



# In The House!

National Newsletter of the House of Gordon USA

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## USA HOUSE VOTES IN NEW OFFICERS!

At the Annual General Meeting held this year at the Meadow Highland Games in Richmond, Virginia on October 24-25th, our new slate of officers were duly elected.

**Kim William Gordon of Missouri** will lead the House as our President with some exciting ideas to help build our organization.

**Geof Baker of Virginia** as our Vice President will take on the responsibility of Director Coordinator of the Conveners and Commissioners with an infectious enthusiasm that is sure to inspire.

**Barbara Gordon Wray of South Carolina** will continue as our Secretary.

**Nellie Lowry of California** will serve as our Treasurer.

**John Lowry of California and Lu-**

**cretia Gordon of Tennessee** will serve as Board Members at Large bringing the benefit of their experience and giving us a sense of continuity.

**Arlene Adams of California** takes on the duties of Membership Secretary and brings her experience in the same position for Southw est!

**Lois Todd of Virginia** will continue as our Communications Chair heading up the newsletter and website as well as communications with the membership and International representatives. She will also continue in her other responsibilities with the Gordon DNA Fund, and Scholarship.

This group represent a dedicated enthusiastic board who will help to build and expand our organization during the next two years. You can contact them through the officers page online.

## Gordons pass on Spirit Award @ Grandfather

The House of Gordon received the Annual Spirit Award at the 2008 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and so it was our duty to pass on the award this year to the clan we felt best exhibited the spirit of Celtic hospitality.

Geof, Joe and Paul with Gordon banner and sword in hand, presented it in style to Clan Gunn.



Our Scholarship Recipient, Marshall German, wins the Piobaireachd portion of the USA Junior Solo Piping Championship! See page 7.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS!

It is with great honor that I address the members of the fine House of Gordon as your current President! I thank you for your support, and will strive to serve you well.

These last years have been exciting, and represent a tremendous amount of diligent work by the

organizations dedicated members and previous officers. We are well positioned to escalate the House of Gordon in many ways.

Your new team is quickly assembling, and you will begin to see communications shortly about exciting areas of growth and expansion of our grand House. You can expect to see activity in the following areas:

⇒Membership:

We will be igniting an aggressive membership campaign (both new and renewals) to increase our ranks. If you would like to assist in this endeavor, please contact us.

⇒Conveners and Regional Commissioner expansion:

A quick glance at our current list of Conveners and Regional Commissioners will show that we have a number of states in which we are in dire need of representation. We will be working hard to fill these voids, and would appreciate any recommendations and assistance you may have for these positions.

⇒Consideration of a "Clan Store" and Event Support System:

The idea of a "House of Gordon" clan "store" has been discussed for a while, and we are looking closely at how this store may work, and how it may work within a larger issue, and that is supporting Conveners and Regional Commissioners in local event representation. We see this as an opportunity to support the individual events, but also to assist in our first goal, and that is membership expansion. These conversations are in motion now. We would love to hear your ideas and opinion!

⇒Enhanced Communications:

In addition to our traditional newsletter, we will be reviewing our use of social networking and communications resources (i.e. Facebook, SKYPE and others) in an effort to escalate our means of communication. I would like to hear your thoughts on this effort.

⇒Extended Volunteer Efforts:

⇒Shortly, we will be extending requests to members for support in a number of areas in which we could use your volunteer efforts. We realize that everyone has very busy schedules, so we will ask for your assistance sparingly, and appreciate any support you can provide.

I thank you again for this opportunity, and look forward to the next few months and years in building upon the firm foundation of the House and to elevate the House of Gordon to be the envy of the Scottish community.

Please contact me at any time.

Regards,

Kim William Gordon

*"I look forward to building upon the firm foundation of the House and to elevate the House of Gordon to be the envy of the Scottish community."*

## AGM 2009 Report

The House of Gordon USA AGM was held on October 24-25 at the Meadow Highland Games just north of Richmond, Virginia.

The AGM Meeting was held on Saturday and was presided over by outgoing President, John Lowry. Nellie Lowry presented Ken Hendrix's treasurer's report showing that we are in good financial shape. The recommendations were to put more emphasis on the Charles O. Gordon Scholarship for the Celtic Arts by trying to locate more talented youth in need of our assistance to meet their goals and dreams. It was also decided that we would donate \$2000.00 to the Gordon Highlander's Museum in Aberdeen; \$1000.00 immediately and the remaining \$1000.00 to be presented in person next summer on the Gordon 2010 Tour.

The membership report shows 586 members, with 64 not paid since 2007. This figure was in need of some revision due to the Virginia Division's recent response to their new sletter with 19 renewals, seven new members and three new members that day.

