

## **GBU CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Hi everyone thanks very much for attending.

2024 was a year of transition for the Gauteng Bridge Union (GBU). We lost the vast experience and expertise of Dierdre Ingersent and James Grant who had both been involved for many years. I found myself pretty much thrown in the deep end. After a few months, our vice president Val Bloom resigned for personal reasons and I want to thank her for all her support. Our webmaster, Devan Chetty resigned in October, after getting the GBU website in order and he is thanked. Betty Ravenscroft was co-opted onto the committee and Duncan Craggs took over as vice president. The GBU is allowed up to 8 members and I would encourage a few more hands on deck, not only for assistance but also for input as regarding how we move forward. I would like to thank my committee for their suggestions and support. I was particularly concerned about spending our members money however Tor Meyer our treasurer who assured me that the money should be spent for the players benefit which is what we have done.

We ran several tournaments last year including GBU pairs, GBU teams and a mini congress which seemed to go without a hitch. Blairgowrie and Benoni Northerns also ran an all-day event which was well supported.

The rivalry between online and face-to-face continues here in Gauteng as it appears to worldwide and I think we can be pleased that live bridge on Wednesday afternoons, Benoni Northerns, Blairgorie and Saturday afternoons at the Links remain popular. However, Friday morning is battling to get going. Online bridge via the Links, Orchards and RealBridge do however offer a very pleasant alternative.

I remind all clubs that subs are due before the end of April and if you have players who play more than 6 times and do not pay the GBU and SABF fees the club is then responsible for that amount.

Supervised bridge has become very popular in Gauteng.

Having said that there seems to be a leap from learning the game to playing at the clubs and this is the gap I feel we should try to fill. As an example, there are 20 odd tables at supervised at the links on a Thursday morning with a mere 2 tables making it to the Tuesday morning gentle tournament. This is a matter which I feel must be addressed. And I would be very open for any suggestions on how to literally bridge the gap.

Looking forward we will be holding several red point events again this year although no mini congress. I have approached the SABF regarding online red points events pointing out that it is just as difficult for us to get people to play live as it is for any other union. They have said that they will be looking into this.

The GBU is hosting our prestigious congress in May at and this is a huge exercise requiring a great deal of organisation. The annual congress is a platform for all bridge players to hone their skills meet new friends and indulge their passion for the game they love. There will be something for everyone including teams, pairs, mixed pairs and a no fear tournament for our newbies.

I am very pleased to announce that the GBU, in an effort to promote the event, has decided that 20 individuals entering the team's event will be gifted R1000 off their entry fee and 20 individual pairs entrants an amount of R500 at a total cost of R30000. Once entries for congress are closed, we will have a draw at The Links after bridge immediately before the start of congress.

I hope all directors both online and live take up the call to encourage all our +/- 500 GBU members to take part in this event and show the rest of South Africa that Gauteng is a popular bridge destination.

Thankyou

**Sheila Francis**

**Chairman**