

Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

April 2019

Welcome

Happy Easter! We have a packed newsletter for you this month including news from the rooms and details of upcoming events. As always, we are so grateful to all members who contribute in so many ways to our Club and in promoting and organizing these events.

There definitely seems to be an emphasis in this newsletter on events for those members who are newer to the game. If you are enjoying your bridge at club nights and are thinking to take on new challenges, then I would really encourage you to participate in these events. Particularly, please think about joining us for our annual friendly match with Hawera and Whanganui Clubs on 6 June - we need to field two teams at each of Junior, Intermediate and Open levels - and registering for our Club Junior and Intermediate Tournaments on 18 May.

The new Committee, elected at the AGM last month, has had its first meeting and confirmed "bums on seats" as an ongoing focus for this year. With this in mind, we have agreed to a City-wide leaflet drop to promote the lessons which will start in late April. However, word-of-mouth and personal recommendation remain a strong form of advertising so please pass the word to your friends and family. If you know anyone who may be interested in taking up the game, pass on details of the lessons contained in this newsletter to them.

I hope that you have lots planned over the holidays - with plenty of time to relax with family and friends - and look forward to catching up with everyone after the break.

Meanwhile, happy bridging!

Denise Servante
President

Volunteer of the Month



Congratulations to Liz Burrows!

Hey folks, one of our own has been honoured by NZ Bridge: She has been named as "volunteer of the month" for April. This award covers the length and breadth of New Zealand and is justly deserved by Liz who is a stalwart in our club. She single-handedly buys and wraps all the prizes in our Xmas Cheer tournament (in the region of 50 parcels, all beautifully presented and labelled) and has done so for the past 15 years.

She has been club secretary for five years and convenor of the tournament committee for 3 years and Tuesday evening room representative and/or organizer for at least that long. It is special to know that you have been recognized by people from outside our region who nominated you for this award.

She will not like this attention and Liz, we don't care! We think you are amazing, a dedicated woman who leads by example and has no hesitation in telling you when you have made an error at the bridge table (say no more). We appreciate you Liz. Thank you for all you do for our club.

Tony Clear

Our New President



Unless you have been living in a cave for the last few weeks you will already know our club has a new president. Denise Servante was voted in during the March AGM.

I have been asked to point out (no names, no pack drill) that, as can be seen from the above photo, Denise is pretty 'armless. Even so, we are sure she will put plenty of elbow grease into the job and will steer the committee with a steady hand.

Good luck in your new role, Denise!

Ray Kemp

This and That

Joan MacIntosh who was highlighted in the last newsletter has had a fall and broken a hip. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

Interclub is back! The three-way competition between Palmerston North, Whanganui and Hawera is back on this year's agenda. We will be competing at Whanganui on Sunday 9th June. We need two teams of four at each level: Open, Intermediate, and Junior. If you're interested in taking part, please contact Julie Bunnell (bunnell.julie@gmail.com or 021 127 4143) by Sunday 19th May. Interest from both singles and partnerships welcomed. Prior experience in playing teams competitions or tournaments is not required.

Help wanted! The club is looking for occasional specific task volunteers: someone to clean the gutters, someone to re-stain the cedar on the building and someone is already welding the chairs and tables that break and I don't know who that is. Please let one of the Tonys know if you can assist or if you know the identity of the mystery welder. The outside of the building could do with a wash down too. If you have skills that may be useful to the club and would be happy to share them this would be greatly appreciated.

If you are unable to assist and would like to donate to achieve specific outcomes please let your room rep or a committee member know.

There is a new feature run by New Zealand Bridge www.nzbridge.co.nz. It is aimed at players who have just come out of a Beginners' Class or those who need a bit of a refresher. Every Friday the bidding of a hand will be discussed then, on the following Sunday, the play and defence. The hands are real ones from recent sessions. The aim is to look at instructive deals but ones which we hope newish players can follow. Sign on to "My NZB" and tick the prompt "Newer Player Articles". The first article is already on line.

