



GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

**New Century Grand Hotel
Hangzhou, China**

25 March 2009

Present:

ARGENTINA	FRANCE	ITALY	PORTUGAL
AUSTRALIA	FINLAND	JAPAN	SINGAPORE
AUSTRIA	GERMANY	LUXEMBOURG	SOUTH KOREA
BELGIUM	GREAT BRITAIN	MEXICO	SWITZERLAND
BRAZIL	HELLAS	MOROCCO	THAILAND
CANADA	HOLLAND	NEW ZEALAND	TURKEY
CHINA	HONG KONG	NORWAY	USA
CHINESE TAIPEI	HUNGARY	ROMANIA	
CZECH REPUBLIC	ISRAEL	RUSSIA	
DENMARK	IRELAND	PHILIPPINES	

Absent: MALAYSIA and SPAIN

Inactive: SWEDEN

Observers: DUBAI and INDIA

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Official Welcome

President John Sun Dong warmly welcomed the delegation. After delegates watched a short video sent from Claudio Caser (featuring Mr. Roberto Naldo GM of Hotel Giardino, Ascona, Switzerland). President Sun Dong talked with delegates about how Les Clefs d'Or China is structured.

President Sun Dong says it is necessary to “think of others first; provide service from the heart.” In the last 10 years, 69 courses have been taught to Chinese Gold Key members. Candidates must pass a test at the conclusion of the course.

President Sun Dong is proud of the many accomplishments of his section. “We promote UICH at every opportunity.” China has national members in more than 1,000 hotels throughout the country. A committee is in place to discuss, analyze, and anticipate future changes in the hotel and service sectors. Each city has its own committee to handle the membership process.

Les Clefs d'Or China distributes its income on the basis of education and training, and to support those in need. Of the money they bring in, 10% goes to charity; 40% is used for education and training, and the final 50% is in a fund that will help support retired members. Those who have worked 30 years as a member of the society will receive support on their retirement.

China created and uses the “E-Concierge” system. Delegates watched a video that describes the system’s functionality, which includes a 24-hour reservation hotline and a tracking system that allows China to report its profits/losses to decisionmakers in hotel management. Information is power, and it will help bring more business to hotels. President Sun Dong’s dream is to link the world to China’s efficient system.

President Bastoni welcomed Ms. Daphne Kau, the representative from the International Herald Tribune and Mrs. Daniela Cerboni from American Express.

International President’s Report

President Roger Bastoni thanked the Chinese delegation for the excellent job they did organizing this congress. He is delighted to see such great participation.

President Bastoni is concluding his two-year tenure as President. He is pleased to have been able to serve the organization and is proud to see all his mandates realized:

Most countries have now complied with all the international filing requirements at the Paris office. There is still a bit more work to be done before the entire process is complete.

Andy Pongco’s passing has created a legacy that motivates youngsters to attend International Congresses and pursue the profession as a lifetime career. This year, 10 candidates have been nominated to be considered for the Andy Pongco Award.

The International Review continues to improve and finally, through the support of new sponsors, it is mostly self-financing.

The 2008-2010 Book of Members has been successfully produced. The next Book will reflect some changes (specifically, it will be alphabetized by country instead of by zone) and will also be produced in CD format.

The new international UICH website is up and functioning very well. To date, 38 countries have put elements from their country on the site. President Roderick Lévejac was thanked for all his diligence in seeing this task to fruition.

President Bastoni was extremely pleased to report that all sections paid their subscription fees on time in 2008.

President Bastoni thanked the Zone Directors and their primary liaison, Third Vice President Emmanuel Vrettos, for their efforts to streamline communication amongst countries. President Bastoni has observed that, when he attends national AGMs, there is sometimes a lack of information given about international business. He hopes this will change in the future.

President Bastoni presented a slide show highlighting his activities and travels.

Introduction of Newly Elected National Presidents

General Secretary Virginia Casale announced new presidents elected since the Copenhagen Congress:

ARGENTINA: Alejandro Noya
AUSTRIA: Mr. Christian Paral
AUSTRALIA: Elvis Soiza
GREAT BRITAIN: Paul Still
IRELAND: Brendan Spence
JAPAN: Etsuko Higashide
NORWAY: Henning Kletvang
MEXICO: Yasmin Flores
MOROCCO: Taoufiq Ait El Haddad
PHILIPPINES: Leo Hidalgo
RUSSIA: Ms. Ekaterina Zhuravleva

Lecture of Correspondence and Roll of Deceased Members

A lecture of correspondence from the following individuals was read by General Secretary Virginia Casale: Mr. Rainald Egerth, Mr. Andre Damonte, Mr. Piotr Prazula, Mr. Marco Milanez, Mr. Gerard Parent, and a message from Liborio Pimenta of Portugal.

