

Website

The Website Committee, being chaired by Tom Moulton, has met by telephone on several occasions to work on various elements of the website. Tom and I have also have our own conversations. The first priority has been to upgrade the locator map and its connectivity. This should be addressed shortly.

Secondary priorities have been to upgrade Members at a Glance and Skalleagues in the News, while maintaining a link for PR Newswire. There will be improvements in our links to include our current and new travel industry friends, starting with Tourism Cares and adding the organizations Holly and I saw or talked with by telephone in late March.

Advocacy

The Advocacy Committee met in early March and recommends the adoption of the following four issues, which Holly and I discussed with various travel industry friends and had excellent feedback:

1. Support Project: Time Off. Skal International--USA will assist US Travel in urging Americans to use more of their accrued vacation time, hopefully generating more travel. This will have a positive impact on the use of travel industry products.
2. Support the public private partnerships authorized in the National Park Centennial Act. Legislation passed at the end of 2016 allows more dedicated funding for national parks from private sources through the National Parks Foundation. Adoption of this position will allow us to urge private sector companies to set up with such contributions and encourage the National Park Service to use the funds in ways which support tourism.
3. Support the trillion dollar infrastructure initiative of the Trump Administration. America is behind on infrastructure upkeep and expansion of airports and intermodal connections to airports. This position would add our support to an important initiative of US Travel. Infrastructure investment is the most strongly supported issue on a bipartisan basis by both Congress and the public.
4. Support freedom to travel with security and a expedited, simple process. This issue will allow to weigh in on the most important debate on travel to the United States today. With interest in travel to America dropping in some analyses, being in a position to speak out on the freedom to travel with security is critical to our members and our industry.

On behalf of the Advocacy Committee, I recommend the adoption of these four positions on our April phone call.

Travel Sector Relationships

President Holly Powers and I spent a good part of the past week either visiting with or speaking to the leaders of key national organizations to develop and implement relationships. There is follow up to do in every case.

In addition to her prior conversation with Terry Dale, President, (member SI New York), United States Tour Operators Association, we engaged the following organizations. I am only listing the top individual for the purposes of this report. A more complete report with additional specifics should be available for our May call. In the meantime, all organizations seem willing to be listed on the links section of our website.

Organizations contacted were as follows:

American Bus Association, Peter Pantuso, President (member, SI Washington)

American Hotel and Lodging Association, Matthew MacLaren, Vice President (member, SI Washington)

Brand USA, Chris Thompson, President (member, SI Washington)

Destination Marketing Association International, Don Welsh, President

National Office of Travel and Tourism, Julie Heizer, Deputy Director

National Tour Association, Morgan Maravich, Manager (member, SI Washington)

Student and Youth Travel Association, Carlyann Assante, Executive Director (member, SI Washington)

Sustainable Travel International, Geoff Bolan, CEO (member, SI Seattle)

U. S. Travel Association, Malcolm Smith, Senior Vice President

Skal Club of Addis Ababa

I will be in Ethiopia in April, relating to expanding Skal into Ethiopia. During that time, I will be participating in a tour of the country with Skal International President David Fisher, a meeting with the African Union about expanding Skal throughout the continent, and representing SI Washington, one of the co-sponsors of the re-established club, on its charter night, April 8. President David will be at all of these events.

US-India Skal Club Twinning

We have reached out to India to start the process of identifying clubs for twinning for US-India Tourism Year, which will be part of the twinning ceremonies in Hyderabad. Brand USA, US Travel, the National Office of Travel and Tourism, and Destination Marketing Association International are all interested in this initiative.

SI Washington has agreed to twin with SI Dehli, the capital city club in India.

IPW

U. S. Travel will make sure that Presidents David and Holly have convention passes, as well as a booth for Skal International--USA, if we want one, during IPW. I am planning to be available to walk them both throughout the show.

SI Washington is holding a Skal event on Monday, June 5, at Claudia's Restaurant, \$75 per person. Publicity about the event is starting now.

Thank you.

Skal!

April 2017 Report
Stephen B. Richer
Director
Public Relations and Communications

Monthly Report to the Members

Due to my international travel schedule, the April report was distributed to the members on April 25 after several modifications from other Executive Committee members. The report focused on the April 3 teleconference of the EC.

New Press Release

It was my pleasure to prepare the second press release of the year on the four issues adopted by the Executive Committee—Project Time Off, the trillion dollar proposed infrastructure federal investment, public private partnerships at national parks, and freedom to travel with security. With the help of Vice President—Administration Burcin Turkkan, the release was distributed with hundreds of media pickups.

Industry Relationships

President Holly Powers and I met in person or by telephone with a number of key organizations at the end of March, we are now in the process of getting the information we need to give them visibility on the Skal International-USA website and following up on other shared points of interest. A special proposal from NTA will be discussed on the May 8 teleconference of the Executive Committee.

IPW

President Holly Powers and International President David Fisher will be in Washington in early June for the biggest trade show in the United States. We will be walking the floor to meet with US and international Skalleagues with a focus on supporting our existing clubs and looking for cities with prospects to start or re-establish clubs.

Website Committee

Tom Moulton and his committee have been very active improving the content and usability of the Skal International-USA website, while also looking at our other social media, namely Facebook and Linked In. There should be visible progress for

all Skalleagues. We urge all members to use our Website and join the other social media.

Phone Calls

While there has been uneven success in reaching every club this month (at the time of this report), those successfully contacted are pleased with the new direction focusing on membership growth, communications, and relevancy.

Members are welcome to contact me at any time at RicherAdvisors@gmail.com or call 228-596-7004.

Thank you.

Skal!

Club contacts:

Albany, Ernie Bruno. All is well, working on increasing membership. Likes the new direction of the EC.

Anchorage, Sheron Patrick. Left a couple of messages. No response to date, probably need to do an email.

Arkansas, Montine McNulty. Club is working hard on membership and continuing record of excellence. Appreciates efforts at relevance by EC.

Atlanta, Harry Huff. Burcin keeps them informed. Very positive about activities of Skal USA. Has some interest in India twinning.

Atlantic City, Ed Davis. Planning for 25th anniversary celebration. Has some suggestions on communications and budgeting.

Website Committee:

Chairman Tom Moulton getting a lot accomplished on enhancing our website, plus setting consistent criteria for all of the Skal USA social media (website, Facebook, newsletter, etc.), and specific work on the club locator section of the website. Tom and I have been communicating regularly.

Advocacy Committee:

The committee recommends adding the continuation of matching ESTA fee funding to support the operations of Brand USA, which will be voted on by the Executive Committee on Thursday.

NGOs on the website:

Continuing to add NGO information as it comes in. Already submitted are AH&LA, NTA, ABA, and DMAI. Eight more to go. We are in touch with all of them.

IPW:

Made arrangements to have both President Holly and International President David at IPW, but David was unable to get a US visa in time, due to having traveled to Iran last year on official Skal business. We will proceed with just President Holly. No one from Skal International was available to fill in for David.

Skal Washington is hosting a big Skal reception for \$75 a head on June 5 at Claudia's Restaurant, 6 pm, at IPW.

Planned activities:

Write and distribute release on Brand USA this week, if Executive Committee approves it.

Respectfully submitted,

Skal!

Steve

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Stephen B. Richer

Director

Public Relations and Communications

Skal International--USA