



From the Bridge

The biggest thing on the horizon is of course our clubroom's roofline. The solar panels have been installed, connected to the grid and a new power supplier giving better rates contracted. Our Nov power bill did not include a full month of buy-back of our output so we still eagerly await the next bill to see the full impact of the development and the switch.

On the wider scene we have the fantastic news that next years National Congress will be held in Palmerston North. Not only very handy for this region's bridge players but an event bringing approx 600 people to the city for up to 5 days. It comes with some responsibilities and opportunities to help out. Ken Bateman and Julie Bunnell are part of a working group looking at these matters. It is not too far away to mention that they encourage people willing to billet players to come forward. Standby players will be needed and caddies. Ring Ken if you can help or give ideas.

Online bridge continues to have a place, although at a reduced frequency. Regional and national events can be held online except on statutory holidays. Club events during the week can be held online. If you are looking for more competition the Wellington club is one that runs regular sessions open to all. Look them on line.

Some lack of communication has been noted around recent events. The committee is working towards more regular pianola updates. I continue to marvel at how this club functions with the help of both our paid staff/members and those who volunteer their time. It is a privilege to be with you.

I should also mention Grant Elliot (now a Fielding player) who has continued to guide us in legal/accounting matters. Welcome Prue to the Thursday evening hosting role. May that evening flourish. I will be there for one!

Most of all I encourage members to think of our club as a family, not just as a venue to serve our bridge needs. Be prepared to play across the grades and get to know who is behind those new faces.

Summer bridge continues on Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings. See you there!!

All the best if holidaying afar!

Martin Carryer (President) www.MartinCarryer.com

Grade changes for 2025

Congratulations to the following players, whose performances this year have improved significantly and who have reached criteria for promotion to a higher grade.

Bronze to Silver: Michele Kay, Lila Bosman, Kevin Conley, Sonia Smith, Craig Killington, Julie Palenski, Judy Jenkins, Theo Pippas.

Moving from Gold to Platinum: Anne Gordon

Well done to you all.

Morgan Booker

New(s) from the Committee

The Committee meetings in October and November focussed on “business-as-usual” – the end of year always requires some organisation; the playing programme to finalise, events to organise, the budget for next year to agree, hosts and room reps for 2025 to confirm and so on. In addition, we had regular updates on the solar panel project. The playing programme remains mainly as in previous years with the addition of monthly improvers’ sessions on Thursday evenings. Several players have been regraded - well done – and these details are confirmed in this newsletter. Our tournament dates and social events were also confirmed and are listed in the playing programme.

In the new year, the Committee will focus on redrafting the constitution to re-register as an incorporated society under the new legislation and investigate the use of a reserve fund to support long term strategic planning. Our thanks to Geoff Jamieson who has undertaken to redraft the constitution (and is well underway with it) and to Grant Elliott (former treasurer) for his ongoing advice and support around prudent financial management. Both these issues are Annual General Meeting matters – hence the focus needed in the new year.

Thanks are also due to our sponsors: ongoing sponsorship from Ryman’s Julia Wallace Village, Peter Colville (Real Estate), Tracey Dench Travel Broker, Mitre 10 Mega and New World Pioneer Highway was secured, and our sponsors are joined by Spike Electrical who undertook the supply and installation of our solar panels. The Globe Theatre has again provided theatre tickets as raffle prizes and the manager hopes one day the winner will take him up on the freebies!!

Our relationship with Julia Wallace Village had undertaken several iterations. The ever energetic and lovely Chrissy Thompson is looking for ways to increase our awareness of JWV and would like to focus on Club events rather than sponsorship of a tournament. Knowing that the way to anyone’s heart is through their stomach, Chrissy has agreed that JWV will become our official Monday afternoon chocolate biscuit sponsor! So the Committee is hoping that she will become a familiar face to all of you who are regulars at Monday afternoon tea.

Denise Servante
Vice-president

Club and Tournaments Results

Here are the results of tournaments and new entries to the 70% club since the last newsletter . Congratulations to all.

