

# Skål News

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International Association of Travel Agents  
Founded 1934

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**THEME**  
**LIVING THE TRUE**  
**SPIRIT OF SKÅL**

**BUDAPEST**  
**CONGRESS REVIEW**

**ECOTOURISM**  
**AWARDS 2009**

**TRADE FAIRS**

**SKÅL GOOD**  
**NEWS STORIES**

*President*  
**NIK RACIC**  
*2009-2010*



# FLORIMOND VOLCKAERT FUND

## FLORIMOND WHAT?

It was with great surprise that I received the report on "research undertaken to ascertain the opinions of Skål members" by Lumsdon Research, sent to all members of Skål. Surprise, because of how little the majority of the members know about our benevolent fund.

Below I will try to enlighten those members on what it is all about.

The Florimond Volckaert Fund was set up in 1954 in the name of the founder of Skål, Florimond Volckaert, "TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO SKÅLLEAGUES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILIES WHO ARE IN SERIOUS NEED OF ASSISTANCE".

This includes:

- Cost of surgical/hospital services which cannot be met by other means (no health cover).
- Death of a Skålleague whose spouse/children need funds for medical care/education.
- Equipment for a physically disabled Skålleague.
- Help for members and their immediate families affected by natural disasters, etc.

In the majority of cases an appeal to the Fund is a result of a personal crisis, an accident or a sudden illness; for example, where money is needed immediately. The Trustees endeavour to resolve all appeals for assistance within 48 hours, which is something insurance companies are rarely able to do.

To meet these needs we require help from our members in the form of donations from Clubs/National/Area Committees as well as personal donations.

The International Council is responsible for information concerning the Fund to be given to members and for contributions to be made to the Fund. The Trustees will take up this matter with the President of the Skål Council in the hope that the majority of Skål members receive information and contribute to the Fund.

Today there is approximately €530,000 in the Fund, but the goal has always been to reach one million. Since 1999 the Fund has granted \$300,000 and €200,000 to 144 people, which gives an average of \$4,500 or €2,800 per grant. The donations for the same period amount to a total of \$340,000 and €200,000. This includes income from auctions and raffles during the World Congresses.

As you can see, without your kind contributions we would not have had a benevolent fund to help fellow Skålleagues in distress. But, due to the financial crisis, we see that the number of applications for grants is increasing, so please "look deep into your pockets" for our good cause. One possibility, during each meeting of your Club, is to set up a "donation" box for members to put in small amounts. If 500 clubs manage to



**TRYGVE SØDRING**

Past-President  
**COORDINATING TRUSTEE**

P.O. BOX 70  
0712 OSLO, NORWAY  
Tel. 47.2214.7969  
Fax: 47-2213.8422  
[sodring@online.no](mailto:sodring@online.no)



**ALFONSO PASSERA**

Past-President  
**TRUSTEE**

ENTRE TURISMO MALCANTONE  
PIAZZA LAGO, 6987 CASLANO  
SWITZERLAND  
Tel. 41.91.606.2986  
Fax. 41.91.606.5200  
[alfonso.passera@malcantone.ch](mailto:alfonso.passera@malcantone.ch)



**RICHARD HAWKINS**

Past-President  
**TRUSTEE**

HAWK RENT A CAR  
32A HILLVIEW TERRACE  
SINGAPORE 669251, SINGAPORE  
Tel. 60.3.5636.4218  
Fax. 60.3.5636.2302  
[richard.hawkins@hawkrentacar.com](mailto:richard.hawkins@hawkrentacar.com)



collect only \$10 per meeting, with 10 meetings per year this will amount to a fantastic \$50,000.

Now, what has the money been used for?

Due to the anonymity conditions, I cannot and will not divulge how much and to whom we have paid out, but we have had cases of accidents, including fatal ones, illnesses including cancer, heart and brain diseases, special and unexpected expenses in connection with loss of job, death in the close family and so on. What all these cases have in common is that they all lacked insurance coverage.

### HOW TO APPLY FOR GRANT

Go to our website ([www.skal.travel](http://www.skal.travel)) and click on Members Only and Florimond Volckaert Fund. Here you will find the application form. Fill it out, and send it via your International Councillor or Club President to the three Trustees.

You can also send it directly to the Trustees, but then the process might take longer.

Your Trustees are:

Alfonso Passera, Past President Skål International – [alfonso.passera@malcantone.ch](mailto:alfonso.passera@malcantone.ch)

Richard Hawkins, Past President Skål International – [richard.hawkins@hawkrentacar.com](mailto:richard.hawkins@hawkrentacar.com)

Trygve Sødning, Past President Skål International – [sodring@online.no](mailto:sodring@online.no)

In conclusion I would like, on behalf of the Trustees and the 144 recipients of grants, to thank you all for your involvement in the Fund.

By Trygve Sødning  
Coordinating Trustee Florimond Volckaert Fund  
and Past President Skål International

# CALENDAR TRADE FAIRS

## FEBRUARY 2010

- 04-08 SALON DES VACANCES**  
Brussels, Belgium/Belgique/Bélgica  
www.vosvacane.be
- 04-06 HOLIDAY WORLD**  
Prague/Praga, Rép. Tchèque /Czech Rep./ Rep. Checa  
ww.holidayworld.cz
- 09-10 IMTM 2010**  
Tel Aviv, Israël  
www.ortra.com
- 11-14 EMITT**  
Istanbul/Estambul, Turquie/Turkey/Turquia  
www.emittistanbul.com
- TBA BASLER FERIEVMESSE**  
Bâle/Basel/Basilea, Suisse/Switzerland/Suiza
- 18-21 BIT**  
Milan/Milano, Italie/Italy/Italia  
www.bit.expocts.it
- 18-22 CBR - Leisure and Travel**  
München/Allemagne/Germany/Alemania  
www.c-b-r.de
- 24-26 FLORIDA HUDDLE**  
Etats-Unis/USA/EEUU  
www.floridahuddle.com
- 24-26 VITRINA TURISTICA DE ANATO**  
Bogota/Colombie/Colombia  
www.vitrinatouristica.anato.org
- 24-28 REISE/CAMPING URLAUBSMESSE**  
Essen/Allemagne/Germany/Alemania  
www.reise-camping.de
- 24-28 ITF 2010. International Fair of Tourism**  
Belgrade, Serbie/Serbia  
www.ift-belgrade.com
- 24-28 VIVATTUR 2010**  
Vilnius, Lithuania/Lituanie/Lituania  
www.visusplenus.lt

