



Calvin Coolidge
CALVIN COOLIDGE PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION

Chairman's Report

Annual Meeting

August 1, 2015

Report of the Chairman to the Members, Annual Meeting 2015

I was perfectly certain that I was traveling out of the darkness into the light. – Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge

President Calvin Coolidge, the President to whose service the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation dedicates itself, understood the value of independence. When, as a young boy, Coolidge got the opportunity to attend Black River Academy in Ludlow, Vermont, the Coolidges did not hesitate. On a cold morning Coolidge's father drove the boy in a sleigh to Ludlow. Though anxious, Coolidge was excited. It was not just education that awaited him, but the chance to set his own course in life.

At the Coolidge Foundation we believe that every young person needs the chance to set his own course. In the past three years our debate program has helped nearly 1000 young people set their own course by offering them the chance to train in two areas they will need for meaningful independence: public speaking (style) and policy (substance) knowledge. There are many debate tournaments across America. Even if you haven't participated in a debate you may have noticed the hopeful white tents on the Notch hillside throughout the summer. Those are debate chambers for our teens.

Coolidge debate tournaments are special for four reasons. The first is that the New England community participates in them as judges. Among the many judges who have come back to serve more than one year are Terry Gulick and Professors Anne Buttimer and David Orrick of Norwich University. We hope especially that more Vermonters join us in future in training the young people. Second, we invest not only in expert coaches from the sport but also in bringing adult experts, from Brian Lamb of C-Span to economist Alicia Munnell, a former Clinton Administration Treasury Official, to the Notch. Professor Roberto Salinas Leon travels all the way from Mexico to share knowledge of trade and economics with our debaters. Third, our debaters focus especially on economics and presidents, both of which of course are important to the economic President, Calvin Coolidge.

The goal is to give kids a competitive experience they remember all their lives, and to ensure that many future leaders get to meet Coolidge first hand, even before they attend college. Reinforcing the connection is our Coolidge blast, a weekly email that goes out to a group including Coolidge debate alumni, of which there are now hundreds. We also offer a Vermont prize, the Calvin, for essays on Coolidge-related topics. This year, the prompt question is: Is college education worth it for me and my family? Educator Diane Kemble and office administrator Kelly Larson do further Vermont work, bringing hundreds of Vermont school children in over the course of the fall, spring, and summer for Coolidge classes and tours with Diane.

To build our Coolidge network, we are also piloting a new program: the Coolidge, a scholarship for college undergraduates from across the country. The Coolidge scholarship will emphasize policy and debate skills, in keeping with the Foundation's general focus on debate and policy. Competition for the scholarship will start with an essay on the president by every scholarship candidate, with winners joining us in Plymouth Notch as tutors for our debaters. Though we are starting slowly, with only two winners a year, the Foundation intends to expand the program to up to 20 "Coolidges" a year. Stay tuned for more information.

Beyond advancing Coolidge principles, the Coolidge will serve another purpose: advancing the president's name. This Foundation's job is to preserve and promote the Coolidge legacy. That includes of course, promoting the Coolidge name. Our board has identified the next generation as especially important. We could think of nothing that would promote the Coolidge name faster than a scholarship bearing his name.

For years the Coolidge Foundation has spoken of "going national," but has lacked the resources to do so. Now we are preparing to do so. Raising funds for major scholarships is a national project, and one which will require significant support from donors across the nation. It's important to point out why these expansions and endeavors are possible. The first is our excellent partnership with the state of Vermont, and its Division for Historic Preservation. Especially key to this partnership are Noelle McKay, Commissioner of the Department for Housing and Community Affairs and Laura Trieschmann, Vermont's State Historic Preservation Officer. Year round the curator at the site, William Jenney and his team collaborate with us in planning and executing complex events. We appreciate this support and are eager to continue to strengthen this already-substantial partnership.

