SKAL INTERNATIONAL TAMPA BAY

Member Handbook

Est. 1959

Welcome to Skål International Tampa Bay!

Fellow Skålleagues:

I want to thank each of you for your continued confidence, support, and active participation in SKAL Tampa Bay. Our club is intent on building friendships, networking with like-minded professionals, and strengthening our voice within the travel and tourism community and across the global SKAL network. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Skål Tampa Bay, I am very grateful that you are a member of the most respected professional organization in the global travel and tourism industry. I also offer a very warm welcome to the new members joining our club this year.

Since its founding in Paris in 1932, Skål International has brought together leaders from every sector of the travel and hospitality industry under one guiding principle: "Doing Business Among Friends."

The Skål network creates opportunities for collaboration, professional growth, and lasting friendships among the leaders in tourism.

Since we were first chartered in 1959, our club has in fact played an important role in connecting leaders across Tampa Bay's ever-growing tourism industry.

Please take full advantage of your membership by attending meetings regularly, participating in activities, connecting with fellow members both locally and globally, and bringing new members into our club.

Thank you again for all you do to support our Club. I'm excited for the remainder of the year and look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting very soon. Feel free to contact me anytime with questions about our group.

Welcome to Skål Tampa Bay!

Skål!

Bryan P. Clancy
President 2026
Skål Tampa Bay

Table of Contents

Welcome 1
Welcome Message from 2026 President Bryan Clancy 1

The Basics 4
What is Skål? 4
The Meaning of the Word Skål 5
The Skål Toast 5
Skålleagues 5

Ten Reasons to ba a member of Skal Tampa Bay 6

Brief History of Skål International 7
Founding 7
Paris 7
Skål Quickly Grows Beyond Paris 9
Skål International Today 11
How Clubs, National Committees & Skal International Work Together 12

Brief History of Skål USA 13
New York 13
American Cities Begin Forming their own Clubs 14
2026 Skål USA Clubs 15

Brief History Skål Tampa Bay 15

Who Qualifies for Membership in Skål 16
Active Membership 17
Retired Membership 17
Life Membership 17
Honorary Membership 18

Young Skål and Project Future 18
Young Skål Membership 18
Two Types of Young Skål 18
Young Skål Tampa Bay 19
Project Future 19

Engagement 19

Skål Tampa Bay Benefits 20
Meetings and Events 20
Skål NASC 2026 (May 2 – 7, 2026) 20
Benefits of Membership 20

Skål Florida Member Retreat 2026 (September 18 – 20, 2026) 20
Skål International World Congress (September 29 – October 2, 2026) 20

Visiting Other Skål Clubs 21

Skål Traditions 21
Skal Entomology
The Skål Song 22

Florimond Volckaert and the Florimond Volckaert Fund 22

Frequently Asked Questions 23

2026 Dates To Remember..... 25

Websites to Remember..... 25

Top 10 Things Every Skål Member Should Try to Do 25

List of Skål Tampa Bay Presidents 26

.

The Basics

What is Skål?

Skål International is the only global organization that unites all sectors of the travel and tourism industry. It is a global organization of travel and tourism professionals dedicated to promoting friendship, cooperation, and business relationships among leaders in the industry. Founded in Paris in 1932, **Skål** brings together executives and decision-makers from every sector of tourism, including:

- Hotels and resorts
- Airlines
- Cruise lines
- Attractions
- Tour operators
- Travel agencies
- Transportation companies
- Tourism promotion organizations
- Industry suppliers

Unlike many industry associations that focus on a single sector, **Skål** unites professionals across the entire travel and hospitality ecosystem.

Skål was created on the belief that strong personal relationships among tourism leaders lead to stronger businesses and a healthier global travel industry. Members meet regularly at local clubs around the world to share ideas, discuss industry trends, and build professional relationships in an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual respect.

Today, **Skål International** operates through hundreds of local clubs in more than seventy countries, representing ten thousand members worldwide. These clubs are connected through national organizations such as **Skål USA** and through the international governing body of **Skål International**. Members have opportunities to participate in local meetings, national gatherings, and the annual **Skål International** World Congress, which brings together tourism leaders from around the globe. Through its global network, **Skål** fosters cooperation, knowledge sharing, and professional development within the tourism industry. Members benefit from a trusted community of colleagues who support one another professionally while also promoting responsible tourism and sustainable growth in destinations worldwide. For many tourism professionals, **Skål** provides a unique combination of friendship, networking, and leadership within one of the world's most important industries.
The guiding philosophy of **Skå**l is simple: "Doing Business Among Friends."

The Meaning of the Word Skål

The name **Skål** comes from the Scandinavian word traditionally used when offering a toast among friends (similar to "Cheers", "Salud", "Slanté" or "Prost"). Historically, the word also referred to a shared drinking bowl passed among companions as a symbol of friendship, trust and goodwill. Over time, the word evolved into a greeting or toast used across Scandinavia to celebrate fellowship and shared experiences.

In the context of **Skål International**, the word represents the spirit on which the organization was founded—bringing together professionals from across the travel and tourism industry in a spirit of

friendship and cooperation. Since its founding in Paris in 1932, **Skål** has embraced the idea that strong personal relationships among industry leaders foster collaboration, mutual support, and successful business partnerships.

The Skål Toast

At **Skål** meetings around the world, members often conclude gatherings with the traditional **Skål** toast. Traditionally, in our Tampa Bay club, we open AND close our gatherings with the toast. Someone is selected to lead it, while members stand, raise a glass and repeat the toast:

"To fellow Skålleagues everywhere,

Happiness!

Good Health!

Friendship!

Long Life!

Skål!"

The **Skål** toast symbolizes the core values of the organization:

- **Friendship** – Building lasting personal relationships among tourism professionals
- **Cooperation** – Working together across companies, sectors, and countries
- **Professional respect** – Recognizing the contributions of colleagues throughout the travel industry
- **International goodwill** – Promoting understanding and collaboration among nations through tourism

This simple but meaningful tradition reflects the organization's enduring philosophy of "Doing Business Among Friends." By raising a glass together, members celebrate not only their professional connections but also the shared commitment to strengthening the global travel and tourism community.