## MARCH 2010

- 02-03 AIME**  
Melbourne, Australie/Australia  
www.aime.com.au
- 05-07 UTAZAS**  
Budapest, Hongrie/Hungary/Hungria  
www.utazas.hungexpo.hu
- 10-14 ITB**  
Berlin, Allemagne/Germany/Alemania  
www.itb-berlin.com
- 13-16 ITM 2010**  
Moscow, Russia/ Rusia  
www.itmexpo.ru
- 13-16 ITM 2010**  
Moscow, Russia/ Rusia  
www.itmexpo.ru
- 18-21 MAP - LE MONDE A PARIS**  
Paris, France/Francia  
www.lemondeaparis.com
- 24-26 UITT**  
Kiev, Ukraine/Ucrania  
www.uitt-kiev.com
- 24-26 GLOBE2010**  
Rome, Roma/Italie/Italy/Italia  
www.globe2010.com
- TBA ASTA International Destination Expo-ASIA**  
Jeju, Korea
- 26-27 Braztoa**  
São Paulo, Brésil/Brazil/Brasil  
www.braztoa.com.br
- 25-28 TUR**  
Gothenburg, Suède/Sweden/Suecia  
www.tur.se
- 25-28 MITT 2010**  
Moscow, Russia/ Rusia  
www.mitt.ru
- 27-29 WTF 2010**  
Sanghai, China  
www.worldtravelfair.com.cn

## APRIL 2010

- 15-17 TOURSIB 2010**  
Novosibirsk, Russie/Russia/Rusia  
toursib.sibfair.ru/eng/
- 27-29 Peru Travel Mart 2010**  
Lima, Peru/Perú  
www.perutravelmart.com.pe
- 25-28 TIANGUIS ACAPULCO**  
Acapulco, Mexique/Mexico/México  
www.tianguisturistico.com.mx
- 28 WORLD SKÅL DAY**

## Croatian Skål Christmas Celebration



*On Tuesday 15 December 2009 President Nik Racic attended a Christmas celebration in which all Skål members in Croatia were present to mark his election as President of Skål International.*

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## “Living the true spirit of Skål”

Dear Skålleagues and friends from around the world...

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the trust you invested in me at the 70th World Skål Congress in Budapest when you elected me as President of Skål International. On behalf of the 1,000 delegates who attended this congress, I would also like to thank all our Hungarian Skålleagues, tourist employees and officials, who were led by the active Chairman of the Organising Committee, George Paldi, and PCO for the Congress, Peter Javorkai, for their wonderful organisation skills, immense enthusiasm and the friendly atmosphere they created. All of us will always have extremely fond memories of the wonderful city of Budapest and Hungary.

I consider my election to be a recognition of the work I have done in tourism up to now and also to be a recognition of the generations of people working in tourism in both my country Croatia and my native Zagreb, which has a 150-year tradition in tourism – one of the most important branches of the economy.

I am very aware of the responsibilities that my position brings and I would like to assure you that I will do everything in my power to make sure that the synergy of the activities between the General Assembly, Executive Committee, International Council, Clubs, National and Area Committees and, most importantly amongst you, my fellow Skålleagues, continues; and that we advance the good quality programmes connected to the development of Skål International, to make the organisation's role in global tourism even more visible, developing the idea of “Doing Business among Friends”, increasing our presence at trade shows and developing the Skål International Ecotourism Awards. This also includes making sure that the operations and management of all the official bodies of Skål International – the General Assembly, Executive Committee and International Council – are functioning at their maximum.

The first question we all need to ask ourselves is: what can I, as a member, do and how can I contribute to Skål International? And not just: what can I get from the organisation? When combined, a thousand seemingly small contributions create a powerful organisation of satisfied members who truly feel a sense of being a part of one large, worthwhile idea.

Furthermore, it is vital to understand that today Skål International is a powerful and unique global organisation, and this is proven by the following facts:

- A 75-year long tradition
- Skål International covers all tourist branches
- It works on all five continents

It is especially important to point out that, even during these objectively difficult and complicated times for the tourist industry, at its 70th World Congress in Budapest, Skål International managed to gather around 1,000 delegates from all over the world; and that, at the B2B Workshop, there were a record 78 tables, which is a number that today only a few global tourist branches can claim to have. I am delighted by the fact that there is a noted rise in the number of members, which is now at 20,004, and that the negative trend has stopped. All these figures confirm the long-term, high-quality planning and implementation of the Skål International programme.

Now the results of activities in the areas of development and marketing are slowly starting to become visible, which for the most part is the result of our presence at the most important global trade shows, our contact with the media, the start of the B2B Workshop organisation as a part of the Skål World Congress and the Ecotourism Awards. In every job of work, it is important to have a vision, good quality logistical preparations,



patience and persistence, and then the good results will definitely continue.

All of us can expect a lot of work in the development and advancement of our organisation, where, at the same time, we will be aware of the good quality foundations on which it has been built. As a result, our obligations will become even greater. And finally, I would like to tell you what it is, in my opinion, that makes Skål International a unique international tourist organisation, and I do speak from experience. I was very excited and honoured when, as a young tourist manager, I became a member of this organisation. Skål International opened up the tourist world for me, provided me with plenty of business experience and enabled me to make numerous new friendships. Today, at an experienced age, I share with my Skålleagues times good and not so good on a daily basis, exchanging ideas, doing my job...

When I retire – God willing my health will serve me well – I shall have more time to enjoy my friendship with Skålleagues on all five continents, and hand down my knowledge and experience to younger colleagues.

