

WESTERN CAPE BRIDGE UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2018

"May you live in interesting times!" is purportedly a curse of Chinese origin. Certainly, your Committee has had an interesting but, I believe, fruitful year.

In South Africa and many other countries, Bridge is perceived as a white elitist sport for the less young. Sadly, our past insistence on SABF membership in order to be permitted to attend workshops and receive other (poorly marketed) benefits has done little to change that impression. Not anymore! If we are to keep bridge alive for future generations, it is incumbent on all of us to hunt down bridge-players wherever they may be hiding, educate the young about the best "mind" game in the world and welcome all of them into the fold with open arms. That has been my goal in taking up office and I am fortunate that my fellow committee members have wholeheartedly supported this change in philosophy.

It is for you our members to decide whether we are heading in the right direction, but here are highlights of what has been accomplished in 2018:

- **Quarterly WCBU Newsletter** – with three editions already put to bed and a fourth due next month (March 2019), this has been extremely well received. It is distributed direct to all of our members and to a total of 23 non-affiliated clubs dotted throughout the Western Cape. It is free, no copyrights and all recipients are encouraged to share it. Bringing this venture to life was a major undertaking. Please join me in thanking Shirley Kaminer (Editor) for her extraordinary organisational skills and devotion of time, on an ongoing basis, to bring this idea into reality. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the many contributors – to date Tim Cope, Neil Hayward, Diniar Minwalla, Eckhard Boehlke, Kathryn Herz and, last but not least, Shirley Kaminer herself – of informative articles which we hear you are enjoying. A fantastic team effort led by Shirley.
- **Workshops for Players** – we are very fortunate to have two world-ranked players in our own backyard. Tim Cope and Glen Holman hosted the "Bidding Challenge Workshop" in May 2018 which was attended by 33 pairs plus some kibitzers. The second workshop, this time on all aspects of "Counting", generated immense interest with 64 pairs, a handful of kibitzers and seven learners from our schools teaching program – all this despite it coming so soon after "silly season". It goes without saying that more workshops are being planned – i.e. at least another two in 2019 – and we welcome your suggestions on the topics to be covered and the skill level that is most desired (intermediate, advanced, etc.).

- **Major Events** –

- The **Western Cape Pairs Championships** took place early in February 2018 and there's no question we stuffed up the format with too many pairs meeting the same opponents during each of the four sessions. This will not happen again! Congratulations to Glen Holman and Brian Pincus on a well-deserved victory.
- The **Western Cape Teams Championships** took place in August. We listened and learned from past mistakes, experimented with an exciting new format and ran a very successful event attended by 18 teams. We will tweak it a little further this year based on your feedback. In the long-board head-to-head final stage, the Cruise team (Andrew Cruise, Tim Cope, Rob Sulcas and Malcolm Siegel) were the victors against the Der Kinderen team (Anton der Kinderen, Sven-Ake Bjerregaard, Andrew Brooke, Brenda Foster and Ann Sturrock). Many congratulations to both teams.
- For the first time ever, the **SABF Interprovincials** (Medwin and Berkowitz) were played online via BBO in September. Our own regional players sat at computers behind table screens at the Bridge Centre. This worked very well as a means to eliminate the high costs associated with travel and accommodation. Gauteng were victorious in both sections with our own WCBU teams finishing second. We will try harder next time!
- The **Cape Festival of Bridge** in December each year continues to be a major drawcard for top players from all over South Africa and from overseas. The Swiss Teams event was won by the Bjerregaard team which comprised three top Swedish players and Alon Apteker. Largely the same team won the previous year, so we are determined to do our best not to let them achieve a hat-trick in 2019. The outcome of the Pairs event was much more to our liking – very well done to Maureen (Narunsky) and Imtiaz (Kaprey).

- **Development, Financial and Administrative Matters** –

- We expanded our teaching programme at schools – more about this in Kitty Cruise's report.
- We ironed out some historical accounting errors and have implemented improved cash management processes, no easy feat when you consider that more than R1 million in cash flows in (and out) of the Bridge Centre each year.
- This year, for the first time ever, our Audited Annual Financial Statements are computer-generated (QuickBooks software) and I am extremely grateful to our Treasurer (Hilary Nick), our Book-keeper (Cary Roberts) and our Honorary Auditor (Harold Bernstein) for their patience, assistance and understanding as we continue to improve our accounting methods.

