



# **Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter**

February 2020

## **President's Welcome**

And so it is 2020: the Club kicked off with some very busy Summer Bridge sessions on Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings. It was great to see so many people continuing to play through the summer. We've had a slow start to the Playing Programme - February can sometimes be slow as people get their partnerships for the year arranged but please, don't be shy! If you want to play and don't have a partner, let your session host know and s/he will help to arrange a partner. Details are provided further in this newsletter.

The Committee had its first meeting of the year in mid-February. We had a couple of important issues to deal with. The main one was the move of Open Night from Tuesday to Monday. It looks like, despite our best efforts, we may have got this wrong! So, we have asked the Session rep, Morgan Booker, to look at reinstating a senior night programme on Tuesday evenings. For those affected, please expect Morgan to contact you with her proposals.

The second issue was the Annual General Meeting. This is usually held early evening and the Committee is always grateful for any members who come along to support. This year, we will also arrange a social Quiz Night to follow, not only to thank those members who support the AGM but also to thank all members for your support for the Club. Invite your friends and family and come along for a fun night out. Details are given further in this newsletter. Save the date: Friday 27 March.

Our accounts to December 2019 show that many of you (me included!) stocked up on table cards at the old session rate - this has certainly helped our balance sheet for the year - thank you. No excuses not to increase the number of sessions you are playing! Also, many thanks to everyone who has paid their 2020 subscription promptly. It really helps with our planning and budgeting to have these funds in our account. A quick reminder for those of you who pay online (for subscriptions or table cards) to change over to our new account with BNZ (02-0727-0231184-000).

Finally, in this newsletter we have a short, introductory article on Precision bidding from one of our Grand Masters, Bob Hurley. Many of you have noticed the rise in people playing Precision and have asked for some information so that you can think about your defensive bids against precision opening bids. Bob's article highlights some pluses and minuses of Precision vs Standard ACOL bidding. Bob will also be running two mentoring sessions in March as part of our Tuesday social playing programme. Come along and pick up some tips from a Grand Master! Thanks to Bob for supporting the Club in this way.

Thanks to everyone for your ongoing support for the Club. This month, I'd like particularly to thank Martin Carryer for the beautiful new supplies cupboard and Anne Gordon for organising (and mostly doing) the carpet cleaning.

Happy Bridging everyone!

**Denise Servante**

## Club Rooms

Firstly a big thank you to Martin Carryer who has made us such a lovely cupboard for our playing supplies. It is so perfect for a bridge club and beautifully crafted.

You may have noticed that the carpets and some of the chairs were cleaned over summer. The carpets were really stained considering how new they are. Thanks to all those people who helped with moving furniture, and to Morgan Booker who helped with upholstery cleaning. They have come up beautifully and now we just need your help to keep them clean. Please clean up any spills or ask for help to do so. Someone at your table may be able to help.

**Anne Gordon**

## Beginner's Corner

It was great to see so many beginners playing during Summer Bridge including some from other clubs. I certainly enjoyed playing with my buddy and I was quite impressed with her play!

I'm hoping to see last year's beginners returning to the junior room but also joining us on our social Tuesdays. We had a lot of fun last week playing with so many players of different abilities on our speed dating. Quite a challenge to play with someone new with so little time to talk about systems. Plus some time to relax with a drink and snacks prior to play.

Next month is mentor month when we are very lucky to have one of our most experienced players, Bob Hurley, giving us pointers and analysing the hands. If you need a partner please let me know and I can find someone for you. Tuesdays are also a good option if you are unable to play a whole month.

A reminder that lessons are starting again soon so please invite friends, family and work colleagues to join us. Let me know if you want me to add them to the list.

