

### President's Welcome

I am writing this immediately following the final Committee meeting for the year. If I look at the agenda, it provides a great summary of our current issues and forward projects.

We were able to carry out debriefs on the most recent events: the Babich NZ Nationwide Pairs (30 October), Daytime Party (30 November), Prizegiving (3 December) and Mitre 10 Christmas Cheer (5 December). The Committee was, overall, very happy with how these events went and will apply lessons learned to future events. All these events were successful NOT LEAST because of the wonderful support from all the Committee and the membership – there was lots to be done and everyone played a part. My thanks to everyone who helped in any way and to those of you who took part in any (or all) of them.

Of course, the Committee was disappointed not to have held our members event, the Spring Fling on 7 November – we would really like your feedback about whether we should continue to have a relaxed, fun event for our members and family/friends and, if so, what format you would like for this event to take. In the meantime, the Committee has fixed the date for our 75th Birthday Bash - Saturday 29 May 2021 - your ideas to celebrate this milestone will also be very welcome.

This year the Spring Fling was to have been sponsored by Julia Wallace Village: that sponsorship remains and for our part, we are providing two free places at our lessons and promoting an Open Day event for members at the Julia Wallace Village. This date will

be confirmed in the New Year and your support for it would be very welcome.

The Committee confirmed the calendar of events for 2021 which includes our Junior, Intermediate and Open Club tournaments, Christmas Cheer and a North Island Pairs event on behalf of NZ Bridge. In addition, we will hopefully hold the (annual) Interclub event between Palmerston North, Hawera and Wanganui which was cancelled in 2020 because of COVID.

In the regular newsletter from the Chair of NZ Bridge in early November, we were notified of a change in tournament grading for national events, viz *“We know the subject of tournament grading has been on the table for a number of years. We equally know that the present grading system operates as a disincentive for those players who have recently achieved open status. Many players feel they are out of their depth and are reluctant to participate in open fields. We have therefore amended open status which will be effective when a player achieves provincial master status (100 masterpoints of which 50A points are required). The change does not prohibit players from participating in an open event. We very much encourage participation.”*

The Committee has long struggled with a similar issue at Club level: we know that many members feel equally disincentivised playing in the same room as our Platinum members and Grandmasters, albeit we are so proud of the achievements of these players who call our Club their home. The Committee has established a working group to review our Club grading system including the ungraded day-time sessions on Mondays and Fridays. Again, we would be pleased to have any feedback for the working group from our members.

Somewhat aligned to this, the Committee agreed to change the name of Monday evening sessions from Novice Plus to Junior. This change will take effect immediately (although too late for the published 2021 Playing Programme!)

The Committee was also delighted to confirm that we have a good-sized group of learners signed up for the block course of lessons (12-16 December) that Anne Gordon is providing. Many thanks to Anne for this initiative – it is clearly a welcome alternative for some people from the ten weekly evening sessions (these will still be held from March 2021).

The Committee started to look at potential remits for the 2021 AGM. Particularly, we are keen to investigate if there are any members who should be rewarded Life Membership of the Club. We agreed that Life Membership is primarily to honour service to the Club that is ongoing and significant (not necessarily associated with Committee work) and irrespective of any great achievement at the bridge table. Please let me know of any suitable candidates and provide a brief resume of why they should be awarded with this honour. Also, please raise any issues which you think may require a change to our rules – these are available online from the Incorporated Societies website.

As I close this welcome to our final newsletter for 2020, it seems to me that our Club is in good heart as we come to the end of an extraordinary year. I have been so heartened by the support that so many of you have shown in helping us to weather the various storms and for your ongoing and significant contributions to our endeavours and events. Our Committee and our Club is packed with dedicated and proactive members who have gone above and beyond my expectations in giving freely of their time and expertise. Thank you all so very much.

It remains only for me to wish you all a very, very festive holiday period with lots of good food and good wine (or substitute!) and happy times with family and friends. Hopefully, I will see you at Summer Bridge!

**Denise Servante**

### **Summer Bridge**

You can still play bridge during the summer holidays!  
Summer bridge sessions are held:

Monday - 1:15 pm - arrange your own partner

Tuesday - 7:15 pm - arrange a partner or come solo

Play as many (or as few) sessions as you like, as your diary allows. Normal table money of \$6 per session or pay with a table card.

**Julie Bunnell**

### **Bridge Lessons**

This year I decided to run some extra lessons in December as we had several people contact the club who wanted to learn and March seemed so far away! It will be interesting to see how teaching the lessons as a block works for our learners.