Alan Sundry

Rejuvenation project

This month is a busy time for us leading up to our lessons this year. Jane Stearns from NZ Bridge has been helping with adverts and posters so that we can generate a real buzz this year and hopefully attract a much larger intake for our lessons. We will be on the radio and fliers will be arriving in 21000 letter boxes all around Palmerston North! We are also going to be putting up posters in as many places as possible, so any suggestions and help would be most appreciated. We are also going to be organizing a small group of bridge players to showcase us somewhere around town (as yet to be decided.) Let us know if you can help with this. Please also invite anyone you know that might consider joining our lessons this year beginning in the first week of May, the more the merrier!

On another note we have decided to get new cabinets made to suit our special requirements and also to try and match our beautiful display cupboard made by Martin Carryer. We are still in the process of applying for funding for this project and the new tablecloths, so still a work in progress.

If you looked for the answer to my previous question... Where would you find a King or Queen picture? The eagle eyed amongst you will have spotted them above our bathroom doors.

Thank you to everyone that responded to requests this past weekend for the garden working bee. The gardens are looking awesome now after a massive effort over two days. I believe you even had to deal with some angry wasps and three were stung! Hopefully the nest has now been dealt with. You all deserve medals for your efforts so a huge thank you to Carolyn Brodie, Roxanne Brassington, Dan Lynch, Beverley Charlton and Clare Veltman.

Anne Gordon

Upcoming Tournaments

Over the next few months the tournament scene becomes quite busy. If you are new to tournaments we have our very own Junior/Intermediate Tournament to be held on the 18th May with entries to be in by 16th May. A change this year is that lunch will be catered for rather than an evening meal. This also constitutes early warning for all our Open members whose help will be needed. Also keep in mind there are Interprovincial Trials at at Intermediate, Open, Women and Senior levels to be held over 2 days in Whanganui on the weekend of the 11th May.

Other local tournaments in the next two months are as follows:

Levin Multigrade Pairs	20 th April
Wellington Regional Congress	25 th -28 th April
Hokowhiti Intermediate Pairs	28 th April
Feilding Intermediate Pairs	4 th May
Taradale Tierney Teams	18 th May
Paraparaumu Intermediate Pairs	19 th May
Waipukerau Inter/Junior Pairs	25 th May
Taihape Int/Junior Pairs	26 th May
Otaki Multigrade Pairs	26 th May
Hawkes Bay Congress	1 st -3 rd June
Levin Int/Junior Pairs	16 th June

Laura Griffin

Club and Tournaments Results

Congratulations to the following winners of our club competitions:

February

Monday Afternoon	Jenny Wilson Alan Doddridge
Novice Plus	Dianne Gardner Dianne Reilly
Tuesday Open	Denise Servante Morgan Booker
Multi-grade Welcome Pairs	Barbara Passman Reuben Leberman
Friday Luncheon	Val Pain Peter Avery

March

Metlifecare Pairs	Julie Bunnell Tony Clear
Novice Plus	Margaret Foss Grant Elliott Bob Hurley
Myra Stubbs Teams	Ken Bateman, Elizabeth Kemp Ray Kemp
Naylor Palmer Swiss Pairs	Dianne Hunter Garry Hodge
Friday Luncheon	Sylvia Fray Frank Dunlop

Only one pair joined the Over-seventies Club in March: Dianne Gardner and Carolyn Brodie-71.57% 18th March, Novice Plus.

Well done to club members who have featured well in the following tournaments.

Feilding Open Pairs	Bob Hurley Evelyn Hurley	2nd
Feilding Open Pairs	Jan Whyte Ken Bateman	3rd
Marion Picnic Pairs	Lorraine Stachurski Sarah Green (New Plymouth)	2nd
Marion Picnic Pairs	Pat Oyston Anita Thirtle	3rd
Dannevirke Open	Bob Hurley Evelyn Hurley	1st

The Club is also starting a Grand Slam Club. If you have bid and made a Grand Slam please email me the details at e.burrows@massey.ac.nz. or leave me a note on the Tuesday night notice board.

