**PRESIDENT’S REPORT 2019**

 Kia ora

 2020 has been a challenging and different year at the bridge club. Each of us has faced challenges and ongoing issues with the Covid crisis. At bridge we have adapted and tried to meet the government and health standards as we have locked down and then come out of lockdown. We have all tried to look out for each other and as our Primeminister said “ be kind.” Hopefully we won’t have to face another year like it again. We here in New Zealand and in particularly in Cambridge have been very fortunate to live in a safe and democratic society.

Improver lessons started in February with Clare and Kate once again giving up their valuable time to teach us many new ideas to help us all with our bridge. While they didn’t complete all of them the majority of them were very well received.

We also had a very enjoyable afternoon at bridge in the gardens hosted by Sue and Tim Aitken for the second time. The weather was changeable and we ended up inside with Sue and Tim being unfazed and making room for us all! A quiz showed some of us how little we know while Tony astounded us with all that he has done in life. The food was plentiful and the BBQ didn’t disappoint. Thank you so much Sue and Tim for sharing your beautiful home and garden with us again.

In March we continued our rivalry with Te Awamutu in our battle for the Fairlands shield. This year it was contested in Cambridge and as you can see we won the battle and retained the shield. We look forward to travelling to Te Awamutu next year to see if we can win away!

Beginner lessons started in March with Kim, and with Vicki taking over the helper role, initiating another bunch of newbies into the intricacies of our beautiful game. A good number started the lessons only to be interrupted by Covid and the lockdown. The newbies had their lessons interrupted twice but it is to their credit that many of them came back later in the year to complete the course. It is also shows the dedication of Kim and Vicki that so many of them completed. During the closures several other members of our club also kept in touch with the learners and organised practice sessions for some of them. Thank you. When the newbies entered the club many of you became buddies and are still mentoring the newbies to ensure that they feel welcome. Thank you Buddies.

We would like to acknowledge these teaching contributions to our club. Clare and Kate completed most of their lessons to ensure that our existing club members remain challenged and interested in their bridge and Kim and Vicki ensured that we have new members to keep our club growing and vibrant. Clare, Kate, Kim and Vicki can you please come forward.

Our junior tournament was unfortunately cancelled along with all the other tournaments at that time due to Covid. But by July we were able to have our Junior restricted fun afternoon. It was great to see Sandra Gissing and Michael Neels win that.

August is of course our sixes month but alas not to be this year. Hopefully we will be back bigger and better than ever next year.

Congress was cancelled this year and our club, initiated by Michael , put on a Swiss pairs tournament for some of the congress players that still came to the Waikato from all over NZ. We have never had so many top NZ players in our club at one time. Our own Anna finished fourth with Richard Soloman as her partner. Some of the visiting players also played in our club sessions during the following week. Thank you Michael for organizing this.

In October we had our annual Boat race with The Tauranga bridge club on Wednesday nights. A close competition resulted in a small win to Tauranga for the third time. Even a change in scoring procedure didn’t help us and as I said last year “ Next year may be our year.”

Our intermediate tournament was also October and was well supported and successful. It was pleasing to see our new member Josie Van Weerd and Beth Kingsley win this event. Once again we were complimented on our food and hospitality.

 We hosted a session of the NZ wide pairs in November. Kevin and Clare topped our session and did well nationwide.

 Clare and Kevin also won the right to represent Waikato bays in Rubber bridge. They had a huge run of success, playing top players from all around NZ to reach the final. This was an exciting time as we watched the progress they made and cheered them on. The cards wern’t with them for the final but such an amazing effort to be the runner up NZ champion!!

The newest innovation for our club this year, has been the adoption of Compass dollars as a replacement for Hello club, for our finances and our communication. Thank you to Michael, Kevin and Vicki for organizing that. It will continue to be easy to pay your table money and your subs. If you can ensure that you have transferred funds into the club’s new Westpac account, your subs will be debited from there.

Clare has continued to support our club on the NZ Bridge board again this year until she finished her stint, as have Michael, Jan, and Anna on the Waikato regional committee. Eunice has continued to be a super bridge mate keeping Cambridge’s profile high. We thank them for all they do.

Our Monday Day Session continued to be managed by Inge helped by Christine and Alison. It was great to see some of your players recognized at our prizegiving for the first time.

Our Friday session is still a well-supported and well -liked session for many. Ayako, Doug and Janet and Melanie give of their time and knowledge to help others to practice their bridge.

