

**MEDIA KIT FOR
PIPING HOT! TALES OF A WANDERING BAGPIPER
SUSAN HADLEY PLANCK**

BIOs

2-line, Short, Medium, Long

5 Fun Facts You Didn't Know about Me

PRESS RELEASE

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2-line bio:

Traveling with bagpipes around the world, Susan Hadley Planck weaves interesting tales of mixing various cultures using the international language of music.

Short Bio:

Traveling expert, Susan Hadley Planck, in *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper, Piping Hot!* marches you into the world of bagpiping and around the globe through the eyes of a seasoned traveler, piper and educator, who weaves together her sense of adventure and humor with her love of bagpiping in this one-of-a-kind memoir and travelogue. www.SusanPlanck.com ; plancksusan@gmail.com.

Medium Bio:

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Having taught school in kindergarten through high school in over 30 different subjects, Susan also operated a climbing school In Washington state. She further developed her sense of adventure through these years. Then, learning to play bagpipes in her late thirties, she reached nirvana when she combined her love of adventure with love of bagpiping.

Long Bio:

Susan Planck is as unique as the bagpipe. With her background as an elementary, middle, and high school teacher for 30 years, with more than 30 different subjects under her command, she also captivated children and adults as a bagpipe teacher and climbing school instructor for 15 years

Susan reached nirvana when she combined her love of adventure with love of bagpiping and described her zany tales in *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper*.

Starting out by teaching history in high school, she moved to elementary school and, finally, middle school in geography and language arts. At the same time, for ten of those years, in the summers, she operated a climbing school in Washington State, taking clients from all over the world around and up Mt. Adams, a glaciated volcanic peak in the Northwest. Watching nearby Mt. St. Helens erupt in 1980, she saw the climbing school's attendance disappear. It was time to move on.

After a divorce and move to Boulder, Colorado in her late 30s, she embarked on a life-long dream of learning how to play the bagpipes. Joining the award-winning City of Denver Pipe Band, she

was drawn into a new and unique world of unusual personalities and adventures. For 15 years, she competed in Highland games around the country and enjoyed unique gigs from “Memphis in May” to Oktoberfest in Sidney, Nebraska. While a member of the band, she met her husband, Andrew, who was the pipe-major (or leader) of the band. Enjoying success as a solo piper, Susan wanted to share this strange instrument with other cultures.

She endeavored to combine her love of adventurous hiking and bagpiping. Off she went to far points of the world. In her book, she relates engaging stories of travel and piping from the top of Mt. Fuji in Japan to the Great Wall of China, at the base of Mt. Fitzroy in South America and even marching with 10,000 pipers through the streets of Edinburgh in the 2000 Millennium parade. The juxtaposition of the cultures, Scottish, American and wherever she found herself, was always entertaining and educational.

Imagine waking up at 6 am in Guilin, China and seeing a nice park across from the hotel, just calling for some early morning bagpipes. As she pinned her music to a tree and struck up the first notes, a Chinese fellow chatted her up in passable English. He asked her to play while he led his group in Tai Chi, the slow, deliberate martial art of China. An odd mix indeed! Or, driving into Puyahuapi, a small town in Chile, she stopped to register with the local authorities. The swirling dust of the empty dirt streets recalled a scene from the old movie, *High Noon*. Again, as the bagpipes struck up, the previously deserted streets were instantaneously filled with the children of the town. As Susan played and walked around the block, more children joined; the Pied Piper of Hamelin never had it so good!

Susan has now moved on to learning the alphorn, the 12-foot long instrument associated with Switzerland, Germany and Austria. Still hiking and traveling to Highland games, she and her husband, Andrew, who has written his own book, *What's Hot on the Moon Tonight!*, reside in Boulder and enjoy music of all kinds.