Liz Burrows

Weekend Decussation¹

This was my favourite hand from the recent North Island Teams played in Tauranga, which was won by four of the members of the current New Zealand Open Team: Ashley Bach; Michael Cornell; GeO Tislevoll; and Michael Ware.

South Deals ♠ A K 7 6
Both Vul ♥ J 8 7
♦ 9 2
♣ A K 7 5



♠ J 9 2
♥ A K 6 3
♦ J 6 3
♣ Q 8 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 NT

The bidding was normal, at least playing a strong 1NT but the contract was very poor. Nevertheless, the double dummy information indicated that the contract was makeable. Despite that fact only seven of twenty-nine players who declared 3NT came away with a plus score.

Declarer starts off the play with two top spades, two top hearts, and three top clubs for a total of seven tricks. Moreover, there are only slim chances for additional tricks. Nevertheless, when we are in a normal 3NT we have to try and make nine tricks.

This hand is really a lesson in squeeze play. A squeeze is a play where we run off our winners and hope, sometimes very optimistically, that one opponent will not be able to hold all of their good cards and will be forced to discard a potential winner making one of our lesser cards good.

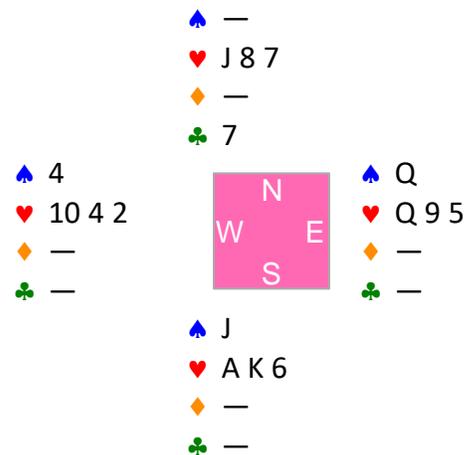
In addition, before we contemplate a squeeze we must hope that the defenders cannot take more than four diamond tricks. However, for our first bit of good news, this time we were lucky, and the play continued after the ♦A lead with east cashing the ♦K and ♦Q before playing the ♦5 to west's ♦10 at trick four. So, we were still in the game.

Our first problem is what to discard on the third and fourth diamonds? Our main chances of additional tricks are the three-three club break (around 36%) and

either major suit queen dropping singleton or doubleton (each is around 19%) – remember, I said that our prospects were slim. We need two good things to happen. Therefore, we cannot discard a club from north as the fourth club is our best chance of an additional trick. Similarly, we cannot afford to discard a heart from north without giving up on the chance of the ♥Q dropping in two rounds. That means that declarer must discard two small spades from hand.

Dummy is a little more flexible and either a small club or a small heart can be parted with safely. We will have to discard a heart eventually on the third club if a club is discarded now so we might as well throw a club at trick four. At trick five, west plays a spade through our now bare ♠AK and we win perforce. Are there any other chances?

Yes, fortunately. Unfortunately, those chances are also not great. If the clubs break three-three then if east holds both major suit queens then we can squeeze east in the majors. Let's see how this works. We play three rounds of clubs noticing the good break and cash the ♠A which leaves this end position.

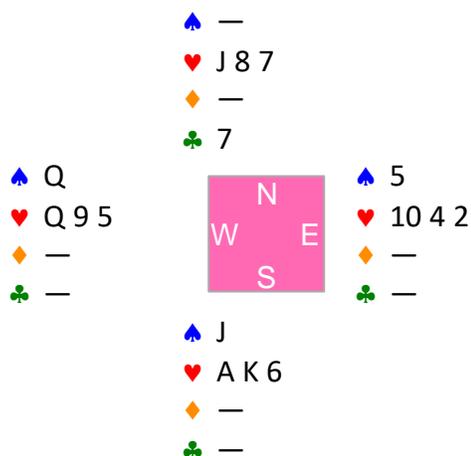


On the ♣7 east has no good discard. If east throws the ♠Q then dummy's ♠J will be good but if instead east throws a heart then south can throw the ♠J and two rounds of hearts will drop the now doubleton heart queen and the third round will be won by north's ♥J.

