



# NEWSLETTER

**October 2011**

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been a very busy 3rd quarter for Skäl with the NZ AGM and Congress in Hamilton as well as the International Congress in Turku, Finland which included a long session on Statutes. Added to this the normal round of monthly get togethers for each of our six clubs.

So far this year I have had the opportunity as part of business trips to meet with the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Hamilton teams as well as attend the Australia mid-year meeting, catch up with Skäl Southampton in the UK and attend the World Congress in Finland.

All have been thoroughly enjoyable and have reinforced the true meaning of Skäl - doing business amongst friends.

At all venues I have been able to gain pearls of wisdom from Skälleagues as well as establish or reconnect with Skälleagues from similar business backgrounds and share ideas and work towards doing business together.

I appreciate we are all very busy and time and monies are tight, but I do urge you all to take the opportunity and attend another club's function, either in NZ or while overseas, and spend a few hours with Skälleagues - I have never found a function or one to one meeting that hasn't resulted in a benefit to my business and I am sure you can all gain the same benefits.

In this newsletter I have included the thoughts of Gary Dickson, a new member in Auckland who attended the World Congress in Finland. Gary shares his thoughts on attending a World Congress for the first time as well as what he got from it.

Yours in Skäl

Nigel A. Pilkington

President, Skäl New Zealand

## SKAL NZ AGM & CONGRESS Hamilton - 26 - 28 August 2011

"Hamilton have done it again - a fantastic weekend" was the by far the majority opinion on the weekend's activities Skäl Hamilton put together in August as part of hosting of the 41st Skäl New Zealand AGM & Congress.

the Statutes being tabled at the World Congress in Turku (refer Statutes section on pages 3 & 4). The balance of the AGM was generally housekeeping as the national officers are in the mid year of their two year cycle with the positions



The gathering started on Friday lunchtime with the AGM starting at 1300. The AGM was opened by President Nigel who also welcome two very important guests - Skäl International Australia President, Russell Butler and Skäl International Australia International Councillor, Bernard Whewell. Their attendance was important as both the Australian and New Zealand national committees have been working closely together for the past few years with delegates attending each others Congresses. This has enabled a frank and enjoyable exchange of ideas and has seen both organisations working closely in terms of approaching World Congress issues with one voice. President Russell and IC Bernard presented a brief report on Skäl in Australia and then went through how Australia saw the proposed changes to

coming up for re election at the 2012 AGM. A full set of AGM minutes was circulated by National Secretary Peter Clark to all clubs in September so please ask your club secretary for a copy if you have not received them.

Friday evening saw a very lively cocktail party followed by a dine-around in the city. Saturday AM had the delegates on a whirlwind tour of some of the new facilities in and around Hamilton, including the new Claudelands Centre, a fantastic events and conference centre with world class facilities. Next stop the conference centre at Lake Karapiro, built as part of the refurbishment for the 2010 World Rowing Championships.

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Lunch was held at the beautifully landscaped Sarnia Park Boutique Lodge just out of Cambridge. Built in the American/English country manor style and surrounded by 9ha of landscaped gardens the Lodge has achieved a New Zealand Garden of Significance listing.

The highlight for many was the next stop - Hobbiton or more correctly "The home of Hobbiton" The set was being refurbished for the filming of the two new Hobbit movies and the tour was an eye opener in terms of the techniques Sir Peter Jackson and his film crew use in the production and the amazing eye for detail they demand - imagine an Oak tree made from rubber and metal with over 80,000 handmade leaves - the closer you get the more real it looks!! That and the 37 "Hobbit Holes" made the tour surprisingly interesting and fun.

The last event of the weekend was the Murder Cruise Mystery Dinner held at the Novotel Tainui in Hamilton.



Skal Hamilton's Trevor Armour (aka Capt Bligh) and Lorraine Eves, "haming" it up at the Gala Dinner

A fantastic night of dress up and very very bad acting (although many did comment that the acting by a certain ex President of Christchurch was hard to tell from the real person!!).