5 Fun Facts You Didn't Know About Me

1. I was a waterskiing fanatic in the Wisconsin summers.
2. I have climbed over half of the 14,000 ft. peaks in Colorado.
3. Kayaking down the Rogue River in Oregon, I almost drowned.
4. Bagpiping nude on a deserted beach in Hong Kong is actually described in my book. “It just seemed like the thing to do at the time.”
5. I have a football signed by the 1967 Championship Green Bay Packers team.

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HAVE BAGPIPES, WILL TRAVEL

How to Gather a Crowd and Make Travel More Interesting

Boulder, Colorado, 2016: How does it feel to play the bagpipes on the summit of Mt. Fuji? Or march with the riotous skirl of 10,000 bagpipers through the streets of Edinburgh in the 2000 Millennium parade? What is it like to serenade mystified onlookers with bagpipe tunes on the Great Wall of China? And who are these strange folk who don wooly kilts and funny shoes to partake of this ancient musical rite? Susan Hadley Planck tells all in an engaging new book, *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper*. (MoonScape Publishing, 2016; ISBN 978-0-9908769-2-2; \$17.95, www.SusanPlanck.com.)

Piping Hot! marches you into the world of bagpiping and around the globe through the eyes of a seasoned traveler, piper and educator, who weaves together her sense of adventure and humor with her love of bagpiping in this one-of-a-kind memoir and travelogue.

Arm-chair, group travel junkies or actual travelers, Scottish-Irish descendants, bagpipe aficionados or anyone after a good read will enjoy this entertaining book of zany adventures around the world through music.

As an educator for over 30 years and member of the award-winning City of Denver Pipe Band for more than 15 years, Susan witnessed the behind-the-scenes antics and personalities of these unique musicians along with their triumphs and travails of bagpipe competitions and gigs, from the matchless "Memphis in May" celebration and Oktoberfest in Sidney, Nebraska, to exotic international destinations.

SIX TIPS FOR TRAVEL

1. If the decision is to sign up with a commercial group, spend time researching and choose wisely. Avoid groups over 20. Read about the trip leader's background and experience.
2. Go with an audience grabber, whether it's bagpipes or balloons.
3. Everyone knows to pack light; Do it!
4. Find out-of-the-way places to visit (a harder and harder task these days).
5. Keep a journal; write in it every day. You will be glad you did.
6. Go a little wild: "Playing bagpipes in the nude just seemed like the thing to do at the time."

Order *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper* through Amazon.com or SusanPlanck.com for \$17.95.

Please e-mail any questions to plancksusan@gmail.com.

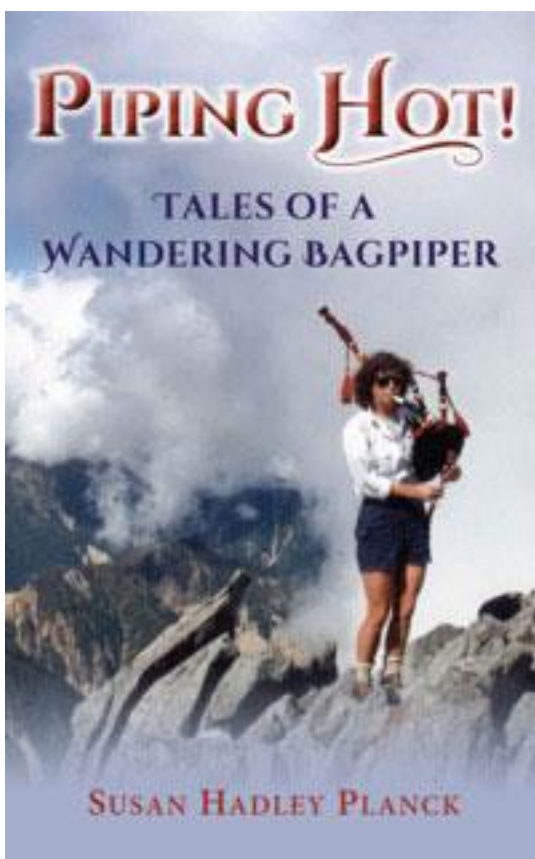
About the Author:



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Review Copies and Media Interviews:

For a review copy of *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper* or an interview with Susan Hadley Planck, please contact: 303-499-3916 or plancksusan@gmail.com. When requesting a review copy, please provide street address.

