



# **Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter**

February 2021

## **President's Welcome**

It seems a bit late to be wishing everyone happy new year – but not if you consider that our Club playing “year” starts in February – so Happy New Year!

We have held our first 2021 Committee meeting, at which we started to think about a “strategic plan” for the Club to address the ongoing whittling away of our cash reserves. The draft accounts for 2020 prepared by our treasurer, Grant Elliot, indicate that we will again be showing a small cash deficit. The ongoing uncertainty and closures over COVID have certainly affected our income from table money and room hire but it is heartening to see that our income from subscriptions increased slightly (though we did increase the rates in 2020!). In addition, the Government’s wage subsidy meant that we have been able to retain both our employees at their contracted rates of pay throughout the year without dipping into our reserves.

However, the plain fact is that we are “asset rich but cash poor” and we need to develop a plan to manage this over the long term. We are likely to have some options to bring to you for your comment at the AGM in March. A notice for the AGM is included later in this newsletter – we have decided to hold the event on a Saturday night – 20<sup>th</sup> March – and to follow it up with a Quiz Night. Your family and friends are invited to join us so start booking the best brains NOW! More details of the Quiz Night (format etc.) will be announced at Club sessions and circulated by Pianola in early March.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne Gordon for undertaking the “block course” of lessons in mid-December – a number of new faces have already appeared in the Summer Bridge sessions and we hope that all our new members will enjoy settling into the regular programme of events. Jack James will be teaching the lessons course in March/April and Maxine Keay has taken over from Anne in managing promotion of the lessons - more details in this newsletter but again many thanks to both Jack and Maxine for taking this on.

Our Summer bridge sessions have gone well with up to 14 tables at the Monday afternoon sessions. We welcomed visitors from Hokowhitu, Whanganui, Dannevirke, Pahiatua and Feilding, demonstrating yet again that life without bridge lacks purpose. It was good to see the rooms full and everyone enjoying their bridge.

We have just waved goodbye to Kate McNamara. Many of you will know that Kate has been our cleaner for at least two decades and that she has done an amazing job to keep our Club Rooms looking at their best over these years. She has finally thrown in the (tea) towel and is retiring. Kate was delighted to receive our card, signed by so many of you to express your good wishes. How we manage in the future will be part of our “strategic review” but in the meantime, Anne Gordon has agreed to enter into a casual contract with us to fill the gap. So, do not be surprised to see her in the building and not just at the bridge table.

Finally, from me, I was sad to attend the memorial service for a former Club President, Selwyn Jebson. Selwyn held two terms of office as President but has been involved for many years in our bridge community. At a moving service, his family and friends spoke about his love of bridge and the part it played in his life, but I learned so much more about this remarkable man. It is a real privilege to follow in his footsteps as Club President. Selwyn’s friend and colleague, and Committee member, Tony Fayerman, has collated a tribute piece to Selwyn which we are circulating along with this newsletter and will post on our website.

So, in closing this welcome to our first newsletter for 2021, I hope that you have found your way back to the regular playing sessions (if you ever left!). I look forward to seeing you at the bridge table very soon.

**Denise Servante**  
**President**

## Club and Tournaments Results

Here is a list of pairs who achieved a score of 70% or better in Summer bridge:

14 Dec - Alan Doddridge & Jenny Wilson - 70.83%

4 Jan - Jack James & Alistair James - 70.19%

Congratulations to all Club members below who have achieved success in recent tournaments.

Wanganui Picnic Pairs	Jan Whyte Ken Bateman	1 <sup>st</sup>
	Pat Oyston Val Gardiner	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	Steve Baron Peter Ramsay	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Grant Elliot Terry Young	8 <sup>th</sup>
Suzanne Duncan Pairs	Jack James Nigel Kearney	1 <sup>st</sup>
New Plymouth Summer Picnic Pairs	Jack James Steve Baron	1 <sup>st</sup>
Hawera Picnic Pairs	Jack James Steve Baron	5 <sup>th</sup>

## Gayle Leader

### Bridge Lessons

The Club will be running lessons for new players beginning 15th March. These will be held on Monday and Thursday evenings, 7 - 9pm: 10 lessons over a 5 week period. The cost of \$50 includes all lesson materials and a subscription to the club for 2021.