A great weekend and once again a big thank you to Skal Hamilton - they have set the mark that Auckland (host for the 2012 AGM and Congress) has to come up to.

The date for the 2012 Congress will be advised by the end of November to ensure Skalleagues can take advantage of early bird flight deals.



## SKAL INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS TURKU, FINLAND National President's Report

The 72nd World Congress was held in the southern city, (the original capital of Finland) Turku. A three hour coach transfer south of Helsinki, after a 32 hour

their small numbers noticeable, including putting down a scrum at a luncheon venue with a mob of South Africans!!



The NZ delegation with members of Skal International Sunshine Coast at the Gala Dinner. From left ... Peter Clark, National Secretary, Skal NZ; Nigel Pilkington, President Skal NZ; Tony Smith, Vice President, Skal NZ; Ross Manson, President Skal Auckland; Mark Skinner, President, Skal Sunshine Coast; Joanne Skinner, Skal Sunshine Coast and Gary Dickson, Skal Auckland.

flight from Auckland, made it one of the longest trips to a Congress in recent times.

Due to the distance and the lack of any discount airfares (contrary to what was originally mooted by the organisers) New Zealand had a small contingent consisting of four from the Auckland Club and two from Christchurch.

Over 600 participants representing 183 Clubs attended the Congress making it smaller than Sydney and Budapest but good given the current state of the world economies. Out of 458 Active Skal Clubs, 183 were present with a total of 235 votes. (A quorum is 147 Clubs)

The overall impression the Kiwi group had was that the Congress was not that well planned and they would only vote it a 6 out of 10 compared to 8/10 for Budapest and 7/10 for Sydney.

The major concern was the lack of clear communication as to when and where activities were and the transfer times between them. Combined with what can be best described as ordinary food and service at the functions, in particular the President's Gala Dinner, the overall feeling was "could do a lot better".

These issues aside the NZ team, (the blokes/blokette in Black), certainly made

**Statute Changes :** In terms of the General Assembly section of the Congress - this I found extremely interesting given we had a number of statute changes to debate and vote on - while many find this time consuming (it took 4 hours) it really is the nuts and bolts of the organisation and the only time the general membership can dictate the direction they want the organisation to move.

As discussed at our AGM in Hamilton, NZ clubs agreed with the statute changes recommended by the executive and international council as per the paper prepared by International VP Mok Singh and circulated to all NZ Skalleagues with the last national newsletter (June 2011). There was one exception and that covered Article II relating to the revised mission statement for Skal. Skal Wellington asked that the wording in the revision be changed from "DEVELOP a responsible tourism industry" to SUPPORT a responsible ...

I was able to present and argue this change from the floor and I am pleased to advise the congress agreed and

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the article was changed and voted accordingly.

In summary the Statute changes were as follows:

Article VIII, Section 3: Adopted - was the change that the Internal Auditors would also be responsible for reviewing the 'management of the Association'.

Article X, Section 3: Statute changes must now be received 'six' months before the next General Assembly and the Executive Committee has 'four' months to submit changes, prior to the next GA.

Article X, Section 3: All approved amendments will be circulated 'one month' after the closing of the GA and become effective 'three months' after the GA.

Mission Statement for Skal approved: 'Through our leadership, professionalism and friendship, work together to achieve our Vision, maximize networking opportunities and **support** a Responsible Tourism Industry'.

Vision Statement for Skal approved: 'Be a Trusted voice in Travel and Tourism'.

Article III, Section 2: All new members will sign an agreement and commitment to Skal membership. (Content to be developed)

Article VI, Section 1: New Paragraph. 'Candidates for election to the Executive Committee shall sign a binding Memorandum of Understanding.'

Article VIII, Section 6: The accounting year will commence on January 01 and end on December 31 of each year.