Skålleagues

The use of the word "Skålleagues"—a combination of **Skål** and colleagues—symbolizes the unique spirit of camaraderie that distinguishes **Skål** International as a global network of tourism leaders.

10 Reasons to be a Member of a Skål International Chapter

1. Place your business and tourism community on the **Skål** map as a worldwide destination for tourism and hospitality
2. Build relationships with other leaders in the tourism industry
   - Within the 45 USA Chapters – 1,600+ Members
   - Within the 335 Worldwide Chapters – 13,000+ Professionals
   - Lifelong Friendships
3. Opportunities to exchange ideas and network with other tourism professionals
4. Travel Discounts – Special rates offered by fellow Skålleagues worldwide, including:
   - Car Rental Discounts and Coupons
   - Hotel Discounts and Upgrades
   - Travel Insurance Programs not available to the general public
5. Mentor industry leaders of the future (Young **Skål** Student)
6. Database access to more than 13,000+ members around the globe
7. Ability to promote your product to members and their clients, business to business opportunities on a local, national, and international level
8. Representation and recognition at Trade Fairs
   - IPW
   - ABA (American Bus Association) Marketplace
   - World Congress and Regional Congresses
   - Discounted access to participate and network with existing and potential Skålleagues. Look for the **Skål** pin or ribbon.
9. Seminars, educational opportunities, and top-notch speakers at meetings and Congresses
   - Webinars on current industry topics
   - Best practices
10. Learn about and support Sustainable Tourism efforts – Get involved in your tourism community
    - **Skål** Gives Back
    - Scholarships
      a. Service projects – Tourism Cares

The Brief History of Skål International

Founding

Skål International was founded in Paris in December 1932, inspired by an extraordinary journey that brought together travel professionals from several European countries. In May of that year, a group of travel agents and tourism leaders from Paris were invited on a fam trip to Scandinavia to experience the newly introduced air routes of the Dutch airline KLM. The journey, which included visits to Denmark and Sweden, they were welcomed with the traditional toast "**Skål**." This fostered strong friendships among the participants from all the nations involved. This is generally considered the inspirational origin of **Skål**.

The KLM fam trip was significant because it demonstrated how travel professionals from different countries could collaborate and build personal relationships that benefited the entire industry. The thoughts of friendship, camaraderie, and understanding that united the people who planned and organized trips, the people who transported passengers, and the people who received those passengers across the world, are what birthed the spirit of **Skål International**.

After returning from Scandinavia, the participants decided that the friendships formed during the journey should continue through a formal organization. They decided to create a club that would maintain those relationships and promote international goodwill within the travel industry. The **Skål** Club of Paris already existed unofficially in the autumn of 1932. Hugo Krafft had assumed the role of Acting President and, together with Pierre Soulié and Florimond Volckaert, had the initial idea; on 30 June, after a cocktail gathering arranged by Lignes Farman, the initiative was established.

The participants continued meeting socially and professionally. In September 1932, these meetings became what would become the first **Skål** Club.

Founding Committee, Comité Créateur, Comité Fondateur: Jules Moltz, Florimond Volckaert, Hugo Krafft, Pierre Soulié, Georges Thiéry.

Paris

53 professionals in the tourism field, the "Elder Statesmen of Tourism" who were elders in experience if not in age, met together and decided to officially found the **Skål** Club of Paris. The Paris **Skål** Club was formally organized and structured on December 16, 1932, with Rene Genestie as President. This is the date many **Skål** publications reference as the official founding of **Skål International**, because the organization was formally established. This stage marks the actual beginning of the first **Skål** club.

A commission of 12 members drafted the organization's Statutes; on December 20, 1932 at the Ambassador Hotel, and then on December 27, 1932 at the Hotel Astra, that first **Skål** Club was formally recognized by the constitutive General Assembly.

At the meeting of 7 January 1933 at the Cintra bar, in the underground room graciously reserved for the **Skål** Club, the club's first Statutes drafted in December meetings were presented and officially adopted.

STATUTS

DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES "SKÅL CLUB"

TITRE PREMIER

ARTICLE PREMIER. — Il est formé un groupement prenant pour titre : « *Association des « Skål Club »* dont le siège est fixé à Paris.

ART. 2. — L'association internationale des « Skål Club » est composée de tous les « Skål Club ».

Elle a pour buts :

a) De grouper tous les « Skål Club » afin de servir de trait d'union entre eux, d'étendre l'idée du Skål et de s'efforcer de créer de nouveaux centres.

b) De représenter le mouvement Skåliste dans toutes les grandes manifestations touristiques internationales, sans immixtion possible dans les questions professionnelles et commerciales.

c) D'éditer un Bulletin international de Tourisme servant à la fois de journal à tous les « Skål Club » et au service du Tourisme international.

TITRE DEUXIEME

ART. 3. — Cette Association groupe tous les Clubs ayant pour dénomination « Skål Club ».

Chacun de ces clubs, suivant son importance, devra déléguer au maximum 4 de ses membres du Comité en exercice pour le représenter au sein de l'Association.

ART. 4. — L'Associatoin Internationale des « Skål Club » est placée tous le patronage d'un Comité d'Honneur de plusieurs membres et dirigée par un Comité Directeur se composant de :

Président ;
4 Vice-Présidents ;
Secrétaire Général ;
Trésorier ;
Directeur de Presse ;
Deux Commissaires aux Comptes issus de l'Assemblée.

ART. 5. — Le Comité d'Honneur est formé de personnalités du monde touristique international qui, par leur autorité morale, peuvent parfaire au prestige de l'Association.

ART. 6. — Le Comité Directeur est choisi parmi l'ensemble des représentants, délégués à l'association, et est nommé à la majorité des membres présents en séance.

Ce Comité est nommé pour un an et est rééligible.

