



*Calvin Coolidge*  
CALVIN COOLIDGE PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION

# Chairman's Report

## Annual Meeting

### August 2, 2014

## Report of the Chairman to the Members, Annual Meeting 2014

*“When I was home that summer I took part in a small neighborhood debate in which I supported the gold standard....the study I put on this subject well repaid me.” -- Calvin Coolidge*

President Calvin Coolidge, the President to whose service the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation dedicates itself, understood the value of civil informed debate on policy topics. A strong debater himself, Coolidge at every stage of his life turned to debate to convey the values he cherished: restrained government, fiscal prudence, support for the rule of law, and many others. But the Vermonter who became our thirtieth president also turned to the medium for what it gave him: a chance to inform himself on key issues, and a chance to share ideas with fellow citizens.

It is in the context of serving these same goals and President Coolidge’s emphasis on debate, at the Notch and elsewhere, that certain changes are taking place at the Foundation. The annual public meeting of the Foundation, taking place as it always does in Plymouth’s Union Christian Church on or around the historic date of August 2, seemed a good moment to review the steps the Foundation has taken. I therefore welcome you to our 2014 Annual Meeting, held today, Saturday, August 2 to the 10:00 a.m. I am pleased to offer you this report on the state of our organization.

The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation preserves the memory and advances the values of President Calvin Coolidge. In addition to activities supporting the Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth, Vermont, the Foundation hosts programs, local and national, undertaken in the spirit of Coolidge’s values. Our emphasis is on education through competition with a focus on youth. Through research, conferences, lectures, prizes, scholarships and education, we spotlight Coolidge. The Foundation will bring the world to Coolidge, and take Coolidge to the world.

In the past year, we have launched debate programs at all levels. The Notch is an unparalleled setting for learning about Coolidge. Our centerpiece is a youth summer debate program at the Notch, run now for the second year in a row with Debate Institutes of Dartmouth. The goal is to make a memorable day for young people and to share Coolidge with them early. This program brings hundreds of high school debaters to the Notch to experience the president’s birthplace and to compete in day-long tournaments contemporary or historical economic topics. Home school debaters have their own half-week camp this summer at the Notch. We also bring in internationally renowned experts and expert debate coaches to instruct the teen debaters. This summer nearly 250 students from more than 116 high schools and several foreign countries came to the Notch to learn about Coolidge through our debate program. All these debate programs come on top of the excellent work with area schools to bring school classes to visit the Coolidge Site.

On the adult level, the Foundation has begun to increase not formal debate contests but rather informed lectures and discussions of issues relevant to Coolidge. Many of you have attended our lecture series events, including a talk by Governor Peter Shumlin and other experts at Norwich University this past spring. Whenever possible we have begun to make it a habit of bringing extra groups to the Notch or doing something memorable when guests are here. This July 4, under the leadership of Jim Cooke and program associate Rushad Thomas, we revived an old tradition: Foundation members and friends read aloud the entire Coolidge *Autobiography* in the Union Christian Church.

The Foundation is also well on its way to taking Coolidge to a national audience. Our lecture series has been expanded and we’ve now held multiple events in the past year in New York City, and have plans



for upcoming events in other cities like Washington, D.C. The goal is to share Coolidge with many more Americans.

Attention members: these changes mean there are two new ways for you to participate meaningful with Coolidge projects. The first is to contribute to our weekly e-blast, "News from the Notch." We welcome new info or research on Calvin Coolidge. A second new way to get involved is by judging in our debate program. Both the debaters and the Foundation are especially grateful for your input.

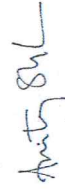
Our education and debate program builds on foundations laid by our predecessors. A number of years ago board President Robert Kirby and others committed to making the Foundation national in reach, the goal being to make Coolidge's name better known and the virtues he treasured better appreciated. Chairman Kirby and Chairman Jay Barrett after him led the board in its plan to communicate Coolidge to the world, through lectures and scholarly work and especially of course to and through younger people.

A number of technical changes have taken place at the Foundation to help us deliver work nationally. Two new staffers, executive director Matthew Denhart and program associate Rushad Thomas, have joined the Foundation. We are honored to welcome Matt and Rushad. Last winter, the board voted to alter our name to better suit our national ambition and reach. The name of the Foundation is now the "Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation." We have launched a new website, CoolidgeFoundation.Org, that will help us continue to aggregate friends of the president and share Coolidge material in an interactive fashion. Mr. Thomas edits our website, weekly "News from the Notch," our social media, and our twice-annual print newsletter, "The Coolidge Brief." We hope our members will contribute to all these publications. Diane Kemble continues to do outstanding work as our education director. This winter and spring Diane arranged three great educational programs, brought some 300 regional school students to the Notch, visited many other classrooms around the State of Vermont, and organized the Foundation's fabulous exhibit at the Vermont History Expo. Diane coordinates our volunteer docent program. Matt, Rushad, Diane, and I are ably aided by Kelly Larson in the office, as well as our bookkeeper, Jonathan Guy.

