

KO: Yeah, I practice at lunch. Not every day but, you know, depending on – somedays it's hot, you don't feel like eating, you grab a bottle of water or something and just go up on the roof. Or wherever. The first floor that doesn't have people on it.

MD: Whatever suits you.

KO: I actually got in trouble down there one morning. I was down there playing one morning and the guy got all upset. It was quarter of six. "You know, there's people sleeping around here." "So? If I'm up everybody should be up."

MH: So how did that guy from the Herald find you? Did he just hear you or how did that come about?

26:25

KO: Oh yeah, it just bounces off all the buildings down there. And I think a lot of their people walk around the city, you know. And the Boston Herald's right on Harrison Ave., it's only about two or three blocks up.

MH: That's right in Chinatown.

KO: Yeah. The Chinese call it a wind pipe. [speaks as if he is someone in Chinatown] "Who's the guy playing the wind pipe?"

MD: [responds to KO's question] You crazy Yankee.

26:51

KO: Six o'clock in the morning.

MH: I don't know if they have a pipe. They might.

27:04

KO: But, um, most construction sites you go on, you can always find a spot to practice. So I know I've always done it right from the start. And I know many guys here. I know Danny used to play down [at] Macy's. *

Danny: I played today at work.

MH: Which site are you at?

Danny: I'm down at the power plant in Weymouth, Edgar Station. Yeah, if you get a chance, you just take them out.

[?] I practice often down at Cedar Grove. Right down here, Dorchester.

PM: I go down [inaudible] in Quincy. I work for the MBTA so I practice in between um,

MD: Trains.

PM: In between uh, 128, walk out on an old railroad bridge and it's all woods in between the north bound and south bound. And I play out there.

27:50

MH: How did this particular band get started? I don't remember if you told us that.

KO: Right from scratch, from day one.

MH: But how did it come about? Whose idea was it?

28:13

MD: Mike Monahan. He went to a construction conference in Washington, DC in 1996 and Local 25 played there, um, the construction conferences, conventions, the national conventions, there are two or three functions during the course of the year. And it's always equal local 3 or Local 25, and those are the two pipe bands that are affiliated with the IBEW. Now there's three, we're the third. [Off mic questions about a band from Toronto] That's what gave Michael the idea. And he started thinking about it. At the time I was working at Deer Island and one of the other original members was working with me, he was an apprentice at the time, Mike O'Connell. And he mentioned it to me. "Yeah, I was talking to Mike Monahan and he was talking about starting a bagpipe band." And I said, whoa, geez, that's right of my alley. I love the pipes and I'd love to learn how to play

29:13

them. So, I gave Mike a call and he said well yeah, we're going to set up a practice and down came Joe, and down came the fella with the practice chanters.

29:25

KO: I think we had thirty guys, thirty pipers.

MD: Big attrition right.

KO: Dropped right out.

MD: Dropped right out, "This is too much work for me. See ya later."

MH: How many do you have now? About how many?

29:38

MD: We were just counting them up. We've got about fourteen to sixteen pipers and about four or five drummers, I think, right now. We have a lot of guys, we're just scratching guys off that we haven't seen in four, five, six months for one reason or another. You know, it's summertime, few guys were doing their houses over, some guys bought a house, some guys had babies, and it's just one thing after another. It seems like the wintertime, they come back into the fold. And that's our slow season, we're just down here once a week. Maybe we practice up or we get a couple new tunes. Joe's pushing new tunes on us faster and faster.

30:17

KO: You're polishing in the winter for Saint Patrick's Day. Really the season runs from March to September. Pretty much. And after September it really kind of dies out. You know, even weddings and stuff like that, that all dies out.

MH: What about graduation's a big one, I bet? In the south anyway...

MD: Well, we do a lot of that on a personal level. OB does a lot of things, I do a ton of things, Paul on occasion, I know Jonathan a few things, from time to time we do go out on our own. But band-wise, it's basically parades, corporate functions, things of that nature. And like OB said, from March to, say, mid-June or mid-July, after that it's competition pretty much.

[Another group enters the break room, ready to volunteer for a phone bank. It's time for the band to begin practice.]

MH: So we're going to have to get out of here.

Band rehearsal takes place in the big auditorium. Since Joe hasn't arrived, Mark takes the lead. Standing in a circle, they run through some of their repertoire, without using their drones. Maggie notices a bagpipe tattoo on Mark's leg and asks to photograph it. Mark alerts me that the next medley is their competition set for Hunter Mountain. They still play without drones. Midway through, Joe Delaney arrives. He is introduced to us.

He spends a good bit of time checking their reeds and tuning. Then he takes them through their competition numbers. He is tough on them. They have a good bit of trouble getting the drones in tune because the air conditioning in the room is turned on very low. At about 8:00 Joe decides to move the group outside. They stand and play with the IBEW Local 103 signage just above them

1:10:03

"Scotland the Brave"

Around 8:15 they take a break. Joe and Mark come inside so we can talk with Joe away from the noise. We ask him to play a tune for us. He is accompanied by a drummer who also plays for the City of Washington band. Then we ask for a strathspey.