And that is why I want to call on all potential Skål members to learn from my example and join us, for Skål International is a unique international tourist organisation for all ages and all periods of life.

We at Skål International speak many languages, but we all understand one mutual language and that is the Skål language.

***My message to all of us is and will be: “Living the true spirit of Skål”.***

Let's make Skål International the most significant world business and friendship club.

**Skål International President Nic Racic**



# WORLD CONGRESS BUDAPEST'09

Special report from Budapest



## HUGELY SUCCESSFUL WEEK IN HISTORIC SETTING

A very successful 70th Skål World Congress was held in Budapest (Hungary) from 1 to 6 November. The almost 1,000 participants were loud in their praise for the organisers of the Congress: Chairman George Paldi, President of Skål International Hungary; and PCO Peter Javorkai, of STH Special Tours, Hungary, Budapest. Aply assisted by their staff and a number of tourism students they managed to organise a congress which was different, varied and, above all, very enjoyable. The historic city of Budapest pulled out all the stops, including decorating the Elizabeth Bridge over the Danube with the flags of all 62 nations represented at the congress. The Ministry of Tourism and the City of Budapest were generous with their sponsorship of the congress thus adding, in no small way, to its success.

The Congress began with the customary Ecumenical Service in the famous St. Stephen's Basilica which was attended by over 500 of the participants. The service included Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Bahai faiths.

From the Basilica the participants were taken to the Budapest Market for a very special Get-together Party.



This was the real live market which is open every day for the local people to do their shopping. Some of the stalls at the market remained open so that the visitors could actually buy local produce and souvenirs. The food, the wine and particularly the music created an atmosphere rarely experienced at a Get-together Party. The President of Skål International, Hulya Aslantas, welcomed the participants to the party, which included 253 first-time attendees.





On Monday 2 November the Opening Ceremony was held at the magnificent Palace of Arts and was attended by the Minister for Local Government, in charge of Tourism, and the Deputy Chief Mayor of Budapest. The ceremony included the roll call of nations and the parade of flags as well as speeches of welcome from the dignitaries present. At the end of her speech, in which her message was one of confidence and a positive approach, Hulya Aslantas was joined on stage by a group of professional musicians for a rendition of the song "We can Fly".



The results of the Skål Club of the year competition were announced, and the winner of the competition for 2009 was Skål International Albany (Australia). Second was Skål International New York and in third place Skål International Stockholm.



The 8th Ecotourism Awards were presented during the opening ceremony; and 19 Club twinning agreements were signed.



The Opening Ceremony ended with a cultural programme featuring jazz, operetta and a traditional folklore show which included some beautiful Hungarian music. The luncheon following the Opening Ceremony was held at the Hilton Hotel in Buda. The day ended with a cruise on the Danube followed by a sumptuous buffet on board the Europa.





The General Assembly of Clubs was held on Tuesday 3 November in the ballroom of the Intercontinental Hotel. It was a long day and included presentations by Malev Airlines, the official carrier for the congress, and Johnson Diversey, the official sponsor of the Ecotourism Awards. Morning and afternoon coffee breaks were sponsored by the Croatian National Incentive Bureau.



The annual Dine Around took place on Tuesday evening 3 November with 21 restaurants being used on this occasion. The Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Honorary and Past Presidents was also held on this evening. A record 16 Honorary and Past Presidents and their accompanying people were in attendance in Budapest.



On Wednesday morning all activity moved to the Corinthia Royal Hotel in the city centre for the Business to Business Workshop (B2B). The workshop has grown from five tables in 2005 to 78 tables in Budapest.



On Wednesday evening the President's Gala Dinner, hosted by the Hungarian Ministry of Tourism, was held at the Railway Park Museum, which had been suitably decorated for the occasion. The guests were taken to the museum by a steam train formerly used by the Orient Express. A sumptuous dinner was served with fantastic musical interludes throughout the dinner. The dance floor was packed and people really did not want to leave.







On Thursday the day tour for all participants was to the Lake Balaton area, famous for its thermal waters. The Farewell Party on Thursday evening was at the Lazlo Equestrian centre outside Budapest. The evening commenced with a demonstration of horse skills – part of the programme at Lazar. The participants were treated to a buffet of typical Hungarian food including the famous Hungarian goulash.

**ECOTOURISM AWARDS**

The 8th Skål International Ecotourism Awards were presented during the Opening Ceremony of the Congress. The 2009 awards were sponsored by Johnson Diversey, whose representatives attended the ceremony. (See full report of the Ecotourism Awards at the end of this report.)

**ELECTIONS**

The new President of Skål International is Nik Racic, Director, Croatian Convention and Incentive Bureau. He has chosen as his Presidential theme “Living in the True Spirit of Skål”. In so doing he is reminding all Skål members worldwide that they have very special privileges as members of this great organisation which is based on friendship and solidarity, and they must work together for the benefit of Skål in their daily lives and with one another. He also emphasised that Skål is not only a friendship association and highlighted the many opportunities which members have to do business with each other worldwide. Enrique Quesada y Barrios, Skål International Guadalajara (Mexico) is the new Vice President and he retains the portfolio of Finance. John Britton, Skål International Toronto North, having served the maximum term as Director, leaves the Executive Committee and is now a Membre d’Honneur of Skål International.



The new Directors of Skål International are Mok Singh, Skål International Los Angeles, who has been given the portfolio of Statutes with special responsibility for the repositioning of Skål; and Marianne Krohn, Skål International Hannover, who has the portfolio of Business Affairs. Lone Ricks and Karine Coulanges, who continue as Directors, have been given the portfolios of Special Projects and Communications and P.R., respectively.

Bent Hadler, Skål International Copenhagen, is the new President of the International Skål Council. He takes over from Marianne Krohn, whose term of office ended in Budapest and who is now the new Director of Business Affairs. Arturo Sierra Barrera, Skål International Monterrey, is the new Vice President of the International Council; while Ann Lootens continues for a second year. John Ruzich, Skål International New York, is the newly elected Auditor. The other Auditor for the coming year is Colin Schirmer, Skål International Adelaide.