Next March Jack has agreed to teach weekly lessons again on Monday evenings and he will be needing someone to help with advertising, enrolments and helping during sessions. The advertising needs to be started well in advance so you will need to be available from early January. If you think you could help please let me know. It would be great if someone else could take this on this time!

**Anne Gordon**

### **2021 Bridge Programme**

Our 2021 bridge year will begin the first week in February: Monday afternoon and Monday evening on 1 February, Tuesday evening on 2 February, Thursday evening on 4 February and Friday daytime on 5 February.

The 2021 programme booklets are available for collection at the Club. If you haven't got yours yet, pick one up next time you play Summer Bridge!

If you have a partner arranged for February, please let the relevant session host(s) know. If you need a partner, please contact the session host(s).

Monday afternoon - Kate Cliff

021 173 1636, [katecliff@gmail.com](mailto:katecliff@gmail.com)

Monday evening - Maxine Keay

Tuesday social - Maxine Keay

027 534 7410, [maxine52@me.com](mailto:maxine52@me.com)

Tuesday evening - Morgan Booker

021 167 0195, [entropy.dancer@gmail.com](mailto:entropy.dancer@gmail.com)

Thursday evening - Cindy Lowndes

027 450 0319, [happypawznz@outlook.com](mailto:happypawznz@outlook.com)

Friday daytime - Jenny Kelland

06 357 3886, [jennyak@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jennyak@xtra.co.nz)

The Social Tuesday evening sessions in February will be Speed Dating on 2nd and 16th February -- no partner required, just come along and enjoy the fun of speed dating.

**Julie Bunnell**

## Tournament and Club Results

One of the highlights of the year was the team of Evelyn Hurley/Bob Hurley/Jan Whyte/Ken Bateman who won the Senior Interprovincials.

Congratulations to all Club members who have featured in the following tournaments.

Palmerston North Open Swiss Pairs	Elizabeth Kemp Ray Kemp	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley	6 <sup>th</sup>
Palmerston North Restricted Open Swiss Pairs	Laura Griffin Tony Clear	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	Debbie Marcroft Garry Hodge	6 <sup>th</sup>
NZ Wide Pairs	Bev Colville Susan Parker	64%
	Laura Griffin Tony Clear	59%
Zelda Morris Provincial Pairs	Jack James Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley	7 <sup>th</sup>
Hawkes Bay Christmas Cheer	Elizabeth Kemp Ray Kemp	5 <sup>th</sup>
	Morgan Booker Alistair James	8 <sup>th</sup>
Palmerston North Christmas Cheer	Evelyn Hurley Patrick D'Arcy	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Elizabeth Kemp Ray Kemp	9 <sup>th</sup>
	Bob Hurley Russell Wilson	10 <sup>th</sup>
	Anne Gordon Hans Van Bunnik	11 <sup>th</sup>
	Susan Baty Tony Clear	12 <sup>th</sup>

Here is a list of winners for club championships and other club competitions. Well done to all!

Level	Event	Winners
Bronze	Championship	Maree Roberts Elwi Beshlawi
	Points Cup	Maxine Keay
Silver	Keith Rowland Memorial Pairs	Sonia Smith Elwi Beshlawi
	Championship	Tony Fayerman Colin Tod
Gold	Points Cup	Tim Coolbear
	Butler Champs	Tony Fayerman Maxine Keay
Platinum	Championship	Morgan Booker Zheng Zhang
	Points Cup	Jack James
	Memorial Trophy	Morgan Booker Zheng Zhang
Monday Afternoon	Butler Champs	Jack James Julian Kissock
	Championship	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley
	Points Cup	Evelyn Hurley
Monday Afternoon	Jack Cliff Memorial Pairs	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley
	Points Cup	Jan Whyte

Congratulations to the following pairs who joined the over-seventies club:

Morgan Booker / Jack James — 75.40  
 Maxine Keay / Jason Cliff — 75.00  
 Kay Townsley / Denise Servante — 72.14  
 Dianne Gardner / Grant Elliott — 70.59

**Gayle Leader**

# Christmas Cheer 2020

When asked to write about this year's Xmas Cheer it made me feel nostalgic. I wondered when was the first Xmas Cheer? My earliest memory is in the early 1990's when there was 50 something tables shared between our old Clubrooms on Linton Street and in a hall we hired just up the road. Lorraine Stachurski thinks it's been held for over 40 years and one of her earliest memories was winning a gallon of sherry for coming second.

The Xmas Cheer entries this year filled up very quickly, and with a cap at 36 tables a few people missed out. However, a couple of late withdrawals on Friday made us rush around for standby pairs. Thanks to Sean & Tammy Lynch, Heather Simpson and Steve Baron who nobly filled in for us.