Roger Mills gave his Convener's Chair Report announcing that Sean Gordon, son of Woody Gordon, had taken on the convenership of Colorado, Micah Wentzel had taken on Pennsylvania, and Jerry Vandenberg had taken on West Virginia. The original order of start-up banner sets had all been distributed, and there were four sets remaining of the reorder. Morris Gordon of Virginia agreed to again take on the position of Commissioner for the Northeast.

Lois Todd gave the communications report and the Russian Gordons are checking us out! Use of the website is up 116.5% over last year and surprisingly the geographic statistics show that the largest single group overall are coming from yandex.ru in Russia. (Maybe in part due to the Gordon Grill going on the road this sum-

mer! See page 5.) A new password protected Convener's section has been added with lots of resources for our conveners. We have started a Facebook page, and a You Tube playlist!

John Lowry gave his final president's report giving an overview of his work taking us from zero in 2006 when we reorganized to now, including filing for the 501c designation. His advice for the incoming president is to find better ways to keep the lines of communication between national and the conveners open, with more accountability from local and national. With the mobility we have in our society today, it is sometimes challenging to keep a handle on conveners who relocate for many reasons. We have many areas in need of representation and the call will go out to our members to step up to take on a game, or area where they can.

The issue of Life membership was revisited, with the decision that at this time it is not feasible.

New business brought up a clan store which will act as a repository for our camera ready artwork, small items wanted by our conveners giving us the ability to maximize our buying power and as we build it the ability to fully fund and expand our scholarship and charitable programs. It was agreed that a committee to create and implement a viable business program will be appointed by the new board.

Jim Gordon of Maryland reported on the DNA Project where our donation has funded so far four new DNA profiles. We have found that the main Gordon lineages are of I1d Haplogroup which is of Danish/Norse origin, while the Chief's Seaton-Gordon lineage is of I1r Haplogroup which is of Continental origin.

Our new board was voted on and unanimously approved. A Ceilidh was held after the games with great food, drink and fellowship for those in attendance.

***"It was also decided that we would donate \$2000.00 to the Gordon Highlander's Museum in Aberdeen"***



# CelticFest Mississippi



Marcia Gordon McLaurin

The House of Gordon attended CelticFest Mississippi in Jackson, MS on Saturday, September 12th. Unfortunately, weather scared us away for the Sunday festivities. There was an Irish Whiskey and Scotch tasting on Friday night along with many performers on three different stages. On Saturday and Sunday, six stages were hopping with 27 musical performers, 9 dance groups, and storytelling. There were workshops on storytelling, Irish music, Celtic Music in America, Gaelic language, sea songs, children's

songs, fiddling, piping, and others. There were 8 dance workshops to attend if you were up to the challenge! There were several Celtic food vendors as well as local "Southern" favorites such as "homemade" ice cream, which was a treat in the Mississippi heat! The vendors were in attendance as well and were busy selling their wares. Many of my family members and friends were in attendance as I lived in Jackson for many years. We had a grand time!

BYDAND!

Marcia Gordon McLaurin

# Gordons Honor Armed Forces @ AGM

With a tradition of over 950 years of continuous military service by Clan Gordon and as Honored Clan at the Meadow Highland Games in Richmond, we felt it only right that we carry our Wall of Honor to the limit with our AGM and honor our military who give of themselves to ensure our freedom.



Our own color guard led the parade of tartans. Aaron Todd and Cole Morgan of the Hermitage High MCJROTC carried the national ensigns of the USA and Scotland followed by men of the clan carrying the flags of the 5 branches of the Armed Forces, Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force and Coast Guard. Mary Joe Gordon McQuestion carried our Service Banner representing our Active Duty members and our Gold Star member, Gary Gordon. The rest of the dan followed.

Jim Gordon of Maryland was our VIP as the oldest member present with military service.

To top off the weekend we hosted several young sailors in our tent all weekend. They were most appreciative of the Gordon Hospitality and enjoyed the Gordon Grill and Ceilidh.

The Wall of Honor brought many visitors into the tent allowing us to share our proud history and hear the stories of many veterans over the weekend. The crowds were most enthusiastic to share in thanking our military for their service, and many a handkerchief made an appearance whilst a hand saluted our color guard as it passed by.

# Gordon Grill Goes On The Road In Scotland! By Jerry Vandenberg



The Piper At GlenCoe

We all know the Gordon Grill has for a number of years been a symbol of the Virginia House's hospitality. For the most part the Grill has been restricted to the Mid-Atlantic Region of the USA, but NO LONGER! What started out as a humorous comment about finding some fried chicken to eat at the Pass of Glen Coe so that I could share a dram and a drum, ended up being much more.

After leaving the Gathering in Edinburgh I proceeded to Stirling Castle, and upon leaving there I stopped in at Tesco (Scotland's primary grocery chain) where it came to me that

eating alone is no fun. I bought a cooler bag and enough food and beverages to have a respectable spread at a small Games. I felt the need to share the camaraderie of the Gordon Grill with the folks in Scotland.

