SCANZ President’s Report

Thanks to the recent SGM vote to move the AGM to an earlier date in the year, this president’s report comes a little sooner than usual, though it has been a significant 8 months nonetheless.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Josie Welch (THL Joanna de Bairros) and Liz Brodie (Mistress Alyenora Brodier) for their service. Josie became a committee member following the most recent AGM, and has taken responsibility for several projects, especially those involving working with the group seneschals to establish processes related several different topics that require consistent approaches across the country. Liz has been an involved and engaged committee member for the last 2 and a half years, and as she nears the end of her term on the committee is certainly deserving of a break. I look forward to welcoming the next committee member in the coming months and working with them. Thanks to the recent change of AGM date all of the current committee members’ terms will be a few months shorter than usual. We are mostly coping with this in good spirits.

I would also like to thank Beth Kent (Mistress Ginevra di Serafina Visconti) for her work as registrar. Beth has served SCANZ in this capacity for many years, admirably dealing with the administration requirements of the organization. She ensures we do not miss important tasks required with the Companies Office and our insurers, the ongoing tasks of processing memberships and assistance with communications to members and running the AGM and SGMs.

Jasmine Fuller took on the Corporate Treasurer role at the start of this year and is working with the Kingdom Deputy Exchequer (Scott Campbell) on transitioning all of the group reeves to using Xero for their financial recording and reporting tasks. The committee’s intention with this is to have a more streamlined system that will reduce the workload of the reeves on the reporting side and make the quarterly and annual reporting processes easier. I’d like to thank Jasmine for her efforts on this process, and acknowledge Scott Campbell and all of the group reeves for their contribution as well.

Lastly I would like to thank David Robb (Master William de Cameron) for his long service maintaining the SCANZ web and IT services and providing the infrastructure on which it all runs. David has always been responsive, friendly, gracious and generous of his time as committee members with different views and levels of savvy have come and gone. I thank him for his valuable contribution and expertise. David has expressed a desire to step back from this role and we are working with him on a process to transition the services and responsibilities. There will be more to come on this topic over the next few months as we look to recruit someone (or someones) to take things over.

Whilst I mention these individuals in particular, there are many, many more that do the tasks necessary to keep the SCA running, and you all have the thanks of the Committee. There have been some incidents of late in other parts of the world, and some concerns as a result that volunteers are not appreciated or supported enough. Fortunately we have not had any major incidents that have made SCA headlines like the ones I allude to, but it is incumbent on the committee to constantly think about how our actions support the local group an consider what steps we can take lighten the load, or support our officers and ultimately the goals of the SCA to the fullest. The process to implement Xero across the groups is an example of this, as it provides a shared platform of not just software but common procedures. It also enables those in the reporting chain to assist reeves more actively, and consolidated reports to be generated instantly.

We are also progressing with consolidating bank accounts into a corporate structure at a single bank. This is not in any way to impinge on groups independence, but a recurring problem is dealing with banks to change signatories. SCANZ itself has certainly experienced this, and Ildhafn as well as the banks have tightened up their procedures. It’s our hope that with a corporate structure we’ll be better able to manage this process and have better support from the bank, as well as have backup people available to authorize payments just in case. It will also dovetail with Xero to allow direct integration with the banking records.

On the whole, the organisation’s finances are healthy. There was a significant payment made this year to SCA Inc for membership dues backdated for a few years. This was an anomaly and we have altered our accounting practices to recognize this liability in the end of year accounts properly going forward.

The committee has other ideas and projects in mind help to support the local groups. Whilst the primary support for group officers will always be their Kingdom upline officer, those officers are only there for a couple of years and have to support the entire Kingdom. The SCANZ committee on the other hand can manage a more sustained effort on key issues due to the 3 year term and rolling membership, allowing combined effort and better handover. In the background we are also conscious that many would like to see New Zealand eventually be a principality, and one part of achieving that goal is for the NZ groups to move forward together as a whole with shared vision. Projects which support us to have common practices and shared institutional knowledge will further that goal, or at the very least, make everyone’s jobs a little easier.

To that end, I encourage anyone with ideas about how NZ groups can share resources and expertise to please get in touch. What are your pain points? What are you spending more effort (or spoons) on than you think is reasonable? We would love to hear and see what we can do to help.

It has been pleasing to see in the last 12 months how the activity levels have rebounded since the last major Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. We understand Covid is still a major concern to many but we are pleased to see that events have largely returned to normal. It was a pleasure to be able to attend Spring Coronation last year, and to enjoy a full and open Canterbury Faire again (possibly our biggest ever) with visitors from Australia once more. With the opening of borders New Zealanders have been able to compete in Crown Tournament again and it is with great pleasure that we were able to watch Sir Ratbot and Mistress katherine achieve victory to become the first NZ-based Crown of Lochac. I offer my sincere congratulations to them both and it is already evident how much they are enjoying the reign, and how much others are enjoying them reigning as well.

Attracting and keeping members is always a priority, but the SCA in NZ seems to be doing a good job of retaining members. The numbers vary month on month as memberships lapse and are renewed, but we are sustaining numbers around 230-240.

The committee has recently been focused on required changes to our Rules as a result of the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 which we are required to reregister under. Many of the changes have been mere technicalities as SCANZ Inc was not involved in practices that the new Act was clamping down on (such as claiming membership by people without their consent) but we are still working through some changes. The change of date of the AGM was one change already completed. The other two major changes involve codifying our disputes resolution process into the Rules. In this context “disputes” refers to matters of misconduct, breaches of duties of the Society’s Rules, or damaging member’ rights or interests, as opposed to purely personal disputes. The existing details regarding disputes resolution exists in various Kingdom documents, and is more in the form of guidance rather than procedures. It is my hope we will be able to work with the relevant Kingdom officers to prepare a legally-acceptable set of procedures in the next couple of months, that will then be added to the SCANZ Rules so that they comply with the requirements of the Act. This will need to be voted on in another general meeting.

We also have to make a change to nominate an organization, or class of organisations as beneficiary to the Society’s assets should SCANZ ever be wound up. This is yet to be fully explored and will certainly involve consultation with the membership.

The committee is also putting the finishing touches on revisions to the SCANZ Financial Policy. Expect to see this go out for comment in the next month or so. Changes to support the policy around publication of photos on social media are being worked through with the group seneschals and updates on that will also be coming soon.

Potential issues with the limitations of our insurance were raised with the committee early last year and while progress on that has been slow we expect to have that resolved this year. Our Public Liability insurance has been raised from $3m to $5m and we are looking at Associations Liability, which protects and indemnifies officers from claims.

As I bring this report to a close, I would like to mention several of our members that we know are going through very tough times at the moment. Master Matsuyama Yoshitoshi (Christopher Foxe) and Baron Oswyn Carolus have recently made it know they are battling severe illnesses, and Baron Sympkyn of the Moor also sustained severe injuries in a motorcycling accident earlier this year. All my hopes and good wishes are with these fine people and anyone else suffering from illness or injury. May all good fortune attend you.

Faithfully,

Richard Goodwin

Chair, SCANZ Inc.