

Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

June 2019

Welcome

Heading into Matariki means we are almost halfway through the year. Highlights from the first six months for me include the fabulous work of Anne Gordon and her team with the rejuvenation committee. Particularly, the success of recent advertising that has seen more than 20 people take up lessons. Please take a good look at Anne's update and see if you can help encourage our new members to move into the junior room with confidence.

It was also great to see the turnout for the Club's junior and intermediate tournament in May. Many thanks to Liz Burrows for her hard work to make it such a success - the room looked great and most people loved the move from a catered evening meal to a scrummy lunch. Turnout may have been affected by other tournaments in the region and so we may look to change the timing for next year. Your feedback will be very welcome.

Over the next two months, the Committee will be starting to look at the playing programme for 2020 – we have to go to the printers by November. We will look at everything including the playing nights. I said last month that our focus will be on "bums on seats" this year and we would love to hear from you about how we can improve the playing programme to encourage more people to play more often. The Committee has some radical ideas which we will be sharing with you so please keep an open mind and bring your ideas to the table too.

As I write, we are on the eve of sending 6 teams from the Club to our regular three-way friendly match with Hawera and Wanganui Clubs. This is two teams at each of junior, intermediate and open level from each Club. It's good fun and a great introduction to competitive team matches. Many thanks to everyone who has put their names forward to represent the Club - and many thanks to Julie Bunnell for organising us all and to Ken Bateman and Jan Whyte for their coaching sessions for those new to team matches.

BTW, bridge is a great way to keep warm in Winter!

Denise Servante
President

Volunteer of the Month



“Have you ever wondered who...”

Makes sure there is enough milk in the fridge, that we have biscuits to munch on, tea and coffee to drink etc.etc.etc?

Wipes down the tablecloths that we spill our tea and coffee on and generally ensures the smooth functioning of the "household stuff" that we often don't even think about?

Let me tell you who: one of our life members who will not like the attention, thanks or being named. So, in deference to her I shall not name her.

Tony Clear

Interclub Tournament

On Sunday 9th June, we sent two Junior, two Intermediate and two Open teams to compete in the three-way Interclub event with Hawera and Wanganui clubs. It's wonderful that we were able to assemble two teams at each level so that we could compete this year.

Even better, we brought home the silverware!! Palmerston North won the Frances Ewington Jug for the three-way competition. We also won the Wilkin Cup for the two-way competition with Wanganui. The trophies will be on display at the Clubrooms.

Palmerston North scored a total of 213.85 VPs, with Hawera in second place on 196.36 VPs, and Wanganui in third place with 129.79 VPs. Our Junior teams placed a close second to Hawera, our Intermediate teams placed a very close second to Wanganui (1.17 VP), and our Open teams placed first. The day was superbly organised by Wanganui club, with excellent direction by Les Gould. Les started by telling us he had three hats on. For juniors he was a helpful director, for intermediates he was kind and for the open players he was going to be harsh!

Ken Bateman noted that the juniors played exceptionally well, which must be due to the coaching provided (no guesses for who was on the coaching team).

Each team played four 12-board matches with all sections playing the same boards. Apart from the serious play of the hands, there was also time to socialize. The day started with a delicious morning tea, provided by our club, and ended with platters of cheese, crackers and grapes provided by Hawera.

Thanks to all those who contributed to our winning effort (see photograph on next page). We look forward to going another round in 2020!

Julie Bunnell

This and That

The Committee has decided that the bidding system 'Precision' is not permitted on the Novice Plus nights. This makes it fairer to our Novice players.

Liz Burrows

Rejuvenation Committee

Our recent advertising campaign has been highly successful in attracting new members to take bridge lessons. We now have 23 newbies to nurture and encourage! It would certainly be great if we can maintain these numbers right through to join our junior room. A big thank you to those people who recommended lessons to family and friends as that has also boosted our numbers. There's a wonderful mix of age groups with a number of youth players, and some family members joining as a way of spending more time together. It's also an opportunity for new players to consolidate their knowledge and we have one person who has joined us with this in mind. We are already at week 5 of lessons and Jack is proving a popular and capable choice to lead us through.