None of this would be possible without our excellent partner, the state of Vermont. William Jenney, Site Administrator of the historic site not only helps us but also curated an excellent Civil War exhibit this summer. We thank John Dumville, Laura Trieschmann, and Noelle McKay and from the state of Vermont for their help.

This annual report finds us bidding goodbye to two longtime trustees, Arthur Crowley and Senator Alice Nitka. Several new trustees have joined the Foundation lately: Ambassador Boyden Gray, who served five presidents, Garland Tucker of North Carolina, author of a portrait of the election year 1924, and Prof. John Tomasi of Brown University, who runs his own highly successful debate and discussion programs for undergraduates at Brown University. All these changes were not easy, and I would like to thank not only members but this board for its tremendous support. Attached please some highlights of our work since last summer.

Sincerely,



Amity Shlaes, Chairman, Board of Trustees



## Highlights of the Past Year

**November 12, 2013 – First Annual New York Dinner.** Last November the Coolidge Foundation went on the road to host its first annual New York Dinner. Some 250 Coolidge enthusiasts from across the country packed into the Four Seasons Restaurant to honor America’s thirtieth president. Paul Volcker, former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, served as the dinner’s keynote speaker. A Coolidge fan, Volcker remarked that President Coolidge’s message allows us to “better understand the forces bearing on the president and Congress almost a century later.”

Throughout the evening, other prominent national voices offered toasts to Coolidge, including budget expert and author David Stockman, magazine publisher Steve Forbes, media host Larry Kudlow, Vermont’s former governor James Douglas, and scholars George Nash, John Tomasi and Christopher DeMuth.

Adding to the evening’s excitement was the awarding of the Foundation’s two new writing prizes: the Coolidge Prize for Journalism and the Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth. The \$20,000 Coolidge Prize honors the writer who best captures the spirit and style of the thirtieth president and the ideals President Calvin Coolidge favored. The Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth is a \$1,500 prize awarded to a Vermont writer under the age of 20 for original writing related to Coolidge.

More than 80 writers submitted columns for consideration in the Coolidge Prize contest, and more than 40 young VermonTERS competed for “The Calvin.” The submissions were judged by a panel of experts that included, among others, former Indiana governor Mitch Daniels, pollster Doug Schoen, historian Richard Norton Smith, television anchor Trish Regan, columnist Cal Thomas, past Coolidge Foundation board president Mimi Baird, and John Dumville of the State of Vermont’s Division for Historic Preservation.

With the audience hanging in suspense, Trustees Milt Valera and Christopher Coolidge Jeter – the President’s great-grandson – announced Holman W. Jenkins, Jr., columnist and Wall Street Journal editorial board member, as the recipient of the inaugural Coolidge Prize for Journalism. In similarly dramatic fashion, Trustee Catherine Nelson and Coolidge great-granddaughter Jennifer Sayles Harville presented the Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth to Abigail Millard of Perkinsville, Vermont.

The Foundation is grateful to the many Coolidge supporters who turned out in force to make the first annual dinner a big success. Special appreciation goes to the Thomas W. Smith Foundation for the establishment of the Coolidge and Calvin prizes. Visit us on YouTube to view a video of the dinner. The second annual dinner will take place November 6, 2014 in New York. At this dinner the second annual “Coolidge” and “Calvin” Prizes will be awarded.

**February 16 -- Presidential Speaker at the Notch.** On the Sunday of President’s Day weekend, Constitutional scholar Kevin Ryan joined us at Plymouth Notch to speak about President James Madison and the *U.S. Constitution*, a topic of much interest to President Coolidge. Other presidents mentioned during Mr. Ryan’s talk included Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Abraham Lincoln, and of course, Calvin Coolidge. The event was organized by education director Diane Kemble, televised on public television, and written up favorably in the *Rutland Herald*.

**March 2 – History of the Site and Foundation at the Notch.** In this second of our “Winter to Spring” programs, we set out to explore “How the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site Came to Be.” A



panel of experts shared stories of the efforts that collectively preserved the land, buildings, artifacts, and legacy of President Coolidge. Panelists included Jenny Harville, great-granddaughter of President Coolidge, Mimi Baird, Coolidge Foundation trustee emerita, John Dumville and William Jenney of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and Board Chair Amity Shlaes. Many of the stories told of the quiet efforts of the President's son, John Coolidge, to preserve the buildings and land of Plymouth Notch. Photographs and building models added to the presentation. This event was televised on public television.