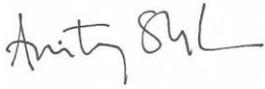
The second reason we can expand is the work of executive director Mathew Denhart. Along with program associate Rushad Thomas and the rest of the Foundation team, including adjunct administrator Rebecca Sears, Matt has launched a number of new projects. For two summers Matt's team has hosted any number of camps and events, stabilizing the Foundation and establishing new traditions that will abide for years to come. Our board and membership cannot thank this group enough, especially Matt and Rushad, who moved to New England from New York and Florida because of their admiration of President Coolidge. The Foundation features a new stability now that will enable us to fulfill our old ambition of scaling up and establishing a firm national presence for Coolidge. In eight years the nation will celebrate the centennial of Coolidge's presidency. The Coolidge Foundation needs to be national if it is going to take the lead in that project.

My own estimate is that all this is possible. In the past two years, on your behalf, I have spoken in more than 20 places across the nation about Coolidge, including Atlanta, Raleigh, Austin, Sea Island Georgia, California, Las Vegas and Sonora, Mexico. Our staff has traveled as well, with Matt Denhart appearing in Washington and Texas and Rushad Thomas representing us in Texas and Coolidge, Arizona. Everywhere the interest in Coolidge is intense. The country is only waiting for this president, and many more Americans are beginning to consider trips to the Notch. This very summer, through our debate programs, students visited the Notch from every region of the country. Indeed, the Notch even hosted several students from abroad.

This annual report finds us bidding goodbye to one longtime trustee, Owen Stearns. Through his professionalism Owen has elevated our board for years, and we thank him. Several new trustees have joined the Foundation in the past year. Today we inaugurate the terms of: Jennifer Foster of Chilton Investments, a leader in the scholarship arena and David C. Johnson of Marketfield Asset Management, which for two years now has supported Coolidge events on the eastern seaboard. In the winter, Rebekah Mercer of New York also joined our team. These new trustees and old friends will all be working very hard in the coming year to bring the world to Coolidge and to take Coolidge to the world.

All these changes were not easy, and I would like to thank not only members but this board for its tremendous support. We too are perfectly certain that, with your help, Coolidge and the Coolidge Foundation are now heading into the light.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amity Shlaes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amity Shlaes, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Highlights of the Past Year

November 6, 2014 – Second Annual New York Dinner. Our Second Annual Gala Awards Dinner, held on November 6, 2014 at the Metropolitan Club in Manhattan, was a smashing success. More than 200 Coolidge friends joined us to celebrate the legacy of Silent Cal. Foundation chairman Amity Shlaes remarked that “our foundation is dead serious about bringing this president back to his proper rank, and about setting the record of history straight so that he is accorded the respect he deserves. We think he is so good he ought to be running in 2016.”

The highlight of the evening was the spirited debate between former U.S. Senator Phil Gramm and Canadian Parliamentarian Chrystia Freeland on the topic of wealth redistribution. The debate was enriched by the presence of several students from the national high school debate teams for the United States and Canada. Prior to the adult debate, Tiana Menon, an 12th grader from Grand Junction, Colorado, and Amelia Miller, an 12th grader from Studio City, California, debated Rory Flynn, an 11th grader from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Lloyd Lyall, a 12th grader from Vancouver, British Columbia. Mirroring the adult debate, Team USA argued in opposition to wealth redistribution, while Team Canada argued in favor.

At the dinner we also awarded the second Coolidge Prize for Journalism and the second Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth. The \$20,000 Coolidge Prize for Journalism honors the writer who best captures the spirit and style of the thirtieth president and the ideals he embodied. The Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth awards \$1,500 to the first place winner and \$500 to the runner-up. In total, 82 writers applied for the Coolidge Prize, and nearly 100 Vermont youths submitted writings to the Calvin Prize contest. The Coolidge Prize for Journalism was announced by Milt Valera, Foundation Trustee and Chairman of the National Notary Association, and Christopher Coolidge Jeter, great-grandson of President Coolidge. The winner of the 2014 Coolidge Prize for Journalism is Dr. Donald Boudreaux of George Mason University. Catherine Nelson, Rushad Thomas, and Jennifer Sayles Harville, great-granddaughter of President Coolidge, presented the 2014 Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth to Sydney Benjamin of Peacham, Vermont. The 2014 runner-up was Jay Tilden of St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

The Foundation especially thanks the Thomas W. Smith Foundation for its support of the Coolidge and Calvin prizes as well as all supporters who helped make the 2014 gala a big success. Visit the multimedia section of our website CoolidgeFoundation.org to view the entire dinner, including the income inequality debate.

