

President's report



Dear members of the World Association of Chefs Societies,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm pleased to give my report to you here today. It has been a challenge for us coming from a small country named Iceland.

The Icelandic Chef Association with only 120 members are in charge of the biggest Chef Association in the world. What a responsibility, but at the same time what a challenge, not only for myself but also for my colleagues Helgi and Hilmar that have been standing strong behind me from the beginning.

A great challenge it has also been for my country that made me a lot of promises just before the world economy crashed. As you know Iceland got a big share of it and is still struggling, but it has also been a positive twenty months.

With the new challenges, the world also gave us new opportunities. New doors opened when others were closed.

Our own work and day to day life have changed over the last months and I think it is for the best, even if it can be hard at the time.

I know you all have got a taste of today's world, but I just needed to share this with you. Lets all remember, when times get tuff, we have a greater need to work together. This is an opportunity for us and we need to get a hold of it now.

Through all these difficulties, we feel we have managed to do the work we promised you in Dubai.

In Dubai, we promised to give you a Permanent OFFICE:

The 20th of January 2009 we officially opened the WACS Office in Paris.

Since an office can not work without staff, I am happy that the same day we opened the office, a young man came to be interviewed for the WACS Office Manager. It is not an easy task for a new person to walk into an organisation like this and start working on the first day, but I think Ragnar Fridriksson has shown great skills and knowledge in handling this work. He is a good team player and other committee members and board members feel comfortable sharing and working with him. All this will make the work easier for everyone. But we have to remember that the office will only work if we support it with information and knowledge about the association.

We will still need to focus on the office over the years to come to make sure that it will be financially capable to take care of itself in the future.

In Dubai, we also promised to focus on Juniors.

Creating a link between Young Chefs and the WACS Board of Directors was one of the main goals when in June 2008, two young chefs, one from Canada and one from Hong Kong were appointed as WACS Young Chef Ambassadors and invited to be a part of the WACS Board for one year.

Their mission was to help WACS look into future juniors' programs and analyze how WACS can help the young generation.

I know that these two young men would have wanted to stay on for a long time and keep on working with the board as they had so much to share and also so much to learn. I am glad that they have given WACS so much time out of their lives and I would like to thank Max Wang from Canada and also Francis Lo from Hong Kong for the great work they have given us. We will be appointing two new young juniors to be part of the board from two different parts of the world as we still have much to do for juniors.

We are in the starting phase of the new WACS Scholarship Program for students. The first company to sign on as supporters of this program was Churchill from the UK. They signed a sponsorship contract last year and this year we have signed a new contract with New Chefs from the US as the second sponsor of this program. Both contracts are for 4 year terms.

We also have opened up many different opportunities for young people to attend this WACS Congress with free accommodation and the great Bill Gallagher Junior Program.

In Dubai, we promised to focus on Communication:

Over the last 20 months we have revamped the WACS Website. Several of our specific activities have been aimed at the running of a new and improved website for our members.

The aim was to make it more user friendly and modern but also more member oriented, with new website sections developed in all four of the WACS languages (French, English, Spanish and German).

The new website was launched on September 1st, 2009 and the same month we doubled the visitor rate on the website.

Creating and distributing a new international magazine called World Chefs is a further attempt to maximize communication and knowledge sharing between members of WACS. The first edition of the magazine will officially be launched here in Chile.

In Dubai, we promised to rethink the Committees.

After a careful review of the WACS Committees as they stood after the last Presidium, and in order to make them more efficient and representative of all WACS members, new committees were formed, some merged with others and new committee chairmen and members were appointed with equal representation from each continental areas and a better representation of the female chefs. I have to say that I am very happy with the great work these committees have achieved over the last one and a half year and it shows how many skilful and good people there are around the world.

In Dubai we promised to focus on making Competitions more transparent:

Reviewing and updating the WACS Culinary Competitions Guidelines has been tuff and complex job. A new section was added with new rules competition levels. In the end, the WACS Culinary Competitions Committee declared the guidelines, "Official Rules" to ensure certain standards to be met in all levels of international competitions considered "WACS Approved". Also, new Sanitation Rules as well as a Code of Conduct have been added to the Culinary Competition Rules.

WACS Judges Seminars: Judges Seminars are and will be held more regularly in all the continental areas of WACS, this year we have 6 judging seminars set up in Dubai, Brazil, New Zealand, Singapore, Luxembourg and Moscow. In the year 2011 we will also focus on different parts of the world to make sure that everyone will have the same opportunity.

In Dubai we also promised to build long-term relationships with Sponsors: WACS provides great opportunities for prominent visibility in front of an audience of 10 million chefs worldwide. I saw this as an underdeveloped asset for WACS and created an official Sponsorship Package for potential sponsors. I have personally actively sought out new sponsors from various parts of the world with great assistance from Kim and Jeff Fanelli.

Looking and working for sponsorship is one of the tasks a WACS president has. It is not right for a new Presidium to take over an association that has 80 years of history without there being some type of funding plan or long-term sponsorship agreements which can keep the association going for a while. This is something WACS needs to put more emphasis on now and in the future.

In the last year, we worked hard to get some sponsorship contracts signed that will extend beyond this presidium to the next one to be elected in 2012.

For this, I have to thank Glenn Austin who has help with signing of a new contract with Fonterra from New Zealand. This contract will bring a lot of support to WACS and its programs. Also the contract with Figgjo and Dick Knives has been signed for 4 years period and Custom Culinary has signed a contract with WACS, Custom Culinary have been a loyal and good partner of WACS for many years. I am happy to announce also that this week a new 4 years counteract are signed with Claude Busion from Chefs Hat in Canada as a exclusive provider of Chefs Hats and Jackets to WACS. Dear Sponsors and partners if you are in the room than I like to give you my great thanks to you all for supporting us and I urge all WACS members to visit them and present you self to our partners.

We are also currently working on:

- The WACS Humanitarian Program and Disaster Relief Fund
- Education on all levels.
- Future Congress:
- **WACS Future:** At this Congress I do expect to hear and discuss with everyone the future of WACS. Here is your opportunity to take part in the discussion. It's important that we always will have this in mind as changes happen fast in today's world and we need to keep up.

We have held 5 board meetings: Thanks to the generosity and hospitality of our colleagues we have had both the accommodations and food sponsored completely at all of our last board meetings. This has given us the opportunity to invite our Chairmen to take part in the discussions and also focus the Board's work on discussing the future of WACS. This will help us move faster and get the work done well and in time. I will later this week recognise these countries that have hosted us.

The last board meeting was held in here in Santiago on Saturday, the 23rd of January 2010.

The upcoming months are full of challenges, the time in front of us is not only time of changes for the board but also for you the members, be active and take part in today's work, share with your friends and colleagues and honour your profession.

Gissur Gudmundsson

WACS President