



BAY of Plenty Blues Club Incorporated

2020 AGM – PRESIDENTS REPORT

In the words of Robert Zimmerman aka Bob Dylan "The times they are a changing"
Another philosopher once said " There's one thing that's constant and that's Change"
For many of us going through this Pandemic, the world is not the same and probably never will be.

You only need to go back to some of the great Blues artists and song writers to understand how and where they shaped their craft through real life experience while looking for a better world for their children and grandchildren.

One thing I have learnt from the Blues as a musician it's about connection. It's about being with likeminded people.

I've been fortunate to have spent several years playing music with some of the great Blues Artists like our very own Midge Marsden and Mississippi Willie Foster.
I learnt a heck of a of a lot from them and have tried my best to pass it on through the club.

Why did they call Dance halls "Juke Joints"? This comes from Willie Foster.

Back in the early 1800s they were named after the Afro Americans having fun dancing; they called it "Juken". That's how they entertained themselves when they were allowed! They were still slaves and owned but they made the most of what they had.

They invented what we now call Blues.

For us in our generation, it's an interpretation of the Blues, however for them it really was the Blues.

Poverty provided the opportunity to form a type of music that only they could do because they owned it, lived it, ate, drank and slept it.

Imagine being Born on a cotton sack? Growing up in a cotton field thinking you're ok only to realise your parents are owned by a wealthy farmer of affluent society. We have no idea what it was like to endure their lifestyle, but here we are performing and listening to their songs.

How many of us really know the history? My self-included, even after spending years playing with icons like Midge Marsden and Mississippi Willie Foster. Willie incidentally was born on a sack in a cotton field on the side of the Mississippi Delta in September 1921. He grew up and learnt to sing and play the Harp. He spent several years with the legendary Muddy Waters. You can't get much closer to the real Blues than Willie.

The History of the Blues is rich with their stories and life, especially their music which is why we have an appreciative bunch of people called the Bay of Plenty Blues Club.

Where am I heading with this?

As much as the last few months has been an upheaval for many of us, it certainly hasn't been anything like the folk back then had to endure.

My "Juke Joint " is the Bay of Plenty Blues club and has been since we first formed the club back in 2006. The Club is settling in to the Citizens club venue quite nicely, they have taken us under their wing and we all appreciate having such a great venue not only for Jam nights but for the Festival at Labour Weekend plus a new initiative "Blues on Sunday " the committee hopes to run every 5-6 weeks which we would love you to support.

Speaking of Committee ...we are a band of Brothers and Sisters who I've had the honour of leading for the last 2 years. Any club has their ups and downs, but these guys were able to sort things in any situation that most of you wouldn't have even known had happened. I can only say without a doubt they have been a fantastic team.

Vice President Mike McMillan, Secretary Di Riddel, Treasurer Bobby Howard, Deb and Terry Oldham, Past President Paul Hindrup, Paul Verney, Rob Gillies, and Graham Watson (Unfortunately Glenda Strawbridge resigned for personal reasons and thank you Glenda for being here).

Just to mention also that our website is no longer bopblues.com we are now bopblues.co.nz

Connecting ... Well, that's one of the many great things this committee has done.

We have "connected " with you as members and all of the musicians that turn up on a Jam night and kept the club alive through various measures during Lockdown, especially the Face Book On-Line " Blues Recharge " concert which was important in keeping the club active and thriving.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for supporting the club and wish the new President and Committee all the best for the coming year.

Outgoing President Noel Lamberton,
BOP Blues INC