November 11, 2014 – “The Virtuous Obsession: A Conference on Budget Process Reform”

The Coolidge Foundation traveled to Washington, D.C. to host a major national conference on budget process reform. Sound budgeting was of core importance to President Coolidge, and this conference looked back at history for lessons that could inform efforts today to reduce federal deficits. This nonpartisan conference was held on Capitol Hill in partnership with the U.S. Senate Budget Committee and featured a lunch address by Senator Jeff Sessions of the Budget Committee. The conference included three panels of numerous budget scholars and experts. In total, four former directors of the Congressional Budget Office shared their perspectives, as did former Vermont governor James H. Douglas, former Comptroller General of the United States David Walker, and many other policy leaders.

February 12, 2015 – Launch of the White House Historical Association’s Annual Ornament. This year the White House Historical Association’s annual ornament honors President Coolidge. The WHAA hosted a fabulous “design reveal” event at the Willard Hotel, where President and Grace Coolidge lived while Calvin was vice president. The ornament resembles a Christmas tree in honor of President Coolidge lighting the first National Christmas Tree. The WHHA was very kind to include the Coolidge Foundation in this program, which was attended by executive director Matt Denhart and program associate Rushad Thomas.

February 14, 2015 – President’s Day Lecture. On the Saturday of President’s Day weekend, program and editorial associate Rushad Thomas offered a public lecture at the Notch titled: “Mr. Coolidge Goes to Cuba.” This lecture explored the history behind President and Grace Coolidge’s presidential visit to Havana, Cuba in 1928. President Coolidge is the last sitting U.S. president to visit Cuba, and this lecture was particularly timely given the recent reopening of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuban governments. Thomas’s received a wonderful write-up in the *Vermont Standard*.

March 16 – Conference in Washington, D.C. with Stanford’s Hoover Institution on: “Modern American Conservatism, Its Roots and Future.” For many years the Coolidge Foundation has desired to partner with the Hoover Institution. This goal was realized on March 16 when the Foundation and the Hoover Institution co-sponsored a conference in Washington, D.C. on the intellectual history of the conservative movement. Our own chairman, Coolidge biographer Amity Shlaes, began the conversation with a discussion of three major themes in President Coolidge’s life that retain major relevance today: faith, unions, and taxation. She also recounted Coolidge’s actions during the 1919 Boston Police Strike and explored Coolidge’s experience with “scientific taxation.” Hoover Institution Fellow David Davenport argued that the roots of modern conservatism lie with Herbert Hoover, particularly with his efforts following his presidency. This is a widely overlooked aspect of President Hoover’s legacy. Recent scholars, including our National Advisory Board member Dr. George Nash, have done important work to bring this period of President Hoover’s life back into the historical conversation. Margaret Hoover, the granddaughter of President Hoover also spoke at this event, along with Governor Jim

Douglas and several historians. The Coolidge Foundation is tremendously grateful for this collaboration with the Hoover Institution.

March 28 – Vermont History Day. Education director Diane Kemble and program associate Rushad Thomas served as judges at the annual “Vermont History Day,” organized by the Vermont Historical Society. Kemble and Thomas also presented the annual “Coolidge Foundation History Day Prize.” The prize is made possible by the generosity of Mimi Baird and encourages young people to learn about President Coolidge.

April 17 – Salisbury School Debate Day at Plymouth Notch. After a long, cold winter at the Notch, the Coolidge Foundation was pleased to welcome 31 high school students from Salisbury School in Connecticut, who came up for a day of learning and debate on Friday, April 17. Thanks to the generosity of one of their trustees, Mr. John Childs, the students were able to spend the day learning about the benefits and costs of college education. Their debate topic, “Resolved: Attending college is worth the cost to students and their families,” gave the young men the opportunity to think critically about whether or not a college education would ultimately reap the rewards they hope for. The students debated this topic in light of President Coolidge’s grappling with college costs.

