

House of Gordon USA Annual General Meeting
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, NC
July 10, 2010, 3:00 p.m.

Federal IRS EIN # 26-0285250

Call to Order: The annual House of Gordon meeting (AGM) was called to order at 2:57 pm, by Kim Gordon, President. The meeting started with the playing of the "Cock of the North." Scholarship Chair Lois Todd presented Zoe Shell, a young highland drummer with the Grandfather Mountain Highlanders, with a big check as one of this year's Charles O. Gordon Scholarship recipients. Also present was this year's Grade 4 Junior Piper of the Day, 9-year old Liam MacDonald, who was presented with the Charles O. Gordon crystal obelisk trophy and certificate as the first annual recipient of this award at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

There were 23 members present who signed the sign-in sheet. We had 15 mailed in "proxy votes".

Kim Gordon read the Chief's Greeting/Message.

Barbara Wray, secretary, read the 2009 AGM Minutes held October 24, 2009 at the Meadow Highland Games in Doswell. David Whiteside made a motion to accept the minutes as read and Geof Baker seconded. All voted aye. A copy of the minutes will be posted on the National website and will also be filed for audit.

Reports:

President's Report - Kim Gordon read his report on the progress made since last October regarding goals set out at the AGM in 2009. He indicated that he'd like to see us triple our membership within 18 months. Kim touched on points such as New membership systems, Conveners and Regional Commissioner Expansion, adding a newly appointed Quartermaster, John Gordon of southern Illinois, new financial and budgeting systems, increased communications with our International partners, newsletters and mailings and Facebook and Website applications. David Whiteside made a motion to accept the President's report as read. David Todd seconded it. All voted "aye".

Treasurer's Report – Nellie Lowry who could not attend this year's meeting provided her treasurer's report. Total income for the period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 was \$7,268.82. Total expenses were \$10,903.00. An increase due to the cost of printing and mailing the May annual for \$4,085.85 (600 copies); the allocation of Charles O. Gordon Scholarship Fund for \$2000.00; and increasing the donation to the Gordon Highlanders Museum to \$2000.00. Our remaining operating balance is \$15,158.78. A copy of Nellie's report was provided at the meeting for review. Lois Todd made a motion to accept the financial report as read and Ginny Gordon seconded it. All voted "aye".

Membership Report – Arlene Adams indicated in her report that many organizations find it hard to retain members, yet the renewing members are most important for us to encourage to continue with their support. New membership will help expand the House. Currently we have 765 new, active and inactive members. Lu Gordon made a motion to accept the membership report as read and David Todd seconded it. All voted "aye".

Vice President/Convener's Chair Report – Geof Baker welcomed everyone for coming to the meeting. He welcomed new conveners, Michael Hilden and Julie Bowman, co-conveners for Minnesota and John Gordon, convener for southern Illinois & Missouri. John also graciously accepted the newly created position of House of Gordon Store Quartermaster. This is a new position and we now have 9 Board members.

He discussed profits from the Heritage fund creating standardized “Conveners Kits” to help new conveners and developing a “Brand Standard” for clan tents for festivals and games. He also discussed conveners collecting dues for their states but not reporting to National. This goes against our 501(c)(3) non profit status and could potentially lead to loss of our status if not complied to.

He also indicated that guidelines for duties for commissioners and conveners would be developed soon to clear up any misunderstandings of the roles.

National (Geof and Lois) would be attending the Central New York Highland Games and Celtic Festival in August in an effort to bring a convener on board in that region.

We have made a commitment to increase our membership by 25% this year. Barbara, Lois and Morris attended the Greenville, SC games and have already received a few new memberships generated from those games.

Communications Report – Lois Todd read her communications report to everyone. Highlights were amount of hits to our website are down this year by 3.32%. We are seeing a rise in hits from our fellow Gordon’s in Russia. Valeria Morris has started the House of Gordon in Russia. Our Facebook House of Gordon USA Group now has 319 members and is growing. We currently have 76 videos in our House of Gordon Playlist on YouTube. One of the biggest challenges we have is contacting our members. Email addresses and home addresses change and we don’t get the updates. Another challenge is the cost of communication. Most is done electronically, however the cost for the annual newsletter is approximately \$6.30 each and that is 63% of the national portion of the dues of \$10.00. We are looking at ways to streamline these expenses. Barbara Wray made a motion to accept the communications report as read and Ern Malcolm seconded it. All voted “aye”.