Ilkay Bener, Skål International Marmara (Turkey), and Jefferie Tippen, Skål International Christchurch (New Zealand), were both awarded the distinction of Membre d’Honneur of Skål International by the General Assembly.



Skål International Sydney was reconfirmed as the venue for the 71st Skål World Congress, with the theme “**Linking the World Down Under**”. The dates are 7-12 October 2010. For the first time the congress commences on a Thursday. Information on the congress will be posted on the Skål International website shortly.

Skål International Turku (Finland) defeated Skål International Dubai as the venue for the 72nd Skål World Congress 2011.



A Corporate Order of Merit was presented to Malev Hungarian Airlines and Orders of Merit were presented to the following: George Paldi, Hilary Murphy, Kemal Ozyigit and Cem Aslantas. Geraldine Rosney accepted the award on behalf of Hilary Murphy.

**NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED**

The new, more dynamic 2.0 website was launched on Tuesday 3 November during the General Assembly in Budapest, by the President of Skål International, Hulya Aslantas. All members are encouraged to use this new website: [www.skal.travel](http://www.skal.travel).

To sign in you need to insert your First Name\_Surname (e.g. Jim\_Power); and your membership number or chosen password remains the same. Entry to the “members only area” (family name and password) remains unchanged until such time as the two sites are merged. There are many new features on this new site, including a search facility. Members are invited to post their constructive comments on the “Forum”.

**FLORIMOND VOLCKAERT FUND RAFFLE**

The Florimond Volckaert Fund Raffle held during the Congress in Budapest raised a significant amount of money. The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the success of the raffle. A number of prizes remain unclaimed and these are now at the General Secretariat. Winners are asked to scan their winning tickets and forward them by e-mail to [skal@skal.travel](mailto:skal@skal.travel). A number of valuable prizes had also been donated and the Trustees have decided to conduct an auction on the website so that the entire membership have a chance to win.

**HUNGARY MAY BE A SMALL COUNTRY BUT IT PACKS A LOT WITHIN ITS BORDERS, INCLUDING THE SUCCESSFUL 70TH SKÅL INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN BUDAPEST ATTRACTING 1,000 SKÅLLEAGUES AND PARTNERS – THE BIGGEST NUMBER FOR SOME TIME.**

**VIEW FROM DOWN UNDER**

From the opening party at the Grand Market Hall to the closing farewell bash at the Equestrian Park, visitors were treated to a microcosm of Hungarian life, culture and their fascinating history.

As a relevant “newbie” of Skål, a highlight for me and many others was the nostalgic trip back in time in one of the trains of yesteryear to the gala dinner at the Railway History Park. One could almost be forgiven for expecting to see Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple or even Agatha Christie herself making an appearance in such carriage surrounds.

A South African Skålleague remarked that, out of the six congresses he had been to, this was by far the best gala dinner, so accolades to George Paldi and his organising committee.



Cape Town Skålleague Vernon Kirsten added to the mix with his interpretation of YMCA, of which the band was undoubtedly extremely grateful, paving the way for more guest appearances on the post-conference cruise.

Other successes included the business to business forum, with the Australian contingent reporting huge interest in their product and the commitment to visit as part of the Down Under experience in October 2010 for the Skål World Congress in Sydney.

Those who availed themselves of the optional tours were suitably impressed at the range and variety on offer, especially Budapest's newest attraction, "The River Ride"

While not on the list of suggested things to do, the "House of Terror" proved popular due to the unprecedented surge in "Dark Tourism".

Post-congress, 129 Skålleagues and partners from 24 countries embarked on the two-day "Western Hungary Tour", which was a real eye opener and a chance for many to cement relationships.

Lake Balaton and the infamous Tibany Benedictian Abbey was something to behold, while the Medieval Knights Tournament Show was precision artistry at its best!

Our host, the Western Hungary Skål Club, provided an excellent lunch the following day, the perfect therapy after indulging in the medicinal waters of the Héviz Thermal Lake.

Waterways' Australian boss, Stewart Williams, who also happens to be the President of Skål International Sydney North, and Skål International Vice President and owner of Jetset Travel Townsville, Tony Boyle.

Tony may have let the team down that day, but he definitely scored a hole in one by putting this tour together, embracing 20 countries for the trip down the Danube to Vienna and return.

Five-star hospitality, together with the sights along the river, paved the way for smooth sailing, made all the more enjoyable by a captain with a quirky sense of humour!

Having come from a third generation river family, he admitted he'd just got his car licence and still preferred the sanctity of the pushbike for the fear of running into someone!

Quite remarkable for someone who can manoeuvre a vessel of 135 metres in length and 2,650 tonnes through locks and the confines of the river. I wondered why there was a "pushie" chained to the rail!

Working the way through the Skål toast in 20 different languages proved challenging and enlightening, prompting International Director Lone Ricks to comment that the toasts from the relevant countries should be posted on the Skål International website.

Tour director Tony Boyle worked tirelessly to ensure everyone had a good time and should be applauded for bringing together guests including Israelis and Palestinians. Their "Breaking of Bread" was a milestone for human relations by again using Skål to help bring about "Friendship and Peace".

The crème de la crème was undoubtedly a dinner hosted by Skål International Vienna at City Hall to hear a performance concert by two of their finest musicians.

Full marks to Austrian International Councillor Sylvia Liebisch for her vision and foresight in staging such an event, even if Australian-at-large Skålleague Leeroy Jones tried to upstage the occasion.

Then it was back to Budapest, where reluctantly farewells were the order of the day before a promise by Australians to extend out the welcome mat in Sydney in 2010.

*A footnote: We travel to learn how others find happiness but the way we see a new place depends on more than the place itself, thus appreciating the expression, "It's not where you go, it's the way that you do it."*



# 8TH ECOTOURISM AWARDS

WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT 70TH SKÅL WORLD CONGRESS IN BUDAPEST



The 2009 Ecotourism Awards ceremony was another great success. The 8th Annual Skål International Ecotourism Awards were presented by the President of Skål International, Hulya Aslantas, and the Director of External Communication & Media, Karine Coulanges, during the Opening Ceremony of the 70th Skål World Congress at Budapest's Palace of Arts.