ART. 7. — Aucune décision ne peut être prise qu'à la majorité des voix. Le vote peut se faire par correspondance et doit, pour être valable, être signé par les membres délégués de l'Association.

Les élections du Comité, les adhésisons et exclusions des Clubs, doivent se faire à bulletin secret.

ART. 8. — Les délégués doivent se réunir au moins une fois par an, le premier samedi de décembre, pour procéder à l'élection du Comité et étudier en commun toutes les propositions concernant le développement de tous les « Skål Club ».

A la suite de ces Assemblées, des rapports seront adressés aux Secrétaires des différents « Skål Club ».

En dehors de ces réunions, le Président et le Secrétaire Général ont en charge la marche de l'Association et sont responsables de leur gestion envers le Comité Directeur.

Une réunion extraordinaire pourra être provoquée à la demande par écrit des deux tiers des membres du Comité Directeur, avec préavis de six semaines.

ART. 9. — Tous les deux ans, le Comité Driecteur réunira un Congrès auquel pourront assister tous les membres des « Skål Club » en possession de leur carte pour l'année en cours.

ART. 10. — Les procès-verbaux de chacune des réunions du Comité et des Congrès sont tenus par le Secrétaire Général, sur un registre ad-hoc.

Le rapport annuel sur la gestion du Comité et un extrait des comptes doivent être envoyés en deux exemplaires à chacun des Secrétariats des « Skål Club » deux mois avant la date prévue à l'article 8 pour les Réunions du Comité Directeur et des Délégués, ainsi qu'avant la date fixée pour les Congrès.

Les procès-verbaux de ces Assemblées devront parvenir aux différents Secrétariats dans un délai de deux mois.

ART. 11. — *L'Association ne peut avoir aucune tendance politique, syndicaliste, religieuse ou professionnelle ayant un caractère privé.*

TITRE TROISIEME

ART. 12. — Les réunions annuelles du Comité et des Délégués ainsi que des Congrès devront avoir lieu dans une des villes où existe un « Skål Club ». Le lieu de ces réunions sera décidé chaque année à la majorité des délégations de l'Association.

L'ordre du jour de ces réunions devra parvenir au Secrétariat des différents « Skål Club », deux mois avant la date prévue.

ART. 13. — Seuls ont droit de vote les membres délégués au sein de l'Association. Chaque Délégation aura droit à une voix. Le Président a voix prépondérante.

TITRE QUATRIEME

ART. 14. — Un droit d'inscription de 50 francs or, en un seul versement, sera exigé de chaque « Skål Club ».

Cette somme est payable à l'inscription. Le versement pour les Clubs existant se fera le 1er juin 1934.

ART. 15. — Il sera créé un seul type de carte d'identité de membre pour tous les « Skål Club ». Cette carte sera éditée par l'Association et délivrée aux « Skål Club », moyennant le prix annuel de 1 fr. or par carte. Ce franc or servira de cotisation en faveur de l'Association.

Les demandes de cartes devront être adressées au début de chaque année au Trésorier de l'Association et seront payables en Octobre de l'année en cours, à partir de l'année 1935.

ART. 16. — Tous versements se feront par chèque barré, émis sur Paris au nom de l'Association internationale des « Skål Club » et sur une Banque d'Etat désignée par le Comité Directeur.

ART. 17. — Toutes demandes de délai de paiement de cotisation, devront être adressées au Secrétaire Général de l'Association, qui en saisira le Comité Directeur qui seul est qualifié pour prendre une décision.

ART. 18. — Les dépenses et les retraits de fonds ne peuvent être effectués que sur une décision du Président et du Trésorier qui devront en rendre compte à chaque séance du Comité Directeur.

ART. 19. — Les fonds recueillis devront servir :

En frais de Secrétariat ;
de réunions de Comités et de Congrès ;
de publication d'un Bulletin ;
de déplacements de Délégués de l'Association.

TITRE CINQUIEME

ART. 20. — Toute proposition de modification aux statuts devra être présentée avec un préavis d'au moins un mois par trois (3) « Skål Club ».

Les présents statuts ne pourront être modifiés que si le projet est approuvé par les deux tiers des délégués de l'Association.

ART. 21. — Tout Club désirant quitter l'Association devra faire parvenir sa démission par lettre recommandée adressée au Président de l'Association trois mois avant la date fixée pour la Réunion annuelle du Comité Directeur.

Après ratification de celui-ci statuant sur la démission demandée, le Club démissionnaire s'engage à ne plus s'intituler du nom de « Skål Club ».

ART. 22. — Tout Club ne se conformant pas aux présents statuts ou qui, pour une cause quelconque, porterait un préjudice moral ou matériel à l'Association elle-même, ou à ses membres, sera radié sur avis conforme du Comité Directeur, au tiers des voix.

ART. 23. — En cas de dissolution de l'Association Internationale des « Skål Club » les fonds en caisse seront partagés entre les « Skål Club », membres de l'Association et au prorata de leurs versements.

ART. 24. — Seuls, le Président et le Secrétaire Général, sont mandatés pour fournir tous renseignements sur l'Association Internationale des « Skål Club ».

ART. 25. — En cas de différend sur l'interprétation des textes des présents statuts traduits en d'autres langues, seul le texte français fera foi.

Skål Quickly Grows Beyond Paris

After the first **Skål** club's founding, additional clubs quickly appeared. On April 3, 1933, George Thiry of American Express in Amberes sent a letter to his colleagues in that city, informing them of the founding of the **Skål** Club of Paris and suggesting that they form a chapter. Ten days later, on April 13, the **Skål** Club of Belgium was founded, and growth followed in cities such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Stockholm.

To coordinate the growing network, representatives from these early clubs met in Paris on April 28, 1934 for the first **Skål International** Congress, where Florimond Volckaert conceived the idea of uniting them into an international organization, and Volckaert became its founding President. They created the Association Internationale des **Skål** Clubs (A.I.S.C.)—the organization now known as **Skål International**. This gathering was especially significant because it was during this congress that **Skål** International was formally established as a global organization.
The congress also reinforced the philosophy that continues to guide the organization today: "Doing Business Among Friends."