Jane Stearns has created some videos on YouTube that are an excellent way to revise the lessons, or to catch people up if they miss out a lesson. They are also useful for beginning players to take another look at playing conventions. She has also created an improver series for helping newer players which are definitely worth a look. Search for Bridge-IT Jane in You Tube.

As we head towards the end of lessons we will be calling for volunteers to be playing buddies to help ease our newbies into the junior room. If you would like to help with this and are available to play on a Monday night please give your name to Jack, Jan or myself. Thank you in advance your help is vital!

Anne Gordon

Upcoming Tournaments

Here are the upcoming tournaments for the remainder of June and for July in our local region.

Levin Int/Junior Pairs	16 th June
Hastings Intermediate Teams	22 nd June
Masterton Int/Junior Pairs	23 rd June
Wellington Main Regional Teams	29 th June
Dannevirke Int/Junior Pairs	29 th June
Taradale Junior Pairs	6 th July
Feilding Charity Pairs	7 th July
Wanganui Open Swiss Pairs	14 th July
Napier Open Pairs	20 th July
Paraparaumu Junior Pairs	21 st July
Levin Open Pairs	21 st July
Havelock North Open Swiss Pairs	27 th July
Hawera Int/Junior Pairs	28 th July

Ray Kemp

Our Successful Interclub Team



Back: Hans van Bunnik Jack James Morgan Booker Duane Griffin Bob Hurley Garry Hodge
Middle: Laura Griffin Tony Clear Evelyn Hurley Dianne Gardner Rita Hodson Tony Fayerman Jo Cooley
Front: Julie Bunnell Margaret Sargent Denise Servante Jan Whyte Debbie Marcroft Roxanne Brassington Anne Gordon Ken Bateman (missing Grant Elliott, Angela Harper, Clare Veltman)

Club and Tournaments Results

Congratulations to the following winners of our club competitions:

April

Monday
Afternoon Jan Whyte
 Anita Thirtle

Novice
Plus Malcolm Loudon
 Grant Elliot

Tuesday
Open Zheng Zhang
 Evelyn Hurley

Multi-grade
Welcome Pairs Julian Kissock
 Glenn Bush

Friday
Luncheon Val Pain
 Bryan Northcott

May

Monday
Afternoon Carolyn Brodie
 Stuart Malcolm

Novice
Plus Malcolm Loudon
 Mike Mahony

Tuesday Open
Teams Evelyn Hurley
 Bob Hurley
 Tammy Lynch
 Sean Lynch

Whitehead
Handicap Pairs Julian Kissock
 Glenn Bush

Friday
Luncheon Annette Gregg
 Maureen Wats

Over-Seventies Club: No new members since the last newsletter. Only one score over 70% in the last couple of months and that was from a pair who are already members:

Dianne Gardner and Carolyn Brodie-70.37% 8th April 2019 Novice Plus

Huge congratulations to the following team:

Garry Hodges, Debbie Marcroft, Laura Griffins and Cindy Lowndes who will represent Central Districts in the Intermediate Interprovincial Teams at the end of the year.

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

Waipukurau
Open Pairs Evelyn Hurley 2nd
 Deb Smith

Jan Whyte 3rd
Carolyn
Yeomans

Wanganui
Intermediate Pairs Hans Van Bunnik 3rd
 Anne Gordon

Wellington
Provincial Teams Wayne Burrows 2nd
 Clair Miao
 Russell Wilson
 George Masters

