

Welcome from Deputy Denise

Our President is away on a cycling trip in Turkey. His wife, Jenny, sent us this message: “the biking here is pretty gruelling with 6 k long very steep hills and petrifying down hills. But we are having so much fun.” Sounds a bit like my bridge but without quite so much risk to life and limb! Anyway, Martin, enjoy your holiday – you have earned it after such a busy and successful year to date, culminating in ensuring the solar-panel-on-the-roof project goes ahead. This contract has now been commissioned from Spike Electrical and work should be underway shortly. Hopefully it will not be too disruptive of our use of the Club Rooms. As always, your patience and understanding is warmly requested.

Your ongoing generosity always delights and amazes me. We are so grateful to our member who donated \$20,000 to Club funds which meant we were able to go ahead with installing the solar panels. Grateful thanks also to another member who has sponsored our multigrade tournament since its inception in 2022. Our tutor for the lessons this year, Alistair James not only did a magnificent job with the latest cohort of beginners, but he also donated the honorarium available for this role back to the Club. These anonymous acts of generosity are such a wonderful gift to those of us who continue to love playing this frustrating and stimulating game.

There are also other people who work in the background and rarely get a thank you but let's shine the light on some of them: Glyn Robinson and Lyn Wilson have just stood down after many years of dealing for our weekly sessions. Jane Leighton joins Carolyn Brodie and Lorraine for this essential and unremarked task. We have our tournament team: Glynis Penhale and Gayle Leader who have organised our last three tournaments and will be again on hand for the upcoming Swiss Pairs tournament in October. And a further shout out to the Housie Team – Gayle Leader, Maxine Keay, Annette Scanlon and Glynis Penhale (+ regular helpers) who have held monthly

sessions raising \$2,000 to date for Club Rooms maintenance and repair.

Finally I wanted to particularly thank our venue manager, Maxine Keay, who on top of all her voluntary work for the Club is employed to manage the cleaning and venue hire for the Club Rooms. Maxine has done a truly outstanding job in this area: our income from venue hire is looking to be almost double the amount we budgeted for. The reforecast of our budget for this year is indicating a healthy cash surplus. This is such good news after so many years of struggling to stay in the black.

The Committee voted unanimously to thank and reward all of our members for your support and commitment to the Club by keeping our subscription and table money unchanged for 2025, even though our costs continue to rise. We cannot promise anything for 2026 but we felt that when we are doing well, we should give some of this surplus back to our members.

On another financial note, the Committee has appointed Graeme Thompson to review our accounts for 2024. Our thanks to Graeme for undertaking this role. Changes to the incorporation legislation require that we re-register as an incorporated society within new guidelines contained in the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. The new provisions require us to amend our constitution before April 2026. This in turn will add expense to the annual review of accounts but for the time being, we are able to have the accounts reviewed by a non-qualified but competent person. Graeme certainly fits that bill. For your information, our constitution is currently being reviewed by yet another member, Geoff Jamieson, for alignment with the new Act and for ratification and adoption at the next AGM. See what I mean about our amazing members?

Anyway, I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter – please note the upcoming dates for your diaries as we enter the silly season of Christmas and New Year!

Good bridging everyone!

Denise Servante
Vice-President

Tips and Conventions

Some players are opening 2D to show both majors, 6-10 HCP. Often one (or both) suits are 4 cards and poor quality. It is a good bid as makes bidding difficult for opponents.

So, the recommended defence is: X = 12-14 balanced or 19+, 2H and 2S are natural, preferably a six card suit and good opening values up to 18 HCP, 2NT = 15-18 balanced or semi-balanced, 3C and 3D are natural, 15-18 (not suitable for 2NT).

If you have say 13HCP and 6 clubs, Pass and if the bidding comes back to you at 2H or 2S now bid 3C.

