



Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

June 2022

President's Welcome

The weather in London is bright and sunny - which matches my mood today having just heard about the magnificent performance of our teams at the annual Interclub event between Palmerston North, Wanganui and Hawera Bridge Clubs. I want to say a massive thank you and well done to everyone who represented the Club today, but particularly to our newer members, for whom this was a nerve-wracking, first competitive teams event, and also to Bob Hurley for undertaking to seek expressions of interest and then to select our teams at all grades. Bob has written a report of the event later in this newsletter but just be sure my Presidential heart is beating proudly!

We also had a Committee meeting by zoom last week so I can update you on some committee matters of interest. We were pleased to report table numbers at all sessions bouncing back to pre-Covid levels - particularly the great attendance at the Thursday evening handicapped multigrade sessions. The new Sunday evening online session was popular enough for us to agree to extend it into July and to promote more widely throughout New Zealand - the links for all online sessions will be via the website www.pnbridge.nz.

[You will know from pianola's recently circulated that NZBridge are undertaking a consultation on their Online Bridge Strategy. Two of our members have already expressed interest in being on the Think Tank - if you would be interested also, please let me know as soon as possible. The Committee also agreed to offer our Club Rooms and host a regional consultation meeting. If this happens, we will let you know details by pianola.]

The Committee also heard back from our R and R (Recruitment and Retention) Sub-Committee which has been tasked to draft the playing programme for 2023. They have suggested we retain the basic programme but with all Tuesday evening competitions described and with the Butler Tray competition moved from the Thursday Multigrade session to the Monday Bronze and Silver session. We are also proposing that the Improver's Classes are retained as a monthly event but moved to Friday evenings. This will enable many of our Gold and Platinum players to contribute to the sessions without having to forego their regular

Tuesday evening playing session. If you wish to contribute to this discussion, please discuss with your room rep or session host in the first instance. We welcome your input.

Maxine Keay provided us with an update on the lessons programmes: the ten week courses will be ending soon. We are hopeful of ten new members to integrate into our regular club playing sessions. The plan is to find "mentors" to play with these new members for the weeks beginning 27 June to the end of July, in separate sessions, so that they can confidently participate in regular club sessions from August onwards. If you would be available and willing to do this, please contact Maxine. I would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to our tutors, Ken Bateman and Anne Gordon, and their helpers Maxine Keay, Gayle Leader, Jan Whyte and Morgan Booker. I know, too, that our newest members will experience the warmest of welcomes as they start their bridge journey in the Club sessions.

On a more mundane note, the Committee adopted a Health and Safety Statement and Policy. This is a legal requirement for any organisation with employees - sports clubs and organisations being no exception. These are now on the Club website should you wish to take a look.

On another matter of business, the club needs to have licensed bar managers registered to manage our Club Licence for the Sale and Supply of Alcohol. At the moment, we have two registered bar managers - myself and Gayle Leader. If any member has a Bar Manager's Licence, or the qualification necessary to become registered with the City Council, and is willing to help us with managing our bar services, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Finally, a note that our Club Restricted 8B Tournament is happening on Sunday 27 June (this Sunday). The newsletter may come too late as a reminder to enter but as I am writing it looks to be shaping up to be a great day. Thanks to Liz Burrows, as tournament secretary, and Gayle Leader and her team, for catering.

There is lots more news and views in this newsletter, so enjoy reading it and enjoy your bridge!

Stay safe, everyone.

Denise Servante
President

Interclub Victory



On 19 June twenty-four club members travelled to Wanganui to play in the annual interclub event against Wanganui and Hawera. It was a fun day, some good bridge was played and Palmerston North finished on top with the final scores PN 268, Wanganui 244, Hawera 207. We played four 12 board matches, two against each Wanganui team of our grade and two similarly against Hawera.

Special thanks to the eight junior players, most of whom had not played teams bridge before, for accepting the challenge and doing so well.