Synopsis for Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper

2-line Summary:

Piping Hot! takes you into the world of bagpiping and around the globe through the eyes of a seasoned traveler, piper and educator, who weaves together her sense of adventure and humor.

Short Synopsis:

Piping Hot! takes you into the world of bagpiping and around the globe through the eyes of a seasoned traveler, piper and educator, who weaves together her sense of adventure and humor with her love of bagpiping in this one-of-a-kind memoir and travelogue.

Medium Synopsis

How does it feel to play the bagpipes on the summit of Mt. Fuji? Or march with the exhilarating skirl of 10,000 bagpipers through the streets of Edinburgh in the 2000 Millennium parade? What is it like to serenade mystified onlookers with bagpipe tunes on the Great Wall of China? And who are these strange folk who don wooly kilts and funny shoes to partake of this ancient musical rite? Susan Hadley Planck tells all in an engaging new book, *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper*. *Piping Hot!* takes you into the world of bagpiping and around the globe through the eyes of a seasoned traveler, piper and educator, who weaves together her sense of adventure and humor with her love of bagpiping in this one-of-a-kind memoir and travelogue.

Long Synopsis

How does it feel to play the bagpipes on the summit of Mt. Fuji? Or march with the exhilarating skirl of 10,000 bagpipers through the streets of Edinburgh in the 2000 Millennium parade? What is it like to serenade mystified onlookers with bagpipe tunes on the Great Wall of China? And who are these strange folk who don wooly kilts and funny shoes to partake of this ancient musical rite? Susan Hadley Planck tells all in an engaging new book, *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper*. (MoonScape Publishing, 2016; ISBN 978-0-9908769-2-2; \$17.95, www.SusanPlanck.com.)

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Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper

By: Susan Hadley Planck

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[Amazon](#), [Boulder Book Store](#), select Celtic shops, <http://www.SusanPlanck.com>

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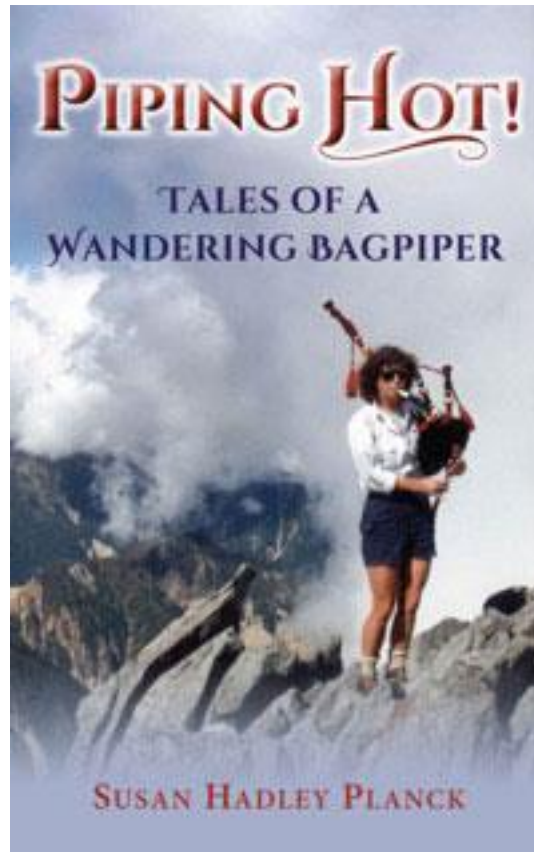
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you write *Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper*?
2. Why did you decide to learn to play the bagpipes? Are most bagpipers of Scottish or Irish descent?
3. Do you play any other instruments?
4. How did you decide to take your bagpipes with you on your travels?
5. Did you meet with any irate listeners or complaints to the noise?
6. In the book, you say that traveling with a commercial group is a mixed bag. Why do you feel that way?
7. What is the most important thing readers will learn from *Piping Hot!* ?
8. People reading this book will probably have traveled extensively. What does your book offer that other travel books don't?
9. Who's your favorite author?
10. Where can we buy the book?

