

FROM THE President's Desk

Firstly I wish to say what a privilege it is to be President of TWIF and I thank the membership for the vote of confidence at the Congress in the beautiful town of Stennungsund in Sweden.



Cathal McKeever,

It is extremely humbling to realise that one is following in the footsteps of such illustrious names as George Hutton, Fugi Fuchs and, most recently, Co Koren. Co has given tremendous commitment and a significant part of his life to TWIF and has been very successful in improving our sport in so many ways. (A more comprehensive tribute is paid to him in this newsletter).

His will be a very difficult act to follow and he had skills which I could never emulate. To paraphrase the words of Frank Sinatra: "All I can do, is to do it my way".

I am particularly reassured that three other members of the former Executive have been re-elected and our new Junior Vice President, Patrick van den Heuvel, will have much to contribute in the years ahead. We have a good team, most of whom have worked together for many years and that has to be a major advantage.

As far as the future is concerned I believe we are making steady progress, particularly in respect of increased membership. There are, however, areas of development which need to be addressed. I realise that there are several long established Federations which are not as vibrant as they used to be although to some extent they are in a position to help themselves. One of our greatest priorities is to assist the large number of "new" countries which have joined in recent times and are in need of support, some of it urgent. As a firm advocate of our Fellowship programme I shall be looking in that direction for help from some of our members.

There is a perception, false I hope, that TWIF is primarily concerned with Europe. I can assure you that I do not subscribe to that belief. We are a world-wide organisation and striving to be even more so. Indeed we in the EXCO are currently in the process of organising a seminar in Chinese Taipei for countries in the Asian region, some of which may feel on the periphery of TWIF affairs. More about that in due course.

Inclusion within the Olympic programme remains an important goal but realistically that does not seem to be attainable in the short term future. In the meantime we need to build up our sport, not so much at the top level, but at the grass roots where so much needs to be done. That is where all of us, Executive and membership, need to pull together".

CATHAL MCKEEVER, President TWIF

2007 SEMINAR ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES

Delegates were welcomed to the 2007 Congress and Seminar in Stennungsund, Sweden, by Mr Co Koren, past President of TWIF. The seminar covered three topics, with each topic being introduced by an individual, with delegates then splitting into groups to discuss the topic further. At the end of the session, each spokesperson relayed their group's view of their given topic, which were then opened for discussion by all delegates and their comments invited. The topics were:

- Fellowship
- Doping Awareness
- Promotion and Media

I. Fellowship

CARL HAGSTROM from Sweden explained the tremendous co-operation that had taken place between Sweden and Latvia over an extended period of time whilst Lilita Mukina from Latvia, said that co-operation between their two countries had first started in 1991. Their motto was: "Meet the right people in the right place". Swedish teams visited Latvia for educational visits and Latvian teams visited Sweden to learn all they possibly could about the sport. This effort resulted in the formation of the Latvian TOW Federation in August 1993.

Between 1994 & 1997 Latvia introduced a project called "Co-operation in Sport Latvia/Sweden". During this time twelve seminars with an educational format, research trips, handouts etc, were undertaken and tug of war handbooks were printed. This culminated in Latvia becoming a TWIF member on 23rd April 1994. During 1998-2000 a number of selected judges took the TWIF Judges Course and in 1998 Velkonis became the first Latvian Club Champions.





New Exco: Four members were re-elected to the Executive for a new 4 year term with only Patrick van den Heuvel (Belgium) coming in as Junior Vice President. From left to right are: Anton Rabe (Treasurer - South Africa), Tony Martin (Snr Vice President - England), Cathal McKeever (President - Northern Ireland), Glen Johnson (Secretary General - USA) and Van den Heuvel.

Latvia's long term aim is to continue developing the sport under the youth. Association officials visit youth camps in Sweden whilst efforts are underway to invite other Baltic Countries and previous Soviet Union Countries into the sport.

2. Doping Awareness

AUKJE VAN RAAIJ of the Netherlands, the TWIF Doping Control Administrator, provided some background on the difficulties she experiences with so-called TUE's (Therapeutic Use Exemption).

The main problem is reaching the pullers, as one person can only do so much. It is the responsibility of the International Rep's to notify the pullers to alleviate this problem. Aukje indicated that she believes that she only receive around 10% of all TUE Forms assuming a normal medication use pattern amongst pullers as part of a normal population. These pullers should all be completing the TUE Forms.

Because TUE forms have to be filled out by hand, some of these forms are very hard to read. This form is however now on the TWIF website and can be filled in by the pullers and the Doctors on the computer, or it can be downloaded and then completed and returned. It was pointed out that in some countries Doctors charge for the filling out of such forms - WADA are aware of this and are trying to solve the problem.