Suit preference signals are useful on defence to give partner information. They can be used in many situations. Common ones are:

1. Partner has led what is likely to be a singleton. When you get the lead and are returning that suit for partner to trump, a high card says your entry is in the highest suit and a low card says your entry is in the lowest suit.
2. Partner makes the opening lead and dummy has a singleton Ace, or AK doubleton, or void or a strong holding in that suit. If you play a high card you are signalling the highest suit, a low card the lowest suit. A middle card would be no message or possibly the middle suit.
3. When declarer is drawing trumps you can give suit preference signals using the order in which you play your trumps.

Bob Hurley

Dates for your diary:

Tournaments/Events:

12th October: Julia Wallace Village Swiss Pairs (5A): open tournament – everyone welcome. Register online or see Lorraine

5th November: Tracey Dench Travel Broker Melbourne Cup Day: fun afternoon of No Fear bridge with High Tea, race sweepstake and all the glamour of Best Hat

15th November: Loveblock NZ-Wide Pairs: come and test yourself against your peers on a national stage for this annual fundraising event for NZ Bridge

7th December: Christmas Cheer (3A); our annual celebration of the year and Club friendships. Always popular – book your place early to avoid disappointment

Club Events:

Bronze/Silver Championships from Monday 21st October (no play on Labour weekend)

Gold/Platinum Championships from Tuesday 29th October

2nd December: Daytime Sessions party – bring a plate to share at 12.30. Play starts at 1.15 as usual (cash bar)

5th December: Prizegiving and Social bridge (all grades)

Denise Servante

Raffles

Celebratory Raffle

The family of Beryl Eaton have donated a beautiful Wedgewood card box to the Club in memory of Beryl. The Committee has decided to raffle this as a fundraiser for the Club. Tickets will be \$5 each and once 100 tickets are sold, then the winner will be drawn. Tickets can be bought at any time and will be available at all Tournament and Club events.



Tournament Raffles

Martin Carryer is again organising raffles for the Swiss Pairs and Christmas Cheer tournaments. Please drop your raffle prize donations in the Raffle Prize Donations Box which has appeared in the Club Rooms.

Denise Servante

Club and Tournament Results

Congratulations to pairs and teams who have performed well in recent tournaments.

Main Centre Pairs

Wayne Burrows/Claire Miao - 3rd

Levin Open Pairs

Tony Oberdries/Steve Baron - 1st

Liz Burrows/Anne Gordon - 3rd

Havelock North Swiss Pairs

Jan Whyte/Carolyn Yeomans - 3rd

Napier Fullerton Teams

Wayne Burrows/Andrei Sharko/Jeremy Fraser-

Hoskins/Zachary Yan - 2nd

Hawera Club Charity

Anita Thirtle/George Maclaughlan - 2nd

New Plymouth Swiss Pairs

Jack James/Pam Livingston - 2nd

New Plymouth Open Pairs

Jack James/Pam Livingston - 1st

Otaki Intermediate Pairs

Michael Hardman/Hans van Bunnik - 1st

Terry Young/Grant Elliott - 2nd

Napier Open Teams

Bob Hurley/Wayne Burrows/Scott Smith/Grant Jarvis - 1st

Hokowhitu Daffodil Open Pairs

Anne Gordon/Bob Hurley - 1st

Levin Swiss Multigrade

Morgan Booker/Zheng Zhang - 2nd

South Wairarapa Multigrade

Morgan Booker/Colin Haywood - 2nd

TOPS Mini Congress teams

Jack James/Alex Shan/Zarias Werder/John Davidson - 3rd

Here are some recent new entrants into the 70% club from our sessions:

Netty Keen/Wayne Stewart - 72.22%

Marilyn Miller/Tony Clear - 70.71%

Alan Doddridge/Allan Mudford - 70.63%

Gayle Leader

Fishy Leads to Slams

Having to lead to a slam is not a frequent challenge since there aren't that many slams around. However, if you are in pole position in this situation your lead may be the most crucial card that you play in a session. Maybe the opponents have got to a flakey slam, in which case you don't want to be handing them a top board by giving away a trick with that very first card. This thought may convince you to be cautious. However, if you and your partner have a cashing ace and king between you, you are going to feel foolish if you don't cash your top cards and you later see the tricks disappear upon a side suit that declarer has set up. Either way, the odds are that you are going to get a very good board or a very bad board as a result of your lead. But handling pressure is what the game is all about, right?