We have two new trophies to display for a year, the jug for overall winner and the cup for PN v Wanganui. Here are the teams:

Open

Jan Whyte	Bob Hurley
Ken Bateman	Sean Lynch
Morgan Booker	Ray Kemp
Zheng Zhang	Elizabeth Kemp

Intermediate

Julie Bunnell	Laura Griffin
Michael Hardman	Tony Clear
Hans Van Bunnik	Malcolm Loudon
Anne Gordon	Maxine Keay

Junior

Prue Drake	Kevin Conley
Theo Pippas	Kate Cliff
Elwi Beshlawi	Janet Rogerson
Maree Roberts	Dianne Gardner

Bob Hurley

Club and Tournaments Results

Congratulations to the following pairs who attained 70% or more in our club since the last newsletter

Morgan Booker / Zheng Zhang	75%
Zheng Zhang / Anita Thirtle	72.22%
Annette Gregg / Maureen Watts	72%
Malcom Loudon / Maxine Keay	70%
Jan Whyte / Ken Bateman	70.37%

And here are the pairs who have done well in recent tournaments.

Hokowhitu Intermediate Tournament	Hans van Bunnik Michael Hardman	4 th
	Zheng Zhang Anne Gordon -	5 th
	Paul Harper Angela Harper	6 th =
	Laura Griffin Tony Clear	6 th =
Hawkes Bay Congress Open	Jack James Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins	3 rd
Hawkes Bay Congress Open Teams	Jack James Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins Rachel Pelkman Murray Wood	2 nd
Hawkes Bay Congress Swiss Pairs	Jan Whyte Carolyn Yeoman	3 rd
Levin Intermediate Pairs	Debbie Marcroft Garry Hodge	1 st
	Terry Young Grant Elliott	3 rd

Gayle Leader

I've a Feelin' You're Foolin'

Do you assess your opponents during each round and adjust the way you bid or play depending upon who they are? It is tempting to take more risks against less experienced players, or to be more cautious when encountering top ones. Sometimes one can consider one's knowledge of an opponent's proclivities to steal a march on them. For example, at our club there is one player, let us call him Mr X, who tends to make risky bids and treats the game more like poker than bridge. When playing against Mr X one session in May I decided to take him on. Here is my hand, sitting North, and EW vulnerable:

♠ 10 8
♥ K 3
♦ Q 9 6 3
♣ Q J 9 8 3

and the start of the bidding:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	1NT
Pass	?		

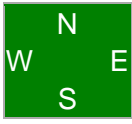
Our Mr X was sitting East and spent a lot of time thinking before bidding one spade. It is quite common, after two passes, for third in hand players to overstate their hand. In view of who East was and the hesitation I had a suspicion that this was the case. My partner's overcall showed 15-18 points balanced which made it even more certain in my mind that West was bidding with tram tickets. If my partner was at the top end of her range then we had a game on, so I had no hesitation in raising to 2NT even with my poor spades. Maybe I was expecting Mr X to turn up with something like 9762 in the suit.

At this point, East decided to up the ante, bidding three spades. He obviously was getting into his stride and was trying to stop us bidding game. However, partner wasn't fooled and converted to 3NT. Again, there was a long hesitation from Mr X but partner and I felt pretty confident we were in the right spot.

Here is the complete bidding sequence:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	1NT
Pass	2NT	3 ♠	3NT
All Pass			

Well, things didn't turn out quite as we expected. West led 7♠ and here are the four hands.

West Deals	♠ 10 8		
E-W Vul	♥ K 3		
	♦ Q 9 6 3		
	♣ Q J 9 8 3		
♠ 7			♠ A K 9 6 5 4 3
♥ A 8 7 5 4 2			♥ 10 9
♦ 4			♦ A J 2
♣ 10 6 5 4 2			♣ 7
	♠ Q J 2		
	♥ Q J 6		
	♦ K 10 8 7 5		
	♣ A K		

South can make nine tricks if EW play ball but there was no charity for us on this hand. East set up the spades and waited for diamonds to be led. We went four down for a score of -200. Maybe East was being generous by not doubling us, or maybe he thought partner might not have a spade so that he wouldn't get time to establish the suit. In fact, a bottom board is a bottom board and a double would have been irrelevant. A score of -200 gave us the same result as -800 ie zilch. Other East-West pairs pushed on in spades but, despite the long suit, the maximum they can make with accurate defence, is eight tricks.

So, well done Mr X! I shall be less presumptuous when bidding against you in future.

Ray Kemp

A Bridge too Far?

I guess most of us profusely thank our partner when dummy goes down on the table but what are we actually thinking? Maybe “now show me the hand you bid”, or perhaps “we are out of our league on this one. I’ve no idea where to start”. The saddest situation is when you are almost there but have bid up to just one level too high. Perhaps you need eleven tricks but every time you check you can only count up to ten.