At the Pass of Glen Coe, I stopped for photos and to chat with the piper who was playing there. In talking to him, I found that the lunch truck that used to park there no longer even came by. So, I invited him to join me in my simple meal as a guest of the Gordon Grill back at the grub wagon. (Okay so it was only the back of my rental VW Golf.) While we were eating, a couple of tired and thirsty walkers came by and the Gordon generosity grabbed me. Over the next hour of so, a number of hikers and bikers stopped by and joined us,

including a small coach tour of ten. To my great pleasure, I not only fed about 25 people, but spread the word of the hospitality of the Gordon Grill, the House of Gordon, and what the House is all about!

My next stop was Inverloch where I met a young family who were enjoying the dry weather and peaceful setting to explore the ruins. When one of the lads asked his mom when they were going to eat, I offered to share the remains of the earlier meal if they would join me at my grub wagon for a repast from the Gordon Grill here at this western stronghold of the Gordons! After explaining what a grub wagon and the Gordon Grill were, and my reason for the offer, we had a pleasant meal.

My final wandering with the Gordon Grill was at Loch Ness near Urquhart Castle where I camped. There I shared with about 20 people and introduced the S'More to the group, most of whom had never heard of them. One couple was from an area of the former Soviet Block and were headed to join a youth work program in Inverness.

The Gordon Grill was again a great hit and the Gordon fame is now spreading east again in Russia!

I recently heard from the piper, who reports that several hikers and bikers later asked after "the Scottish Yank" who kindly shared his Gordon Grill!

## Bonnie Knees? The Gordons Have It Wrapped!

The Gordon Clan has it all wrapped up when it comes to bonnie knees. At the games in Richmond, Virginia the Gordons have won every year.

Pictured left from bottom dockwise:

Last year our men swept all the categories, Morris Gordon, David Gauthier, Mac Adams.

This year Gordy won the bonniest kneed tent mascot.

Our wee Oliver won the Wee Lad division of the contest.

Jim Gordon of Maryland won the Senior division.

We always knew the Gordon men are good looking!





# Gordons Garner Best Clan Tent @ Detroit!



Garth Gordon accepts the Arthur J. & Harry (Bud) Nesbitt Award for Best Clan Tent from the Clans Nesbitt representative.

Garth Gordon reports that the House of Gordon was the recipient of the "Arthur J. And Harry (Bud) Nesbitt Award" for the best clan tent at the 160th St. Andrew's Society of Detroit Highland Games on August 1st!

Overall the House has not done badly since there has been a Gordon tent in Michigan and Northern Indiana. We've won at Kalamazoo, Old World Canterbury Village, a second and two first place awards at the Indiana Highland festival, but St. Andrew's was one of the two largest games in this area, and this is our first and only win there!

During the Parade of Tartans, Black and Tan (Gordon) Setters of NODROG the Gordon Setter Club of Michigan, and annual event that we both enjoy, joined us. Later in the day, "Graham's Company of the 42nd Highlanders" saluted us with a volley.

# Virginia Gordons Win x 2 at Williamsburg!

The Virginia Gordons had a stellar day at the Williamsburg Scottish Festival winning the Lord Dunmore Award for Best Clan Tent and fielding two teams for the Lady's Haggis Hurl. The Gordon 2 team won on the event setting an all time individual record as well as team record with a combined total of 167 feet 8 inches!

The House of Gordon will be Honored Clan at next year's Williamsburg Scottish Festival.

The Gordon Grill was in full

swing, Lois Todd returned to the tent following her summer-long absence due to surgery on her Achilles' tendon, and we signed up some new members! All in all, a great event!



# Our Scholarship Recipient Wins @ Piobaireachd!

**Our Charles O. Gordon Memorial Scholarship recipient, Marshall German of Corona, CA, sent us the following thank you note, and a follow-up note from his family. He traveled to Pittsburgh, PA to compete in the Balmoral Classic USA Junior Solo Piping Championship where he placed 1st in Piobaireachd, 4th in March/Strathspey/Reel and 2nd Overall. Congratulations Marshall!**

29 July 2009

Dear House of Gordon,

I would like to thank you for the \$500.00 Charles O. Gordon Memorial Scholarship you have awarded me to help go to the U.S. Junior National Solo Piping Championship Balmoral Classic in Pittsburgh PA in November. I greatly appreciate it and the support that the House of Gordon gives to myself and others in their chosen fields. I am glad that people take an interest in helping me to advance myself in the studies of the Great Highland Bagpipes in hopes my music will bring knowledge and joy to all who listen. I anxiously look forward to going to compete, play and learn from this experience. I will take a lot of pictures and send them to you. I hope I can do the scholarship justice and win at this competition as I have been practicing very hard for it, I will do my very best and give my best effort, thank you again.