It was stressed that it is vital that doping awareness must be enhanced at all levels within the sport. She indicated that she plans to discuss this with all the International Rep's and that perhaps England could put some information on their website for the European Championship in Minehead 2007 to assist with further communication.



3. Promotion & Media

ANTON RABE from South Africa introduced this topic suggesting that this subject should be approached as you would tackle any other challenge in a business type environment, with a clear strategy, action plans, time scale and responsibilities. The old saying is: "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well". It is a fact that the tug of war profile is poor and the media coverage is limited in many countries. It is not easy to promote the benefits that come from our sport such as team-spirit, integrity, honesty, etc, as "good news" doesn't sell well in the media that is focusses mainly on sensation.

Action must be practical and realistic, and ultimately there must be a clear objective with a basic strategy plan:

- What we want
- When we want it
- When to achieve it
- Who is going to achieve it
- With what

At this point the delegates were split into 3 groups, following thorough discussion by each group the following feedback was put forward:

Fellowship feedback

It was concluded that a lot of fellowship already takes place with countries being toured and holidays being combined with tournaments not just via the International Reps, but also through Clubs and individuals. This needs to be encouraged.

Cathal McKeever recalled that in Northern Ireland they had been very fortunate, as they had a group of people and teams who were willing to travel to all parts of the world for very little incentive. For example in 1979 contact was made with the USA authorities and representatives of the USA TOW Association and a trip was arranged in June 1979. A package of training, coaching and the passing of information was set up, combined with a tour of the Mid-West for approximately three weeks. Everybody paid for our own travelling, but the cost of accommodation was met by the hosts.

India back in TWIF family: After some years of uncertainty in India with two rival associations vying to represent their country, it was ruled by the Exco, after confirmation of their recognition by the Indian Government, that the Tug of War Association of India (TWFI) should be recognised for this function. Here mr Gautam Kaul, President of TWFI receives a TWIF flag from the past President of TWIF, Mr Co Koren, as symbol of this recognition.



The Irish Tug of War Association celebrates their 40th Anniversary

Similar trips were undertaken in later years to Kenya, Australia, South Africa and recently also to the People's Republic of China, a vast country and new to TWIF with a judges course added to the tried and tested format.

Doping Awareness Feedback

It was stressed that all pullers should be aware that Doping Tests take place from time to time. Some countries even sent all the information to their pullers and had them sign for it, so everyone knew. The main problem is that pullers *know* about it, but don't *act* on it. They seem to think that they won't get tested. It is their responsibility and they must act on it. *Ignorance is no excuse for a positive test!*

Workgroup members concluded that awareness of banned substances, not only in medication, but also in food and drink supplements, need to be enhanced as well. Such supplements can be purchased freely and should be checked before it is taken. Sports Councils in the various countries may be able to advise on supplement uses.

Promotion & Media Feedback

Group members concluded that organisers of events should have realistic action plans stating:

- The different goals they want to reach;
- Identifying which levels need to be reached, for example media at National, Regional or local level;
- Setting and allocating tasks to achieve this;
- Contacting the media with a well written press report.

The "Italian Way", with Giorgio Trocchi's initiatives, was cited as a fine example where he persisted in continually visiting the TV companies until his point was made. The sport of tug of war is now on 25 TV programmes each year which is a magnificent achievement.

Contributed by: **Tony Martin** *The full report is available on request from the Editor.*

The Irish Tug of War Association was founded in 1967. The President at that time was Mr Fred Cogley with Mr Robert Deane as Vice Chairman, the Hon Secretary Mr Jim Donovan, Hon Treasurer Mr Richard O'Connell and Assistant Hon Secretary Mr John Ferry. Over the years we have seen Mr Don Ryan, Mr Kevin Wheeler, Mr Eddie Hubbard, Mr Anthony Pender and more recently Mr Gerard Ferguson all hold the office of President of the Irish Association.

Many people will remember Mr Tommy Elmore, a very colourful character who served as Treasurer of TWIF for many, many years. Tommy was also Irish Chairman from 1969 to 1996 when sadly he passed away. Mr Jim Curtis was then elected to replace him, Jim was also an International Representative and he chaired the TWIF Technical Commission for a number of years.

To celebrate the occasion of their 40th Anniversary, the Irish Association hosted an International Competition on 27th May 2007 in County Monaghan. The Killylough Club, with the driving force of Gerry McQuillan, provided the venue. It was a great success with teams from Latvia, Germany and England in attendance. The new president of TWIF, Mr Cathal McKeever and Mr David Wilson, a TWIF Judge from Northern Ireland also attended and assisted with the running of the event. The event was well covered by television (RTE Television) whilst a representative from the Irish Sports Council, Ms Diane Fay, attended as well.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

FAQ's

ORIGIN OF THE NAME TUG OF WAR?