You can read more about the founding of **Skål** on the **Skål International** website.

COMP
BODE

Skål International Today

After a couple years in Paris (1932-1934), Belgium (1934-1964 under Secretary General Florimond Volckaert) and various European locations (1964-1994, reflecting the international nature of the organization and the location of its present leadership), **Skål International** has been headquartered in Torremolinos, Málaga, Spain, on the Mediterranean coast in the Andalusia region of southern Spain, since 1994.

Skål International established its permanent headquarters in Torremolinos near Málaga, a major tourism destination on Spain's Costa del Sol. Torremolinos was selected because:

- Spain was (and remains) one of the world's leading tourism destinations
- The city already had strong connections to the tourism industry
- The location provided a stable and accessible base for international operations

The **Skål International** Secretariat in Torremolinos supports the global organization by managing:

- International membership and club records
- Governance and board administration
- Coordination of the annual **Skål** World Congress
- Communication between clubs worldwide
- Support for **Skål** committees and initiatives

The General Secretariat is the administrative body of **Skål International**, accountable to the Executive Committee (also sometimes referred to as the Executive Board).

The Executive Board of **Skål International** is formed by 14 elected members who are accountable to the General Assembly, being led by the President of **Skål International** who represents the Association.

Two Internal Auditors and one Deputy are also elected by the Assembly, in accordance with the by laws. The Auditors are responsible to the General Assembly and submit a report on the finances of **Skål International** ensuring that the expenditures, fund status, and the financial and operational management of the association are in keeping with the **Skål International** Statutes and By-Laws.

An Internal Auditor cannot hold any other office in **Skål International** at any level.
These members are elected by the General Assembly of delegates (one appointed delegate per club) each year during the **Skål** World Congress.

The Executive Board is responsible for guiding the strategic direction of **Skål International**, overseeing the organization's policies, and ensuring that the mission and values of **Skål** are upheld globally. Supporting the Executive Board are several international committees and working groups, which focus on areas such as membership development, communications, tourism advocacy, and professional networking initiatives.

Through this governance structure with the volunteer board and the administrative staff in Torremolinos, Spain, **Skål International** ensures that members from every region of the world have a voice in shaping the organization's future while maintaining consistent standards and programs across its global network.

Skal International has enduring partnerships and affiliations with several like-minded organizations who are eager to drive global change and cooperate closely on matters of mutual interest in order to achieve common objectives

How Clubs, National Committees, and Skål International Work Together

Skål International operates through a three-level structure consisting of local clubs, national committees, and the international organization. Each level plays an important role in supporting the global network of tourism professionals.

At the local level, **Skål** clubs are the heart of the organization. Clubs bring together tourism professionals within a city or region to build relationships, share industry knowledge, and conduct regular meetings and events. Members participate in networking opportunities, educational programs, and social activities that strengthen connections within the tourism community.

Above the club level are national committees, such as **Skål USA**, which coordinate activities among clubs within a country. National committees provide leadership, organize national meetings or conferences, and represent the interests of their country's clubs within **Skål International**. They also serve as a bridge between local clubs and the global organization.

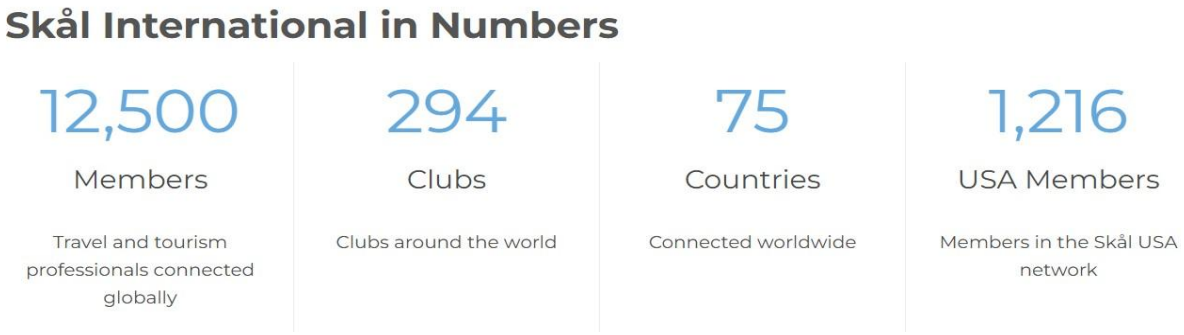
At the top level, **Skål International** provides the global framework that connects clubs across more than seventy countries. Through the international organization, members gain access to worldwide networking opportunities, participate in global programs, and attend the annual World Congress.

Together, these three levels—clubs, national committees, and the international organization—create a network that allows tourism professionals to connect locally, nationally, and globally while advancing the shared goals of the travel and tourism industry.

Today, **Skål International**, as the largest international association of tourism professionals in the world, has more than 12,000 members in over 300 clubs across approximately 70 countries.

Members include executives and leaders from every sector of the travel and hospitality industry, connected through local clubs, national organizations, and the international governing body. Skål members from around the world gather annually in different destination for the **Skål International** World Congress, where members conduct the organization's business, elect international leadership, and strengthen the global network of tourism professionals.

This marquis event brings together tourism professionals from around the world to celebrate friendship, collaboration, and the shared mission of strengthening the global travel industry. The 2026 **Skål International** World Congress will be held September 29 – October 2, 2026 in Nelson Mandela Bay (Gqeberha), South Africa.



A Brief History of Skål USA

The first **Skål** club in North America was **Skål New York**, chartered on April 1, 1938. The club was sponsored by Skål Paris and formed by leaders of New York's travel, hotel, and transportation industries who wanted to extend the spirit of international cooperation that had begun in Europe.

