

**House of Gordon USA (HoG USA) Annual General  
Meeting (AGM)  
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, NC**

**July 8, 2022**

**Federal IRS EIN # 26-0285250**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Good afternoon! I'd like to apologize for not being here in person, but I'm sure hoping I'll be joining you via zoom or speaker phone. If, for some reason I can't, I'm so very sorry! (If I can't, Michale Todd, Barbara Gordon Wray, or Penny Pierson, please read my report!)

This has been an interesting year for me being it's my first year in this position. We've experienced some growing pains, but I feel we're getting into a good flow and will continue to grow and do some fine things here in the House!

Some things we're working on and things that have transpired this past year;

- One new, positive thing we've added to the routine is we (the Board) have started quarterly zoom meetings! We've enjoyed touching base, and planning some wonderful things. We're also having a Convener zoom meeting in the spring and planning to do one in the fall...our hope is to continue this year after year!

-The bylaws are getting a much-needed update to reflex a better description of Board positions and adding things that keep us current with technology. (Lisa covers this in her VP report below)

- David (Moo) has stepped down from the position of Membership Secretary. Cynthia Patrick from FL has graciously taken over for him! Welcome, Cindy!!!!

- With Lois stepping down from the Communication Chair position we have welcomed Julia Heinig who's from FL, but now lives in Oregon to the team. Julia will be amazing in that position and being she's in Oregon so it's another Board member out west!

- Our bylaws state "To the extent practicable, the annual meeting location will be rotated among major Highland Games and Gathering sites." And "An Annual Meeting of the Board will be held at a date, time and place to be determined each year by the President. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to conduct such business as may come before the meeting." This being at my discretion I'm going to set 2023 AGM for Stone Mountain (it's an election year and I'd like to be able to make it). I'm going to (if I'm reelected) put the 2024 AGM in Pleasanton (though I won't be able to go in person, we have Board members out west who would love to attend).

Then, maybe 2025 can be in Texas or somewhere central. Grandfather Mountain again in 2026. I feel the AGM should be accessible to all members without great hardship. Rotating it to the bigger games seems to be the most fair and inclusive option (and it seems that was the intent back years ago when the bylaws were written).

- We're creating a Challenge Coin that will be given to our Conveners so they can award it to a worthy member who's helped out or done something worthwhile in their area! They're not going to be for sale, these coins are intended to be something super special!

- Seems the print on demand venture ends up in a tangled mess of taxes and such so I'm working to do some badges in vector to give set in our Convener Resources link on our site to give Conveners a way to print product to sell for themselves at the tent.... No tax issue for us because they're buying shirts and selling them themselves to recoup the cost they spend out of pocket. This also allows everyone to be able to buy shirts and such somewhere other than at some games in the east.

– We're looking into sponsoring awards at other games like we have for years at Grandfather Mountain (details in VP report)

– We're working to utilize some resources offered to nonprofits via Google apps (details in VP report).

– Our membership numbers are continuing to grow and recover from the 2020 and 2021 global pandemic.

All in all, I believe we've had a very successful year and I look forward to continuing our positive flow moving onward and upward!

Yours,  
Jen Mills Martin

## **VICE PRESIDENT REPORT**

Hello House!

Last year, Lois Todd asked me to step up into the Vice President position to help our new president, Jen Mills Martin, transition into her role. I am glad to share a few projects that I have been working on for the House:

First the more business end of things:

## Bylaws

I have been putting together a comparison and recommended updated officer duties to bylaws. A lot has changed since 2015 when our bylaws were written, and just in the last two years alone to warrant revision. This is building off of Evan Rose's excellent work and is not intended as a rewrite. Some positions align, while others do not as much, so we will put together recommendations based off of officer experiences. Our goal is to have flexible language to continue in the future and include further guidance.

## Google Apps for non-profits

I initiated the process for gaining access to Google Apps for non-profits. This will allow us to raise our standards on a variety of improvements: email that can be passed on to future members, website hosting, communication tools, fundraising (including via YouTube), marketing/advertising tools, etc. all for free. If your school or workplace uses Google Apps, it is similar, but with some added bonuses (like fundraising tools). Our hope is this would allow greater access and support to conveners especially and provide something that outlives us without needing to be remade generationally.

We are currently in back and forth with the IRS over details to get appropriate copies of one specific record to apply. Essentially, non-profits get an online post card showing their status. Newer non-profits would also see their incorporation similarly. Because we are older, our incorporation does not show up the same way, so we need to request a paper copy. Y'all don't know how much form reading this was. On the other hand, all of our other ducks are in a row.

## West Coast Presence

One concern of the board has been reestablishing our presence where we have lost conveners, such as in California. I was happy to help our new California convener, Phil Gardner, at his first Pleasanton Games, in the San Francisco Bay Area.