To all who deal cards, score and direct the club can’t survive without you! To Michael and Liz and Allison who organize the rosters and to all who deal, direct or score and sometimes do all three we thank you. Allison, Anna, Ayako, Beth, Bill, Bob, Callum, Carol, Christine, Clare, Don, Eunice, Jan, Jenny, Karen, Kevin, Kim, Liz, Margreet, Michael , Sue Aiken, Tony and Vicki.

To all of you who card turn for Melanie. This is an important role in our club and Melanie is very appreciative of all of you, who give up your time to do this for her.

Our partnership stewards do a big job sourcing partners and keeping track of who may be available when you are short of a partner. A big thank you to Inge, Di, Kay and Beth. Di Emms retires this year after keeping the Monday evening players in partners so well. Thank -you Di.

There are many people who help our club in many ways. From those of you who help prepare for a session , help in the kitchen, run the vacume around when necessary, and generally do something when you see it needs doing. Thank you. Thank you to those who contributed food for tournaments and raffle prizes for our Intermediate tournament. We all can help in many different ways, but importantly it is when we remember to be considerate, and understanding of the players we are playing with and against. We have a wide range of abilities in our club and it is important that we all enjoy our session of bridge. We want to go away from our bridge table remembering the companionship and support of fellow members. Many life- long friends have been made at our club.

To all of you who have had success in a series at the club or in tournaments well done. While bridge is a competitive game we also find success in the enjoyment of competing, and in small milestones, as we learn something new or enjoy the interaction with other members.

Thank you to our Almoner Di who makes and sends cards for us.

To Gail who maintains our garden and to Malcolm who is our honorary auditor.

To all our committee who work together as a team and also perform their individual responsibilities so well.

Allison as vice president is always there to assist and take charge when needed. She does this willingly and conscientiously. I look forward to helping her on occasion next year.

This has been the first year for Ailsa as secretary and she has risen to the challenge with zeal and competency! Well done Ailsa and thank you.

Kevin who continues to manage our finances for us so capably. We thank Rosemary his wife for letting him give so much time to us!

Vicki for her computer work, keeping the membership up to date and her work on the programme book with Liz and Michael. Vicki’s job this year has been extensive and time consuming.

Tony has been an amazing maintenance officer. Continuing on from the good work Peter did Tony has kept our clubrooms spic and span. You don’t realise all the things that Tony fixes around the place. Just recently he cleaned the spouting and water blasted the entire building.

Sue McKenzie our tournament secretary is retiring this year after being a supportive and hardworking committee member. Thank you Sue for your contributions to our well- being.

Helen who supervises our cleaner along with doing a lot of work with Liz organizing our prizegiving. Helen also retires this year and her smiling face will be missed on our committee along with her apt and pertinent observations. Thank you for your work Helen.

Mary who has looked after our sponsors and has prepared the beautiful desert that you will be having tonight. Keeping our sponsors secured is a big job and Mary has done a great job with many of them returning for 2021.

Thank you to our sponsors. Its great to see the wider Cambridge community represented in our club.

Michael has joined us on the committee this year and it has been fantastic to have his wealth of knowledge and experience once again. He continues his many years of working hard for our club.

Kay Hanna has also joined us this year as has Gretchen Gavey. They have both organized the kitchen and the food for sessions and tournaments. Thank goodness they are both staying on and that Kay is stepping up to a new role next year.

Gretchen came in to replace Louise on the committee during the year and I am very pleased to say that Louise is going to rejoin us in 2021. She is valued and hard- working committee member who had a rough 2020.

Our new club captain Liz has had big boots to fill left by Clare, but she has done herself and us proud. It has been an extra difficult year for Liz and she has often had to put her sorrow to one side to do her very best for us all. She is amazing and we are thankful after the dreadful 2020 year for her she is staying on to give 2021 a go. We’d like to give Liz some flowers as a small recognition of the big role she plays in keeping our club happy.

Many thanks to you all. It has been a pleasure to work with you all this year.

This year has been a disrupted and perplexing, stressful year. Many of our series weren’t completed and only one of our championships was completed. But despite this the year has contained many times of companionship, of friendship, and of personal growth as we have risen to the challenge of living in a Covid society. During lockdown Michael and Eunice organized BBO sessions that we could participate in and many people kept their skills alive by playing online.

Thank you all for helping me during my two years as President. I have enjoyed the challenge and look forward to interacting with you next year, and supporting Allison when I can, as she takes over my role. I hope you have a healthy and happy Christmas and travel safely throughout the holiday period until we meet again over the bridge table in 2021.

Kia kaha

Haere ra