Skål International is aiming at quality in tourism and values sustainable development in tourism as the key to the industry's future success and considers ecotourism just one area of the various components of sustainable development and responsible tourism. To encourage the conservation of the environment and help to promote the development of responsible and sustainable tourism, Skål International initiated an awards programme in 2002, during "The Year of Ecotourism and the Mountains" as declared by the United Nations.

While the purpose of these awards was to highlight best practices in ecotourism around the world, they were also created with the aim of acquainting the world with this new concept that puts emphasis on the importance of the interaction of the physical, cultural and social environment, the traveller's responsibility and the need for active community participation for ecotourism.

In their eight years, the awards have received continued support worldwide and 49 entries were received in 2009, originating from 25 countries: seven from Asia; 11 from the Americas; 15 from Europe; 10 from Africa; and six from Oceania.

The awards show the true implication of Skål International in the protection of the environment in conjunction with sustainable tourism. Ecotourism, together with other alternative forms of tourism, strengthens local economies and contributes to sustainable development.

The applications were evaluated by three independent judges and the scores, given by each separately, were added up to find the winners. The primary criteria for the evaluation is based on such points as: contribution to the conservation of nature and cultural heritage, community involvement, educational features, business viability and innovation.

Skål International is grateful for the meticulous work conducted by the three judges:

- Eugenio Yunis, from UNWTO
- Jack Soifer, Swedish Education and Consulting, Portugal
- José Koechlin, Inkaterra, Per

**Johnson Diversey** ([www.johnsondiversey.com](http://www.johnsondiversey.com)), whose global mission assumes a green position that supports sustainability in terms of ecology, efficiency, reduction in energy consumption, food and employee safety, is the main sponsor of the awards. The products they create and the methods they use are all aimed at making our world a safer and cleaner place.

This year, **Izник Foundation** ([www.iznik.com.tr](http://www.iznik.com.tr)) was a co-sponsor of the quartz trophies they had specially designed for Skål International. Combining ecology with the unique art of Izник (Ancient Nicea), the awards are a sign of preservation of natural sources and traditions and, with their special characteristics, they are specially chosen to emphasise the value of our global riches.

## TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS



### FRONTIERS NORTH ADVENTURES

Submitted by Frontiers North Adventures, Canada - [www.frontiersnorth.com](http://www.frontiersnorth.com)

**URBAN ACCOMMODATION**



**WE CARE – OPERATION PENGUIN**  
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**CITY AND VILLAGES**



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**SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM**  
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THE 8TH SKÅL INTERNATIONAL ECOTOURISM AWARDS WERE PRESENTED DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 70TH SKÅL WORLD CONGRESS. THE MAIN SPONSOR OF THE 2009 ECOTOURISM AWARDS WAS JOHNSON DIVERSEY ([WWW.JOHNSONDIVERSEY.COM](http://WWW.JOHNSONDIVERSEY.COM)). PICTURED AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY WITH HULYA ASLANTAS, PRESIDENT, SKÅL INTERNATIONAL, ARE FOUR JOHNSON DIVERSEY EXECUTIVES: ERIK JAN BETS, INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS DIRECTOR, EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA; RORY CAMPBELL, LODGING SECTOR DIRECTOR; ALP AKSOY, DIRECTOR, EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA; AND KEVIN SHIPLEY, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR.

Detailed information about the winners can be found on the Skål International website.



## Reflections on 60 years as a Skålleague

Geoffrey Pitt joined the Skål Club of London in 1949, transferring to Southampton 20 years later. In the following article (abridged from the original due to space requirements) he offers some light-hearted reflections on those 60 years...



At that time the travel trade was dominated by Thomas Cook, which meant their managers very much influenced UK Skål as well. Their Traffic Manager, Bob Smyrk, became International President in 1952.

You were no one in the travel business unless you were a Skål member, and Skål was regarded with high esteem. Sadly, we stayed very snobbish, which hampered our development, failing to grow as the travel business grew, and in my mind much to do with our shortage of members today.

My thought for a long time has been that we should have welcomed members of the rapidly expanding 18/30 Club as their members became 30-plus, but it is useless to look backwards.

At this point I should probably add in this small treatise that any thoughts are solely mine. Remember the old E&OE (errors and omissions excepted) which used to appear at the bottom of bills and invoices? Let me invoke it here.

Incidentally, the “we” throughout refers to my wonderful wife Jo and I together. Jo has been with me in Skål since we married in 1952 and I like to think she has had just as much pleasure and satisfaction as I.

So what has Skål done for me? Above all, Amicale – Friendship. Many of the friends we made on first coming into Skål are still friends today. With, of course, many new ones worldwide along the way. And what better way to business contacts through friendships?

I always maintain that you haven't had the best out of Skål until you have attended an International Congress. It has been wonderful to see the pride various nations take in their representation. One must surely remember that, while the importance of Skål in the UK may be declining, there are as many other nationalities to whom it is a new thing and they place a high value on their membership.

We have seen grown men weeping when they have failed to be elected to Skål International appointments. This can be dismissed as over-emotion but then we Brits tend to go the other way and be overly phlegmatic. But this reaction from other nationals shows the very high regard in which Skål has been and continues to be held by them.

## Joe Collins: “Skål moment” with the President



Joe Collins, National Treasurer of Skål International Republic of Ireland and a member and Treasurer of Skål International Dublin, proudly wore his Skål pin when he met President Barack Obama in Las Vegas. The meeting took place in Caesar's Palace where the President was attending a fund-raiser to kick off the election campaign on behalf of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who is up for re-election in 2010. Joe and his wife were guests of his daughter Therese and her husband Byron Georgiou, who is an active supporter of the Democratic Party. Joe and Patricia are pictured with President Obama and Senator Reid.

National Assemblies are almost as important as Internationals... making lasting friendships along the way. In addition to these friendships Skål has encouraged us in adopting a community spirit as well as taking us to places we would not otherwise have visited. And it has all been great fun!