If you are not from California, I need to share a bit about these games. The Scottish Gathering and Games is hosted by the Caledonian club of San Francisco across the Bay in Pleasanton, Alameda County. These are one of the oldest in the US, going into their 156th year.

Pleasanton is also one of the largest games in the country, a behemoth that still has room to expand. Pleasanton's two days before Labor Day is twice as big in terms of attendance as the next biggest games in the state - Seaside, down in Ventura, where we have had our AGM before. Pleasanton hosts half again more people than the whole four-day weekend at Grandfather Mountain. This year's Games hosts the 2022 men's professional Scottish Highland Games Heavy Events World Championships, and a new Women's Elite Class.

With this in mind, the board agreed to offer a sponsorship to the Pleasanton Games similar to our sponsorship of the Junior Piper (Grade 4) award at Grandfather Mountain to better represent the House and carry out our mission on both sides of the country.

I reached out to the Caledonian Club of San Francisco regarding a sponsorship at the Pleasanton Games and got in contact with Alan Purves, a former chief of the club and Sponsor Chairman. We are currently in talks with their board about ideas and different opportunities for sponsorship.

BYDAND  
Lisa Gordon

## **CONVENER CHAIR REPORT**

It's with a heavy heart we learned the passing of Kenn Gordon, our Gulf States Convener.

Another great loss was the passing of Dirk van Straaten, son of our Arizona Conveners Don and Diane.

Conveners Nick Blythe of Idaho and William Salamone of Missouri stepped down from the position. Texas Convener Katy Richards gave up her position with her move to Arizona; she offered to help out in her new state though. I'd would like to thank them for their past contributions to the House.

I'd like to welcome our new conveners! Gordon Gradney, who has taken on Nevada. Amanda Johnson who helped Katy this past year, will be our new Texas Convener. Damian Broussard will be taking over Louisiana. Joseph Yerger will take on Michigan. And Laurence and Helena Whitten will be taking on Wisconsin. I'm excited with the expanded coverage of the House of Gordon USA to Alaska as Laurel and Tim Osborne will be convening in their great state.

It is such welcome news there is a full slate of games this year. I'm excited Pennsylvania Conveners Penny Pierson and Mark Memmo will be expanding into Maryland. We need conveners in a number of states: Arkansas, Mississippi, Idaho, Illinois and Missouri.

Finally, I'd like to give a big thanks to all our Conveners for their hard work in representing the House of Gordon USA at all the games! You are the heart and soul of our organization with your connections to all of our members.

Rob Gordon  
Convener Chair

Membership Report

AGM July 2022

Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 to June 30,2022

Total Active Members Current until 2023: 277

Certified Voting Members: 182

Quorum Needed (20%) 55

New Member this year 7-2021 through 7-2022: 46

Members who passed during the Fiscal year:

Kenn Gordon

Dirk Van Straaten

Norval Marr, Jr

Jacob Bynum

Respectfully yours,

Cynthia Gordon Patrick

Membership Secretary

**SCHOLARSHIP REPORT:**

**-Vanessa Mhairi Gordon Sharp**

Vanessa is about to finish her first year at Mississippi College where she is studying linguistics. She recently for out she has been accepted a Gaelic Immersion course at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. This year-long program will allow her to develop advanced Gaelic language skills, as well as acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of Scottish Gaelic language, culture, and literature through advanced level Gaelic language immersion. We are awarding Vanessa a \$500 grant.

## **-Travis Greer**

About six years, while researching an interest in strength sports, Travis happened upon Highland Game Heavy Athletics. From there he educated himself on the sport and began training. He's learned all the different techniques needed to be a fine heavy athlete. Once he began competing it awoke a connection to the true spirit and heritage of the game. Travis is our very first Heavy Athlete to apply for our scholarship! We are awarding Travis a \$500 grant.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

-Discuss the House of Gordon parade banner being added as part of the boot up kit for new Conveners, (and be made available to existing conveners for free based on their request). This is an effort to make sure our Conveners have tools to make a fantastic showing at their games!

-We usually pay the entry fee for one game to new conveners. Discussion the feasibility of possibly paying the entry fee for one or two games for all conveners. At least for those Conveners whose convener check doesn't cover the cost. The convener would have to make a request for reimbursement of the difference, after they've received their convener check. They would have to submit some type of proof of game entry expenses to the President or Treasurer. This might encourage conveners to take on more games in their area.

- A member wishes us to discuss creating a position of House of Gordon USA Chaplain and were such a position created, he wishes we discuss naming our late LA Convener Emeritus Chaplain.

- A member wishes to discuss that we link the Wall of Honor to the website again, revamped.