Sample Chapter

Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper

By Susan Hadley Planck



CHAPTER ONE

WHY?

I blew and blew, and blew some more. Nothing! No sound at all, save the spits and squeals from my mouth.

“So, what d’ya wear under that thing anyway?”

This most often asked question to a bagpiper has elicited many time-honored responses, from “socks

and shoes” to the risqué, “A small set of pipes---care to blow?” These answers work better if you’re a male, obviously. In fact, many bagpipers, following the time-honored Scottish tradition of “going regimental,” wear nothing whatsoever under their kilts.

I finally gathered up my courage and decided to give the tradition a try. Of course, that was the evening, when I was sipping a beer at a fellow piper’s house, and he and his friend decided to check out if I was, indeed, a true piper. After they brazenly lifted my kilt, I rethought my decision. Needless to say, I never went “regimental” again.

There truly is no other sound like the Scottish Highland bagpipes. There is a primordial, sensual texture to the music infusing the whole body. Some listeners are moved to tears of joy while others are simply moved, with fingers in their ears, to leave the room in a fruitless effort to block out the sound. People seem to either love the pipes or hate them.

One lovely fall day I was playing my bagpipes a fair distance from the edge of a campground in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado when a woman charged me shaking her fists, screaming “Turn those things down!” My only way of “turning those things down” was to move farther away.

At another time, while climbing in the Japanese Alps with a small group and having reached our goal for the day, I took out my pipes and played. One exhausted member of the group, with tears of happiness streaming down her face, said the sound helped inspire her to continue and reach the top!

Bagpipes were, indeed, classified as “an instrument of war.” In fact, kilted Scottish soldiers fought with such ferocity in World War I that the Germans called them “The Ladies from Hell.” The sound of the pipes has caused entire armies to retreat in defeat before the battle even began.

Imagine you are awaiting battle on a cold fog-filled morning, wondering if you would live to see that evening. Absorbed with fear and unable to discern the enemy because of the Scottish mist, you suddenly hear the skirling of a large group of untuned bagpipes coming your way. The sound is deafening, bloodcurdling, and indescribable to the uninitiated. One can imagine that whole armies would drop their weapons, turn tail, and dissolve into the wilderness.

It has been said that each set of bagpipes is worth 100 guns in battle. They have been used in wars from Europe to Africa, Asia and America. Indeed, Nero may have been playing bagpipes instead of a fiddle when Rome burned. A World War I veteran from Britain stated, “When they played the bagpipes, I felt like I could get through anything.” Sadly more than 1,000 bagpipers fell in battle from

1914-1918.

Various forms of bagpipes exist in Spain, Hungary, Pakistan, Ireland, France, Bulgaria and other places. A crude form of a bagpipe can be traced to ancient Egypt. Some of these bagpipes in other countries have only one or two drones as opposed to the well-known Scottish bagpipes that have three. Some have a bellows to fill the bag instead of the player's breath. There are different shapes and sizes. The bag was originally the stomach of a goat or sheep!

[IMAGE: Fig. 1] caption: A Serbian bagpipe player. Photo © 2005 by Nikola Smolenski. Shot at Knez Mihajlova Street, Belgrade.

The bagpipe has evolved to the point of becoming synthetic, complete with plastic reeds and a bag made out of Gortex—yes, the same material used in raingear. And what may have been African wood and ivory has been replaced in some instances with plastic as well. Word of caution: if you are an American piper, you must be wary of taking your ivory mounted pipes abroad. Customs officials are only too happy to confiscate them upon re-entry to the United States.

No matter how much experience they might have I blowing other instruments, budding pipers will struggle initially. And, believe me, the “blowing” jokes around bagpiping are endless. But what I lacked in musical ability, I made up for in persistence, something we bagpipers need a lot of.