This is what happened to us on one hand in May. Look at the EW hands from the deal below:

	♠ A J 10 9 6					
South Deals	♥ 6 2					
Both Vul	♦ 10 6 3					
	♣ Q 9 3					
♠ Q 8 ♥ A K 9 7 ♦ A K 8 2 ♣ J 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K 2 ♥ Q J 10 5 3 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A 10 7 2	
N						
W E						
S						
	♠ 7 5 4 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ J 9 5 4 ♣ K 8 6					

I am sitting East and after some intervention by NS in spades I consider a slam in hearts but put the brakes on when I realize we have less than thirty points and have an ace and king missing. So, given a spade lead by South, how do you play the EW cards in the contract of five hearts?

Gazing at dummy I assess that we have ten certain tricks but obtaining an eleventh requires a fortuitous distribution of one of the minor suits or some help from the opponents. I have a vague idea that I might be able to end-play South in clubs but missing the nine and eight of the suit rules that one out.

But help is at hand. North takes the ace of spades and, instead of leading the suit back, switches to clubs. I duck and South wins the king and returns a second club. Game over, I now can make a second club trick and take the rest of the tricks.

I was lucky but was disappointed to check on the all-knowing electronic machine that I should always make the contract anyway. Later I looked at the hands and still had no idea how EW can make eleven tricks without the help of the opponents. Still, Deep Finesse always has the answer and it is quite ingenious.

Assuming NS start with an unhelpful two rounds of spades, I win the second trick, and draw trumps. Then, I have to lead a low club up towards dummy’s jack. If South comes up with ♣K then my problems are over. I can just finesse North for the other club honour. If South ducks then North has to take ♣Q but now I can take out three more rounds of trumps and South gets squeezed. He cannot hold on to both the club king and four diamonds. So I will either make an extra club or my fourth diamond. Aren’t computers clever?

In the 1980s a top bridge player called Zia Mahmood stated that he would offer a million dollars to any person who could produce a bridge program to beat him. In the 1990s he withdrew that offer. Looking at Deep Finesse you can see his point.

Ray Kemp

Clubbed!

What would you do if, sitting East, you got dealt the following hand?

♠AKQJ
♥AKQJ
♦AK
♣KJ9

Probably your first impulse would be to check whether it was April 1st and maybe then look around to see if anyone is pointing at you and laughing. But no. This is the hand that the computer has produced for you, and you must decide what to do. In fact, there is a further complication because you are the last to call and there has already been some significant bidding:

South	West	North	East
7♣	Pass	Pass	?

The first impulse may be to double South’s silly bid, but if you do, you find that South immediately redoubles. Everyone else quickly passes so now you have another decision to make. Let me tell you at this point that South is the redoubtable (and redoubling) master spy James Bond. What do you do now? In fact, your best bet is to bid seven no trumps. Yes, you may go one down but that is better than paying out on a redoubled contract that MAKES!

You must be joking

Since the last newsletter we have had the interclub match at Wanganui. For some less experienced players this will have been their first chance to play in a teams format.

If you have a good set of hands then you can return with confidence to your home table. If, instead, you have had a bad round then you may feel some trepidation as you show your team mates your scores. There is a famous example from an international match where the away team has had an atrocious round. They present their score sheet to their team mates. After looking disapprovingly at their results the main guy says:

“How dare you come back to the table with this set of results.”

One of the guilty pair replies:

“It wasn’t my idea to come back.”

Ray Kemp

Meyer	M	Drax
♠65432	♠T987	♠AKQJ
♥T9872	♥6543	♥AKQJ
♦JT9	♦—	♦AK
♣—	♣76532	♣KJ9
	Bond	
	♠—	
	♥—	
	♦Q8765432	
	♣AQT84	

Look carefully at the above deal. Whatever West leads, the contract makes. Bond has to be careful, but as long as he ruffs a couple of diamonds and finesses twice against East’s club holding he can take out the last trump and run the diamond suit.

Thanks to Bob Hurley who supplied the above hand. It is taken from Ian Fleming’s Bond novel “Moonraker” but is based on a much earlier whist hand from the eighteenth century. As you may have guessed, in both cases, the deal was a set-up. However, the main message is that the number of tricks you can make often depends more on distribution than on high card points.

Bob Hurley and Ray Kemp