New York was the logical location for **Skål**'s first North American club. At the time, the city was the primary gateway for international travel to the United States, serving as the hub for transatlantic steamship lines, international airlines, major hotels, and travel agencies. Many European tourism professionals traveling to the United States had strong business connections in New York which helped facilitate the formation of the club.

The chartering of **Skål New York** marked the beginning of **Skål**'s expansion into the Western Hemisphere. The club quickly became one of the organization's most influential groups and played an important role in helping establish additional clubs throughout the United States and Canada.

Widespread expansion across the United States occurred primarily after World War II and as international travel resumed, the global aviation industry expanded, tourism leaders in major areas looked to tourism.

American Cities Began Forming their own Skål Clubs

During the late 1940s and 1950s, new clubs were chartered in major tourism and transportation hubs such as Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Washington, DC, Dallas, and Honolulu. These cities were important centers for airlines, cruise lines, hotels, and convention business, making them natural locations for **Skål**'s professional networking model.

"The North American Chapter Committee" in which all **Skål** Clubs in North America were represented, was formed on March 31, 1949, and was followed by the "North American **Skål** Council" on August 9, 1950, and that organization was superseded by the "National **Skål** Committee of the U.S.A", now called "**Skål International U.S.A.**" (SIUSA). There were also National Committees formed in Canada and Mexico.

Coincident with the formation of the three separate National Committees, its "North American **Skål** Council" was continued to help in all matters of joint and common interest between Canada, Mexico and the USA, as well as offering membership to **Skål** Clubs affiliated with the Area Committee under new name of "North American Area **Skål** Committee." In 2007, it was decided being part of an Area Committee was no longer necessary and the name was changed to the "North American Alliance of **Skål** Clubs."

Skål USA serves as the national organization for U.S. clubs. Responsibilities include:

- Supporting local clubs
- Coordinating national programs
- Hosting the **Skål USA** National Convention
- Representing U.S. members internationally

There are approximately 37 **Skål** clubs in the United States.

Recent and Future NASC Events

These clubs meet yearly at an annual conference (typically in May, and rotating among the countries, hosted by member clubs) and is commonly referred to as the North American **Skål** Congress, or more commonly as the "NASC" (pronounced "NASK"). It 2027, it Will be held in Calgary, Alberta Canada.

All members are encouraged to attend.

SKÅL INTERNATIONAL Connecting Tourism Globally | UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Current Skal USA Clubs

Albany/Upstate NY	**Anchorage**	**Arkansas**	**Atlanta**
Baltimore	**Boise**	**Boston**	**Colorado**
Hawaii	**Kansas City**	**Las Vagas**	**Long Island**
Los Angeles	**Miami**	**Nashville**	**New Jersey**
New Orleans	**New York**	**NE Florida**	**NE Pennsylvania**
Orange Coast	**Orlando**	**Philadelphia**	**Pittsburgh**
Puerto Rico	**Raleigh/Durham**	**San Francisco**	**San Jose**
Santa Fe	**Seattle**	**SW Florida**	**Tampa Bay**
	Tucson	**Washington, DC**	

Skål Clubs in Florida: Miami, Northeast Florida, Orlando, Southwest Florida, Tampa Bay

A Brief History of Skål Tampa Bay

Skål Tampa Bay grew from the rapid travel and tourism boom in the 1950's and was spurred by the beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. **Skål International Tampa Bay** was chartered on September 25, 2959. The club was founded by leaders in Tampa Bay's travel and tourism industry, including individuals who later served as early presidents and founding members. The first President was Carroll F. Hull.

Skal Tampa Bay 2026 Executive Board

President – Bryan Clancy
Vice-President – Mark Karoftis
Secretary – Ellen Hale

Lisa Mansell – Director
Tina Wood – Director
Dan Peretz - Director

Who Qualifies for Membership in Skål

Active membership is limited to professionals who hold senior management, executive, or decision making roles in the travel and tourism industry, including both core sectors and those companies which closely and directly support and serve the travel and tourism sector in related allied industries.
Eligible industries include:

Accommodation & Hospitality
- Hotels, resorts, timeshares
- Hospitality management companies

Transportation
- Airlines and aviation services
- Airports
- Cruise lines
- Rail, motorcoach, and other transportation providers

Travel Services
- Travel agencies
- Tour operators
- Online travel companies

Meetings, Events & Destination Services
- Convention and exhibition centers
- Meeting and event planners
- Destination management companies (DMCs)

Tourism Promotion & Government
- Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) / DMOs
- Tourism boards
- Government tourism offices

Attractions & Entertainment
- Theme parks
- Attractions and cultural sites
- Museums and Zoos

Education & Training
- Tourism and hospitality schools
- Industry educators and trainers

Allied (Supporting) Industries
- Marketing, PR, and communications firms focused on tourism
- Technology providers serving hospitality or travel companies
- Consultants working with tourism businesses
- Travel and tourism media or publishing
- Hospitality suppliers and vendors
- Financial, legal, or professional services with a strong tourism focus

To maintain **Skål**'s identity as a tourism organization, it is generally expected that allied industry members do not exceed approximately 20% of total club membership.
To qualify, members must hold a senior management, executive, or decision-making role in the qualifying company, such as:

- Owners, executives, and senior leaders
- General managers and directors
- Department heads (sales, operations, marketing, etc.)
- Professionals with decision-making authority

Positions that are entry-level, administrative, or not directly connected to tourism do not qualify. Membership requirements ensure that **Skål** maintains its professional standards and help maintain the purposeful environment of empowered members "Doing Business Among Friends."

There are several categories of membership in **Skål**, which include:

- Active Members
- Retired Members
- Life Members (former)
- Honorary Members
- Young Skål Members

Membership

To be eligible for Active membership (the core membership group), individuals must:

- Work full-time in the tourism industry or a directly supporting allied industry company, and
- Be actively involved in management, leadership, or decision-making processes

Active Members:

Active membership in **Skål** is limited to those holding Executive and managerial or equal senior positions in the travel and tourism industry or positions considered equivalent by **Skål International**.