Note: One of the important changes to the Statutes that was defeated by the GA, was in regard to Article VI, Section 1. The Statute change reduced the Executive Committee from 7 Directors to 6 Directors and recommended that the President of the ISC shall serve on the Executive Committee with full voting rights. This Statute should have been separated into two, ie, reducing the Directors to 6 and secondly dealing with the ISC President.

The Executive Committee will bring forward the reduction of the EC to 6 members at the next GA in Korea.

In addition 6 proposed changes were withdrawn by their sponsors.

All in all a very intense and interesting session and one that proves the organisation is run by the membership from the floor of the General Assembly and a very strong reason why Skalleagues need to seriously consider attending a World Congress if they believe change is needed - remember only those attending the Congress can vote.



President Tony Boyle opening the Congress

**Election of Officers :** With regards to the election of officers our new Skal International President is Enrique Quesada from Mexico.

Senior Vice President Mok Singh will continue with the statutes portfolio and liaison with the task force for the repositioning of Skål.

Newly-elected Vice President Karine Coulanges will continue with the portfolio of public relations and communications. This portfolio includes Skål News, the regular e-newsletters, and other activities, members' benefits and the Skål Greeter programme.

Marianne Krohn will retain the finance portfolio with special emphasis on reduction of the deficit and the best ways to administer members' dues.

Ann Lootens will now be responsible for Young Skål.

Newly-elected Director Salih Cene will take on the portfolio of development and business affairs.

Graham Blakey - special projects in Asia. Past President Tony Boyle opened the door to China and there is nobody better placed than Graham to do this work. He lives in Macau, has knowledge of Chinese customs and speaks the language.

Bent Hadler, was re-elected President of the International Skål Council and will supervise the operation of the congresses and continue working on the new Congress Manual, the current one having been in operation for over 30 years.

**Removal of Director :** In terms of the election of officers it was also moved from the floor that Andrew Wood, elected Director in Sydney last year, be removed as a director. Unfortunately Andrew has not been able to attend any meetings

over the past year due to a serious illness and his recovery has not been as fast as we all wanted. Due to his inability to work on a consistent basis with the Executive Committee, the General Assembly voted to remove Andrew as a Director. This was a difficult decision, but necessary for the ongoing consistent function of the Executive Committee.

**Membre D'Honneur:** Four Skalleagues were confirmed as Membre D'Honneur as follows: John Bright (UK), Egil Gloersen (Norway), Isaac Haim (Brazil) and Challagalla Nagendra Prasad (India).

**Auditors:** John Ruzich (USA) and Yaacov Hartman (Israel) were voted and confirmed as the Auditors for Skal.

**International Fees:** The General Assembly voted and approved the fees for 2012

44 Euros Active

41 Euros Retired

**Congress City Selection :** Unfortunately the outdated Congress manual did cause major concerns as a result of confusion over the exact date that World Congress hosting submissions have to be tendered. This confusion resulted in Rome withdrawing their bid and the Skal Italy team abstaining from all voting in protest at the AGM and considering withdrawing from Skal completely.

On the matter of voting for the host city we (Skal NZ) are adamant that all clubs need to have information on the various bids well before the International Councillors Meeting so the clubs can then direct the New Zealand IC how they wish to vote - this ensures the membership have the say as to which two locations will then go forward to the GA for the final vote by the attending delegates.

In terms of 2013 the two top bids to go to General Assembly were Mexico City and New York City. The General Assembly voted for NYC - 126 to Mexico City - 77.

The NYC Congress is a Cruise for 7 nights on the Carnival Glory, departing 28 September and calling in at Boston, Portland, Maine, St. John's New Brunswick and Halifax. Inside cabins for the Cruise were costed at USD\$1988; Outside cabins - USD\$2318 and with balcony - USD\$2758 (all based on two persons, including registration). The NYC club indicated that 10-20% discounts would be arranged on Star Alliance Flight Partners.

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**Mid Term Meeting for the ISC:** There was an election between Marmara, Turkey and Opatija, Croatia. The price for Croatia was sharply reduced prior to the decision by the ISC Councillors and Croatia won the bid. Cost was EUR292 per ISC Councillor for three nights, including accommodation, meals, and tours. Dates are April 26-29, 2012.

