

President's Report 2014.

Welcome everybody to our A.G.M.

I would like to thank all our committee for the sterling contribution they have made this year, and also acknowledge the efforts of Ross Sutherland, Steve Chaney and John Cregten in helping with the running of the club.

My main motivation for putting my hand up to be on the committee was simply to do what I could to stop the club "going broke". This time last year that seemed a distinct possibility. But here we are, another year on, with the immediate demise of the club fading (and even a slim profit before depreciation), and a workable plan for the future.

I plan to be a very active part of the new committee. As immediate past-president I will support the new president and try to pass on what I have painstakingly learned over the last year. The plan that I propose for our future is in four parts:

1. To grow membership numbers. A key point here is to deliver real value for membership. The proposed membership fees would deliver a "break-even point" of 7 nights accommodation - in other words, the savings you make from cheaper members rates would pay for your annual subscription after just 7 nights accommodation. Our National Park Lodge can be a key driver of new memberships with posters and pamphlets advertising to those already staying there in summer.
2. To minimise expenditure on the Ruapehu Lodge. Things may change, but given that the national downhill chairlift has been decommissioned and that we make a loss on the "top-hut" we need to start thinking of it more as a mountain hut, and less as a luxury lodge. The custodian position, provision of food, and even mains electricity may have to be considered as extravagances. The National Park lodge can continue to subsidise the top-hut - but at a much more basic level.
3. To maximize summer income. This applies to both lodges, but I am especially thinking of National Park and the demand for Tongariro Crossing accommodation. This would involve the semi-commercial selling of accommodation to non-members using such sites as "Book-a-Bach", or potentially contracting the lodge out to commercial Tongaririo Crossers.
4. To continue and extend our special events. Evenings such as "Curry Night" are hugely popular. It's vital for the social life of the club that we actively promote these ideas - and of-course they bring in accommodation income and potentially new members. I'm keen to promote summer trips as well as winter events: a summer hiking trip up to the crater, and also a Tongariro Crossing for members and friends.

I'd like to finish up with a new proposal - or rather a reintroduction of an old tradition in the club which I have tentatively called the "President's Race Weekend". I would like to sponsor a "Whiskey Race" and "Champagne Race" - possibly on the first Saturday after the school holidays. I think it was Peter and Greta who introduced me to the idea that ours is primarily a drinking club with a bit of a skiing problem! The Whiskey Race will start and finish at the top-hut. Racers will head to the top of the Far-West T-bar by whatever (non-mechanical) means they choose; running, skinning, snow-shoeing? Here the 2 races join; the Champagne Race will run from the top of the Far-West T down to the Ruapehu Lodge. The first of the Whiskey racers to start back down the course will trigger the start of the Champagne race. (It would be feasible, but perhaps unlikely, for one person to win both races at the same time).

I look forward to inspiring a mad-cap bit of fun - because after all, that is what skiing is all about.

Mac McKay