Active Business Membership

Active Business Membership allows Large Corporations to nominate a person representing the company's membership in a local club. Should that member leave their employment or move to another city, the corporation would be able to replace that member with a new member without incurring any additional membership dues or fees.

Active Individual Membership (AIM)

Active Individual Members (AIM) are persons in a managerial capacity in the Travel and Tourism industry who live in a city or country where a **Skål** Club does not exist. Active Individual Members are urged to join a club in a city or country of their choice. Active Individual members enjoy the same privileges as Active Members; however, they may not hold Club, National or International offices. They may request to receive information on events from their nearest club.

Life Members

This category was eliminated in 2005. Those Life members remaining will keep this clarification and function as Active Members.

Retired Members

An Active member who has reached the age of 55 and has fully retired from the Travel and Tourism business may be granted Retired Membership. The General Secretariat shall be

informed of all Active to Retired membership transfers. Retired members cannot hold representative office on the National and International levels. Retired members enjoy the same privileges as Active Members, except they may perform limited work in travel, tourism, or other industries to supplement their income.

Specialized Tourism Services

Members who do most, or all, of their business with the Travel and Tourism industry and provide goods, services, media, IT solutions, and much more.

Young Skål Members

This category is divided into two subcategories: Young **Skål** Student and Young **Skål** Professional.

Honorary Membership

Honorary membership is a special recognition given to those who have made significant contributions to **Skål** or the tourism industry, without requiring standard membership qualifications. Honorary Membership may be granted to individuals who have made significant contributions to Skål Tampa Bay or the tourism industry. Honorary members must be approved by the Board of Directors through a formal vote or nomination process.

Honorary members may attend meetings and events however, they generally do not vote or hold office, and are not counted as Active members. They do not pay dues as status is granted as a courtesy or recognition.

Young Skål and Project Future

Young Skål Membership

Young Skål was created around 2003 by **Skål International** to ensure the long-term vitality of **Skål** by bringing the next generation of tourism professionals into the organization. The program was designed to connect students and young professionals with established industry leaders, giving them access to mentorship, networking, and career development opportunities within the global **Skål** community.

Project Future

Today, **Young Skå**l is active in dozens of countries and well over 100 clubs worldwide, making it a critical pipeline for future leadership across the organization.

Two Types of Young Skål

Young Skål includes two distinct segments. The first is students, typically enrolled in hospitality, tourism, or related university programs. These members are often part of university-based **Skål** clubs or affiliated through local chapters. The second group is young professionals, generally under the age of 30–35 (transitioning into full **Skål** membership).

Students:

- Hospitality / tourism majors
- Often tied to universities
- Entry point into the industry

Young Professionals:

- Already working in tourism
- Typically under 30–35 years old
- Transition stage toward full membership

Young **Skål** members pay a greatly reduced dues price subsidized by the club as an investment into the future which includes admission to all of the club's events. This low barrier to entry makes it accessible for students and early-career professionals while still providing access to the full **Skål** network. All members are encouraged to mentor and help strengthen **Young Skål** members so they may flourish in the careers and one day become Active members.

Young Skål Tampa Bay

Our club is in the process of starting a **Young Slal** group.

Our club will work closely with local universities and hospitality programs, sponsor student participation at meetings and events, and provide mentorship opportunities with seasoned members. Our club will also encourage **Young Skål** members to attend regional and national conferences, helping them build relationships beyond the local level.

Project Future

Championed by **Skål USA** leaders at the national level, this initiative focuses on strengthening the **Young Skål** pipeline. Project Future emphasizes recruitment, mentorship, and retention—ensuring that **Young Skål** members are not only brought into the organization but are actively engaged and transitioned into long-term members.

The initiative highlights the importance of integrating younger members into events, leadership opportunities, and meaningful industry connections. Project Future is gaining exposure and acceptance nationwide.

Engagement

Members are encouraged to participate in committees. Those interested in future board or committee service should speak with a member of the current board to express their interest and get further engaged!

Skål Tampa Bay Benefits

1. **Meetings and Events**

Skål Tampa Bay holds monthly meetings/evening events as well as lunch meetings and cocktail hours. These are usually held on the second Monday of the month, but may change for special occasions. Each event is built around a food & beverage experience, split between a blend of dinners and mixers with heavy appetizers.

At these events, activities may include:

- Networking time
- Special programs
- Periodic compelling speakers

Benefits of Membership

Members benefit from:

- Global networking with industry leaders
- Peer-to-peer business development opportunities with decision-makers
- Lasting friendships that go beyond transactions and casual dinners
- Leadership opportunities and a path to mentor young people in hospitality
- **Skål USA** NASC and the International Congress
- Regional gatherings
- **Skål** Florida Member Retreat 2026 (September 18 – 20, 2026)

Skål clubs in Florida have always had a special interconnected relationship. In 2025, a group of local leaders got together to re-establish and annual get-together, and also invite Skålleagues from around North America for the **Skål** Florida Member Retreat, which was held at the Castle Hotel in Orlando. Nearly 50 people attended from all the Florida clubs, Merida Mexico and other **Skål USA** clubs, including New York, New Jersey, Atlanta and Tucson.

Skål NASC 2026 (May 2 – 7, 2026)

The 2026 **Skål** North American **Skål** Congress (NASC) is more than just a conference—it's where the energy of **Skål** truly comes to life.

This is your opportunity to connect face-to-face with fellow Skålleagues from across the U.S., Canada, and beyond, strengthening relationships that lead to real business opportunities. From high-level industry insights to meaningful networking and unforgettable social events, NASC delivers the full value of **Skål** in just a few days. You can find more information or register for the NASC at the event website: ttps://nasc2026.com.

Skål International World Congress 2026 (September 29 – October 2, 2026)

The 2026 **Skål International** World Congress in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity to experience **Skål** at its highest level. For **Skål Tampa Bay** members, it's a chance to elevate your involvement beyond the local and national level, build international relationships, and represent Tampa Bay on the world stage!