- The late registration of Red Master Points for Teams events has been a source of much consternation. Not anymore! With Ann Sturrock's expert help, we have streamlined the methods and there is now no legitimate reason why these points cannot be registered immediately after each event. As a result of our efforts, the new improved methods are already in use nationally.
- **The Tim Cope Award for Outstanding Contribution to Bridge** – in appreciation of Tim Cope's decades of service to bridge in South Africa, we are delighted to be able to honour him through a brand-new award bearing his name. The choice of who should receive it each year is made by Tim, the prevailing President (of the WCBU, not the nation!) and the previous year's recipient. Its purpose is to recognise hitherto unsung heroes or heroines who work largely behind the scenes year in and year out on aspects of bridge administration and development without seeking personal glory or fame. It is befitting that the first recipient is Kitty Cruise, to show our appreciation for her many decades running the Keurboom bridge clubs and the Schools Teaching programme. Tim presented the award to Kitty at the Cape Festival of Bridge. (NB. There is one criterion that is cast in stone – no WCBU President is allowed to receive the award while in office!)

That was the year that was, but what about the year ahead and beyond?

As mentioned, we are planning at least two more workshops for bridge-players as well as technical workshops on the ScoreBridge scoring program and on the new bridge Laws that came into effect in 2017. We will keep you posted on the dates and give you plenty of notice.

The next major regional event is the Western Cape Pairs Championships which take place at the Bridge Centre over four sessions (morning and afternoon) on Sundays the 17th and 31st March. You should by now have received an email and a copy of the flyer which contains all of the details. Please assist us – your committee of unpaid volunteers – with the administrative burden by encouraging your club members to enter online via the web site (www.wcbridge.co.za) and to pay the entry fee promptly by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Cash and cheques are complicated to handle and cost money (your money) to deposit. The format will be determined when we have a better idea of the number of entries but rest assured that it will be implemented correctly and be fair for all players. Please announce the event at your regular club sessions and encourage your members to take part – cash prizes and Red Master Points are up for grabs.

Perhaps the largest single challenge we face is to locate a new "home" for bridge in the Western Cape. The current lease on the Bridge Centre expires at the end of April 2019 and continues monthly unless/until a new lease is agreed or we are given notice to vacate. We have applied and paid the associated fee for a new lease on the present premises and, just yesterday,

we have been asked to pay a further fee so that the CT Municipality can advertise our lease application in the newspaper. So, I believe there is cause to be optimistic that our application will be successful and, hopefully, will result in a further 2-3 years' tenure. Anything longer than that is unlikely given that council has already decided that the land we currently occupy will be redeveloped for commercial use. We are investigating longer term options and will keep you posted as soon as there is concrete news.

I would like to thank all of my fellow Committee members for their hard work and achievements over the past 12 months. Shirley Phillips continues to manage the staff admirably at the Bridge Centre. Andre Truter continues to ensure we all get our pre-dealt boards and hand records in time and still manages to smile and act courteously when called to rule on potential infractions at the tables. Hilary Nick continues to keep tabs on our money, takes entries for events, chases outstanding payments, maintains membership status (via the SABF Online system), etc., etc., etc. I know how she does it, but I don't know how she manages it – thank you Hilary, we would be lost without you.

After a decade or so, Jocelyn Ashberg has decided to step down as WCBU Secretary. Please join me in thanking her most sincerely for all she has done for us including, most recently, helping to ensure the smooth running of one of the most successful Cape Festivals on record. I know that Jocelyn will continue to assist us behind the scenes and I am delighted that she remains the Vice President of the SABF and, along with Ann Sturrock, continues to represent our interests at a national level. Thank you!

I am very happy to report that Andrew Cruise has offered to take up the reigns as Secretary. Also, after working closely for several months with Kitty Cruise on expanding the Schools Teaching programme, I am equally thrilled to inform you that Duncan Keet has offered to fill the gap (left by Jocelyn's departure) by joining the team as our Transformation and Sports Liaison Officer. This is a strong, devoted and hard-working Committee and I hope you will re-elect them.

In closing, good luck to Michelle Alexander (SAWBA Chairlady) and all our Western Cape ladies at the SAWBA National Congress which is just around the corner. Also, don't forget that the SABF Seniors Trials and the SABF Mixed Teams Trials take place 9th to 13th April 2019 at a venue still to be announced; if you are thinking of entering, you can do so online but not later than the 10th March 2019.

Yours in bridge,

Steve Bunker

WCBU President

23 February 2019