One can't run such a big tournament without lots of members helping. So, a huge thank you goes to the following people:

- Robyn Anderson and Gayle Leader and all the catering staff involved including morning and lunch time helpers. This is the first year we did our own catering for a while. The food was amazing and I know it must have taken days to organise and prepare.
- The morning tea plate providers
- Anne Gordan for organising the raffle
- Denise Servante, Tony Clear and Val Pain for setting up the rooms on Friday afternoon.
- Ray Kemp for generating the Sweepstake draws
- Lorraine Stachurski and Bryan Northcott for directing and organising the boards.
- The Hokowhitu Bridge Club and Julie Bunnell for lending us stools and rubbish bins.

- For all others that helped and are too numerous to name.

The winners on the day were:

First: Anne-Marie Russell and Debbie McLeod

Second: John Patterson and Sandy McKirdy

Third: Graham Stronach and Paul Carson

Best Mixed Grade: Tony Clear and Susan Baty

Best Intermediate Pair: Moira and Graham Wylie

Best Junior Pair: Bruce and Ann Barnett

\$1 Sweepstake: Gail Kirton

\$2 Sweepstake: Cindy Lowndes

The highlights of the day for me were:

- The good spirit in which the tournament was played
- The plentiful morning tea
- The delicious dinner
- Lorraine and Bryan dressing up as angels to give out chocolate to everyone.

This is one of the biggest tournaments in NZ outside the national events so Palmerston North Bridge Club should be proud to run such a successful event.

Merry Xmas everyone and I hope everyone has a great holiday and special time with their families.

**Liz Burrows**





## Rueful Rabbit Strikes Again

I've mentioned before the antics of Rueful Rabbit, the creation of English bridge writer, Victor Mollo. RR is the most tentative and error-prone bridge player you are likely to meet, although I suspect we have all been there at one time or another – either slipping into the wrong contract which happens to be the only one to make, or selecting the wrong card by mistake from hand and it turns out to be the best lead possible. More often than not it is our opponents who do this to us, or so we like to think. Well, Rueful Rabbit makes these kinds of mistakes all the time, and always falls on his padded paws.

On the fourth night of the Platinum/Gold Pairs championships there was a hand just tailor-made for our bungling bunny to misplay.

<b>Board 11</b>	♠ A Q 9 8 6 3	
South Deals	♥ A 8	
None Vul	♦ 10 2	
	♣ A K 8	
		♠ J 7 5
♠ K 10 2		♥ K
♥ J 10 6 3		♦ J 9 7 6
♦ 5 4 3		♣ 9 7 5 4 2
♣ J 6 3		
		♠ 4
		♥ Q 9 7 5 4 2
		♦ A K Q 8
		♣ Q 10

Somehow RR, sitting South, falls into a six heart contract. With a six-two heart fit, thirty high card points and an outside singleton in South's hand, it looks like a decent place to be. West leads ♠2 and when dummy goes down our footling friend furrows his furry brow. From an initial appraisal there are seven top tricks in the outside suits. All declarer has to do is to make five out of six heart tricks. The only snag, but it is a biggie, is the quality of the trump suit. With king, jack and ten missing, RR has no idea how to play this combination. So what does he do? He defers the problem by messing around with the side suits. He takes ♠A and then plays a low spade which he ruffs. Why? Because he can.

Next, he decides to cash some clubs. On the third club from dummy he discards ♦8. What to do next? Well, let's ruff another spade. No one has ruffed in on any of his outside tricks so far, so that is good, but he is running out of options. He is going to have to tackle the trump suit. He leads a low heart from hand, West plays low, and dummy's ace drops the king from East.

Now RR becomes transfixed. Even he can work out that this will mean a four-one trump split and that West has three hearts left to the JTx while he himself has Qxx. Ah, well, two trumps to lose and that appears to be the end of his slam. But, like the US president, he is in denial and carries on regardless.

He leads out the three top diamonds from hand. By this stage he is totally discombobulated and mistakenly ruffs ♦Q with dummy's remaining trump. This is the position, with North on lead and with three cards left to play.

	♠ Q 9 8	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ -	
♠ -		♠ -
♥ J 10 6		♥ -
♦ -		♦ J
♣ -		♣ 9 7
		♠ -
		♥ Q 9 7
		♦ -
		♣ -

RR curses his luck. He is now in dummy with the winning queen of spades, but he is going to be in the ignominious position of having to ruff a winner. So be it. He calls for the ♠Q to be played. He has lost track of trumps but hopes that either West has another spade or cannot over-ruff his ♥7. Doom. West over-ruffs with the ten. But then something wonderful happens. After trancing, West leads back ♥6 which South wins with the nine. Amazed, RR now cashes ♥Q felling the jack. Twelve tricks made.