Of course, it is correct for east to discard the ♥Q, rather than the ♠Q, as east can see dummy's ♠J threatening but there is a faint hope that partner holds the ♥J and can prevent a third-round heart winner. Note also that this squeeze preserves the possibility that either major suit queen was doubleton. The ace and king of spades were cashed before the squeeze played so if we see the ♠Q drop we can just play to cash our ♠J later. If it is the ♥Q that was doubleton from the beginning then if the ♠Q does not appear we will cash our ace and king of hearts and that queen tumbles down.

¹ Decussation: The action of crossing (as of nerve fibres) especially in the form of an 'X' [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

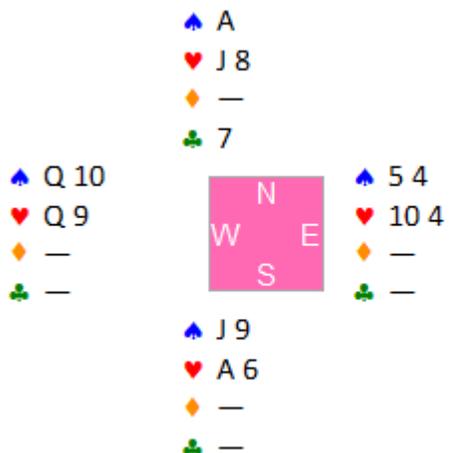
Notice that this squeeze would not be successful if we swapped the east and west cards. The position would then be:



Now, on the last club, dummy must play before west and dummy, not west, will be squeezed. If dummy pitches the ♠J then west can safely discard the ♠Q and if dummy pitches the small heart west can also pitch a heart.

That is, this squeeze is positional as only east can be squeezed. Essentially, that is because the ♠J threat card needs to lie over the hand with the ♠Q. If declarer had the ♠J and dummy the ♥J then either opponent could be squeezed, and we would say that the squeeze is automatic rather than positional. Of course, if dummy had ♥AKJ then there would be a finesse option and that would probably be the best play (finesses are around 50%) for the contract rather than the squeeze.

On this hand though there is yet another option – actually there are many other options but they are even more unlikely. Instead of cashing the second top spade, we can play our fourth club first. For simplicity and symmetry, we can first cash one of the top hearts leaving the position in the diagram below.



That makes no material difference to the mechanics of the play but it looks prettier – both dummy and declarer’s last three cards will be a bare ace and jack-small. With the jack-small opposite partner’s bare ace.

On the ♣7, dummy can pitch the ♥6. Now, either defender holding both major suit queens will have no good discard. The position is shown with west having both queens but transfer those cards to east and that hand will still be squeezed. If the defender bares the ♠Q then declarer cashes the ♠A felling her majesty and goes to the ♥A in dummy and cashes the ♠J at trick thirteen.

On the other hand, if the defender bares the ♥Q then declarer first goes to the ♥A in dummy felling that queen and returns to hand with the ♠A to cash the ♥J.

In theory, this squeeze, called a criss-cross squeeze, is twice as likely as the positional squeeze described above as we can squeeze either east or west. Although in practice, we will need to guess which opponent we have squeezed. As if we cash the wrong ace first in the endgame we will not fell a queen and when we go to the other hand there will be no good jack to cash.

Similarly, if there was a doubleton queen from the beginning, we need to guess which one and play the correct ace first in order to fell the short queen while there is still an entry to the jack in the other hand.

Which squeeze would you play for? I mean, are you a good guesser?

Wayne Burrows

Swingers

Elizabeth and I hadn't played any teams tournaments for a good while but had an offer we couldn't refuse from Morgan Booker and Jack James when they asked us to play with them in the March Hastings Teams. Teams can be fun, but there is often a high random factor. You play 8, 10, or even 12 boards against the same opponents and you may have no idea how you have fared until you return to the home table for the 'reckoning'. If you have had a bad set then you may have some misgivings about comparing results with your team-mates. There is a salutary story about two highly rated American players: Ivan Erdos and Kelsy Petterson. In one knockout teams tournament they had a really bad round. When they went back for the reckoning one of their team-mates said, "How dare you bring such a poor set of results back to this table?" to which Petterson replied, "It wasn't my idea to come back."