**April 5 – Vermont History Day.** Executive director Matt Denhart and education director Diane Kemble served as judges at the annual “Vermont History Day,” organized by the Vermont Historical Society. Denhart and Kemble also presented the annual “Coolidge Foundation History Day Prize” to Jenna Taylor and Vasiliki Anemikos, students at Milton High School. The prize is made possible by the generosity of Mimi Baird and encourages young people to learn about President Coolidge.

**April 8 – Speaker Series Kickoff in New England.** The Coolidge Foundation kicked off its national 2014 speaker series on April 8 with a program featuring remarks by Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin. The program, “What Ails Vermont - Is There a Cure to the Drug Epidemic?” was held in partnership with Norwich University. Coolidge Foundation executive director Matthew Denhart opened the event with an introduction outlining the challenges Americans faced with substance abuse during Coolidge’s own era, the era of Prohibition. Governor Shumlin then spoke about the threat opiate addiction poses to Vermont today. A panel of experts offered additional perspectives and engaged the audience in a community forum. Sarwar Kashmeri moderated, and panelists included Dr. Harry Chen, Vermont’s health commissioner, Col. Thomas L’Esperance, director of the Vermont State Police, Dr. David Orrick and Dr. Max Schlueter. The event received widespread media coverage across the state with video footage appearing on multiple evening newscasts.

**April 12 – Family Day at the Notch.** A family day and program on “Presidential Hats” rounded out our “Winter to Spring” programming at the Notch. Diane Kemble shared a wonderful presentation on presidential hats and hat fashion in Coolidge’s era. Bill Jenney showed several hats from the State of Vermont’s collection, including a top hat of Coolidge’s and a fashionable hat of Grace’s. This program was also made available on local public access television.

**May 5 – Celebration of the Coolidge Presidential Coin Release in New York.** The Foundation hosted a special event to celebrate the release of the 2014 Calvin Coolidge Presidential \$1 Coin from the United States Mint. The event was held in the elegant library of the Union League Club of New York. The celebration featured remarks by Amity Shlaes, special guests James Grant, editor of Grant’s Interest Rate Observer and Steve Forbes, Chairman and Editor-In Chief, Forbes Media. Grant spoke about the importance of currency holding its value so that commerce can flourish. This was something that Coolidge understood.

Toasts to the Coolidge dollar were offered by David C. Johnson, Professor Richard Sylla of NYU, Seth Lipsky, Milton G. Valera, Mark Anderson, and Thomas Williams. Singer Mary Carter performed Cole Porter’s classic tune, “You’re the Top,” along with other period tunes. Executive director Matthew Denhart emceed. The evening also included a birthday cake for the Coolidge Coin and a small display of Coolidge-era coins and currency, prepared by Mark Anderson of the New York Numismatic Club. Following the celebration, a smaller dinner was hosted by the Foundation to thank supporters. The event



was made possible by the generous support of the Lehrman Institute and Marketfield Asset Management. This event was an important expansion of the Foundation's programs to a national audience. Thank you to all our wonderful members who attended. A video of the entire event is available on the Multimedia page of our new website.

**Late Spring 2014 – School Visits to Plymouth Notch.** Some 300 school children and their teachers visited Plymouth Notch on school trips. The students spent the day at the Notch, touring the historic site and learning about President Coolidge.

**June 21-22 – Vermont History Expo.** The Coolidge Foundation was proud to take part in the 2014 Vermont History Expo, held June 21-22 at the World's Fairgrounds in Tunbridge, Vt. The Coolidge Foundation's exhibit presented a life-size mural depicting the famous visit of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone to Plymouth Notch during the summer of 1924. The mural was painted by artist Terry Sylvester of Brattleboro, Vt. Hundreds of visitors, including Senator and Mrs. Patrick Leahy, stopped by the exhibit to learn about the mural, President Coolidge, and our Foundation. The mural will be on permanent display in the Plymouth Notch Schoolhouse so it can be viewed by many visitors, including the hundreds of students that visit the site each year with their teachers. The commissioning of this mural was supported by a grant from the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation. A generous gift from Mimi Baird allowed the Coolidge Foundation to sponsor this year's Vermont History Expo.