**New Skal Website :** President Tony presented the progress on updating the Skal website and improving the IT delivery of Skal to members. A much more interactive and dynamic website is in the process of development and should be complete in the New Year. As part of the revision the IT support will be moved from Spain to a company in Tucson, USA who have been working on the new site and other IT options including a new Smartphone App that will allow Skalleagues to view members and meetings in the region they are visiting directly from their phones.

**Skal Greeter Programme** As discussed at the NZ AGM Skal have established the Greeter programme where skalleagues can register on the website to provide info for any visiting skalleague and for Skalleagues visiting other regions to get assistance from local Skalleagues.

**Membership:** For the year ending 2010 Skal saw an increase of over 100 members with the world total now standing at 18,512 in 87 countries. The target for 2012 is to see 20,000 members which represents growth of just over 8%. Based on this NZ clubs will be asked to plan for 8% growth or in the case of the larger clubs 8-10 new members in 2012 - a very realistic target.

A new membership brochure has been published and is available for download on the Skal website.

Overall a successful General Assembly and I look forward to the next World Congress in Seoul, South Korea 02-07 October 2012.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**Skal New Zealand National Committee Meeting**  
Thursday 15 March 2012,  
Clearwater Resort, Christchurch.

**Skal Australia AGM & Congress**  
Friday 23 - Sunday 25 March 2012  
Cairns, Queensland

**Skal New Zealand AGM & Congress**  
Late September (final date TBA)  
Auckland

## SKAL WORLD CONGRESS Twinning Ceremony



Following on from discussions over the past 6 months between Skal Auckland and Skal Sunshine Coast, the two clubs formalised their relationship with a Twinning Ceremony held as part of the World Congress. The two clubs have a lot in common and look forward to a close working relationship and an interchange of ideas over the coming years. Pictured from left to right are, Mark Skinner, President Skal International Sunshine Coast; Tony Boyle, President Skal International, and Ross Manson, President Skal International Auckland.

## 73rd SKAL WORLD CONGRESS 2-7 October 2012 Seoul, South Korea



For those who want to diary the 2012 World Congress it will be held in Seoul, South Korea from the 2 - 7 October.

We met with the South Korean Skal team at the B2B in Turku and they have promised a lively and very professional congress.

In terms of airfares they advise Korean Air (KE) have come onboard as the airline partner and they will have very competitive fares available to Skalleagues by mid March 2012.

Initial (yet to be confirmed) fare levels are AD 75% for members in Y class with partners at AD50%. J class AD 50%. That could mean return economy fares for Skal members at around \$499 NZ!! Further details will be sent to all clubs once received.

## SKAL WORLD CONGRESS A "FIRST TIMERS" VIEW

The following comments are written by Gary Dickson, Publisher of Let's Travel magazine and a new member of Skal Auckland who attended his first World Congress in Turku.

"The over riding position we took on deciding to attend our first Skal World Congress was not to expect any return on our investment for at least 2 or 3 years.

The fact I have come away with quite a mass of brand new travel industry contacts bodes well. The people who attended the conference were genuinely interested in discussing all aspects of the travel industry.

It was quite a unique position I found myself in - being almost the sole media person there. It signalled to me that the event could be better served by the attendance of more media - as they do with POW WOW in the States and WTM each year.

But, overall, I found the conference itself well run and the variety of travel industry personnel more diverse than I at first expected. I also had the feeling that the people were there to learn and understand how others within their industry work around the world - be it luxury lodges in Ireland, Star Gazing tours in Outback Australia or guided walks in Banff, Canada.

The people that were representative at the congress were also (on the whole) the decision makers of their business and therefore I see the contact with each and every one of them as a potential customer. Business owners doing business with business owners!

Will we be attending next year ...absolutely!"

Gary Dickson  
Managing Editor  
Let's Travel Magazine