Another potential issue with teams is that a whole match can be decided by one or two "swing" hands. You play straight down the line for the whole match and make a misjudged call or play on one hand and down the gurgler goes all your good work.

In the final ten board match of the Hastings tournament we were playing against a team of grand masters who were lying just above us in the league table, so if we beat them we could switch places. The swinger deal, the one that determined our fate, is shown below.

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

The bidding at our table is as follows:

North	East	South	West
			Pass
1C*	2H	Dble	4H
4S	Pass	Pass	5H
Dbl	All Pass		

North's 1 club opener is announced as "2 plus clubs" which is disappointing for me sitting East because I would like to overcall a 2C Michael's bid showing both majors. But we play a 2C bid over a possible short club as natural so I have to content myself with a preemptive bid in hearts. After the double, and with favourable vulnerability, my partner is happy to jump to 4 hearts. North bids 4 spades and if I wasn't holding my cards I would rub my hands in glee. Probably not a good idea to double, I think, since it will tell NS where all the spades are. I'll just be content with the 100 or 200 points for North going off in the contract. However, I have not taken my partner's zeal into account. She decides that 5 hearts, even doubled, is going to be a good save. Aargh! There goes the match, I decide.

Although I am fatigued after a day of full-on bridge, our opponents are obviously more tired and let me off with going only two down. However, that is 300 away. Surely at the other table our team-mates are going to be playing in 4 spades, and knowing our opponents, they will, no doubt, be doubled going for 500 or so. Maybe we will lose 10 imps or more.

Back at the home table, our team-mates were looking very pleased with themselves. We'll soon change that, I thought. However, to cut a long story short, sitting NS they had got into a 6 diamonds contract on this very hand, and, bless 'em, had made it. The swing to us was 14 imps and settled the match in our favour. Looking at the results later at other tables, most NS pairs who had played in spades had made at least ten tricks. Poor defence, you might think, but Deep Finesse tells us NS can always make eleven tricks in spades. Can you see how?

Ray Kemp

Improvers Corner

Last time we looked at how you might bid a major suit game. Now let's turn our attention to games in no trumps.

Playing in no trumps give you an extra ten points for the same number of tricks compared with a major suit contract, but, as mentioned last time, you can usually make more tricks in a major if you have a fit. So before settling on no trumps, you should first make sure you shouldn't be in hearts or spades.

East Deals	♠ Q J 2		
None Vul	♥ Q 7		
	♦ K Q 9 2		
	♣ A 6 5 3		
♠ A 9 7 5 4		♠ 10 6	
♥ K J 2		♥ 10 8 5 4	
♦ 8 5		♦ J 10 6	
♣ Q 10 4		♣ K 9 8 2	
	♠ K 8 3		
	♥ A 9 6 3		
	♦ A 7 4 3		
	♣ J 7		

The above hand is taken from the first week of the Monday evening April pairs. East is going to pass if they have any sense, and South must open 1NT. Worried about the club suit? Don't. If you only bid no trumps when you have perfect coverage in every suit, then this is going to severely restrict your bidding. Perhaps you envisage a worst-case scenario where you are left in the contract and West is going to lead out six club tricks followed by the ace of spades. Well, that is always a possibility, but in that case, maybe 1NT minus one may give you a good result since EW should be in a contract. Always open 1NT with 12-14 points and a flat hand. Even if the clubs were the lowly three and the two you should close your eyes and just do it.

After South's bid, North knows they have at least 26 points between them and should be in game. Is there a possible major suit fit? Not if opener is telling the truth. If South had a five card major they would prefer to open with that rather than 1NT and North doesn't have four cards in either major. North must bid 3NT straight away and South can take the blame if the contract doesn't make.

The next hand, taken from the same evening's bridge, makes another important point about no trump bidding.