Wellington Open
Congress Pairs Wayne Burrows 3rd
 Clair Miao

Garry Hodge 1st
Debbie Marcroft

Hokowhitu
Intermediate Pairs Hans Van Bunnik 2nd
 Anne Gordon

John Hogan 3rd
Stuart Malcolm

Feilding Intermediate
Pairs Hans Van Bunnik 3rd
 Anne Gordon

Denise Servante 1st
Martin Carryer

Cindy Lowndes 3rd
Laura Griffin

Palmerston North
Junior Pairs Tad Krogulec 1st
 Paula McCool

Angela Harper 2nd
Paul Harper

Waipukurau
Intermediate Pairs Cindy Lowndes 3rd
 Laura Griffin

Liz Burrows

Rueful Rabbit Revisited

The old-timers amongst you may remember the wonderful articles and books by the English bridge player and author, Victor Mollo. He specialised in writing about some of the curious characters that can be found at your typical bridge club (not ours of course!) The two main protagonists are Hideous Hog and Rueful Rabbit. HH is a brilliant player who insists on insulting partners and opponents alike. A typical comment: "Let me play all the contracts partner. It is in your own interests." RR is his unwitting nemesis who bids, plays and defends with equal ineptitude. "One gets used to abuse. It is waiting for it that is so trying." Although this bob-tailed pasteboard pusher has never really got the hang of the game, he almost always falls on his paws much to the annoyance of his tusked adversary.

One of my favourite RR stories is when he is on lead to a slam. His opponents have bid up to six spades and he has something like the following hand:

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♠ XXX
♥ —
♦ AKQ632
♣ XXXX
  
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What is your lead? The ace of diamonds doesn't seem like a bad idea. As it turns out, it would win the trick but since declarer has a singleton in that suit and all the other top cards that would be the last trick you win. Instead, RR makes the inspired lead of the 2 of diamonds! He finds partner with the singleton jack. Partner can think of nothing better to do so leads back a heart which the rabbit gratefully ruffs. Declarer is one down.

In the post-mortem, RR is asked how he found this killer lead. Ruefully, he admits that whilst sorting his cards the two had got separated from the other diamonds and put in with his non-existent hearts. He believed his hand was:

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♠ XXX
♥ 2
♦ AKQ63
♣ XXXX
  
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So, when called upon to lead to the slam he did what novices always do, which was to lead his singleton!

In the first evening of the May Tuesday evening teams competition there was a deal that was tailor made for our paw friend:

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

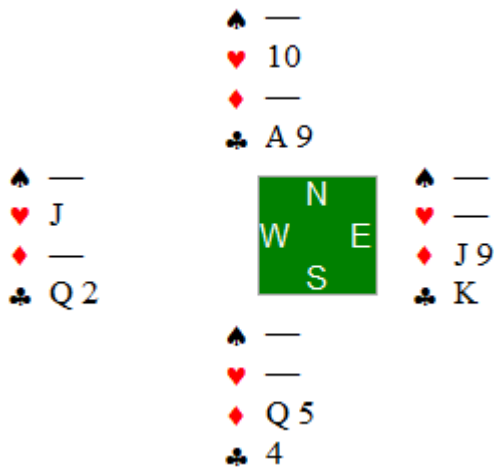
♠ 10 5 3	♥ Q J 7 6 5 3	♦ 10 2	♣ Q 2	♠ 9 7	♥ A 10 9 8	♦ K 7 3	♣ A 9 8 6										
				<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S					
	N																
W		E															
	S																
				♠ 8	♥ K 2	♦ J 9 8 6	♣ K J 10 7 5 3										
				♠ AKQJ642	♥ 4	♦ AQ54	♣ 4										

Let's say his partner is Hideous Hog who, out of malevolence, puts RR, sitting South, into the challenging contract of seven spades. The lead to this hare-brained contract is the queen of hearts. RR's eyes bulge as he surveys dummy and realizes he is in a bit of a stew. If you cover up the EW hands you can see why he is so perturbed. The only possibility seems to be a 3-3 split in diamonds. He has this vague memory that this isn't very likely (in fact, about a one in three chance). Still, you never know. If he plays out enough spades, the opponents might start shedding their diamonds.

So, after taking his ace of hearts, he starts on the trumps, playing out all seven of them. West has four discards to make, throwing four hearts. East is in a more difficult position with six cards to jettison. He suspects he needs to hang on to all the diamonds and so throws the king of hearts (surely his partner has the jack) and five clubs.

