

House of Gordon USA Annual General Meeting (AGM)  
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, NC  
July 11, 2015

Federal IRS EIN # 26-0285250

**Call to Order: 2:10 PM** The meeting start was delayed to allow some members time for transportation to the meeting location in the campground.

**Attendees:**

Lois Todd  
Bonnie Linse  
Keith Linse  
John Gordon  
Mark Dodd

Geof Baker  
David Gauthier  
Barbara Wray  
Mark Ballard  
Jane Carl

**Membership and Quorum:** Bonnie Linse reported the membership at 359 members, with 20% (72 votes) required to achieve a quorum to conduct official House of Gordon business. A quorum was met by the 10 voting members present and 162 proxy votes received from absentee members.

**Reading of the Chief's Greeting:** Lois Todd read the Chief's Greeting below:

**CHIEF'S MESSAGE**

Dear Clansmen and women,

When I see the number of books published every year I really wonder who is going to read them all. Some, of course, will be best sellers but then others.....I do wonder!

Having said this, I have decided if everyone else can do it then so can I. It was really the imminent arrival of my 10th grandchild that made me think. When they are adult what will they know of my life and times? Possibly very little - but if they are interested in the way things were during my seventy years then I wanted them to have something to read which would tell them. I am starting soon. The fun of doing this sort of thing now is that it is so easy to publish and one can include all sorts of illustrations, cuttings and photographs and make it all the more interesting. I shall, of course, have a chapter on my involvement with House of Gordon USA - including happy memories of Charles O Gordon, Lucretia and many others. Visits to Grandfather Mountain and Ventura will be well covered.

We have moved out of Aboyne Castle after 36 years! I cannot deny I feel somewhat lost without it but delighted that my son Alistair and daughter in law Mouse will be moving in when it suits them. Catheryn and I have bought a house near Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire and we are planning to have a cottage at Aboyne so we can be 'at home' during the Summer and at plenty of other times during the year. I have lived many years in the South of England so it is no hardship for me to be here - it will just take a bit of getting used to.

Lois is doing a tremendous job for us all - and in stifling heat (I hope her aircon is working well) whilst Scotland has had its coldest June since 1972! I know it's time I got over to see you all again. Such a pleasure last time at Ventura - but perhaps Lois and I can work something out for 2016. I do hope so.

Heartiest greetings to you all.

Aye,  
Granville

The last sentence prompted of Granville's message prompted a quick discussion as to whether or not we could properly support a visit in 2016. According to Bonnie, the funds would not be available until FY 2017. This item was tabled for later discussion.

**Reading of the 2014 AGM Minutes:** Mark Ballard motioned this be omitted due to everyone in attendance having a copy in their hand that had been distributed prior to the meeting. Keith Linse seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Motion to approve the Minutes as written carried unanimously.

### Reports:

- 1. President's Report (Lois Todd):** We are starting to make headway on our biggest project as a board and my top priority, positioning the clan for the upcoming generation. Our social media is taking off and we are seeing new members coming to us through their exposure to the House via our online community in our Facebook Group. Most exciting is the young leadership talent we are beginning to realize. Evan has been doing a fabulous job as our VP and has brought his leadership skills to the table with our Bylaw's rewrites; Jason Shepherd in Georgia stepped up to help out with that this year as well. Lisa Gordon is joining the board and I couldn't be more excited to have her! I am hoping that Evan and Lisa will inspire more young Californians to step up and take on some of the responsibility of games convening to give Tom Adams a hand out west. I am also hoping they will inspire some young Virginians as well! I can always use the help. Geof & I have worked hard to find and put in place several new conveners in areas where we had not had coverage for some time. He will be telling you more about our conveners in his report later!

I would like to thank John Lowry for his many years of service on the Board of Directors. John put in many hours doing many things for the House that few people know of, and both he and Nellie have given much to the clan. John was The moving force in getting the House of Gordon USA reorganized and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. He has encouraged many young people to develop their talents and guided several to our scholarship program. He has worked hard to bring and keep the House of Gordon USA together as one.

