



USGenWeb Election Committee

***The USGenWeb Election Committee is an official standing committee of the USGenWeb Advisory Board.
It is not affiliated with any other election, voting or campaign project or committee.***

USGenWeb Election Committee Report # 1 June 2, 2001

The USGenWeb Election Committee hereby respectfully submits the following report to the USGenWeb Advisory Board.

Prior to the seating of the Election Committee, Linda Haas Davenport acting as temporary chair of the Committee requested web space and an e-mail list from Rootsweb. Rootsweb granted her request for web space but also told her that the Election Committee e-mail list already existed and was available from the National Coordinator. The National Coordinator turned over the list to the temporary chair who added all Election Committee members.

The EC (Election Committee) is made up of: Two members for each of the four regions of the Project; Two members for the Special Projects and two members at-large for a total of twelve members. Eleven members may vote and the Chair may only vote in the case of a tie.

The USGenWeb Election Committee was seated and began business January 29, 2001. The Temporary Chair called for nominations for permanent Chairperson. Linda Haas Davenport was unanimously elected as Chairperson and was formally approved by the Advisory Board on Feb 7, 2001.

Upon taking her position as Chair, Linda called for nominations for the office of Publicist-Secretary for the Committee. Upon a call for votes Debbie Anderson was elected to the position unanimously. Her first order of business was to construct the Election Committee's web site which would be hosted by Rootsweb.

One of the Committee members voiced her concerns about how the Project members would view the use of Rootsweb as the server for the Election Committee's web site and mailing list. The Chair opened the item for discussion. During this discussion it was pointed out that the voter software and the full voter list would not be stored on a Rootsweb server, that only the web site and e-mail list would be. It was felt, by the vast majority of the EC members, that since the National Web Site and the majority of the Projects state and county sites were hosted by Rootsweb that the EC's web site should be also. The Chair called for a vote. Ten members voted to use Rootsweb and one member voted against using Rootsweb

The Chair issued a Welcome Message that included the "rules" by which the Committee and e-mail list would operate. One of these "rules" was that the Committee would operate as a confidential list. This was to insure that the members would be able to voice their thoughts, concerns and make

suggestions without having to worry about what someone outside of the committee would say or think. One of the members, Carol C-H, was not happy with this. The Chair opened the issue for discussion. During this discussion it was pointed out that the Chair had not issued a gag order but rather required that each member keep confidential the discussions taking place or that would take place on the list. The Chair called for a vote. Ten votes were cast in favor of the list being confidential and one vote was in favor of an open list. As a result of the vote Carol C-H resigned from the committee.

The Chair asked for nominations for a replacement for Carol C-H. Keith Gideon was nominated.. Keith was selected by a unanimous vote of the EC. He was approved by the AB and seated on the committee.

Following the Guidelines established by the Election Study Committee there were actually two "first order"s of business. One was to find available voting software that conformed to the requirements of the Guidelines. And the other was to secure a copy of the prior election committee's voting list.

The Chair was placed in charge of securing the voter list and the rest of the EC began the search for voting software. The Chair was unable to secure a list of the prior voter's list for a few weeks. And, after four weeks of searching the web the EC was unable to find any voter software that conformed to the Guidelines. Two sites were found where the voting software met all requirements, except one, both of these sites charged fees.

The EC held a lengthy discussion and it was decided that the EC should oversee the development of voting software for the use of the Project. A search was begun for a programmer or programmers who would be willing to develop voting software for the Project. Michael Anderson volunteered to write the code for the Voting Software and Keith Gideon and Kenneth Thomas (EC members) agreed to work with Michael to develop the software. Michael is not a member of the USGenWeb and has no interest in genealogy.

The Election Study Committee had conducted a survey of Project Members and during this survey it was suggested (by one of the respondents) that the EC look at the voting software developed by the IA State and Local Coordinators that was in use for the state of IA. It was agreed upon by the EC that the Chair should contact the IA people and determine if the EC could review their voting software.

The Chair contacted Loren Toomsen and he was kind enough to set up a test of the IA's software for the EC members. The voting software was excellent but there were several areas that did not conform to the Guidelines set forth by the Election Study Committee. A discussion was held to determine if the IA's software could be modified to fit the Guidelines and it was determined that it would require paying the original software programmer to modify the code. Therefore the EC unanimously agreed to go forward with the development of voting software program for the Project.

While the development of the software was underway the EC members contacted all State and Special Project Coordinators for a list of names and e-mail addresses of all LCs in their states or projects. This was a slow process and in several instances the Committee members found it necessary to visit the state site and collect names and addresses themselves. Once all lists were completed they were turned over to Keith and Kenneth to compile into one membership list. This process is now underway.

During this same time frame the Chair tried to secure the voter list from the prior election committee. This list was not received until most of the EC members had already compiled their own lists. However, last year's list was used as a comparison to this year's list.

The EC is very aware of the problems of past elections and the way that some Project members feel about Rootsweb, therefore - Once the decision was reached to develop voting software a search for a secure server was begun.

One of the concerns voiced by the Election Study Committee was that some (if not many) volunteers would object to their name being placed in a voter list if the list could be harvested and some members would object to a list being housed on a Rootsweb server. The EC kept that thought in mind as they searched for a secure server.

There were several sites suggested and the Chair visited each and signed up for server space, using a different name for each site. Within a week the Chair started receiving spam under each name she had used. In a casual discussion the Chair was having with a friend about the problems of finding a secure server, the friend (Ms. Keuchler) suggested that the Chair contact a friend of hers who has a large server system. The Chair contacted Mr. Kettmann and he agreed to allow the voting software and the membership list to reside on one of his servers. Mr. Kettmann has no connection with nor interest in genealogy or the USGenWeb Project. His servers are as secure as the EC could find and as far outside of Project as possible.

At this time Michael is working with Mr. Kettmann set up the server space and to upload the voter software. Keith and Kenneth will upload the membership/voter list as soon as the final list is complete. Once everything is in place a test will be conducted by the EC. After this test the software will be adjusted for any problems encountered and then the software will be set up for a test election and all members of the Project will be invited to participate in the test. The EC will welcome any and all comments, suggestions or criticisms after the test.

One final item needs to be mentioned - Debbie Anderson, our PR/Secretary has tendered her resignation due to her pending promotion which will leave her no time for outside activities. Therefore, as Chair, I am submitting this report on her behalf. The EC will notify the AB as soon as replacement has been selected by the committee.

The EC will issue another report as soon as the test is completed. In the meantime we will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Linda Davenport
Chair
USGenWeb Project.

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