

House of Gordon USA Annual General Meeting (AGM) Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, NC July 09, 2016

Federal IRS EIN # 26-0285250

Call to Order: 2:02 PM

Attendees:

Lois Todd
Geof Baker
Bonnie Linse
Amy Lynn Edwards
Steve Helliard

David Todd
Keith Linse
David Gauthier
Bryan Gordon

Membership and Quorum: Bonnie Linse reported the membership at 434 members, with 20% (87 votes) required to achieve a quorum to conduct official House of Gordon business. A quorum was met by the 8 voting members present and 182 proxy votes received from absentee members.

Reading of the 2015 AGM Minutes: Geof motioned this be omitted due to everyone in attendance having a copy in their hand that had been distributed and reviewed prior to the meeting. Keith Linse seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The Minutes were approved as written.

Reading of the Chief's Greeting

Lois read the complete text of Granville, Marquis of Huntly's message which reflected upon the turbulent political landscapes both here and in Scotland with Brexit, Donald Trump, Prime Minister May, and Scottish Independence currents creating a great deal of change and uncertainty for us all. He tried to remain apolitical where we are concerned and is very much looking forward to visiting the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in 2017. For the full text of his words, go to <http://www.houseofgordonusa.org/AGM2016.html>

Report Summaries:

- 1. President's Report (Lois Todd):** Over the past 3 years, we worked hard to get House of Gordon USA shipshape. The Bylaws revision is complete. The Social Networking efforts are paying dividends. Tax and legal issues are resolved. The convener and membership bases have fully recovered. Our soaring membership can be attributed to having a good team on the Board, motivated conveners and a clear vision of our future. I'm very proud of the work done to get us to this point.

The increased membership allowed us to bring Susan Gordon Rose's Epic Project under the national umbrella to be part of our scholarship programs and we are excited to be able to help her provide deserving young Highland Pipers and Drummers with the kit needed to continue to compete on the boards and further their talent. Our youths' talent in the highland tradition of performing arts is one of the best ambassadors we have to showcase our Highland cultural and musical heritage. We are so proud of all our scholarship recipients in the Charles O. Gordon Memorial Scholarship Program and now also in The Epic Project Program. These efforts support our focus to make our success sustainable by engaging our youth and infusing their energy into our ranks.

In keeping with that youth focus, Our Christmas in July last year went well, and we had a lot of support for the USMC 1/7 who we adopted during their deployment. They made it home in April and greatly appreciated our efforts. If you have a member deploying, please let us know so we can support them with care packages. We have sent out many care packages over the years to members who deploy, but we can only do this when we know about it! We are also looking for a nomination for Christmas in a Box...if you know of a Company or Battalion- who will be deployed over the Holidays let one of the board members know and we will consider them for adoption. It was a huge morale boost for the 101st Airborne in 2014 and the USMC 1/7 in 2015, it would be nice to continue this project supporting our men and women at Arms who selflessly serve and protect us.

For the complete text of the President's Report and all reports from the board, refer to the online Reports at <http://www.houseofgordonusa.org/AGM2016.html>

2. Vice President's Report Summary (Bonnie Linse for Evan Rose): Quiet year...Bylaw updates complete and all of our legal requirements met. Celebrate!

3. CONVENER REPORT SUMMARY (GEOF BAKER):

We continue expanding our convener coverage and working hard to bring in new conveners and some younger conveners to position us for the next generation!

Sheila Mills Bedsole took on Alabama giving us coverage for the first time in that state. She had a very professional welcoming tent at the highland games in Dothan and did a fabulous job increasing Alabama's membership.

Mark Dodd took on Tennessee and Kentucky and was at the Glasgow, KY games and did a great job. After many years without representation, it is great to have a Gordon Tent at that festival and in Kentucky again!

Jen Mills Martin has taken on co-convening Florida with Cynthia Gordon Patrick. Cynthia remains in the lead and will focus on South Florida while Jen will focus on North Florida. Together they are creating a dynamic team to really explode our presence in Florida.

We are working to get help for Rob Gordon in New England similar to what we established in Florida, and we are looking for Conveners to come onboard in the Mid-Atlantic area in the same way so we can better cover Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

We created a private Facebook Group for our conveners so that they can get to know each other, bond, and share ideas. We have had some exciting exchanges and many ideas are in development - a new kid's handout, a handout on some of our more famous Gordons, and some unexpected Gordons of fame that the average person wouldn't readily recognize were Gordons! We are all looking forward to the Chief's visit next year and the conveners are going to play a major part in the planning.