RR commiserates with West saying he, too, sometimes gives declarers contracts by poor leads and he shouldn't worry about making such a mistake. He cannot understand why West is now weeping.

Rueful Rabbit had stumbled upon a fool-proof way of making a difficult contract. Let's see how a more competent player would try to bring home the slam.

Perusing dummy, declarer should see that the trump suit is the problem, but there is no advantage to be gained by delay. The aim is to play ♥A and another heart straight away hoping that East started with Kx or Kxx. This gives the best chance of only losing one trump trick.

In practice, when dummy's ace of hearts brings down the king singleton South has to resort to plan B. He must now leave the trump suit alone and hope to get to a showdown when he and West each only have three trumps left. Then he must throw in West by playing a low trump. To achieve this, he must first cash all the outside winners whilst shortening his own trump holding by ruffing two spades. "Trump reduction" is a well-known ploy but only works if the opponents cannot ruff outside winners at an earlier stage. In this case, West is 4333 and must look on helplessly as the end-play looms.

The idea of ruffing just to reduce one's trump holding without taking out an opponent's trumps is a strange one to get used to. In certain cases it may even be necessary to trump one's own dummy winners. What a weird game we are all addicted to!

**Ray Kemp**



## Six ever, seven never?

There is an old saying in bridge “four ever, five never” which suggests that one should always compete at the four level (for example, bid four spades over the opponents’ four hearts in a competitive auction) but never do the same at the five level. So if the opponents bid five hearts over your four spades then you shouldn’t be bidding five spades but should either drop out of the auction or double the opponents’ contract. Like most guidelines there are exceptions, and one is better to trust in one’s assessment of the given situation than to worry about some little jingle.

A hand that totally confounded this guideline occurred during the Palmerston North Swiss Pairs in October. It was a very unusual deal and produced perhaps the biggest swings of this IMPs scoring tournament. Like most hands with extreme distributions it was a case of fortune favouring the brave. Out of the 56 boards played that day, for some pairs this one may have made the difference between being in the prize money and finishing down the track.

I’m not exaggerating. The couple that eventually won the tournament got the best possible result on this board which probably secured their top place. Their unlucky opponents, who were vying for top spot at the time, got a correspondingly poor score and eventually finished in the lower half of the field.

Let’s see how you would fare. One bid and the play of one card may make the difference between ending the day with a fistful of dollars or a pocketful of regrets.

You are South and have picked up the following collection (vulnerable against non-vulnerable) :

♠ A J 8 5 3 2  
♥ 8 7  
♦ K Q J 4  
♣ 10

The bidding so far:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	?

East’s opener shows a 20-22 HCP balanced hand so at this vulnerability it is advisable to keep your powder dry until you know something about West’s hand. As it turns out, he is obviously pretty minimum with at least six hearts since he has transferred East to hearts with no interest in looking for a slam.

Third time round you need to make that first momentous decision. Do you re-open the auction with a courageous (or foolhardy) vulnerable four spade bid or do you let it be?

If you let East play in a four hearts contract then don’t bother staying for the prize-giving. You won’t be getting the golden handshake from Anne. If, instead, you decide to bid four spades, then congratulations, you are still on track for the big payout. But, unfortunately, the auction is not yet over.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	4 ♠
5 ♥	5 ♠	6 ♥	?

West competes up to five hearts and apparently your partner, North, has not heard of the guideline “four ever, five never.” Either that, or she has chosen to ignore it. But now the auction gets a little surreal as East suddenly comes alive and bids the heart slam.

You’ve done your dash in the auction so I hope you are not considering venturing a six spade bid. You might decide to double but that could be inadvisable, too. EW are a top pair and are not going to have bid to this level without some chance of making. Everyone passes and you are on lead.

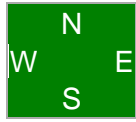
There is good news and bad news. The good news is that you can defeat this slam and start envisaging the plaudits from the rest of the room as you go up to collect your prize. The bad news is that you can also allow the slam to make. If the latter is the case then you had better hope your partner is not due to be giving you a lift home, because you may need to arrange a taxi for the end of play. So your lead to the heart slam is where the rubber hits the road. Just to remind you of your hand:

♠ A J 8 5 3 2  
♥ 8 7  
♦ K Q J 4  
♣ 10

So what is your choice? Do you try to cash your ace before East can jettison any spade losers, or do you take a more cautious approach and lead the king of diamonds hoping to make your ace later? If partner has the ace of clubs then you might not need any spade tricks at all. You can lead your singleton club and partner can give you a ruff in the suit with a club return.