The students debated this topic in light of President Coolidge’s grappling with college costs in his own day. Many of the letters he wrote his father from 1891 to 1895 contain requests for the elder Coolidge to send money, for one reason or another. Tuition, room, and board at Amherst College, Coolidge’s alma mater, was about \$8,000 in inflation-adjusted dollars in 1891, Coolidge’s freshman year.



After a full day of debate, the affirmative side won the championship round, making a strong case that indeed college is worth the cost today. We are grateful to Mr. John Childs, Salisbury School Headmaster Chisholm Chandler, Dean Hilary Barhydt, and Ms. Jennifer Siff for making this debate day possible. Bill Jenney also kindly offered a winter tour of the Notch to the students, and Chris Jeter, himself an alumnus of Salisbury School, joined and spoke to the students.

May 28 – Coolidge Scholars Program Reception. The Coolidge Foundation held the first major event for its new Coolidge Scholars Program. This event was a fundraising reception held at the Racquet and Tennis Club in New York City. The Foundation thanks Richard L. Chilton, Jr. for generously sponsoring and hosting this event to help raise funds for the new program. Coolidge Foundation trustee Jennifer L. Foster was instrumental in orchestrating this event, and we thank all the trustees who attended, including Rebekah Mercer, John Tomasi, and Garland Tucker.

Late Spring 2014 – School Visits to Plymouth Notch. Some 500 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. These visits were expertly organized by education director Diane

Kemble. Many of our volunteer docents helped to lead tours and teach about Coolidge and Plymouth Notch.



June 28-July 5 – World Schools Debate Camp.

One of the most exciting developments for our debate program this past year was being tapped by USA Debate and the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA), the largest debate network in America, to host a top debate camp for some thirty varsity debaters who are competing for slots on America’s international traveling team with Team USA. These students came to us from all across the country: California, Washington, Oregon, Georgia, North Carolina, New York, Connecticut, and even North Dakota. One student’s parents even drove

her all the way to the Notch from Little Rock, Arkansas. The students spent seven nights with us in the program where they learned about Coolidge, economics, presidential history, and debate.

The students came to the Notch to train for the USA Debate Team, but ultimately they received so much more. They all made major gains in their debate skill, thanks to the coaching of our experts, including Dr. Ben Voth of Southern Methodist University, former USA Debate Team members Tiana Menon and Amelia Miller, The King’s College debate coach Josiah Peterson, and Chaminade High School debate coach Bro. John McGrory. But the unique aspect of our camp is its intense focus on content instruction. Each day of camp the students engaged in seminars led by world-renowned experts, including Walter Russell Mead, pension expert William Shipman, and Mexico Business Forum president Roberto Salinas-Leon. Daily debate topics included labor policy, pension reform, regulation and climate change, and immigration. On Friday, the students engaged in a camp-wide tournament in which they debated tax rates. The winners of that debate, who received as their prize modest college scholarship money, were Audrey Cooper of Seattle, Aditya Shekhar of Minnesota, and Kevin Manuele of New York.



Each of the students excelled throughout the course of the camp. We've already received word from one of the debate campers that, inspired by his experience at the Notch, he's started a debate team at his high school and it's been upgraded to a semester elective by his school. We look forward to build on the success of the inaugural year of this camp and make it an annual program.

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. Attendance at the Fourth celebration was up for the fourth year in a row. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation estimates a crowd in excess of 700 came to the Notch this year on the Fourth to honor President Coolidge. New this year: the Foundation hosted a moving Naturalization Ceremony at the Notch during the morning of the Fourth. Judge J. Garvan Murtha presided as 20 immigrants from 13 different countries took the Oath of Allegiance and become U.S. citizens. At the ceremony, Judge Murtha offered moving comments and Matthew Denhart gave an address on the important contributions immigrants make to America.