For endless months I struggled to learn the intricate fingering techniques on a practice chanter. The recorder-like instrument was my sole companion while I longingly looked at my bagpipes resting in their case, laughing at my crazy attempt to get comfortable with the complicated fingering of bagpiping, waiting for the day I could actually try the real thing.

Since I had just divorced and moved to Boulder, Colorado, I was living the free and easy single life, working some part-time jobs, and had the time to devote to learning the pipes. Finally, after nine months, a lot of practice, and much pleading, I convinced my instructor to allow me to try the actual pipes.

Bagpipes have four reeds: single reeds in each of the three drones and a double reed in the chanter. And any one of these reeds alone is difficult to blow. Together, they require special technique as well as hearty lungs. Many experienced pipers would dispute this, claiming from their lofty perch that I overstate the situation. There is, perhaps, a touch of snobbery in this attitude—or they just plain forgot what it was like when they began. The three drones, once tuned, should maintain a steady tone

throughout all the tunes. Any wavering is the mark of a beginner. The chanter provides the nine melody notes.

[IMAGE: Fig. 2] caption: What a bagpipe really looks like

Image copyright Andrew T. Lenz, Jr., BagpipeJourney.com. Used by permission.

With corks plugged in the three drones so I would only have the one double reed in the chanter to contend with, I anxiously blew up the bag. I blew and blew, and blew some more. Nothing! No sound at all, save the spits and squeals from my mouth. Drool formed and dribbled onto my shirt. I was devastated. It couldn't be that hard!

I tried again, this time holding onto the blow stick near my mouth, helping to create a seal. Squawk! A pitiful sound, but a sound, nonetheless. I was ecstatic! I had just experienced the first of many rapid mood swings that all pipers experience, regardless of their ability, dependent on how their playing is going on any given day.

The instrument takes patience and extreme determination. I would need several more weeks before I could play a sound with all three drones uncorked. In spite of the God-awful squeals I was making, I was excited to be able to produce genuine bagpipe sounds.

A less than understanding relative who heard my first feeble attempts likened the sound to sticking a needle into a pig. He was not one of the bagpipe's greater admirers. Yet I love the sound. I enjoy challenges, and learning the bagpipes certainly was one of the greatest challenges I've ever faced. Perhaps bagpiping was also a way to compensate for the frustration I felt at never being heard at the dinner table as the youngest of five children. But I always found myself torn between the embarrassment of the attention and the enjoyment of it.

I suspect I'm a closet masochist. The instrument is just too difficult and frustrating for any sane person to tackle. If your fingers finally start to behave properly, the instrument may choose that day to develop its own contrary personality. The weather, time of day, and phases of the moon seem to affect the reeds.

Some chanter reeds last several months, others only a few hours. And then there was my friend who had spent several weeks breaking in her reed to just the strength she wanted it. As she showed it to her instructor and turned, she walked smack into the door with reed in hand. She looked at the smashed

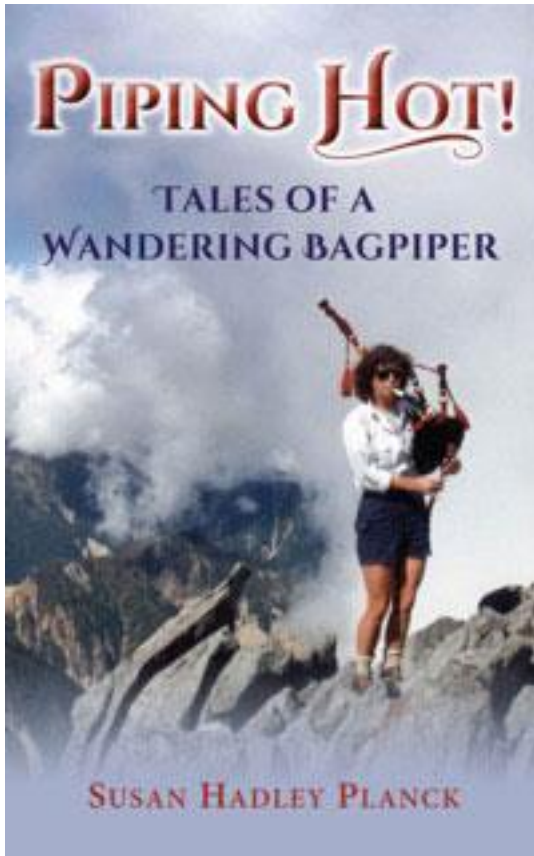
reed and burst into tears.