Let's look at a couple of hands from Monday afternoon bridge where your lead to a slam could be crucial to your result for the deal (and maybe even for the session). Here is your first hand:

♠ 9 6 3
♥ K J 10 2
♦ K 9 3
♣ Q 5 2

And the bidding has gone:

West	North	East	South
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	6 ♠	All pass

West's opener shows 20-22 balanced and East's three club bid asks partner for a major. His 4NT bid is Blackwood and West replies that he has 1 or 4 aces. You are sitting North. What is your lead?

I think most experienced players would agree that the only safe lead is a trump. You have nine high card points. Unless EW have gone berserk, they have 30+ hcps, so that leaves partner with virtually nothing. Any other lead you make is likely to give declarer a present. I was happy that my partner found the spade lead. Here are the four hands.

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

So, a glance at the opponents' cards suggest that the trump lead saves the day. But look at the hand in detail. It turns out that whatever card North chooses it is going to produce exactly the same result assuming declarer plays carefully. Shuffle North's hand, take out a random card and lead it. Whether it is the crazy ♥K or the sensible ♠6 declarer can always make precisely twelve tricks.

Consider the hardest situation for declarer where North leads a trump. East has various ways to play the contract. For example, he can continue to take out trumps and lead a low diamond from hand. North can take or refuse the trick but declarer will eventually set up a fourth diamond which can be used to discard a losing club from hand. Now, after cashing two top clubs, a third one can be ruffed in hand. This sets up the fourth club in dummy on which can be thrown a losing heart. The third heart can be ruffed in dummy. So good lead by partner but no reward.

Here is the second hand:

♠ 10 5
♥ Q 7
♦ A Q 9 8
♣ Q J 10 9 5

with the following bidding:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		4 NT	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

The 4NT opener is a variant on Blackwood. It asks partner to show which ace (if any) they have. The 5NT response show ♣A. You are South. What is your lead to the slam?

This is a little trickier. Like last time, you are expecting little or nothing from partner, but a trump lead looks a little risky with the queen in your hand. In fact, if you believe East's bidding, he has a solid heart suit since he did not even bother to ask West what she has in the suit. Maybe clubs would be safer anyway since it is surely not going to give anything away. However, West has indicated ♣A so a lead in that suit is not likely to advance your cause. You may have reached the stage of analysis paralysis (common in golf) and decide to attempt to cash ♦A. Is that a good idea?

Mike Lawrence wrote what I regard as the bible of opening lead books, informatively called "Opening Leads". He has a whole chapter on leading to slams and suggests it is usually better not to lead an unsupported ace, particularly if it is accompanied by a queen. At our table South had obviously not read Lawrence's book and led ♦A anyway. The four hands are shown at the top of the next column.

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

We were sitting EW and ended up with a less than average board. Any other lead but ♦A allows us to cash thirteen tricks. Some EWs were in a precarious 6NT contract which, unluckily for us, also makes.

So what can we conclude from the above two examples? In the first hand my partner makes a commendable lead but could have made a crazy lead without having any impact on our score. In the second example, the opponents make a poor lead which gets them a top result. Maybe the moral is provided by Ted Lasso. Fans will know him from the TV series bearing his name. He is a wise soccer coach and when one of his team has a setback he suggests the player should "be like a goldfish". When the guy looks perplexed, he explains "goldfish have ten second memories".

Ray Kemp



Thanks to Dianne Hunter for finding this gem from the days when ladies put on their twin set and pearls to play bridge in the afternoon!