Paraparaumu Multigrade

Garry Hodge / Steve Baron - 1st

PN Swiss Pairs

Tony Oberdries / Steve Baron - 2nd

Taradale Open Pairs

Jack James/Wayne Burrows - 1st

Shirley Weymouth Pairs

Jack James/Wayne Burrows - 2nd

Masterton Multigrade

Wayne Burrows/Justine Hart - 3rd

Feilding Building Fund Tournament

Alistair James/John Seator - 2nd

Julie Bunnell/Hans van Bunnik - 3rd

Susan Baty/Tony Clear - 4th

Waikanae Int Pairs

Michael Hardman/Hans van Bunnik - 1st

Waikanae Jnr Pairs

Kevin Conley/Theo Pippas - 3rd

PN Melbourne Cup

Liz Burrows/Jan Whyte - 1st

Anne Gordon/Bob Hurley - 2nd

Marilyn Miller/Denise Servante - 3rd

Hawkes Bay Christmas Cheer

Jan Whyte/Ken Bateman – 1st

Marilyn Miller/Martin Carryer – 2nd

Latest members of the 70% club:

Jo Rosier / Jack James - 75.00%

Maree Roberts/Gary Hodge - 74%

Wayne Burrows/Charles Ker - 70.83%

Gayle Leader

You must be joking

Here is a quip that is also a useful reminder of bridge basics – and not just for novices!

Why is Donald Trump poor at playing bridge contracts?

He doesn’t count losers.

Ray Kemp

Unlucky Last

“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face”. This perceptive comment is attributed to the one-time heavyweight boxing champion, Mike Tyson. I don’t know when he made this remark but I like to think it was at the end of a long and distinguished career after his last fight where he has been floored by some young and eager contender.

My ‘unlucky last’ was at the end of a less than distinguished bridge session where I had made many folks happy – usually opponents rather than partner. There had been a lot of unusual and tiring hands so I was hoping for a quiet and uneventful conclusion to the day - maybe 1NT making two by partner, or 2 diamonds going one away by the opponents, something not too stressful. Then I took my last set of cards out of the tray.

♠ Q J 9 8 7 4 3 2
♥ J 9
♦ A
♣ A Q

This hand is not the kind I wanted. Anything could happen. I can likely make a game in spades with only a little help from partner, but we could easily have a slam on if she produces anything halfway decent. Either way, there could be some guesses to be made, with likely intervention by opponents and a tricky hand to play.

Whilst I am wondering what call to make, my partner surprisingly opens up the bidding herself. But partner’s opener is no ordinary bid. It is ‘one club’ which in our system shows sixteen plus points with any distribution. After a pass by my right-hand opponent, I respond to partner with a one spade bid showing a positive hand with 5+ cards in the suit. It is forcing to game and keeps our options open at a low level. Surely no one is going to intervene since we have at least thirty high card points between us. I’m wrong. My left hand opponent makes a takeout double of my one spade bid. Not for the first time in my experience of Monday afternoon bridge I wonder how many points there are in this pack. Even more surprisingly, partner then bids two spades, agreeing suit.

With no more intervention by opponents, I now zoom up to ask for key cards and kings. I discover partner has the AK of spades, the ace of diamonds and an outside king. I can now count 12 tricks in no trumps, but my distribution suggests with the suit sown up that a contract of seven spades must be a good bet. Maybe it is that ‘lucky last’ hand and there aren’t many opportunities to play a grand slam so I make the fateful bid of ‘seven spades’.

South leads ♦K and dummy goes down.

♠ A K 5
♥ A Q 8 5 2
♦ 10 8 5 3
♣ K



♠ Q J 9 8 7 4 3 2
♥ J 9
♦ A
♣ A Q

I have mixed feelings as I gaze at dummy. Certainly, there is all that partner promised but the nine points in clubs only gives us two tricks. A singleton low club with ♥K rather than ♣K would have been much more useful. Also, with the lie of the cards there is no real advantage to playing in spades rather than no trumps. I take out trumps with North showing both the missing ones. What now?

Normally, I would just play off trumps watching for discards but it is late and most of the tables have finished and are being cleared. I can play around with diamonds, hoping for an unusual but fortuitous distribution enabling me to ditch that irritating extra heart but why bother? After her double, surely South has most of the remaining hearts and all of the remaining points. It is simpler to take the marked heart finesse to put partner and opponents out of their misery as soon as possible. I can then claim the rest of the tricks and head for the exit. I lead ♥J to which South smoothly plays low, as she should. I ask for a low heart from dummy and up pops ♥K from North! Here are all four hands.

