

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

To all our club members

We have all agreed that the club's focus for this year should be on rebuilding and retaining our membership. I believe that together we are making progress.

I am so appreciative that our hard working and dedicated team of committee members, together with their sub- committees, have taken up the challenge.

The committee's first focus this year was on recruiting and retaining beginners. While we knew that our best referrers were our members, we still did our utmost to promote lessons out there in the community- advertising, demonstrating and perhaps our best idea was the sign in the garden. We were successful as 36 registered for lessons, 31 receiving their completion certificates.

Then we worked on retaining these beginners. Grant, our tutor, was helped by others and fun and friendliness was always the vibe. Our students were absorbed into the bronze division in their own time, some opting to play separately for longer. Inevitably some beginners opted out, but a good cohort of perhaps 25 have continued on through the year, hopefully they are hooked! The bronze room formula (shorter sessions and longer playing time for boards) is working well – it is always a happy place.

The committee's next focus was on retaining our current members and we conducted a members' survey to ascertain satisfaction and to ask for ideas. Feedback was generally supportive and we were overwhelmed by 45 volunteers putting their hands up. Following on from the survey, we committed to being known as the friendly club. Also to improving our communication with our members through email, newsletters, making the best use of the new television and a suggestion box for your ideas. We had already revived our Facebook page and updated our website. We responded to requests for more social interaction by holding a social charity night which everyone enjoyed. We did hold one improvers' lesson but these will be an emphasis for next year.

Meanwhile, members have all been enjoying the benefits of our new air conditioners which were funded by an insurance claim. The committee has prioritised the replacement of our window joinery and windows with double glazing. The club is very appreciative to have received a grant of \$19,215 from Pub Charity Ltd which is funding half of the project cost. We have therefore proceeded with the replacement of just half of the windows and it is likely that the new committee will apply for further grants to complete the project. The building is looking better, providing us with better insulation and should have appreciated in value.

Your committee agrees with NZ Bridge's marketing in that we want the club to be welcoming and friendly and the game to be fun and interesting. However, we have to acknowledge that bridge is a competitive game.

The new promotions committee have started their work towards equity of playing skills and numbers within the playing divisions by setting and actioning a silver division promotions

policy. There has been a challenging task as our members are all in different places on the social/ competitive spectrum as to which aspects of the game are more important to them. I know that the promotions committee would welcome any constructive feedback.

Some of our members are the best exponents of competitive bridge and are to be congratulated by us for their achievements at the highest levels...

Dorothy Bain and Jim Burford who were two members of the team who won the NZ restricted open title at National Congress.

Kay Nicholas and Lesley Andrews who were placed 26th overall out of 856 pairs in the Loveblock nationwide pairs.

Michael Johnstone and Paula Gregory who were selected as Canterbury senior team representatives and AnneMarie Pavletich and Cath Preen as intermediate team representatives. These teams were placed second and fourth respectively in the Inter Provincials played last weekend.

Michael Johnstone and Paula Gregory for their many tournament successes.

Thank you to our many volunteers working in different areas of the club ensuring its smooth- running through the year. I would like to thank the following members for their constant commitment and special contributions, but I do apologise if I have missed anyone...

Our secretary Andrea Brown,

treasurer Sue McConway,

division chairs Kay Nicholas, Sue Milmine and Mary McSherry and their committees,
committee members,

AnneMarie Pavletich and her tournament committee,

promotions committee of Kay Nicholas, Michael Johnstone and Bill Mecchia,

Steve Geddes and his works committee,

Grant Patterson and the tuition committee,

Dianne Esler and her directors' group,

computer manager and club captain Bill Mecchia,

Keith Nicholas and his card dealers,

Mary our housekeeper and her caterers,

Lucy Blackie website and Facebook co-ordinator,

Kay our room hire contact,

Ashley Milliken our bar manager

and Dorothy Bain who prepares our programme booklet.

Please remember that we are all volunteers endeavouring to make decisions and work in the best interests of the club. I would like to make a plea for your support and understanding please. If you would like to join a decision-making team, please contact me or a committee member and we would welcome you.

My best wishes to you all for a joyful Christmas. Keep safe and well and we will all look forward a happy new bridging year.

Carole Brand

November 2023