

Invercargill Contract Bridge Club President's Report for 2015

It is my pleasure to present this report to the 56th Annual Meeting of the Invercargill Contract Bridge Club. Being the President of any club or organisation was not something on my "bucket list", but I must say, this last year, whilst being a learning curve, has also provided a number of highlights.

Toilet Upgrade

This was very much a highlight for the year! After many years of talking about upgrading and changes being required to our building, and many options being looked at and considered, it was a pleasure to have this upgrade finally completed. And doesn't it look great!

The completion of this project is a credit to the club, but in particular to the fundraising committee that drove the major fundraising event the Cutter Debate, which was held at the Ascot Park Hotel in February of this year. I particularly want to thank Judith Lawton, Sue Scott and Robyn Reidie for their drive in seeing this project through!

Membership

Our membership remained relatively static, which in this day and age is no mean feat. Declining memberships are an issue for NZ Bridge Inc across the country, and early in 2015 a small group of us attended a seminar in Clyde to hear from NZ Bridge Inc representatives on steps we could take to try and address this decline.

We have taken some small steps this year already to assist in this area, such as the introduction of a second Learner's class; trying to address what appears to be rude or abrupt behaviour of more experienced players around learners (noting that even our more experienced players can be put off by those situations); reducing the number of boards played when Learner members first come into the main playing room, etc.

Next year we are hoping to make more, small changes, without radically affecting the whole programme, that will assist in inducting Learners into the club as well as retaining the membership we already have.

Obituaries

We have lost a number of members from our club this year, and recorded their passing when they occurred - Noelene Maynard; Joan Belworthy; Allan Ramsay; Inga Jensen; Tina Hishon. The loss of each member has been sorely felt by the club.

Finance

The financial position of the club will be presented by our Treasurer, Robyn Reidie. However, it is pleasing to record the Club remains in a strong financial position, following the completion of the toilet upgrade. This could not have been achieved without the support from:

- Invercargill Licensing Trust
- Community Trust of Southland
- the fundraising subcommittee of our Club.

We are also fortunate to still be able to hold a number of sponsored tournaments throughout the year. Once again, a huge thank you to the following sponsors who have supported the club in this way throughout 2015:

- Rowena Jackson
- Foveaux Communications
- Invercargill Licensing Trust
- Toyworld
- Martin & Lobb

The support of these businesses/organisations has allowed us to continue to run a variety of events for our members – from the fun, social, handicapped nights through to the more competitive Graded Tournaments and Swiss Pairs events.

Our sponsors will only continue to support us if we continue to support them – so please help us to help ourselves by supporting our sponsors in any way you can. And please let them know that you are supporting them because they support us!

Club Success

Our Club has continued to be well represented at various events throughout the year – both across the region and overseas.

Anne Somerville (and her partner) came home from the Victor Champion Cup Festival of Bridge held in Melbourne with the Sara Tishler Women's Swiss Pairs title.

Sue Scott and Robyn Reidie were successful in winning the Otago/Southland Congress Intermediate Pairs, which qualified them to attend the Interprovincial Teams Championship in Christchurch, which is to be played later this month. Also representing the province in Christchurch will be Kaye Shand, Moss Wylie, Lorraine Oliver & Anne Somerville. I wish them all well at this event.

For the first time I joined a number of people who attended the National Bridge Congress held in Hamilton in the later part of the year. It was a great experience to be part of, and I heard a number of people remark on what a great representation there was at the tournament by the Invercargill Club.

Club members Sue Scott and Robyn Reidie were joined by two fellow Southlanders (and Te Anau Club members) to win the Intermediate Pairs Championship – which was an excellent result!

Other successes included:

NZ Pairs – Moss Wylie and Lindsay Glover – 3rd

NZ Intermediate Pairs – Yvonne Hughes and partner 7th; Robyn Reidie and Sue Scott 9th; and our Junior pairing of Maree Chilton and Barbara Fahey were 29th.

Your Committee

I wish to particularly thank the Committee for their hard work throughout the year. It has been a big year – which started with the club fundraiser through to the toilet upgrade oversight and of course the weekly competitions, sponsored tournaments, graded tournaments and various events that have gone on in between. These things don't just happen, and there is a lot of hard work put in behind the scenes by many.

We have some retiring members this year – Robyn Reidie is finishing as our Treasurer, after a number of years in the role. It is a major role, and a very important role for the club, and the Committee has appreciated your oversight of the finances through this particularly busy time. Thank you Robyn! It is great that you have agreed to continue on as a Committee member.

I also note that Lee Davies, Cathy Flawn and Karen Palmer-Hall are standing down from the Committee this year. Thank you for the various roles you have played throughout the year, and for your support of the club in general.

Thank you also to the dealers who participate in the dealing roster; to the Directors who keep up-to-date with the rules and help our nights to run smoothly, to those who participate in the bar roster, those who have helped to keep our gardens tidy throughout the year, and everyone who has played a role in keeping our club running.

Finally – an extra big thank you to Geoff Eyles for his continued oversight of the computer programme and for being at the end of the phone when needed. Technology is wonderful when it is working, and the Compass Programme has been a positive introduction for the club in recent years, but it doesn't come without its hitches at times. Thanks Geoff.

Jan Brown
President