Katy Richards, our convener for Texas, created two new Facebook pages. One for HoG Texas as well as one for HoG Oklahoma/Kansas. We are still looking for someone to come forward and help us with Oklahoma and Kansas.

I applaud ALL of our conveners for their fantastic efforts in driving up our membership 373.3% from the low reported in 2012!! Keep it up and if you need any tools, items, handouts, or any other materials, let us know!

4. MEMBERSHIP REPORT SUMMARY (BONNIE LINSE):

Certified 2016 Voting Members: **435** **Votes needed for Quorum: 87**

New members this year: **160**

5. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT SUMMARY (LOIS TODD):

Our main website, HouseofGordonUSA.org, continues to serve our membership a forum for ideas and camaraderie, with peak months in April, June, August, October and December. This corresponds to key events, the beginning of the Festival season in April, the AGM, Fall Festival push with several BIG festivals, the December newsletter and beginning of Florida's season in January. The peaks run just ahead or concurrent of these events.

Our Facebook page and Twitter page are getting more notice and we are getting more followers and seeing re-tweets. I would like to have someone work with me on the Twitter account. I find I have little time to really make this as effective as it could be. Our Facebook Group online community grew by 114.6% over last year and now has over 1200 members.

In The House! featured an article on Abergeldie Castle, which faced flood waters that eroded the riverbank and threatened to topple the historic home into the River Dee this past winter, and an article of A.A. Milne and Winnie the Pooh. Winnie is the official Gordon Tent Mascot at the House of Gordon USA tents, and

is always a huge hit with young and old alike. Both received much interest and positive comments from the members. At the request of many members, we also had an article on the Battalion of Marines we adopted and the member who served as our piper for several years that many of you watched grow up. This Battalion, USMC 1/7 out of Twentynine Palms in California, is one with a long proud history of service and Company C, better known as Suicide Charley, won fame in WWII at Guadalcanal & Peleliu. The Battalion and Suicide Charley continue to do well and were written up in an article in Marine Times which we were allowed to reprint as part of our article to give our members an understanding of the importance of the support we give to these fine young Marines & Sailors. The fact that their routine training for their deployment enabled them to send the winning squad with no special preparation to the first Super Squad competition the 1st Division has held in 15 years shows the level of their commitment and skill. This is a well deserving group. Their letters of thanks say it all in telling of the morale boost given to them when they were away over the Holidays serving our nation and protecting our liberties.

6. SCHOLARSHIP REPORT SUMMARY (LOIS TODD):

We awarded two scholarships this spring to deserving young ladies of Gordon Heritage and this morning awarded the final scholarship of \$250.00 along with a trophy to the Grade IV Piper of the Day, **James Campbell**, 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 Charles O. Gordon scholarships awarded by application this year went to:

Destiny Swainston of Dunedin, Florida: a 15-year-old Highland Dancer - \$500
Isabel Friedrichs of Escondido, California a 15-year-old Highland Dancer - \$400

The Epic Project scholarship program 2016 recipient is

Linda Snoddy of Bakersfield College in Bakersfield, CA.

All of the applicants were worthy of consideration and we hope those that did not get selected this year will reapply next year. For more information regarding these recipients, refer to the complete scholarship report at <http://www.houseofgordonusa.org/AGM2016.html>

6. House of Gordon USA Treasurer's Report Summary FY2016:

Beginning Balance: **\$15,188.47** Ending Balance: **\$17,761.25**

Motion to accept as written (Dave) seconded (Geof) and approved unanimously

See the complete report from the link off of
<http://www.houseofgordonusa.org/AGM2016.html>

House of Gordon USA Items of New Business:

1. **Scottish Gordon Heritage Charities Fund:** Unanimously voted to continue to support
 - a. Gordon Highlanders Museum
 - b. Gordon Scottish Heritage
 - c. Charles O. Gordon Scholarship
 - d. Epic Project

2. **House of Gordon USA Goals:** Now that our House is in order, continue what we've been doing
 - a. Expand House of Gordon USA throughout the US by recruiting Convener's in areas as yet untapped and supporting their membership acquisition and retention efforts
 - b. Focus on building sustainability by encouraging youthful involvement in House of Gordon USA and rewarding our youths' cultural heritage pursuits with scholarships and support
 - c. Support the preservation of House of Gordon's historical contributions by charity and education

3. **Adjournment:** At 3:23 pm, the slate was clear and motioned to adjourn (Lois), seconded (David), unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

DAVID J. GAUTHIER, Secretary