Rueful Rabbit is disappointed that no one has thrown any diamonds. There is nothing for it but to play the suit and hope for that 3-3 split. A low diamond to dummy's king and then another one back to the ace in hand leaves the following position:

Improvers Corner



The moment of truth has arrived. South plays his queen of diamonds. Uh-ho, West is hesitating, and is obviously deciding upon a discard. The diamonds didn't break after all. Tough luck. To make things worse, West is taking a long time to play, as if he is teasing declarer. In the end he discards the two of clubs. Now a discard is required from dummy. RR remembers that West led the queen of hearts to the contract, and he doesn't recall the jack having been played, so discards the useless ten of hearts, not that it seems to matter. East follows with his nine of diamonds. Well, declarer had a good go. There is nothing for it but to play for one off. He goes across to the ace of clubs but, wonder of wonders, the queen and king of the suit tumble down together and he is left with the winning nine.

Rueful Rabbit commiserates with his opponents. He reassures them that he knows how difficult it is to decide upon discards and often throws the wrong cards himself. East-West resist the temptation to tell him that whatever they discard he can always make the contract. He probably wouldn't understand anyway.

I think our furry friend deserves a mention in the list of players who have bid and made a grand slam. How about it, Liz?

Ray Kemp

Do you prefer playing suit or no trump contracts? Personally, I much prefer no trumps since there are usually fewer decisions to make. In no trumps it's usually pretty simple. You try to establish your long suits and avoid playing the short ones. In a suit contract, if you start by trying to set up your long suits you may find your uncooperative opponents ruffing in on your winning cards. So, should you immediately take out their trumps? Well, not necessarily, because you may need to throw away losers first, or ruff losers of your own. So, should you just take out one or two rounds of trumps? Maybe, but then if the trumps split badly you could lose control of the hand. One of your opponents might end up with more trumps than you do and take your trumps out. See what I mean?

Often the most crucial choice in a suit contract is whether to start taking out trumps as soon as you get in. In this article we will look at three hands played by juniors in the last few weeks where it was important to make the right decision.

Most of the time you should draw the opponents' teeth as soon as possible, so the first thing you need to ask yourself as declarer when you get on lead is "Is there a good reason for NOT drawing trumps immediately?" I have listed some of the reasons for deferring drawing trumps in that first paragraph, but most of the time you should just do it. Sometimes players don't draw trumps because they have honours missing and they are not sure how to play the suit. This is not a good reason. Do you expect the opponents to draw trumps for you? You should be so lucky. This may happen occasionally but don't count on it. More likely they will retain their low trumps for ruffing your winning cards later in the play. You certainly don't want that.

Let's start with a hand where the decision is simple. As many have commented beforehand, most bridge hands are simple, it is only declarers that make them complicated. The first hand is from the opening week of the June Novice Plus pairs.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A 10 8		♠ J
♥ K Q 7		♥ J 9 4 2
♦ A Q 6 5		♦ K J 2
♣ K 7 6		♣ Q J 5 4 3
	♠ N	
♠ Q 9 7 6 3 2	W	♠ K 5 4
♥ 6		♥ A 10 8 5 3
♦ 9 7 4 3	E	♦ 10 8
♣ 10 9	S	♣ A 8 2

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

		♠ J 7 6 4
		♥ A Q J 8 3
		♦ J 4
		♣ 10 5
	♠ N	♠ Q 3
♠ K 9 8	W	♥ 7 2
♥ K 9 5 4		♦ 8 7 6 3
♦ Q	E	♣ A K J 8 4
♣ Q 9 6 3 2	S	
		♠ A 10 5 2
		♥ 10 6
		♦ A K 10 9 5 2
		♣ 7

Assume you are South in the reasonable contract of four hearts. Suppose you get the lead of ten of clubs. Looking at your hand you have a likely loser in each of the black suits and another possible loser in diamonds. Counting winners, you come to the same result: five hearts, two spades, two clubs and one diamond giving you at least ten tricks.

Any reason, then, not to take out trumps? Absolutely not, so just do it. You should cash the king and queen of hearts finding the bad trump split but that is OK since you can skewer East's jack of hearts between your ace-ten. You may then take the diamond finesse for the overtrick which doesn't work but that's OK you have still made your contract.