Also on the Fourth, 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. Jenny Sayles Harville, John Sayles and Laura Trieschmann read selected passages from Coolidge speeches.

The early afternoon featured Jim Cooke's final performance of "Calvin Coolidge: More than Two Words." Mr. Cooke first performed this solo act thirty years ago on July 4, 1985 in Plymouth. The president's late son, John Coolidge, was in the audience that day and remarked, "The actor did very well with his impersonation." After thirty years and many more rave reviews, Mr. Cooke retired his act. The audience packed into the Union Christian Church to witness this final performance before a standing-room only crowd. The overflow crowd even gathered outside under the Church windows to hear Cooke. Mr. Cooke received a thunderous applause and standing ovation. Following his performance, Laura Trieschmann presented him a framed congratulatory letter signed by Vermont governor Peter Shumlin. The entire Coolidge community thanks Mr. Cooke for his many years of service. Here at the Foundation, we are proud to call him a close friend and dedicated member.

The Fourth festivities closed with the Foundation hosting its annual reading of Coolidge's *Autobiography*. More than 50 people joined as official readers. Thank you to all Coolidge Foundation members who helped to make this reading a success. 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 6 and July 25 – Coolidge Presidential Debate with Dartmouth Debate Institute. Over the course of two separate days, nearly 200 varsity debate students from around the country visited Plymouth Notch for days of intense instruction and debate competition. On July 6 the students debated taxation in an international context and learned about their topic from star economist Roberto Salinas Leon of Mexico. On July 25, the students debated the future of Social Security and what reforms could make the program more solvent. They benefitted from a detailed seminar on the topic from two world-renowned experts: Alicia Munnell, a Clinton Administration Treasury Official and Governor Jim Douglas. We thank especially Nicole Wanzer-Serrano, director of the Dartmouth Debate Institute, for her partnership. We also thank all of our instructors and judges who made these debates possible.

July 15-18 – Coolidge Foundation Homeschool Debate Camp. The Foundation built upon the success of 2014’s successful Homeschool Debate Camp to offer the program for a second year in 2015. Homeschool teens, chaperoned by their parents, spent several nights at the Cortina Hotel and several days learning about Coolidge from Rushad Thomas, Diane Kemble, Amity Shlaes, Matt Denhart, and experts Anne Buttimer, Kevin Ryan, Greg Rehmke, and, especially, Ben Voth. More than 30 homeschool students and 15 homeschool teachers joined for this four-day camp, coming from all around new England. Four homeschool debate alumni also helped facilitate the camp. The camp culminated in a debate tournament with college scholarship money going to the winners and top speakers.

August 1 – Old Home Day. Today marks Old Home Day at the Notch. Among the many festivities, the Foundation will host its annual meeting at 10:00 AM in the Union Christian Church and at 2:47 p.m., will host a reenactment of the historic 1923 “Homestead Inauguration.”

August 2 – Annual Summer Gala. This summer we are honored to be joined by acclaimed presidential historian Richard Norton Smith and former New Hampshire governor and White House chief-of-staff John H. Sununu. The dinner also will award the Calvin Coolidge Award to Jim Cooke for his years of service and teaching about history and Coolidge. Stewart McLaurin, president of the White House Historical Association will also join the dinner to share news of the Coolidge ornament and the WHHA’s other efforts to teach about President Coolidge this year.

Upcoming programs and activities:

- August 3-4, 2015 – Bookmaking with Primary Sources at the Notch.
- August 5-9, 2015 – Debate with Houston’s Pro Vision Charter School at the Notch. Twenty students from Houston will join for a four-night program with debate instruction at the Notch.
- October 27, 2015 – “Coolidge and Reagan: A Debate” held at St. Anselm College’s New Hampshire Institute of Politics. This event will feature Amity Shlaes, governor Jim Douglas, governor John H. Sununu, historian Steve Hayward, columnist Cal Thomas and NHIOP director Neil Levesque as they debate the merits of both presidents. High school debaters will also join for this event.
- Autumn 2015 (Date TBA) – Third Annual New York Gala.