I know we have a reputation as Ceilidh Central at the Highland Games, and YES I found one more way for us to party and celebrate. I am very excited about our Christmas in July Celebration this weekend, and even more excited that our new convener in Oregon, Shane Milne will be hosting his first event next weekend with a Christmas in July Event! Kaine Atkinson in Michigan, Steve & Cindy Melcher in Colorado and Tom Gardenhire in Arizona are also joining in with the festivities! We will have one banner signed for each Company of the Battalion of Marines we have adopted! And, we are hoping to collect enough cards to give each Marine at least one card. We will continue this project though the fall at events across the country so that we can give these young warriors support and love from home throughout their deployment. I wish I could give you more information on the unit we have adopted, but we have to remain OPSEC Safe and not give out their identity until they are in theater later this year. So have fun with the Christmas theme this weekend, but keep in mind it is all in a good cause in the true spirit of Christmas by giving back to those who by standing to serve and defend us, ensure our freedom, a most precious gift. These young Marines deserve our respect, thanks and support.

Semper Fi and Bydand!

Lois Todd

**2. Vice President's Report (Bonnie Linse):** Last year, the Bylaws Committee proposed extensive amendments to the HOGUSA's bylaws, which were adopted by a vote of the members. After the proposals were published, however, the organization's leadership received additional suggested changes from Jason Shepherd, a House of Gordon member with substantial experience in drafting non-profit bylaws, and a lawyer at King & Spalding LLP in Georgia. Some of Jason's edits were adopted at last summer's annual meeting. The Bylaws Committee was then reconvened to consider the remainder of his edits, and Jason graciously agreed to participate on the committee. The result of the committee's work was a set of important but targeted changes to the bylaws, which have again been submitted to the membership for a vote. I would like to thank the committee---namely, Jason Shepherd and Bonnie and Keith Linse---for their hard work and insight. With amendments proposed over the last two AGMs, the HOGUSA bylaws provide a stable foundation for the organization's continued success.

Respectfully submitted,  
Evan Rose

**3. CONVENER REPORT (GEOF BAKER):**

We are expanding our convener coverage and working hard to bring in new conveners and some younger conveners to position us for the next generation! Tom Gardenhire has expanded into New Mexico giving us a chance to begin rebuilding in that area. We have spun Arizona and New Mexico off from Southwest and think this will help Tom & Sarah by giving them direct support from and communication with national. Membership is growing in Tom's area and we thank him and Sarah for their hard work. They have increased membership in AZ by 317%

Rob & Kathy Gordon have expanded this year to include Rhode Island and next year will add Massachusetts to their coverage! New England is beginning to grow again under their leadership and we are very excited. Last fall as a result from the Gordon Tent hosted by Rob at Loon Mountain, he signed up 3 new members from NH and 6 new members from MA! They have already taken their area's membership from 5 to 20; that is a 400% increase in membership!

We have added a new convener in Louisiana and Arkansas in Kenn Gordon who is supported not only by his fabulous wife, but his sons as well! Ken will also be adding Mississippi next year to his area. This is very exciting as we had not had anyone to convene in Arkansas in many years and he was at the Lyon College Games this spring as well as the Minden Games in Louisiana. Mississippi has been missing out too, but not for much longer thanks to Kenn and family! What an enthusiastic group they are bringing lots of young energy to the Gordon Tent. He has seen a 140% increase in membership so far.

Garth Gordon had been wanting to step down for several years and this year we found a gem of a replacement for him in Kaine Atkinson. Kaine and his lovely wife, Christa, convened their first games in May at the Alma Highland Games. Garth came up to hand off his very generous donations to their efforts with the bulk of his display items and to give them a hand. He gave them a glowing review and was so confident in them that he left them to their own devices on Sunday. Garth's legacy is a big one to live up to and it speaks well that he is happy to have Kaine and Christa carrying it forward. We expect good things to come in Michigan and the Michigordons are again on the rise! Kaine has had a 233% increase in membership.