The name originates from the archaic words, toga werra out of old Scandinavian, German and Frisian languages.

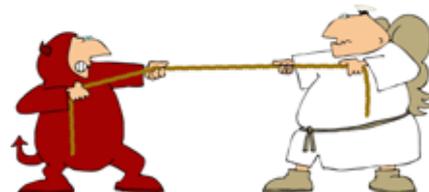
To explain the origin of the name Tug of War the elements of the name have to be analyzed separately.

TUG stems from the Middle English word "tuggen" and originates from the Old Norse word "toga" which means to draw, drag or to pull. The verbs draw, drag, pull and tug are synonyms of each other however they express distinct levels of effort: tug = to pull with strenuous, persistent effort.

WAR stems from the Middle English word "werre" and originates from the Old German word "werra" which means strife. The word strife comes from the Old Frisian "estrif" and is equal to the words; streit, wetkampf (German), wedstrijd (Dutch) and strid (Swedish), all meaning: contest or competition.

The meaning of the name TUG OF WAR therefore is: CONTEST OF PULLING WITH GREAT FORCE & PERSISTENT EFFORT

TRIBUTE TO CO KOREN



Mr Tug of War, Co Koren, retired from office at the last TWIF Congress after nearly 25 years on the Executive. During this time, the sport has grown to one with international stature and membership passing the 50 mark. International representatives from 21 countries greeted him at a very special, and sometimes emotional, occasion hosted by the Swedish Association in Stennungsund, Sweden. The new Executive has also bestowed him the title of Honorary Life President.

Co indicated earlier that he wishes to devote more time to his family and would not be available for re-election for another term. There are several tasks and projects that he has undertaken to complete on behalf of TWIF and he will continue as Secretary of the International World Games Association. Tug of war is certainly fortunate to have such an ally in that position.

According to the newly elected President, Cathal McKeever, he first met Co in the little town of Illerkirchberg in Southern Germany in the late summer of 1978. He had charge of a Netherlands team which took part in an international clubs tournament which performed very well. Cathal was pulling anchor for the Ballyhagan club. "Little did either of us realise then that fate and our mutual love of tug of war would lead us along converging paths in the years ahead".

Under his leadership, the profile of the sport has blossomed. TWIF attained Olympic recognition and dedication and drive within in World Games opened doors which otherwise may have remained closed.

Although the working language of TWIF is English his ability to communicate in a range of languages was a major advantage as was his ability to assimilate developments within the field of computer technology. The current project to modernise the TWIF computer programme expanding its use during competitions to accreditation and score board, is testimony to his vision and hard work in this regard.

Cathal concludes: "What many people did not realise was the huge amount of time Co devoted to his work for tug of war. Only his colleagues on the Exco were fully aware of the volume of work he went through and the time involved. With that in mind it would be remiss not to pay tribute to the support, and indeed forbearance of his wife Marleen. When he retired from his employment several years ago she was entitled to assume that they would have much more free time to share. However, with the increased TWIF responsibilities at that time and Co's appetite for work, it didn't quite work out like that"!

Co Koren's contribution to our sport has been huge and he has left an indelible footprint as his enduring legacy.

Contributed by: Cathal McKeever & Anton Rabe

TWIF MAGAZINE

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TWIF HEADQUARTERS

PO Box 77, Orfordville,
WI 53576-0077 USA
Tel: +1 608 879 2869
Fax: +1 608 879 2103
Email: twif@wekz.net

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Rosemary Smith
Anton Rabe
(publication & production)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Rosemary Smith
20 Boverton Court, Boverton
South Glamorgan,
Llantwit Major, Wales
Email: tugofwarrose@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION:

£10 annual
Prices to advertise on request.

The Editor, TWIF Magazine,
PO Box 163, Paarl, 7622,
South Africa
anton@dfpt.co.za

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE **The Irish Tug of War Association celebrates their 40th Anniversary**

Martha Buckley, current President of the Association, said that over the years they have been very fortunate to have had many good workers on the Executive Committee who have served the Association in different capacities. The Irish clubs have been very successful over the years, both in Outdoor and Indoor Internationals bringing back gold, silver and bronze medals for Ireland. "We are very proud of them and certainly could not survive without them. We now look forward to the next forty years and with the help and support of our loyal members, we will hopefully continue the success that we have had and build on the friendships we have made on the international scene over the past 40 years".

Martha Buckley President of the Irish Tug of War Association
Edited by Rosemary Smith

We certainly congratulate the Irish Association on achieving this milestone and wish them all the best for the future - Editor.



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