

## **Chairman's Report Western Cape Bridge Union**

2016 saw many changes in the Western Cape bridge scene. On the low side, there was the passing of Pat Truter a stalwart of Western Cape Bridge over several decades – her hard work and organisational skills will be sorely missed by all of us.

On the positive side, we are very fortunate that we were able to secure the services of Andre Truter to act as bridge centre manager who had the experience and knowledge of the game and more importantly the patience to put up with the variable nature of bridge players behaviour with a smile and authority. We hope he will continue in this role for many years to come. We have already seen the positive role he has played with increased attendance at most of the clubs at the bridge centre.

Our financial position is sound as Hilary, who I thank once again for looking after our funds so admirably, will explain. My thanks also at this point to Harold Bernstein for yet again being our honorary auditor – I am not certain how many years in a row he has done this task. This is partly due to increased membership and partly to the increase in table money which was the first for a few years. However, we should not remain complacent about our financial position – the brunt of the cost of a bridge centre manager will only really take effect in the coming year over a full 12-month period, and we face rising costs of refreshments and electricity will affect any surplus. We must also be mindful of the fact that we need to build up reserves in case we are forced to leave these premises and need to look for an alternative venue. Thanks largely to the efforts of Shirley Phillips we have for the first time an official lease, but it is short-term.

I believe we have kept the cost of bridge down to a minimum. There are very few forms of entertainment which last for nearly four hours, include good refreshments and the occasional prize, that cost as little as we pay for bridge across the peninsula. We understand there are those on dwindling fixed incomes, who may even find our modest charges a little too much and here we must applaud the work of the Friendship club which assists those who cannot afford to play. I hope that the WCBU will continue to support this venture now and into the future. One must also not forget that most of the clubs in our Association are run or assisted by volunteers. Without the mammoth amount of work done on a voluntary basis bridge would be a lot more expensive.

We remain proud of our teaching programme which is run so efficiently by Kitty Cruise. We may perhaps not be present in quite so many schools as we would like, but it is not for want of her great efforts. We thank the Department of Culture and Sport for their financial assistance without which assistance we would not be able to put as many teachers out there as we have. Obviously we would like to expand this activity where we can – for this we need your help in opening a few doors where you have suitable contacts and also to assist with the teaching itself if you have the time.

Our local events have shown highs and lows in terms of entry. Our flagship event – the Cape Festival – saw a bumper turnout with players from all over the world participating and the major prizes being shared between Sweden and Germany. I must thank Jocelyn Ashberg who puts so much effort into making a success of this event together with our Sponsors Warwick Wealth who do so much for bridge during the whole year and also Julie Gray for her generous annual donation.

Our one day events are well attended, but the longer events such as our Teams and Pairs are less well attended. I do understand this – people are happier to play on their regular club slot rather than committing to a number of sessions which may include evenings. If anyone has any ideas, we gladly look at all suggestions as to how we can increase attendance.

On the National front we gained great success. For the first time in many years we won back the Interprovincial title. Well done to Anton der Kinderen, Glen Holman, Andrew Cruise and Paul Reynolds for achieving this feat. And equally well done to Anton and Glen who were also part of the victorious team at the Nationals last year.

The year ahead is exciting but a bit nerve-wracking. We will see the African Bridge Championships return to Cape Town in May, followed by the National Championships. A lot of people have already been working tirelessly on these events for over a year, and we hope they are a great success and will make our city proud.

I would like to thank my wonderful committee who has worked selflessly yet again often under trying circumstances. If I had one wish for the coming year, where so many things of importance are on the line, it would be for bridge players to remain positive and friendly and understand that your committees whether they be at club or provincial level are all trying to do a good job without personal agenda. I would ask the players to show a little more respect than occurred in the last year which will make the game more enjoyable for all.

Tim Cope

Chairman – Western Cape Bridge Union