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 10 6
♥ K
♦ J 9 7 4 2
♣ 10 8 6 5 3

♠ A K 5
♥ A Q 8 5 2
♦ 10 8 5 3
♣ K



♠ Q J 9 8 7 4 3 2
♥ J 9
♦ A
♣ A Q

♠ —
♥ 10 7 6 4 3
♦ K Q 6
♣ J 9 7 4 2

I don’t know if you ever saw a potboiler poker movie called “The Cincinnati Kid”. OK, it wasn’t movie of the century, or even of the year, but it was slickly done and any movie containing Edward G Robinson is always worth watching. Robinson is a high-class poker king, and the Cincinnati Kid played by heart-throb Steve McQueen is the wannabee. In the climactic scene it looks as if the Kid has finally hit the big-time with Robinson on the ropes in their last big hand. Robinson has committed all his chips and there is only one card in the pack that can give him a win – the queen of diamonds. The Kid calls, sensing victory, and Robinson slowly turns over the fateful card and it is indeed that key ♦Q. The Kid looks dizzily at that impossible card as the camera jerks backwards and forwards crazily over it, whilst Robinson calmly rakes in the chip pile. Well, McQueen’s ♦Q was my ♥K.

Since it was the last hand of the day we could helpfully see all the other results. There were many six spade and six no trump contracts making but only one other seven spade bid. The other grand slam bidder had made the contract! I later asked the player how he had achieved this. Declarer did what I would have done in other circumstances and played off all the spades. South has eight discards to make and eventually discarded all the hearts. When declarer eventually played the heart suit South showed out. Even if he hadn't been counting declarer had no alternative but to play ♥A, dropping the singleton ♥K.

So, "The Cincinnati Kid" was a box office success. How do you reckon "The Palmie Grandpop" sounds as a sequel? Maybe I should contact Sir Peter Jackson with the idea.

Ray Kemp

Who, what, why?

It can be a useful learning exercise to go through hands retrospectively to see how one's game could be improved. Zooming in on poor results is as good a place to start as any. But then, you may have been the victim of a bad board for many different reasons: an unusual distribution of the cards, erratic or brilliant action by opponents, poor decisions by oneself or partner. Worse, it is not always clear even in the cold light of day which of these is the main cause of one's doom.

Take the following hand that I picked up as East during a Monday afternoon session:

♠ Q J 6
♥ 10 7 5 3 2
♦ K J 8
♣ 9 2

This hand looks pretty nondescript, but as things turned out my bidding and play will determine whether we get a top or bottom board. The bidding so far, with both sides vulnerable, has been as follows:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♥
5 ♦	6 ♣	?	

As usual, I am going to put you on the spot. What is your call?

I assume partner has an eight or nine card diamond suit at this vulnerability. If it is only eight cards it is a little thin with the king and jack missing, so I expect another trick outside if this is the case. However, a bid of six diamonds with my hand seems quite rash. Do we really stand to make? If not, will it be a good sacrifice against a slam by NS? Will a slam by NS even make? I decided the bidding was at too high a level for me to get involved so passed, as did the rest of the table.

If you, too, would have passed then congratulations. Six diamonds goes two down, and six clubs can also fail. But don't pat yourself on the back quite yet. You have to make a lead to North's club slam. This is where your top or bottom result will be determined.

I led ♦8, which was unimaginative, but I wanted to make sure we got a diamond trick if possible. A heart lead seemed like a non-starter since I imagined North being void in the suit and parking losers on South's hearts right from trick one. How wrong could I be. Here is the complete deal.

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 4 3
♥ —
♦ A Q 10 9 7 4 3 2
♣ 5 4

♠ A 7 5 2
♥ 8
♦ 5
♣ A K Q J 10 8 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q J 6
♥ 10 7 5 3 2
♦ K J 8
♣ 9 2

♠ 10 9 8
♥ A K Q J 9 6 4
♦ 6
♣ 6 3

So, unless you lead a heart, the six club slam is making, for a top board to the opponents. The par contract for the hand is actually 7 diamonds doubled by East going three down but that is rather silly and, like many of the computer-calculated 'best contracts' it doesn't tell us what each player should have done in the circumstances, but what they *could* have done if they had access to all the other hands and could work out the optimal play. Some of the smart players among you may have noted that a Lightner double by West to suggest a heart lead would do the trick. However, this can misfire if South realizes what is going on and changes the contract to six hearts which can make.

As it happens, most North-Souths played in a four or five heart contract which sometimes got doubled by an eager East but all made. There were two other players in a club contract but in neither case did East make the killer lead. At one table, the king of diamonds was led against six clubs. This could have allowed West to follow with a suit preference ♦2, suggesting East switch to a heart. That could have won a 'play of the day' contest or even 'play of the year' but sadly didn't eventuate.

At the time, I considered the six club bid by North to be ill-advised, not to say reckless, but the only other player in the room to make this bid was an ace-grand master, so what do I know?

So, a fascinating hand but what can be learned from it? I reckon the best piece of advice is to shrug one's shoulders and forget hands like this as aberrational. I obviously didn't do that, which is why it has turned up in this newsletter!

Ray Kemp