At this point I would like to thank the very many Skål officers and friends who have shown us their friendship, loyalty and also help in difficult times.

I firmly believe that if you join an organisation you should aim to put something back in and not just benefit from what is on offer. Consequently I have actively served in several posts. Sorry if it reads like a CV but there seems no other way to go about it: London Council – London President – National President – Southampton President – Southampton Secretary – a National Auditor – Deputy UK International Councillor – and finally eight years as Southampton Newsletter Editor.

When I was London President it was quite usual to have 200



## Pierre Chaperon: honoured for long service

On the occasion of the National Committee meeting held in Townsville (Australia) on 22 August, a presentation was made to mark the retirement of Pierre Chaperon as Secretary of Skål International Australia after 19 years of service.

Pictured left to right are: Jim Power, Secretary General of Skål International; Hulya Aslantas, President of Skål International; Pierre Chaperon and his wife Kaye.



people at many of our functions and indeed at one we had Bobby Moore, then the hero of British football, as guest of honour. I have also tried to put some extra support into various Skål charities.

Well folks, there it is – 60 years in Skål. I haven't been able to get about much lately so I am sorry if it is a bit "the old times", but what else can you expect from an old timer himself!

## Ekrem Ferdi Sarper: a key figure in Skål Nicosia's history



Ekrem Yeşilada, President of Skål International Lefkoşa, presented a copy of the "Skål History" book, signed by Skål International President Hülya Aslantaş, to Ekrem Ferdi Sarper, one of the founder members and Vice President of the Nicosia club (formed in 1953), as well as the first President of Skål International Kyrenia in 1980. Ekrem Sarper, who turned 90 in February 2009, and his wife expressed their heartiest gratitude to Ekrem Yeşilada and Hülya Aslantaş for their "faithful and kind attitudes, which can be considered the real reflection of Skål friendship". He also thanked Lefkoşa, Kyrenia and Famagusta Skål members who proposed him as an honorary member of these clubs.

## Moises Veliz: honoured for services to Panama



A director of Copa Airlines and prominent figure in the world of commercial aviation, Moises Veliz was recently honoured by the Municipal Council of Panama for his "long-standing professional career" and services to the country.

Referring to the award, Skål International Panama said: "We feel honoured to have as a member someone who, with perseverance and a great deal of work and effort, has achieved numerous successes and has made an especially significant contribution to our club. His enthusiasm, professionalism, integrity and dedication have always marked him out as an outstanding figure. We are delighted once again to offer our warm congratulations for his receiving such a high honour."

## Annette Masson: honoured by minister



Annette Masson, President, Skål International France, and member of Skål International Paris, is pictured receiving from Hervé Novelli, the French Minister for Tourism, the distinction of "Officier de l'ordre National du Mérite" for her work as President of the Tourism & the Handicapped Association.



## Tamas Farkas: in memory of Budapest founding member

**Founding Skål International Budapest member Tamas Farkas died of a cerebral accident at the age of 82.** Peter Javorkai, Vice President of Skål International Budapest, recalls that the last occasion members had been with Tamas was at the Royal Waiting Hall on 4 November, just half an hour before the Presidential gala dinner.

"He was supposed to participate at the dinner but said he was too tired for a train trip and a long dinner since his heart had been weak over the last few months... Otherwise he was a very active person and absolutely fresh in mind. He participated in as many Skål lunches as he possibly could whenever he was in Hungary (he

had dual citizenship of Hungary and Switzerland, living in both countries in parallel)."

According to Peter Javorkai, Tamas often fondly recalled an opera visit during Secretary General Jim Power's first trip to Budapest in 2004, as well as the international press lunch two years ago, where they met again (pictured). Skål International Budapest members remembered him at their Christmas dinner in December.



# IMEX 2010

MORE INNOVATION AND BIGGER BUSINESS

Now in its eighth year, IMEX 2010, the award-winning international exhibition for the worldwide meetings, events and incentive travel industry (25-27 May at Messe Frankfurt), will build on the success of last year's exhibition with an increase in long-haul hosted buyers, more exhibitors and a more diverse professional education programme.

Over 20 new buyer groups have already been confirmed from the US, Asia Pacific and Middle East, delivered by intermediaries including Marriott Hotels, Hilton Hotels, Mandarin Oriental, Rocco Forte and Starcite. Participation from US association buyers will also be strong this year. Many have been attracted by the chance to participate in the IMEX Association Day on 24 May.

Those booking extra stand space for 2010 include Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Ritz Carlton Hotels, Mövenpick Hotels, the Spanish Tourist Office, Indian Holiday, the Czech Tourism Authority, Luxembourg and Liberty International. New exhibitors so far are Scandic Hotels, Warwick Hotels and Madrid, who will be taking their own stand for the first time.

## Varied education

IMEX 2010 will continue to balance an unparalleled number of business opportunities with an exceptional education programme delivered in English and German. Sessions will be organised into different tracks such as "environmental", "innovation" and "leadership" to allow visitors to choose seminars and plan their time more easily. Education will cover both professional and personal development themes this year. Educational workshops will also include a number of new green workshops on the Corporate Responsibility Stand, "Powered by GMIC".

## Launch of Meetings & Conventions 2020

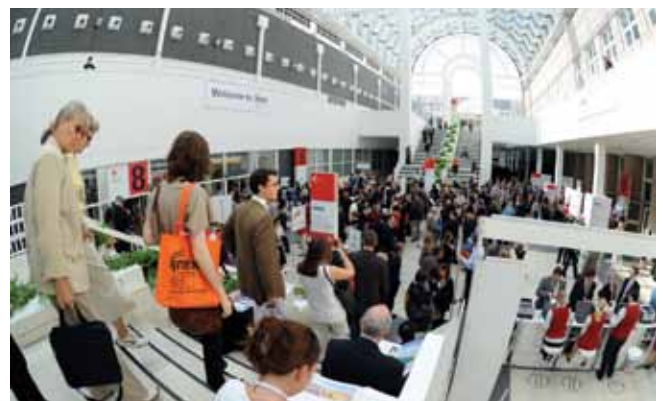
A first for IMEX 2010 will be a new initiative focusing on the future of the industry – Meetings & Conventions 2020. IMEX has partnered with ICCA and Fast Future to deliver a new groundbreaking research study looking at the future of live events, venues and meeting destinations. The study will explore the underlying trends and drivers that could shape the industry over the next decade and will drive a series of seminars and workshops at IMEX 2010.