Bagpiping is not for the faint of heart. I've seen experienced, well-respected pipers throw their \$2000 pipes on the ground after a particularly poor performance in competition. I've seen pipers work for five years only to discard the pipes for good after being beaten by a talented thirteen-year-old with only two years of experience.

I do not consider myself an exhibitionist in any sense of the word. Yet playing the bagpipes quietly or unobtrusively is impossible. I admit to enjoying the positive attention a bagpiper can receive—most of the time. A resident of Sidney, Nebraska, where our band played for over twenty years at their Oktoberfest, approached us after one performance with the gratifying comment, "You have given us so much joy these past years." That may be what it's all about.

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PIPING HOT! TALES OF A WANDERING BAGPIPER

By: Susan Planck

Published by: MoonScape Publishing

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eBook ISBN: 978-0-9908769-3-9

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Website: www.SusanPlanck.com

Praise for Piping Hot! Tales of a Wandering Bagpiper

Andrew Wright, a two-time world gold-medal winner and the world's foremost authority on piobaireachd, the classical music of the bagpipe says, "All through the book the excitement of being involved with the pipe and its music comes through, and this, coupled with well-observed local detail at all locations, makes the book a great pleasure to read."

A fun read about determination, persistence and patience. Learning the bagpipes, one finds out, is an awesome and difficult undertaking. It is a story about a love of music and a love of cultures and how the two mix into a way to communicate and share an experience and friendship. Some wild and fun adventures do play out and you have to enjoy them and admire Susan for what she has accomplished and brought to others through her persistence, energy and love of the bagpipes. The descriptions of the places, the beauty of the sounds of the pipes in the various special locations are entrancing. It truly was a fun read for me. I really do have a sincere appreciation for the bagpipers and the music they make with that instrument.

By Judith Briles on April 19, 2016

What a surprise ... and a treat Piping Hot! is/was. Not quite knowing what I would encounter as I started into the book; what I did, was a delight. Susan Planck is a descriptive storyteller, drawing the reader in as a virtual path to points that few would think a bagpiper ... and a woman bagpiper... would be discovered as the guide. A combination of a travel guide, the author's experiences and a variety of destinations (some I had never heard of), Piping Hot! delivers, one shirl at a time. Recommended for anyone who wants to discover new sights and places; anyone who enjoys the bagpipe; and anyone who wants to read a fun adventure by a fearless woman.

By Barmielad on April 30, 2016

Piping Hot! That's what is! An adventure in traveling and relating to people all over the world, with all those exhilarating and sometimes awkward moments that enliven exotic encounters. Susan tells it as it was and how the pipes made it a grand exercise in human relations. Hard to imagine a more startling ice-breaker than the skirl of pipes -- when you might have expected an American woman phoning home about all this strangeness...

By Cindy on May 5, 2016

Though I don't travel or play the pipes, I found this a good read. Laced with honesty and humor it's an interesting juxtaposition of responses to the music of bagpipes - the differences and similarities between cultures. It's a journey of daring to do things outside your comfort zone and experiencing the unexpected. It's a story of how one musical instrument played by one person can affect others and the player herself as she relates to people and places far from home. It starts with learning the bagpipes, going solo, joining a band, and finally to the 2000 Highland Games in Scotland. And it's a story about moving into what lies ahead.

PHOTOS