After several years with no convener in Oregon we are very pleased to have a new member taking on that role in Shane Milne! Shane will be hosting his first event next weekend in Portland, OR. Starting out with only 3 members in Oregon, he has his work cut out for him, but we think he will do a great job. Shane by just joining brought a 150% increase in membership taking OR from 2 members to 3.

South Carolina has been under represented for years, due to other obligations taking David Nichols away from the Gordon Tent. Fortunately for the SC Gordons Barbara Gordon Wray has agreed to step into the convener role! Barbara is a strong people person and we know she will grow SC into a strong division of the House in short order. She has already brought membership up by 271% since she took it on last September.

Steve and Cindy Melcher have joined Fred Anderson and Randy Walker in CO to round out their board and give the CO Gordons a very strong leadership team. We are very happy that Steve and Cindy have stepped up to lend their strong support and knowledge to the division. I had the privilege of attending the Long's Peak Games last fall and enjoyed meeting the CO Gordons very much. This is a vibrant and fun group that will continue to grow.

Lastly we are pleased to announce that we have a new convener lined up for Texas in new member Katy Richards Morris! A Gordon by her Laurie heritage, she will be taking on her duties soon and has already begun organizing and contacting others in her branch of the clan to come out and support the House! We are very excited to have this young lady coming onboard.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geof Baker

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP REPORT (BONNIE LINSE):**

**Certified 2015 Voting Members:      359                      **Votes needed for Quorum: 72****

**New members this year: 100**

**Received Renewals from members who had been inactive since:**

- **Before 2009: 1**
- **From 2010: 1**
- **From 2011: 2**
- **From 2012: 3**
- **From 2013: 4**
- **From 2014 17**

**Memberships paying online via PayPal this year: 47, up 313.4% over 2014.**

**As of June 30, 2015, we have 216 paid 2016 memberships, up 134.16% over this time last year.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bonnie G. Linse

#### **5. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT (LOIS TODD):**

Our main website seems to be continuing at the same pace as before, with 77% of the traffic being direct traffic from our members and from those who get the address from our literature at the highland games. Only 3% is coming from search engines, even though we have a high Google ranking for our

key words, and 20% is coming from referring sites, including our Facebook and twitter presence. On average we are seeing around 12,663 visits per month on the website. This past month we added a mobile optimized sub domain and will work to tweak and improve that as we go forward.

Our Facebook page and Twitter page are beginning to get more notice and we have had posts shared and re-tweeted by The Gordon Highlander Museum, The Gordon School, Gordon Castle, COSCA, the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, and others. Our online community at our Facebook Group now has about 1050 members and continues to grow.

*In The House!* featured an article on Gordon Castle by Angus Gordon Lennox, owner of the castle, and an article on the Gordon Highlanders in WWI. Both received much interest and comments from the members. We are already looking into some possible articles for next May and hope to have another interesting read for everyone. We continue to keep the costs down on this publication and encourage anyone who has article ideas or submissions to pass them along!

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Todd

## **6. SCHOLARSHIP REPORT (LOIS TODD):**

We awarded two scholarships this spring to two deserving young ladies and this morning awarded the final scholarship along with a trophy to the Grade IV Piper of the Day here at Grandfather Mountain! We also had some dark green t-shirts printed with a color rendition of the Gordon Belted Crest that we are selling to support the scholarship fund.

The two scholarships awarded by application this year went to:

**Gemma Briggs of Clearwater, Florida** is a 16-year-old high school junior in the International Baccalaureate program and Grade 3 piper with the Tampa Bay Pipe Band. This is a girl with lofty goals and the drive and ability to go forth and achieve them. We are happy to be able to give her a little help along the way and award Gemma \$450.00 toward her expenses to attend the North American Academy of Piping and Drumming at Valle Crusic, NC (near Grandfather Mountain!) this year. Good luck Gemma and we look forward to seeing great things from you in the future.