Scholarship Report – Lois Todd read her report. This year we voted to sponsor 3 scholarships of \$500.00 each. This year’s winners were Miss Jean Stein of Elgin, Illinois, Miss Zoe Shell of Elizabethton, Tennessee and Mr. Marshall C. German of Corona, California. We had also voted to begin an annual award to the Grade 4 Junior Piper of the Day at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games to be a trophy and one week scholarship at the piping summer school of choice for the following summer. David Whiteside made a motion to accept the scholarship report as read and Brandie Bartos seconded it.

DNA Project – Lois Todd read this report. This report is presented by Lois Todd, Jim Gordon and Tei Gordon. Tei Gordon is now working on a new project with an astrophysicist. To date we have helped 4 applicants. The House of Gordon USA has donated \$1000.00 to help finance the cost of testing. Morris Gordon made a motion to accept the report as read and Bonnie Linse seconded it. All voted “aye”.

Items of Business:

Article 4, section 2 of the Bylaws proposed change to restrict the board and officers to non family affiliated members: Discussion revolved around the bylaws provision for voting members of no more than 11 but no less than 4 officers on the executive board, and the possibility of a conflict of interest occurring when members of the Board of Directors being directly related or marital partners (i.e. Father and son, man and wife). Concerns of the membership were that one family could direct the course of the clan society by having a “voting block” within the executive board, and balancing that with the need to take volunteers where we have them. After much debate and questions David Whiteside made a motion to accept the changes as read with a proviso grandfathering in any conflicts within the current board members in their jobs until such time the membership should deem it needed for a replacement to be voted for said positions, and John Ruplenas seconded it. All voted “aye”.

Charities – Geof Baker suggested we have more charities and not just the Gordon Highlander Museum. Turpin Ballard mentioned a conservation organization for endangered birds in Scotland. He will provide more info on this. Morris Gordon asked would we continue to support the museum each year. The answer would be that we would vote year to year which charities to sponsor. We have previously created a Heritage Fund and feel this is a good way to tell who we are and attract more young people. We also want to be careful how we move funds into the Heritage Fund. Lois Todd discussed how Virginia has celebrated our military and how we donate time with the USO and our volunteering with one of the local JROTC units and the Cancer Society's Relay for Life. She also indicated that we could post suggestions on our website and the board could review further. We want to encourage suggestions from our members on ways we can through our individual efforts bring an awareness of the House of Gordon in our charitable works in the community. Jim Drouillard, a member in Texas, headed up a care package day in his community and wore his Gordon kilt and used the opportunity to tell people about our military history and 4 pages of Medal of Honor recipients!

DNA – Family Tree DNA. We have money in the fund that sits there until Jim/Tei and Lois direct where the kits are to go. Then we write the check to Family Tree DNA.

AGM for 2011 – the AGM is scheduled to be at the Seaside Games on Oct 8th. It is suggested that we tie the election years to the AGMs held at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The next AGM at GMHG will be in 2012.

Kim asked for volunteers to be on the next election. He would like to see 3 board members each from east, west and central states.

Goals for 2011:

Kim indicated several goals for 2011. We want to increase membership, have more automation, and he wants conveners to know who their members are. Also, to grow our membership, communication is paramount. Maybe we will have a quarterly telecom with conveners.

Kim opened up discussion on the floor for new ideas. Can dues be paid through pay pal? Answer is yes. One suggestion was to have a cell phone "H of G Hotline", which can have the newsletter read to members. This suggestion came from John Ruplenas.

We are working on a new membership form and sign-in sheets for national which can be used throughout the US.

Bonnie Kovach in Wisconsin will provide info on funding top 5 regional libraries.

In summary, Kim thanked everyone for attending and encouraged us to continue to grow as we put more operations into place. He wants to hear from everyone. Also, he wants to see everyone back at 6:00 for our annual picnic being held at the Gordon Ceilidh Corner Camp site.

Jim Gordon made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Brandie Bartos seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

All reports, the Chief's message, meeting sign-in sheet, proxy letters and proposed Bylaws change will be attached with the minutes and a copy of the minutes will be filed for audit.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gordon Wray, Secretary
House of Gordon USA