## New York Times best-seller workshop

A new seminar based on New York Times best-selling book "Influencer" is also new for 2010. Influencer is a training concept which draws on the skills of hundreds of successful change agents around the world and combines them with five decades of the best social science research. This 1.5-hour session will be delivered by Grahame Robb Associates.

Commenting on preparations for IMEX 2010 in Frankfurt, IMEX Chairman Ray Bloom, said: ***"The industry returns to IMEX year after year because we deliver maximum return on investment for their money and time. To achieve this, we must provide the right quality of buyers; the right tools and information; all at the right time and in the right environment. I am delighted to confirm that IMEX 2010 will stick to this winning formula, although each year we raise the bar higher to reflect the pace of change in our industry."***

Association professionals interested in attending the IMEX Association Day can find more information plus details of how to apply online. This year's themed discussions will be on the subjects of Strategic Global Planning for Associations, How to Decide Where to Hold Your International Congresses and Leveraging Conference Content Online. Applicants must organise, influence or make budgetary decisions for international meetings, conventions or events.





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## UNWTO UPDATE Skål elected Vice President of Affiliate members

President Hülya Aslantas attended the 18th UNWTO General Assembly held in Astana, Kazakstan, from 3-8 October. Skål has been an Affiliate member since the 1980s and, with the new repositioning efforts, is aiming to take a more active role. Skål was a candidate for the position of Vice President of the Affiliate members and was elected during the General Assembly. Hülya Aslantas is pictured with the President of the Affiliated clubs, Eulogio Bordas, and other board members.

The Skål President had the opportunity to meet and present a letter to the Kazakstan Minister of Tourism and Sport, Temirkhan Dosmuhabetov, with a view to forming a Skål Club in Astana; and also had a meeting with several potential members who will follow up the formation efforts. On 5 October the President of the Republic of Kazakstan, Nursulta Nazarbayev, hosted a welcome reception at the Pyramid Cultural Centre, with superb performances of Kazakstan ensembles and performers.



## WTM LONDON Skål luncheon a highlight of annual show



Secretary General Jim Power and International Councillor Paul Follows joined other members Claire Farley (MD 2by2holidays) of Skål International Luton, and Carole O'Connor (Rovos Rail) of Skål International Johannesburg. Johan Vos (Rovos Rail) presented the prize of a safari holiday for two to South Africa, including a journey on the luxury Rovos Rail, to Jaap Hesselink, of Voyager Travel and a potential member for Skål International Luton. The competition was launched by 2by2holidays in conjunction with Travel Bulletin.



Skål International had a stand at WTM London which was a cooperation between Skål International, Skål International London and Skål International United Kingdom. Almost 70 Skål members attended the annual WTM Skål luncheon held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Tuesday 10 November and presided over by the President of Skål International London, Mats Wivesson. Over 100 contacts were made during the show by potential members and those interested in the formation of new Clubs.

## SKÅL AT EIBTM

### Promoting Skål at EIBTM

Skål International was present with a booth at EIBTM held in Barcelona (Spain) from 1 to 3 December. A "Happy Hour" was sponsored by the Croatia Convention and Incentive Bureau. Pictured with the President of Skål International, Nik Racic, are a number of Skål members who visited the booth. More than 30 meetings were held with people interested in Skål membership and the creation of new Clubs around the world. The Skål International booth is a free service to members, who are encouraged to visit the fairs in line with the Skål policy of "Doing Business Among Friends".



# One continent.

Geologists call it Pangea. We call it Emirates.

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Fly Emirates. Keep discovering.

## Invaluable help for members abroad

During my last trip to Japan in November 2008 I had to go to Osaka and, as usual before any trip abroad, I consulted the Skål internet site. I made an appointment with the President of Skål International Osaka, who was a tour operator, and when I went for the appointment at his office I was surprised to note that he had invited two other Skålleagues to attend the meeting. As a result, one of the agencies that was presented to me reserved a small group for dinner on the Bateaux Parisiens. This is what Skål is, and it works if one knows how to use it.



**Gérard Daniel**  
*Skål International Paris*

## Taking the family business to another level

When Corey Marshall was 12 years old, his dad was hit by a truck while riding a bike. That event laid the foundation for Marshall's future career. At the time, he wanted to become a chiropractor like the one who helped his dad recover. But it would turn out to be his mom's decision to support the family by taking a job with a small tourism company — which his parents later purchased — that would reveal Marshall's true calling. He started working at the company, Anderson Vacations, at 15. "It was a family approach; we all had to commit," he says.

After completing prerequisites for chiropractic school, Marshall was still undecided about his career, so he travelled to Australia in 1999. When he returned, he resumed helping with his parents' tours. A Christmas lights tour finally triggered Marshall's own light-bulb moment. "There I was, 22 and dressed up like an elf with a bunch of seniors on a bus tour," he recalls. "I realised the reason I wanted to be a chiropractor was because I wanted to help people. I knew then I could do that through tourism."

After that epiphany, Marshall dove into the family business and, in 2003, moved to Calgary from Sherwood Park to help increase the company's escorted bus and rail tours business.

Around that time, he uncovered the growing trend of independent travel, pitched the idea to his parents, approached travel partners and applied to Travel Alberta for a grant for support.

His efforts paid off and, in 2004, he launched the Perfect Fit program to great success. Anderson's independent travel division is now nearly four times the size of the more traditional escorted tours portion of the company.