North Deals	♠ A J 2		
N-S Vul	♥ K J 7 4		
	♦ Q 4 3		
	♣ K Q 2		
♠ K 9 7		♠ 8 6 5	
♥ A Q 10 6 5		♥ 3 2	
♦ 10 5		♦ A J 8 7 6	
♣ 10 7 4		♣ J 9 3	
	♠ Q 10 4 3		
	♥ 9 8		
	♦ K 9 2		
	♣ A 8 6 5		

If you are tempted to open 1NT with North's hand, you must resist that urge. Yes, you have a no-trump shape, but it is too strong to open an Acoll 1NT which you will have agreed with your partner to be in the range 12-14 points. You cannot open no trumps but you have a perfectly good heart suit so start by bidding that. South should respond with 1 spade. This tells North three things straight away. First, South has at least six points, otherwise they would have passed. Secondly, they do not have four or more hearts, because they would choose to support that first. Lastly, they have at least four spades. If South has more than four spades then that suit might be the right place to be. But North cannot support straight away or they may end up in a 4-3 fit which is rarely the best place. Neither can they rebid hearts which would show a five plus card suit. However, North now has a perfectly good alternative bid that accurately describes their points range and shape. The 1 no trump *rebid* in Acoll shows 15-17 points balanced.

Over to South. No spade fit, since North would have raised the suit with four cards. But no trumps looks promising. Adding their nine points to North's gives 24-26. Since the combined total may be 24 which is not normally enough for game, should South pass? No! Neither should they bid 3NT which could be risky. Instead South should venture 2NT. This says, over to you, partner. If you are better than minimum bid 3NT otherwise pass. North, indeed, has a little extra, so bids the game. So, a typical auction might go:

North	East	South	West
1H	Pass	1S	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Notice how wise it was of North not to open 1NT. All South could do then would be to pass, and a perfectly good 3NT contract would be missed.

Ray Kemp

Joy Mitchell



Many happy returns to Joy who celebrated her 90th birthday this month. Anyone who plays daytime bridge will already know that Joy doesn't just smile for the camera but is a joy to play against whatever the weather, giving everyone a warm welcome as they arrive at her table. She quotes her mother's dictum that "If you see someone without a smile on their face, give them one of yours!".

Tony Fayerman had a little chat to her for our newsletter and found out she only started playing bridge in the 1990s when she thought she might have to stop taking part in her other obsession – lawn bowls. In the event she was able to continue playing bowls anyway and only gave up last year.

She is a Palmie girl through and through and most of her children and eighteen grandchildren still live in the area.

Most daytime players will know that Joy can be a canny bridge player and now her secret can be told. She has been on several bridge cruises for pleasure and to improve her play. She has cruised around Australia, up the Murray River and even been to play in New Caledonia. Next on her itinerary is a visit to the Tangalooma Resort on Moreton Island (off the coast of Brisbane) on a Ron Klinger bridge holiday.

Her enthusiasm for the game, her spirit of adventure and, most of all, her gracious attitude to fellow players are an example to us all.

Tony Fayerman and Ray Kemp

You must be joking

This month's giggles come from Eddie Kantar's website. He has written several interesting books on bridge, often including humorous asides. In "A Treasury of Bridge Tips" he warns against making a lead-directing double if you are going to be on lead, unless you have a poor memory!

Two friends of Kantar's, Don Krauss and Roger Bates wind up in 7NT after bidding hearts. Bates forgets and thinks he is in 7H. At one point he leads a low diamond from his hand and asks Don to ruff. Don says, "I'd love to".

Erik Paulsen comes back to his home town, Downey, Ca. after being a member of the U.S team that had just won a world championship. The local players are surprised to see him at the local duplicate. But there he is, and he begins to play. About midway through the game he is competing in spades against opponents who are bidding hearts. Finally, he bids 3S, loudly, so he won't get doubled. It doesn't work. His LHO doubles. Erik looks at him and says: "Do you know who I am?" The guy says: "Yes I know who you are." Erik says: "Do you know how many masterpoints I have?" The guy says, "No, but do you know how many spades I have?"

Ray Kemp