If you're serious about getting the most out of your **Skål** membership, World Congress is where it happens. You'll return with new connections, fresh ideas, and a deeper sense of purpose within **Skål**. Add in the incredible setting of South Africa—rich in history, culture, and natural beauty—and this becomes more than a conference; it's an unforgettable global experience. To learn more and/or register, go to https://registration.floq.live/skalworld-congress-2026.

Visiting Other Skål Clubs

Members are encouraged to visit other **Skål** clubs when traveling! Here is an opportunity to expand your network and meet other professionals in the hospitality industry!
Check the chart below to see where there are other clubs. Then view the calendar on the **Skål** USA website for events and meetings of the club, or head straight to the club's own website.

There are also 13 active clubs in Canada in 2026, including Calgary, Canadian Rockies (Banff), Edmonton, Halifax, Hamilton-Niagara, London, Quebec, Saskatoon, St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and Winnipeg.

There are 27 active clubs in Mexico is 2026, including Acapulco, Bahías de Huatulco, Bernal, Campeche, Cancún, Cozumel, Ensenada – Valles Vitivinícolas, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Isla Mujeres – Puerto Morelos, Ixtapa, Los Cabos, Manzanillo, Mazatlán, Mérida (Orlando Twin), Mexico City, Monterrey, Oaxaca, Puebla, Puerto Vallarta – Riviera Nayarit, Querétaro, Riviera Maya, Taxco, Tijuana – Ensenada, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Villahermosa.
And of course there are clubs all over the world!

Skål Traditions

The name "**Skål**," meaning "cheers" or "good health," was adopted from the Swedish language in honor of the Scandinavian hospitality experienced during the trip. Interestingly it also referred to (among other things) a drinking vessel customarily made out of wood. The medieval Swedish historian Olaus Magni (1490-1557) defended the use of such containers, in preference to those made of glass, this way: "Glass is not used at tables in the Nordic lands, as when it breaks – as it is wont to do – various sorts of accidents may result, which does not occur with vessels of wood". The **Skål** ritual was a kind of civil complement to the religious ceremony of marriage. was adopted.

In another document, the Swedish philosopher Dr. Bo Lagercrantz describes the customs associated with this, giving various examples of the 'host's/farmer's toast'. In the Middle Ages, vassals would take an oath to the king by means of a **Skål** toast. Business transactions could be concluded with such a toast as well. Over time, the prestige of this tradition gradually declined, to the point of nearly disappearing. Dr. Lagercrantz cites the old saying, "Din Skål, min Skål, alla vackra flickors Skål" ("To your health, to my health, and the health of all the beautiful girls").

In the 1930s, the word was also interpreted symbolically, leading to the full toast language (although varied a bit as "Long Life" comes last in the toast), as representing:

Sundhet – Health
Kärlek – Friendship
Ålder – Long Life
Lycka – Happiness

At meetings, **Skål** traditions include:

- The **Skål** toast
- Guest introductions
- Recognition of visiting members
- The **Skål** song (**Skål** Tampa Bay does not sing the song at group events)

The Skål Song

The **Skål** Song is the official song of **Skål International** and is a long-standing tradition at **Skål** gatherings around the world. Interestingly, the **Skål** Song does not have a universally standardized tune. Because tempo and melody can vary by country and club (even who's leading it that day!) it can sound different from one meeting to another. What matters is the common lyrics!

The Skål Song (English Lyrics)

We are Skål International/A worldwide friendship band/Together we are stronger/
In every foreign land./We travel all together/With friendship as our goal/
And when we meet each other/We always shout SKÅL!

Florimond Volckaert and The Florimond Volckaert Fund

Florimond Volckaert joined the organization in 1933. Volckaert was Belgian who worked in the European travel industry and was associated with Wagons-Lits/Cook, the major international travel company that operated luxury rail services such as the Orient Express and later travel agency operations across Europe.

Although he was not one of the original travelers/founders in 1932, he quickly became one of the most influential figures in **Skål**'s early development. In 1934 he became Secretary General of **Skål International**, a position he held for roughly 30 years (1934–1964).

Volckaert's contribution was organizational rather than founding. He helped formalize **Skål**'s structure, guided the creation of new clubs worldwide, and oversaw the organization's expansion after World War II. Because of this long leadership role, he is often considered one of the architects of **Skål**

His leadership helped transform **Skål** from a small European club into the worldwide tourism organization it is today.

Florimond Volckaert
February 23, 1898 - January 17, 1968

In recognition of his decades of service, in 1953 **Skål International** established The Florimond Volckaert Fund (FVF), which provides assistance to provide financial assistance and humanitarian support to **Skål** members worldwide and their families in times of hardship. The fund reflects one of **Skål**'s core principles—that the organization is not only a professional network, but also a community that cares for its members.

Skål clubs or individual members can request assistance through their local club or national committee, which then submits a request to **Skål** International. The fund is supported through voluntary contributions from **Skål** members, clubs, and national organizations, as well as fundraising activities conducted at **Skål** events.

The fund exists to help members who experience serious difficulties such as:

- Natural disasters
- Medical emergencies
- Personal or family crises
- Financial hardship resulting from unexpected events

The Florimond Volckaert Fund represents the humanitarian side of **Skål International**. It demonstrates that the organization's motto, "Doing Business Among Friends", extends beyond professional relationships to include genuine concern and support for fellow members throughout the global **Skål** community.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I expect at my first meeting?

Skål Tampa Bay meetings are designed to be welcoming, social, and professional. You can expect a combination of networking, food and beverage, a short program and sometimes a speaker. Members are friendly and encouraging introductions, so don't hesitate to introduce yourself and engage with others. Many members build lasting relationships through these interactions.

What is the typical meeting schedule?

Skål Tampa Bay typically meets once per month, usually on the second Monday, although dates and formats may vary for special events. Most functions typically include a cocktail hour that starts at 6:00pm, followed by dinner at 7:00pm. The Board of Directors and Events Committee work hard to find new and quality host venues each year to mix in with popular favorites.

Do I have to attend every meeting?