General Secretary Virginia Casale requested a moment of silence in memory of the following deceased members

From Belgium: Michael Peetermans, From Canada: Diane Harding
From Finland: Timo Mannonen
From Great Britain: Richard Higgins
Roy Harden
From Hellas: Christodoulos Vazeos

From Holland: Luck Rockx
From Ireland: Fred Meridith
Tom Flanagan
Charles Marnell
Michael Nolan
Maurice Horgan
James Connor
From Portugal: António Pinho Figueiredo
António Domingos
From Switzerland: Armando Benech
Modeste Follonier
Gian-Domenico Pedrazzi
From France: René De Vroede
Raymond Del Rocchio
From Italy: Michele Cinque
Silvestri Mario
Pacini Piero

Resume of Decisions Taken at the Board of Directors Meeting

General Secretary Virginia Casale reported the following highlights from the Board of Directors meeting on 23 March 2009:

- Each President gave a report on developments within their section. Overall, UICH is healthy and there is good interest in new memberships, both individually and nationally.
- The Board reviewed the official Code of Ethics. Due to unfortunate situations in Copenhagen last year, an ethics committee was created. The objective is to ensure appropriate member behavior at all times. Presidents Maurice Dancer, Gregory Tan, Gustavo Concha, and Mr. Kevin Trimoulla of Switzerland agreed to serve on this voluntary committee.

There is no provision in the statutes for cruise ship concierges. No cruise ship concierges have been authorized to wear keys or to represent themselves as members of UICH.

The use of the UICH logo can only be done with official permission.

With the exception of 11 countries still missing their trademark protection documents, all member sections are up-to-date with the required paperwork to be filed in the Paris office.

We are pleased to welcome observers from Dubai and India.

UICH continues to seek quality sponsors to keep the cost of congresses affordable. This year, donations have been received from American Express, International Herald Tribune, and Elite. President Alain Vanderauwera hopes to add the Chic Shopping Outlet Group (which represents 9 shopping outlet villages throughout Europe) to the list of next year's sponsors.

Another way to defray costs is a raffle, and the USA section brought the Tiger Raffle to China this year. Several wonderful prizes have been donated. Tickets will be sold throughout the congress and winners will be announced during the gala.

Adoption of the Minutes from the General Assembly in Copenhagen

President Maurice Dancer motioned to accept the minutes from the General Assembly meeting in Copenhagen. President Gustavo Concha seconded; the general assembly approved the minutes by a show of majority hands.

Treasurer's Report for 2008 and Budget for 2009

President Geoff Argue motioned to accept the Treasury Report and Budget as presented at the Board of Directors meeting by Treasurer Jean-Roland Boutillé. President Alejandro Noya seconded; the motion carried by a unanimous show of hands.

Future Congresses

Upcoming congresses have been proposed as follows:

- 57th International Congress: Lisbon, Portugal – 14-19 January 2010
- 58th International Congress: Toronto, Canada – 2011
- 59th International Congress: London, England – 2012
- 60th International Congress: Auckland, New Zealand - 2013

A short video on Portugal was shown to all delegates. A short video on Canada, host of the 58th Congress in 2011, was also viewed.

There is interest from Italy and Switzerland to host the 61st International Congress in 2014.

Mr. Timothy Tan (Malaysia) invited delegates to attend the Asian Congress, 7-9 August 2009, in Malaysia.

American Express Lifestyle Presentation

President Bastoni introduced Mrs. Daniela Cerboni (American Express) who gave a presentation on how American Express Lifestyle services interact and cooperate with Les Clefs d'Or concierges.

Andy Pongco Award

Comité des Sages member Ms. Marjorie Silverman explained how this award evolved. Mr. Andy Pongco (from the Philippines) passed away in 2007, just as he was about to become the International President of UICH. He was an area Zone Director who helped many Asian sections established themselves. He traveled extensively and his passion was organizing educational classes throughout Asia for young concierges.

The Andy Pongco Award was created during the presidency of Mr. Denis O'Brien. It is meant to honor Mr. Pongco's memory and to encourage all national presidents and area directors to mentor young people.

To be a candidate, members must be a member of Les Clefs d'Or, they must be under 35 years of age, they must be attending their first congress they must be fluent in English, and their congress attendance must be sponsored by their national section.

The winner receives paid registration and airfare to the next congress.

Candidates take a comprehensive test that assesses areas of hotel knowledge, UICH history, restaurant knowledge, geographical expertise, and more. The test also includes two essays. Candidates were given 10 days to complete the exam, and they were invited to use any resources necessary. All candidates have also undergone personal interviews with the Award Committee.

Last year's first-ever award winner, Mr. Tony Chang (Chinese Taipei) came to the podium along with Past President Denis O'Brien and Mrs. Daniela Cerboni (American Express), who sponsored the award last year. Mrs. Cerboni congratulated Mr. Chang and gave him her best wishes for a "glamorous concierge career." Past President O'Brien presented Mr. Chang with a trophy and a certificate.