We have printed flyers to distribute in letterboxes, workplaces etc. We would like to do a letterbox drop in areas around the city, this has worked in the past in generating interest. If you can help with distribution (perhaps while out walking the dog!) or can take some along to your workplace, gym, sport club etc the flyers are available from the Club. The more flyers out there, the better the response, so please help if you can.

If any of your friends, family, or colleagues are interested, please encourage them to register and come along. Contact is Maxine, by phone 0275347410 or Email [maxine52@me.com](mailto:maxine52@me.com)

**Maxine Keay**

## Improvers Corner

When starting bridge there are so many factors to consider, so many guidelines to remember that it is a wonder any of us gets past square one. I guess the trick is persistence and a thick skin for those many occasions when things go wrong.

The problem with the guidelines is not only their number but the fact that there are so many exceptions that can only be learned from (sometimes bitter) experience. Of all the advice you get, perhaps the best is that you should keep to the basics in bidding. OK, there will be exceptions but if you stick to the 12 point opener, 25 point game principal then you won't go far wrong.

I noticed that during the first week of Monday evening bridge this month, some partnerships must have been wandering from the straight and narrow. Take hand one as an example.

### Board 1

North Deals  
None Vul

♠ A 7 5  
♥ 10 9 3  
♦ A K Q 10 8  
♣ 8 6

♠ 2

♥ Q J 7 5 2

♦ J 4 3

♣ K Q 4 2



♠ Q J 9 3

♥ A 8 6

♦ 6 2

♣ A J 10 7

♠ K 10 8 6 4

♥ K 4

♦ 9 7 5

♣ 9 5 3

With 12-14 points and a balanced hand East should open 1NT. Don't worry about the weakness in diamonds, you have the right shape and any partner worth their salt will fill the gap. South should now pass leaving West with a simple decision. Thirteen high card points plus the 12-14 by partner gives 25 points minimum. There appears no chance of a major suit fit or slam potential and so a straight-forward raise to 3NT is the best option. West should not be lured into a diamond bid. Most of the time no trumps scores much better than a minor suit contract. If you had bid the hand this way you would have achieved a cold top. At every table in the actual session the hand was played in a minor suit part score.

The only way South can threaten a 3NT contract is by leading the king of hearts which no sensible South is going to do. East has five diamond tricks for the taking, a heart and at least three black suit tricks.

**Ray Kemp**

## Bridgevid

How do you improve your bridge? It is sometimes difficult to get effective feedback on one's bidding and play. OK, you can look at your results and if they are good you know you are doing well, and if they are bad you know you have a problem. But when things go wrong it can be frustrating to work out exactly what the issue is. Were you unlucky in that last session or do you need to brush up on some aspect of your game?

One potential remedy is to play a set of hands and then hear the thoughts of an expert as they bid, play and defend the same cards. Here is one way you can achieve this.

First, play BBO's weekly free tournament of eight hands. You don't even need a partner to take part in these sessions. Your partner is a robot, as are your opponents. You will have to bid using a version of Standard American, but you can hover your cursor over potential bids to find out what they mean before you commit to one of them. To access the hands just sign into BBO, select "Solitaire" and then "Weekly Free Instant Tournament".

The robots can be a bit of a pain since they are programmed using an old bridge package called GIB. Most of the time, they are predictable but occasionally make outlandish bids or plays (so just like a typical session at the club, right?). Anyway, you can check your results compared with a range of other real users who have been playing the same hands.

Even better, you can then go to a website called "Bridgevid" where you can watch an expert Australian called Pete Hollands tackling the same hands, and listen to him thinking aloud as he makes his decisions. Every Wednesday he plays the BBO free tournament for that week and videos the whole session.

This is a good learning exercise and players at most levels can benefit. Occasionally, he will execute a fancy squeeze or trump coup but mostly he just tries to get the basics right with planning, timing, and communication. He plays in real time with no editing, so sometimes messes up, but doesn't try to hide any mistakes he makes, which can be reassuring for the rest of us.

At the head of the next column is a deceptively simple hand where declarer must be alert right from trick one.