**Megan Watson of Thousand Oaks, California** is a 15-year-old Highland Dancer who has been a consistent winner in her age group and has also qualified and competed in the World Championships in 2012-2014 and will again be competing in Scotland this year. We are happy to be able to award her \$300.00 toward her goals. We send our best wishes for a successful competition year for Megan and hope to hear of her accomplishments as she moves forward this year!

On July 12<sup>th</sup> 2015, the annual Charles O. Gordon Memorial scholarship of \$250.00 and a trophy was awarded to the Grade 4 Junior Piper of the Day at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games:

**Tyler Detremps from Bethlehem, PA**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Todd

**House of Gordon USA Treasurer's Report FY 2015 (07/01/2014-06/30/2015)**

**Beginning Balance** **14,829.28**

**INCOME**

**National**

Membership	3,560.00
Additional Directed Donations	200.00
PayPal Interest	0.11
Bank Interest	-
Bank Fees Reversed	3.00
Misc. Income	6.00

**Conveners**

Membership	3,560.00
Additional Directed Donations	230.00

**Directed Charity Funds**

Gordon Scottish Heritage	2,081.00
Gordon Heritage QM	-
C. O. Gordon Scholarship	1,110.00
Gordon Highlander Museum	795.00

**Total Income** **11,545.11**

**EXPENSES**

**Membership**

Membership Secretary	398.02
Postage	465.87

**Business**

Bank Fees	5.00
PayPal Fees	42.68
CA Business Filing Fees	20.00
Advertising	250.00
AGM	571.56
Conference Calls	48.10
Misc. Expense	50.00

**Communications**

Website	261.84
Newsletter	1,766.90

**Conveners**

Printing (New Conveners)	196.03
Conveners	1,904.41
Secured GA Fund	236.00

**Charities**

Gordon Scottish Heritage	1,010.44
Gordon Heritage QM	22.85
C.O. Gordon Scholarship	1,936.22
Gordon Highlanders Museum	2,000.00

**Total Expense** **11,185.92**

**Ending Balance** **15,188.47**

**ACCOUNT BALANCES**

**Business Lfunds**

National Ledger	2,423.12
Convener Fund	3,040.59
Secured Georgia Fund	2,435.79
Wells Fargo PayPal	179.02

**Charities Funds**

Gordon Scottish Heritage	5,271.76
Gordon Heritage QM	152.15
C.O. Gordon Scholarship	891.04
Gordon Highlander Museum	795.00

**Total Funds** **15,188.47**

### **House of Gordon USA Items of Business:**

- 1. Bylaws Revisions:** The bylaw revisions worked by the By Law committee were discussed. Most of the changes made the Bylaws clearer and more functional. A motion to adopt the changes passed unanimously
- 2. Scottish Gordon Heritage Charities Fund:** Unanimously voted to continue to support
  - a. Gordon Highlanders Museum
  - b. Battalion Christmas in July
  - c. Gordon Scottish Heritage
  - d. Gordon Heritage Quartermasters
  - e. Charles O. Gordon Scholarship

A discussion regarding other ways to raise revenues to increase support to charitable endeavors ensued. David recommended marketing Angus, the Granite smoker/oven assembled each year in the Gordon camping area. A brainstorming session led to ideas including a brochure describing its history, favorite recipes, assembly instructions. Ultimately, the idea was tabled until other priorities could be met.

The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games staff is assembling a Walkway of Fame area for clans long supportive of the Games. For \$1000, clans can have their clan honored with a Granite Stone Crest added to the walkway area. Bonnie affirmed that the funds were available to support the endeavor. Geof motioned that we support, the motion carried unanimously

### **3. House of Gordon USA Goals:**

- a. Continue to grow membership
  - b. Expand House of Gordon USA throughout the US by recruiting Convener's in areas as yet untapped
  - c. Assist the Conveners with member retention
  - d. Add capabilities to the web site to sell merchandise to supplement the charitable aspects of House of Gordon USA
  - e. Motion, seconded, and unanimously approved.
- 4. Adjournment:** At 3:18 pm, the slate was clear and Keith motioned to adjourn, Geof seconded, unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

DAVID J. GAUTHIER, Secretary