Let's see what happens if, instead, you decide to cash all your side suit winners in clubs and spades first. East can ruff the second spade and leads a third club for West to ruff with the six of hearts. You will end up losing two spades, a club and a diamond. One down in a solid game contract!

That was an easy decision for you, I hope! The next hand from the same session is a bit trickier.

You end up in a four spade contract with West leading the four of hearts. You play low and are pleased to see it run around to your ten. What now? Is there any reason not to take out trumps? Certainly not. It looks as if the heart king is in the right place. You have healthy looking diamonds and don't want anyone ruffing in on those so let's go for it.

The trouble is you probably have no idea of the optimal way to tackle this trump combination with both the king and queen missing. Don't worry. In general, it is not at all obvious what the optimal method is and depends upon the intermediate cards you have. To avoid madness let's keep it simple. Usually, the best strategy when you have a hole near the top of a suit is to lead up to that hole and cover the intervening player's card. We have an added complication here, however, that it is not easy to get into dummy to do that without risking a ruff. Plan B, then is to play off the ace and lead up to the jack of spades. This will work pretty well for most distributions of the opponents' trumps. OK, you are likely to lose two trump tricks that way but hopefully you can leave the last one in and just reel off your winners. The opponents can take two spades and a club but only get three tricks altogether.

Picture the alternative when you decide playing the trump suit is too complicated, so you fiddle around with the other suits. For a start, West is going to be able to trump your king of diamonds. Next, she may lead a club back to her partner who leads another diamond for her to get a second ruff. You cannot now avoid losing a spade trick as well, so you have lost four tricks. Another unbeatable contract down the plughole.

Just occasionally, you need to do other stuff before taking out trumps. Let's see an example of that. This is taken from the morning session of the Junior Tournament played at the club in May.

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

<p>♠ 6 2 ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ A J 4 ♣ Q 10 8 6</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	<p>♠ A K J 10 4 ♥ A 9 7 ♦ 7 2 ♣ A K 5</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 5 ♥ Q J 10 6 4 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ 9 3</p>
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♠ 9 8 3
 ♥ 5
 ♦ K 10 8 5 3
 ♣ J 7 4 2

Let's assume the contract played by North is three spades and East leads the queen of hearts. After taking the ace in hand you could try cashing the ace and king of spades hoping the queen will drop but there is a better plan. If you count the losers in North's hand you might note that you have one in clubs, possibly two in diamonds, two in hearts and possibly one in spades. At this rate you could easily lose 200 points going two down vulnerable. Partner won't thank you for that.

You can't do too much about the possible minor suit losers, but you can get rid of the losing hearts by ruffing. Obliging, East has started the job of leading hearts for you so why not continue? At trick two, lead a heart from hand and ruff it in dummy. Now, back to hand with a club and repeat the process, ruffing your last heart. Now you can start on trumps. As it happens you lose a spade, two diamonds and a club but you have made your contract.

To summarize: unless you can think of a good reason not to, take out the opponents' trumps as soon as you can. If you happen to have a flaky trump suit just take a guess at a reasonable way of playing it. As with many activities, the more experience you have the better you get at guessing. Don't just hope someone else will take out trumps for you. If you are really keen you could check out one of the many websites that explain how to play different suit combinations where there are honours missing but have a stiff drink first. There are a daunting number of possibilities.

Ray Kemp

You must be joking

More witticisms from Tony's collection:

"What happens if . . ." among tournament players is a phrase that generally means:
 "You idiot, why didn't you . . ." (Terence Reese)

And a couple of sad but true observations from Ron Klinger's website (used with permission).

Of course, there is nothing wrong with husbands and wives playing bridge, but play as opponents, not as partners. Then after the game they can listen sympathetically to what each had to endure from partner without blame or acrimony or condemnation being involved in the discussion.

There are three kinds of lie: lies, white lies and partner's bids.

Tony also keeps an ear open at the club for interesting remarks. Here is a comment from an adjacent table during one particular session:

"Whose side are you on, partner?"

Tony Fayerman