**July 4 – Fourth of July Celebration at Plymouth Notch.** On Friday, July 4, the Foundation celebrated the birth of the nation as well as its thirtieth president, Calvin Coolidge. A color guard from the Vermont National Guard, led by Adjutant General Steven Cray, led the traditional procession to the Plymouth Notch Cemetery. The cemetery program featured a moving ceremony where a wreath from the White House was placed on the President's grave by members of President Coolidge's family as well as the National Guard. The National Guard played Taps. The great granddaughter of President Coolidge, Jennifer Sayles Harville, opened the ceremony by singing the National Anthem. Rich Lowry, editor of *National Review*, gave touching remarks on how the death of Coolidge's younger son affected Coolidge's presidency, relating it to the similar tragedy that Abraham Lincoln experienced in the White House. The children present laid a wreath on Coolidge's younger son's grave, recognizing the 90th anniversary of the untimely death of Calvin Coolidge, Jr. Jenny Sayles Harville and fellow Coolidge relation Don Pollard read passages from the *Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge* to conclude the cemetery program.

The group then proceeded to the Union Christian Church where the Foundation commenced a full-length, group reading of Coolidge's *Autobiography*. More than 50 people joined as official readers. The list of readers included, among others: Mimi Baird, Jim Berkman, Hendrik Booraem, Brady Carlson, Robert Cerasoli, Jim Cooke, Cynthia Coolidge Howard, Matthew Denhart, Ted Eismeier, Sean Fieler, Cecilia Fieler, Lisa Federato, Terry Gulick, Scott Haefner, Jenny Sayles Harville, Sue Henry, Bill Jenney, Christine Brinck Joffe, Josef Joffe, Deb Kell, Mike Kell, John Leppman, Seth Lipsky, Rich Lowry, George Nash, Barbara O'Connell, Mary Ottaway, James Ottaway, Jr., David Pietrusza, Don Pollard, Amelia Pollard, Jared Rhoads, David Roberts, Sarah Roberts, Ben Sarro, David Schoenbrod, Rebecca Sears, Jan Selby, Judy Sewell, Amity Shlaes, Aet Singer, Eric Singer, Owen Stearns, Rushad Thomas, Dick Tracy, Laura Trieschmann, and Ray Wanamaker.

Other July 4 activities included a chicken barbecue at the site's restaurant, The Wilder House, wine and cheese tasting at the Plymouth Artisan Cheese Factory, and horse-drawn wagon rides with Plymouth

resident Fred DePaul. Thank you to all who attended. Pictures are posted on the Coolidge Foundation Facebook Page as well as on our Flickr Account. The *Rutland Herald* wrote a wonderful story about the July 4 celebration. The *Vermont Standard* published many photographs and *Vermont Public Radio* also covered the event.

**July 8 and 10 – Coolidge Foundation Presidential Economic Debate Program.** Shortly after the Fourth of July, over a hundred debaters came to the Notch and participated in impromptu economic debates under white tents. These events were made possible by our ongoing partnership with Debate Institutes of Dartmouth and its marvelous head, our partner, Nicole Wanzer-Serrano. A full half of the scholarships at the camp were provided by Coolidge Foundation gifts. College scholarship money is awarded to the winning teams.

**July 30-August 2 – Coolidge Foundation Homeschool Debate Camp.** This is the Foundation’s first experiment in “Coolidge Camp.” Homeschool teens, chaperoned by their parents, will spend several nights at the Cortina Hotel and several days learning about Coolidge from Rushad Thomas, Diane Kemble, Amity Shlaes, Matt Denhart, and experts William Beach, Roberto Salinas Leon, Greg Rehmke, Garland Tucker, David Pietrusza, Ben Voth, and Jim Cooke. More than 30 homeschool students and 15 homeschool teachers joined for this four-day camp, coming from all around new England. Six homeschool debate alumni also helped facilitate the camp including two past national champion debaters.

**August 1 – High School Debate.** On this day, two camps, the Debate Institutes of Dartmouth and our own homeschool debate camp come together to debate an impromptu economic topic that relates to President Coolidge. College scholarship money is awarded to the winning teams.

**August 2 – Old Home Day.** Join our debaters and the rest of the crowd for a day of events, including, at 1:30 p.m., Reeve Lindbergh speaking on the “Coolidge-Lindbergh family connection,” and at 2:47 p.m., a reenactment of the historic swearing in of President Coolidge by his father.

**August 2 – Annual Summer Gala.** This summer we are honored to showcase Vermont’s own Governor Jim Douglas. Governor’s Douglas’s speech topic will be the need for civility in our democracy.

**Upcoming programs and activities:**

- August 11, 2014 – Naturalization ceremony at Plymouth Notch
- Nov 6, 2014 – NYC gala with the awarding of the Coolidge Prize for Journalism and the Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth
- Nov 12, 2014 – Conference on Federal Budget Process in Washington, D.C.