In 2005, Marshall (who had joined Skål International Calgary the year before) and his wife, Karen McCardle, bought Anderson Vacations from his parents. They then launched SimpleRES, an online convention, housing and call centre support business that manages registration and accommodations for large groups and conferences.

Corey Marshall has proven that tourism is lucrative in Alberta, taking his family business from \$2.2 million to \$23 million in just four years. He's a strong advocate for youth in tourism, and aims to keep tourism an Alberta industry worth investing in.

He attributes his success to not only his own determination but the help of those around him. "An incredible work ethic, supportive family, intelligent wife and business partner and goal-setting. What do you want to achieve? Write it down and make yourself accountable for it. Plus, you need spot-on time-management skills for a balanced life."



## Doing “eco-business” among friends

I was preparing to leave for Bangkok and during my preparations I consulted the Skål website to book a hotel room at a Skålleague's hotel. By clicking on the “members” link and then “Skål Clubs”, I was surprised to discover the vast amount of information available on the site. I found the hotel, the same one that I had seen in Skål News, and I sent an e-mail to the director of the hotel, who is a Skålleague. A reply was not long in coming and was a form of welcome together with the reservation.

Once there, I met the hotel director and, of course, after a “Skål” in the hotel bar, the exchange of banners, a friendship was born. During our conversations, I presented, within the framework of sustainable development, an apparatus that can be installed in kitchens to filter used washing-up and dishwasher water to remove oil and fat, so that non-contaminated water goes into the pipes.

The following day I was called to the director's office and he told me my project was of interest to him, and with that we went to the kitchens where I did an installation study. After having agreed on a price and time frame, the installation was completed: “Business among friends” was a success.



This hotel has been recognised as being “eco-friendly” for its actions and projects in various areas, helping in the preservation of the environment. The Skålleague concerned is Andrew Wood and the hotel is Chaophya Park Hotel & Resorts.

**Albert Danan**

*Skål International Grenoble*

## Working together for sustainable tourism



The two Skålleagues pictured here began working together in Alicante (Spain) in June 2009. Yohann Robert (left), a member of Skål International Toulouse and Secretary of Skål International France, assists companies and tourism destinations to put into place sustainable development projects (advice, training, conferences, publication of practical guides, etc.); and Guido Bauer, Vice President of Skål International Los Angeles, is director of the Green Globe Certification Programme, the only international programme dedicated solely to sustainable development in tourism. Yohann became an auditor for the network set up by Guido and an active partner in Green Globe in France and the French-speaking countries. Next step: Green Globe will be present at the Ecorismo Nantes 2010 forum-fair on sustainable development for tourism professionals organised by Yohann Robert's team. Meanwhile, several other projects are being studied.



# COUNCILLOR'S CORNER

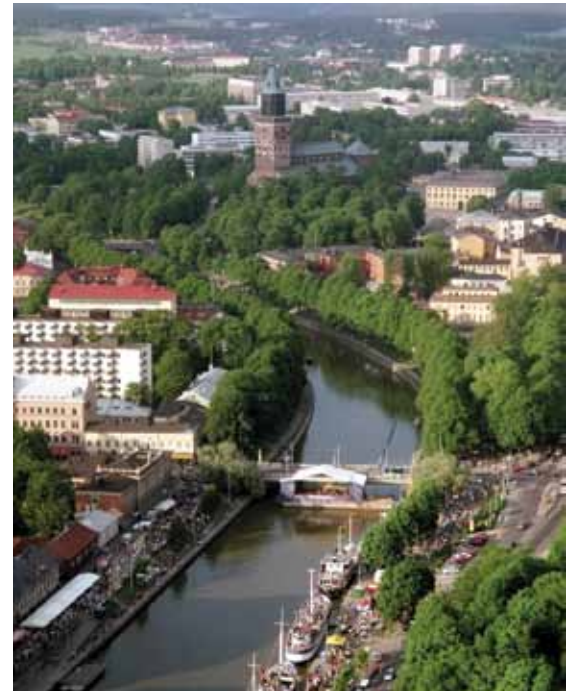
## AN EXOTIC COUNTRY STEEPED IN HISTORY



By Tuula Lindberg  
International Councillor for Finland

**Skål International Finland is today represented by two clubs. The Helsinki Club received its membership certificate in May 1939, becoming the 22nd international Skål Club in the world, and the Turku Club celebrated its 35th anniversary last year, so the 130 Finnish members really enjoy long-lasting Skål traditions.**

Turku, the host city of the Skål World Congress in 2011, is situated in the south-western corner of Finland. The world's biggest and probably most beautiful archipelago, with thousands of islands, begins within the city boundaries. A trip to the islands is really a treat. Ever since the Viking era, south-west Finland has been the meeting point of eastern and western cultures. Situated by the sea it is a gateway to the entire Baltic region and links south-west Finland and the rest of the country to western Europe.



In 2011 Turku will, together with Tallin (Estonia), be European Capital of Culture. Turku's victory was due to its vibrant cultural life, its excellent services for visitors as well as inhabitants, its high-level research and development, and its ancient history.

Finland is an exotic country. We have Lapland with its fells and reindeers in the north behind the Arctic Circle. We have a long border with Russia in the east, which gives a special flavour to that part of the country. We are surrounded by the sea in the south and west, and we have a water network of almost 200,000 lakes. So NATURE is the main component of the Finnish tourism and meetings industry product. Beyond the borders

and within easy reach there are several interesting places to visit such as St. Petersburg, Tallin and Stockholm...

One could say that the whole country of Finland is a RETREAT venue. Finland is one of the biggest countries in Europe by area, but has only 5.3 million inhabitants. So there is a lot of space with interesting venues surrounded by nature, to hide away and enjoy meditation – if one so wishes.

In Finland we use snow, ice and the midnight sun, as well as unique design, art and music, and latest innovations in mobile technology as building blocks of our tourism and meetings industry product. We speak Finnish and the sauna is our second home – for a foreigner, a visit to Finland is really an exotic experience.

The slogan of Turku 2011 European Capital of Culture is **“TURKU ON FIRE”**. Please come and experience the fire by your Turku hosts in September 2011.



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