No, but regular attendance is strongly encouraged. The value of **Skål** comes from building relationships, and those connections are developed through consistent participation. Members are expected to attend several meetings throughout the year to remain engaged. Also you can prepay for a years' worth of events up front, so you'll want to attend as many as possible to maximize your return.

Can I bring guests to meetings?

Yes. Members are encouraged to bring qualified guests who may be interested in joining **Skål**. Guests should be professionals in the travel and tourism industry or a related field. This is one of the primary ways the club grows and maintains a strong membership base. Spouses or significant others are also welcome to attend **Skål** events with you. Guest tickets can be purchased on the website in advance or at the door, and vary in price based on the individual event.

How do I sponsor a new member?

Sponsoring a new member is one of the most valuable contributions you can make to **Skål Tampa Bay**. If you know a qualified tourism professional who would benefit from membership, speak with them about **Skål** and invite them to attend a meeting as your guest. From there, contact a Board member to begin the application process. Sponsors are expected to support the candidate, introduce them to other members, and help them integrate into the club once approved.

How do I attend another Skål club function or event?

Members are welcome to attend meetings and events at other **Skål** clubs around the world. To do so, identify the club in the city you are visiting and reach out in advance—either through the club's website, **Skål International** directory, or a local contact—to request an invitation and confirm the event details. Clubs are typically very welcoming to visiting Skålleagues, but advance notice is important. Also check the new **Skål USA** website for its calendar of nationwide events.

Can any member attend the World Congress, NASC or Florida Member Weekend?

Yes! In fact, please do as your schedule and budget permits! Active participation will help you build stronger relationships and get the most value from your membership. You'll not only meet new people and share ideas, but you will bond deeper with the other members from the Tampa Bay area who are attending as well.

How do I keep up with local and national Skål activities or ways to get my brand out there with sponsorship opportunities?

Feel free to reach out to any Board member for any sponsorships or other opportunities.

Is Skål Tampa Bay more social or business-focused?

It is intentionally both. Meetings combine networking and relationship-building with a social atmosphere, creating an environment where business can develop naturally. The balance of professional and social interaction is what makes **Skål** unique compared to more formal industry associations.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

For general questions, you can contact any other member of **Skål Tampa Bay**. **Skål** is a relationship driven organization. Never hesitate to reach out to a fellow member for guidance or advice. Also, the Executive Board is always happy to assist if you can't find the answer. Remember that **Skål** is built on friendship, and there are always plenty of other members willing to help!

2026 Dates to Remember

Skål NASC 2026: May 2026
Skål Florida Member Weekend: September 18 – 20, 2026; The Castle Hotel, Orlando
Skål World Congress: September 29 – October 2, 2026; Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa

Important Websites to Remember:

www.SkalTampaBay.org
www.SkalUSA.org
www.Skal.org
www.SkalFloridaMemberRetreat.com

Top 10 Things Every Skål Member Should Try to Do

1. Attend Meetings Regularly
The relationships built at meetings are the heart of Skål.

2. Introduce Yourself to Other Members and Guests
Don't sit with the same people each time—meet someone new.

3. Volunteer for a Committee
Participation helps you connect more quickly with fellow members.

4. Invite a Guest
Bring a colleague who might benefit from **Skål** membership.

5. Visit Another Skål Club While Traveling
Skål clubs around the world welcome visiting members.

6. Attend a Skål USA Event
National meetings are excellent opportunities to expand your network.

7. Learn the History and Traditions of Skål
Understanding the organization's roots strengthens the experience.

8. Participate in Special Events and Social Activities like the Skål Florida Member Weekend
Many of the strongest relationships are built outside regular meetings.

9. Connect with Members Across the Industry
Skål's strength is its diverse membership from every sector of tourism.

10. Be an Ambassador for Skål
Share the spirit of friendship and cooperation that defines the organization.

Skål Tampa Bay Presidents

Carroll F. Hill 1959
James H. Gehlsen 1960
Roland Butler 1961
Jack O. Mengel 1962
Fred R Wiggins Jr. 1963
H Wayne Bevis 1964
Robert P. Kitchens Jr 1965
Robert E. Nice 1966
Dominic Cassaro 1967
Thomas Durfee Jr. 1968
William F. Sheeley 1969
Frank S. Boyce 1970
Thomas J. O'Connell 1971
Don Smith 1972
Richard G. Steiner 1973
Phil Dross 1974
Stuart L. Hall 1975
Robert P. Manderscheid 1976
Edwin Y. Woodell 1977
Finley B. Myers Jr. 1978
Gerald McKenna 1980
Fred Probst 1981
Donald Lindsay 1982
Bruce Shorter 1983
Barry Shone 1984
Bud J. Fahs 1985
Russ Kimball 1986
Don Seaton 1987
Hollis Powell 1988
Sam Johns 1989
Bud J. Fahs 1990
Phil Henderson 1991
Rolfe Duggar 1992
George Elbe 1993 +
Henry Kempf 1994
Sam Johns 1995
George Hoch 1996
George Elbe 1997 +
Margaret Franklin 1998
Daryl Seaton 1999
Jack Guy 2000
Oliver Kugler 2001
Phil Henderson Jr. 2002
Steve Hayes 2003
Marcos Lopez 2004
Lee Daniel 2005
Gregg Nicklaus 2006
Jack Westman 2007
Roberta Blum 2008
George Elbe 2009 +
Russell Bond III 2010
Lorrie Hero 2011
Laura Lothridge 2012
Carol Eaves 2013
Dan Peretz 2014
George Hoch 2015
Hoyt Hamilton 2016
George Bentley 2017
Colette Florido 2018
Edward Shaughnessy 2019
Kristina Park 2020
Steven W. Rodriguez 2021
Michael Gruendel 2022
Kristina Park 2023
Sonny Fynn 2024
Sonny Flynn 2025
Bryan Clancy 2026

+ Indicates deceased

SKÅL INTERNATIONAL Connecting Tourism Globally | TAMPA BAY