

Outgoing President's Remarks

In reflecting on my year as president, I have come to two conclusions: firstly it wasn't what I expected and secondly I wish I had my time over again! Perhaps this is a reflection on life in general.

I entered into the job with little knowledge of what would be expected of me (shaking hands and kissing babies is what I imagined) and found myself with significant responsibilities. Now after a life spent avoiding responsibilities this was a daunting task. In support of this and in a year of significant changes in the key roles in the WBU I must thank the MC for their support and help in solving numerous problems and keeping the union together. I must also thank all the members of the WBU itself and my friends in the NWBA for their support over this year. I would also like to thank all the volunteers in the four regions of the Union for their tireless and largely unpaid work in arranging the congresses and area and national competitions; without them we would be in a very difficult position. It has been great to see people at these tournaments and also watch our players on BBO taking part in the Camrose and Lady Milne and when I have been able to play in events I have always been made to feel welcome and, as is usual, given no tops at the table.

In departing to a stress free life I would like to make a few observations. There is a misnomer that bridge is a dying game, this is not true and access to bridge is incredibly easy now. We need to adapt to the changing face of bridge and need to access the growing numbers of internet bridge players and persuade them that the "live" bridge game is better. I was disappointed we were not represented in the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer competitions this year and we were missed by the players from the other unions. I hope to address this with the help of Mark Roderick, Laura Woodruff and hopefully many volunteers. Please don't expect an overnight success this will be hard work and a long term strategy is needed.

I have tried to really enjoy playing bridge this year and I have largely succeeded in doing so and feel I have played better because of this. We all have bad days at the table and controlling our emotions is sometimes very difficult but we must strive to do so, let's start enjoying playing bridge again.

I wish the future president good luck in the coming year and hope to see you all at the table.

Paddy