If you decide to lead the ace of spades, or any other spade for that matter, then you had better be looking up the number of the local taxi service. Any lead but a spade, and EW stand no chance of making the slam. A spade lead, however, hands them the contract on a plate. Here is the full deal:

<b>Board 12</b>	♠ Q 10 9 4	
West Deals	♥ —	
N-S Vul	♦ 10 9 8 5	
	♣ Q 8 7 6 3	
♠ 7		♠ K 6
♥ K 10 9 6 5 4 2		♥ A Q J 3
♦ 6 2		♦ A 7 3
♣ J 9 5		♣ A K 4 2
	♠ A J 8 5 3 2	
	♥ 8 7	
	♦ K Q J 4	
	♣ 10	



Your ace of spades will hold but that is going to be the only trick you make. East can beat any follow-up card you lead, take out trumps and park dummy's losing diamond on the king of spades you have kindly set up. It may appear that declarer has a club loser but once South's ten appears after the Ace of clubs lead, then a simple finesse against North's queen secures East's contract.

Amazingly, both five hearts and five spades contracts make. Two eager Easts doubled South's five spade contract on the basis of their 21 HCPs and got a poor result for their troubles. As you may have deduced, the eventual winners of the tournament were sitting EW and bid and made the six heart contract after the ace of spades lead, whereas their opponents were consigned to the depths of Acheron.

So how did you fare? Your best result is obtained by forcing the opponents up to six hearts and then defeating the contract. If you tamely let them play in four hearts then you would lose six IMPs. But the overall worse result is obtained by pushing the opponents up to six hearts and then allowing them to make. For that, you would lose 14 IMPs which is a lot of moolah in an eight board match.

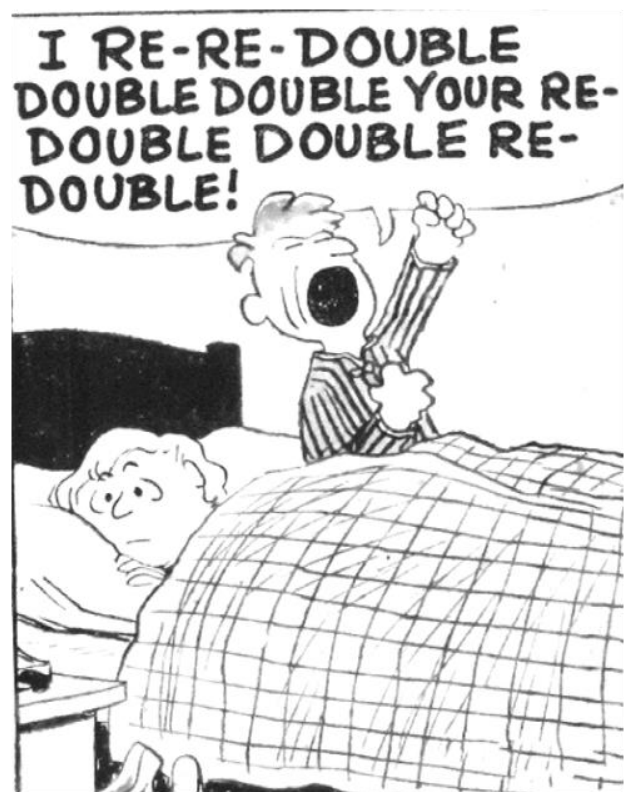
So what is it to be? When you put your head on the pillow that night are you going to have a smile on your face as you relive your witty victory speech or will you fall asleep and endure a nightmare where you are being chased through the woods by a giant ace of spades wielding a whirring chainsaw?

As a postscript to this incredible board, I ran Deep Finesse to check out the par score. For those who are not familiar with the concept, the par score for a deal is the optimal contract if both sides bid and play perfectly. The optimal result was scarcely believable. It is six spades doubled by NS for one down. How could this be? Surely, the best EW can do is to sacrifice in a six hearts contract going one down doubled over NS's five spades that makes.

But I should have known better. The computer never lies. East cannot make six hearts with optimal defence but can make 5NT since there are eleven tricks for the taking whatever South leads. So if East bids 5NT, potentially giving EW a score of 460, then the best NS can do is sacrifice in six spades vulnerable and doubled for -200. So, in this situation it is a case of "six ever, seven never".

**Ray Kemp**

**You must be joking**



*It had been an intense battle at the club championships*

**Supplied by Tony Fayerman**