This year's candidates were introduced:

- From Argentina, Maria José Iturralde
- From Austria, Annabell Schwarz
- From Denmark, Anders Olsted Ruggiero
- From France, Christophe Caron
- From Great Britain, Toru Machida
- From Hungary, Gabor Sinka
- From the USA, Naomi Abe
- From Thailand, Wirachai Chakumrod
- From Holland, Eef Sparta

Ms. Silverman was inspired by the essays of the candidates and highlighted some of the answers to the question, "What does Les Clefs d'Or mean to you?"

Ms. Silverman was delighted to discover how well-mentored all the candidates were. Each understands the culture of Les Clefs d'Or, the culture of service. They are all winners. Candidates received a standing ovation.

The 2009 recipient of the Andy Pongco Award went to Mr. Christophe Caron. Mr. Caron cut his teeth at the Disneyland Hotel in Paris. Now, he works at the world-famous Four Seasons George V. Ms. Silverman concluded with a quip, "There are no little jobs; there are great concierges in small hotels and some not so great ones in large hotels."

Comité des Sages member Mr. Aldo Giacomello presented the award to Mr. Caron on behalf of Elite car rental, this year's sponsor.

President Roger Bastoni looks forward to seeing many presidents bringing many more candidates next year.

Membre d'Honneur Diplomas

International membership in UICH were issued to the following:

ARGENTINA: Carlos Budden
HUNGARY: Andras Gunst
PORTUGAL: Sergio Correia
TURKEY: Babur Arslan
NEW ZEALAND: David Shackleton
BELGIUM: Michel Hasselwander
NORWAY: Svein Petter Haslerud
ISRAEL: Jonathan Harpaz
SWITZERLAND: Roberto Naldi
FINLAND: Timo Georgsson
THAILAND: Pierre Andre Pelletier
FRANCE: Cedric Moreau and Sylvain Stagnaro
HELLAS: Georgios Prasinou
LUXEMBOURG: Carlo Spletz
BRAZIL: Ronaldo Galdino Campos
HOLLAND: K. Quaser
SINGAPORE: Luxury Tours & Travel

Elections and Speeches by Candidates

The candidates were asked to give their speeches to the general assembly; after which the election process began. The positions that were running unchallenged were voted in by acclamation as follows:

- For Treasurer, Mr. Jean-Roland Boutillé (France)
- For Assistant General Secretary, Mr. Shujaat Khan (USA)
- For General Secretary, Mr. Michael Romei (USA)
- For First Vice President, Ms. Virginia Casale (Canada)
- For President, Mr. Robert Watson (USA)

Ballots were cast to determine the Third Vice President. Nominees included Mr. Massimiliano Errichiello (Italy); Mr. Simon Thomas (Great Britain) and Mr. Colin Toomey (Australia)

Ballots were cast to determine the Second Vice President. Nominees included Mr. Emmanuel Vrettos (Hellas) and Mr. Arshad Khokhar (Denmark).

Ms. Marjorie Silverman and Mr. Andras Gunst counted the ballots and winners were announced as follows:

- Mr. Colin Toomey for the position of the Third Vice President
- Mr. Emmanuel Vrettos for Second Vice President

President Roger Bastoni congratulated the winners and thanked the Comité des Sages for handling the election so efficiently.

Questions/Comments:

Several people stood to congratulate the Board of Directors and Executive Committee on all their hard work.

An Indian observer, Mr. Albert Amanna (InterContinental Mumbai) asked if a map of India showing Les Clefs d'Or member presence could be linked to the international website.

Mr. Massimo Francucci (Kempinski Munich) asked what is being done to protect the concierge profession and Les Clefs d'Or. President Bastoni responded that the Board of Directors puts its heart into this effort every year. One of the best ways he knows to protect the career is to follow up with guests after their departures. He concluded his response by saying what a compliment it is that there are so many in the world who wish to compliment us.

Luc Lavoie (Le Crystal Hotel, Montreal) suggested that UICH's international website be password encoded similar to the way that Canada and the USA presently operate.

Raphael Pallais (Plaza Athenée, New York) asked Les Clefs d'Or to look into creating a permanent IT committee.

General Secretary Virginia Casale reported that Hellas and Ireland have nominated Past President Denis O'Brien to join the Comité des Sages.

President's Conclusion and End of Meeting

Comité des Sages member Ms. Marjorie Silverman offered concluding remarks. She explained that the Conseil des Sages are available to do any kind of project that may be assigned by the Board of Directors. As a suggestion, she mentioned that future General Assemblies may profit from hearing questions first and conducting business last, rather than the reverse which has been the common practice to date.

President Roger Bastoni characterized this General Assembly as a "day of change." He wishes Mr. Watson the very best. He has confidence that he will carry out all his duties in very fine style. He thanked everyone for being themselves and acting with confidence and smiles. He thanked his Board of Directors, his Zone Directors, his Executive Committee, and especially General Secretary Virginia Casale for all that she did to make his term so successful.

The meeting was adjourned.