Pass the smelling salts

Of the different aspects of bridge (bidding, defence, contract playing) I think most of us would choose playing the contract as the most satisfying. Bidding can be fun, but if the opponents are playing some weird conventions or misbidding their hands then that can be problematical. Defence is hard. Bob Hurley mentioned this in the last newsletter. Well, if he finds it hard, what chance for the rest of us? No. Playing the contract usually gives a player most control over what is happening and over the resultant score. I have to admit, however, there are certain types of hand I always feel uncomfortable playing:

- ones where the opponents double your vulnerable contract for penalties
- ones where the trumps break badly
- ones with a long but weak side suit
- ones where both sides are bidding enthusiastically

The bad news is that in a Monday afternoon session there was one nasty hand that satisfied *all* the above conditions. The good news is that it was one of our opponents who was left trying to make a tricky doubled contract in this situation.

With EW vulnerable, here are the two hands you, as West, can see:

<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ A 10 8 4 ♦ A ♣ Q 10 8 5 4 2</p>		<p>♠ 2 ♥ K J 9 3 ♦ K Q 10 8 4 3 ♣ K 6</p>
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And here is the bidding:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
2♣	3♠	4♦	Dbl
4♥	Dbl	All pass	

The lead is ♠A by North. See what I mean?

Well, things could be worse. At least East has turned up with a decent heart suit after you rescued the partnership from the doubled diamonds contract. But you are expecting bad red suit splits and your club suit has got too many holes in to make it easy to set up.

North switches to a low club at trick two which is won by South's ace. South returns another club which is won by the king in dummy. At this point you will be relieved that North follows suit and is not able to ruff the second club. It seems clear that North has at least four hearts probably including ♥Q so a reasonable play would be to return to hand with

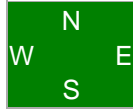
♦A. You now set about drawing North's trumps starting by playing ♥A followed by ♥T. North ducks and, as you expected, South shows out on the second round of the suit. This is the situation after the first six tricks.

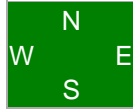
<p>♠ 9 ♥ 8 4 ♦ - ♣ Q 10 8 5</p>		<p>♠ - ♥ K J ♦ K Q 10 8 4 ♣ -</p>
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You have lost two tricks so far and West is on lead. What next?

Since I have stopped at this point you are probably suspecting that there is a catch and you would be right. Our West ploughed on with trumps, taking the heart finesse again. After taking out North's last trump he was in dummy with a string of diamonds. My partner, playing North, reluctantly now conceded the rest of the tricks. Fortunately, however, this only counts if both opponents concede. I was sitting South with four diamonds left in my hand so asked declarer to play the rest of the hand. West was able to cash the king and queen of diamonds but had to concede to my ♦J and I also cashed ♠K for a score of two down.

The correct play at trick seven is to start cashing the clubs in hand starting with ♣Q. North can ruff in if she wishes at any stage, but dummy can over-ruff, and then take out North's last trump. Now you can cash two diamonds and then return to hand with a ruff, and cash the remaining clubs. That way you make eleven tricks for a top board. It may seem counter-intuitive to allow North to ruff in on any of your winning clubs but that is the only way to ensure the contract with the given defence. Here are the four hands.

<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ A 10 8 4 ♦ A ♣ Q 10 8 5 4 2</p>		<p>♠ 2 ♥ K J 9 3 ♦ K Q 10 8 4 3 ♣ K 6</p>
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<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ A 10 8 4 ♦ A ♣ Q 10 8 5 4 2</p>		<p>♠ A J 10 6 3 ♥ Q 7 6 2 ♦ 5 ♣ J 7 3</p>
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<p>♠ K Q 8 5 4 ♥ 5 ♦ J 9 7 6 2 ♣ A 9</p>		<p>♠ 2 ♥ K J 9 3 ♦ K Q 10 8 4 3 ♣ K 6</p>
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Perhaps you think that the right play is obvious on this hand. Certainly, the all-knowing computer indicates that a contract of four hearts can always make. But none of the four Wests who played in hearts in our session made as many as ten tricks.

Ray Kemp