Warm regards,

Marshall German

28 November, 2009

Hi,

I just thought you would like a couple of pictures of Marshall receiving his award from the Balmoral Classic USA Junior National Solo Piping Championships 2009 in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. We can't stress enough how much the scholarship helped out in getting him there to compete.

He worked so very hard this past year with this goal in mind. He has moved up to Grade 1 and two weeks after coming back from Pittsburgh, he competed in San Diego for the PM Angus MacDonald Western Regional Championships in Piobaireachd and MSR and took 1st place in both events and the overall award. He is now eligible to compete in the USPF competition in Delaware at the end of June! He has his sights on some other bigger events as well. We will see how things progress. I am glad he was able to do so well and make everyone proud. Along with the trophy

for Piobaireachd he received a handcrafted set of pipes from Inveran Pipes of Fife Scotland, co-owned by Brian Donaldson one of the judges (Alasdair Gilles and James McColl were the other two judges), one week paid tuition to any Balmoral School of Piping, The Caber Feidh collection of Pipe Music of the Queens Own Highlanders, and his 4th place medal and 2nd place Overall National Piping Champion medal. Thank you again.

Warm regards,

Roxanne, Bob & Marshall German



Photo courtesy of Evan Kenepf



# Homecoming 2009—The Edinburgh Gathering By Jerry Vandenberg

*“...the crowd would break into song as we passed, and “A Gordon For Me” rang out marking the Gordon Clan’s progress!”*

For the first time in 200 years, the Scottish Clans descended on Edinburgh, Scotland, not as part of a great revolution or attack, but as a part of a celebration of the culture and heritage of the Scottish people. The Gathering itself was a part of a nationwide heritage celebration and homecoming of all those who call themselves Scots.

The events at the Gathering held in Holyrood Park, included the 2009 World Highland Games Heavy Events (an Australian pulled down top honors with Sean Betz and Larry Brock, both from the USA, coming in second and third.) Highland dancing, piping and drumming competitions, a foot race up Arthur’s Seat ( a 5-mile long 1250-foot climb), prominent national and international Scottish musical performers and a Clan Village with 133 clans represented rounded out the event.



Jerry Vandenberg, USA & Wayne Laurence, VP House of Gordon New Zealand

The two day celebration had an estimated attendance of over 47,000 people from at least 40 countries around the world, with an additional 20,000 lining the Royal Mile to watch 8,000 people marching with their clan and the pipes and drums on Saturday evening. This was the first time the clans paraded from the royal Palace of Holyrood up to the Edinburgh Castle esplanade. The Royal Mile has a true distance of 1 mile 107 yards, and a climb of 560 feet from the bottom to the top.

While in Edinburgh, I stayed at the McKenzie B&B just a few blocks off the Royal Mile and across from the Edinburgh University. During the march up the Royal Mile, several of the staff and other guests from the B&B came out to watch the Gordons pass. Sunday morning over breakfast, they told me that while the Gordons were not the largest or most colorful group, they were the loudest. They said that they could clearly tell when the Gordons were coming because all along the route the



crowd would break into song as we passed, and “A Gordon For Me” rang out marking the Gordon Clan’s progress!

Regrettably, our Scotland contingent was a bit thin at the Gordon tent for an event of this size. Our Chief was unable to make the Gathering due to being in London with his wife for her surgery, and Andrew (the Scottish Convener) and his wife Lucy had something (work related if I remember correctly) come up at the last minute, so did not make it until late Saturday. They had to pass the responsibility of setting up the tent to Heike and Tom Williamson, who live in the Edinburgh area. As is our standard, several of the International Gordons stepped up to assist answering questions from folks stopping by the tent and offer our knowledge, experiences, and voices about the Clan, House and Society. We had a little better turnout for Sunday.



On Saturday, I met one of the chiefs of the indigenous people of New Zealand. He is also a descendent of a Gordon who was “given free transport” to live in New Zealand. We talked quite a while of the call of the blood that so many of us still feel. As he was leaving the Gordon tent, he invited me to join him and other members of his people for a special ceremony on Sunday. For me this was one of the more memorable events. The ceremony was to reunite the sprite of a recently deceased chief with the land of his Gunn ancestors. It was a very moving and symbolic ceremony showing how far reaching the Scots are and how powerful the call of our blood is to those who were forced to leave Scotland even centuries ago.

*“We talked quite a while of the call of the blood that so many of us still feel.”*

In a year that has seen much economic turmoil and trouble for many of our members, I am very pleased that I was able to attend the Gathering and represent the Virginia and USA House to the people and land of our ancestors.





# AGM 2009 Photos!