South Deals ♠ Q 9 8 3  
Both Vul ♥ 5 4

♦ J 8 4  
♣ J 10 9 5



♠ K J 2  
♥ A K Q 6 3  
♦ A 10 9 6  
♣ 2

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1 ♥	All Pass		

Lead ♠10

Why bother with such a low-level contract you might ask but it is just this sort of deal that can produce big swings. Games and slams can be more fun but often produce uniform results throughout the field. When the bidding stops at a low-level it is usually because the points are close to 20-20 and that's when judgment is at a premium.

Take the above hand. The points are more-or-less evenly divided between the two sides and perhaps the opponents should have come in. If they had then maybe they would have pushed NS up to two diamonds or two hearts which could be dicey if trumps don't split. Alternatively, EW may be able to scramble to seven tricks in 1NT. Lastly, there is a danger that either side might push too hard and go two down vulnerable in a higher-level contract, handing their opponents all the match points.

As it turns out, when dummy goes down, we look to be in a comfortable contract with four or five heart tricks, two or three spades and a diamond. With a fortuitous diamond placement, we may even make ten tricks. Hollands doesn't let all this go to his head. He can see the potential of the hand but also the dangers. Crucially, he needs to work out which spades to play at trick one. Can you see what to do?

It is tempting to put up ♠Q to try to force out the ace from East but a good East doesn't have to play ball with this and will hold up. Since this may be the last time he gets to lead from dummy declarer might then decide to take the diamond finesse straight away, hoping East holds both missing honours. If this fails, however, the hand can quickly turn to custard. West may win with a diamond honour and lead another spade to East's ace. A spade back gives West a ruff. Back to East with a club and another spade through. South may now have the choice of losing to a possible over-ruff or of ruffing high and losing a trump trick later. At this rate, South might make a bare seven tricks and a likely bottom board.

Hollands takes all this in before playing to trick one and decides to play a low spade from dummy - not because "second hand plays low" but because he has worked out the ramifications of doing otherwise. East holds up and if we are on autopilot we take the trick in hand with the jack of spades (which is what I did). Hollands is cannier and plays the king, thus guaranteeing an entry into dummy via the spades at a later stage.

He now takes out trumps which kindly split 3-3 and plays ♠2 from hand, carefully inserting the nine from dummy. East holds up again to avoid setting up the fourth spade in dummy. Hollands runs the ♦8 from dummy and virtue is rewarded when it turns out East has both missing diamond honours. Now declarer has ten tricks in the bag: two spades, five hearts and three diamonds. The four hands are show below:

♠ 10 4 ♥ 10 8 7 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ K Q 6 4 3	♠ Q 9 8 3 ♥ 5 4 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ J 10 9 5	<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 S E</td></tr> </table>	N	W S E	♠ A 7 6 5 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ A 8 7
N					
W S E					
	♠ K J 2 ♥ A K Q 6 3 ♦ A 10 9 6 ♣ 2				

So Hollands gets a top board by working through the likely possibilities straight away at trick one and making sure he plays exactly the right spade from each hand. After that, the hand plays itself.

Many of his good boards are achieved by simple logical thinking as above. One's reaction on watching him play is not usually "Wow, how did he do that?" but more often "Of course, why didn't I think of that?". Check him out at <https://bridgevid.com/>.

**Ray Kemp**

### Taranaki Picnic Cup



Club members Jack James and Steve Baron are shown here with the Taranaki Picnic Cup. This impressive-looking trophy is awarded each year for the pair with the highest combined scores in the two Taranaki picnic tournaments – New Plymouth and Hawera. Well done, guys!

**Tony Fayerman**

### You must be joking



The reason why bidding pads were invented?

**Tony Fayerman**

# Palmerston North Bridge Club Annual General Meeting and Quiz Night

<b>Venue:</b>	Club Rooms
<b>Date:</b>	Saturday 20 March 2021
<b>Time:</b>	6.30 pm AGM 7.00 pm Quiz Night
<b>Entry fee:</b>	\$5.00 per person or \$24 per team (max 6 people) Payable in cash on the night!

## Cash bar

For the AGM:

The Annual Report, Accounts, Agenda and any remits will be circulated beforehand.

The Committee always needs willing volunteers to serve on the Committee – a bit like Jury Service – everyone needs to take a turn. If you think it's your turn, don't be shy! Put your name forward – we have a busy and exciting year ahead.