**Anne Gordon**

## Club and Tournaments Results

Welcome everyone to another exciting year of Bridge. As it's only February there are no Club results yet. However, there are a few pairs who have joined the over 70's Club. They are:

Susan Parker & Liz Burrows Summer Bridge 16/1/20	70.76%
Ken Bateman & Jan Whyte Monday Summer Bridge 20/01/20	73.38%
Jack James & Mark Noble Summer Bridge 23/1/20	73.21%
Anita Thirtle & Alan Doddridge Monday afternoon 3/2/20	71.73%

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

Waikato Bay Provincial Pairs	Evelyn Hurley Bruce Marr	4th
Tauranga Congress Consolation Pairs	Wayne Burrows Peter Hall	3rd
Wanganui Picnic Pairs	Clare Veltman Pam Mason	1 <sup>st</sup>
	Garry Hodge Debbie Marcroft	4 <sup>th</sup>
Kelly Pierse Memorial Teams	Evelyn Hurley Karen Harris Malcolm Smith Kathy Yule	1 <sup>st</sup>
Waikanae Open Pairs	Lorraine Starchurski Mindy Wu	1 <sup>st</sup>
	Ken Bateman Jack James	4 <sup>th</sup>

Finally, I would like to wish 'Good Bridging' to everyone in 2020.

**Liz Burrows**

## This and That

Working bee: Many hands make light work and gardens tidy!! Can you spare an hour on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am? It is time to freshen up the grounds and gardens and we would appreciate some help to do this.

Remember if you need a partner our host people for the sessions are able to help find someone. Also if you need a ride we could find someone heading your way. We are here to help!

Monday afternoons: Clare Veltman 027 481 4821  
Novice plus: Maxine Keay 027 534 7410  
Monday open: Morgan Booker 021 167 0195  
Tuesday Social: Anne Gordon 027 327 8276  
Multigrade: Cindy Lowndes 027 450 0319  
Friday Luncheon: Jenny Kelland 357 3886

Our AGM will take place on Friday 27 March at 6.30 pm. All members are welcome. There will be a Quiz Night to follow from 7.30 pm: free for members and \$5 entry for guests. Teams of 4-6. Please register your team in advance on the noticeboard in the Club Rooms.

### Alan Sundry

#### Should I Learn to Play Precision?

The answer is no for casual partnerships and social play. If you are considering tournaments and/or competitive play with a regular partner, then yes. The opening bids and responses are straightforward, it's the later rounds of bidding where you need good partnership understandings.

In Acol when the bidding has started 1H (1S) 2D, a good start as you have shown two suits already in Precision it may have started 1C (1S) X. Now if the partner of the 1S overcall jumps to 3S the Acol players are well placed while the Precision players are not.

Two other downsides of Precision are: (1) The 1D opening (if it means it could be as short as one). I prefer 1D as natural, the only issue there is when 4414 shape and you must open 1NT or a four card major.

(2) The 2C opening being one level higher than Acol players who have opened 1C. Less room to reach the optimum contract.

Opening bids (except 1C) being limited makes some high level decisions easier and if opponents don't bid over 1C the extra bidding space is useful. Also, 1S-2H-2S is always a 6 card suit. In Acol (even playing 1S as a 5 card suit) this sequence may only be a 5 card suit.

Interestingly, only a few of the top players play Precision, the majority preferring a natural system.

### Bob Hurley

## Psyching for Pleasure and Profit

After an amazing write up on the use of psychic bidding in the last newsletter, I could hardly resist giving an example from National Swiss Pairs (IMPs) in Christchurch.

### Board 26

East Deals  
Both Vul

♠ Q J 10 3 2  
♥ A 10 7 3  
♦ Q 7 6  
♣ 2

♠ 7  
♥ K Q J 6  
♦ J 8 2  
♣ K 8 7 6 4



♠ A K 9 8 5 4  
♥ 5 4  
♦ 10 5  
♣ J 9 5

♠ 6  
♥ 9 8 2  
♦ A K 9 4 3  
♣ A Q 10 3

EW 3♠; NS 3♥; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; Par +130

South	West	North	East
			2S
Dbf	3C	Dbf	Rdbl
Pass	4S	5H	All Pass

East is showing a weak two in spades and promising two of the top three honours in the suit at this vulnerability. Over South's double West seeing what looks like 2 or at best 3 defensive tricks between the hands so infers that NS have game.

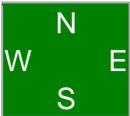
Knowing that East cannot have also clubs for his weak two means that the game is probably in clubs so West comes in with 3C (natural and forcing). North doubles and East redoubles (showing 3 card support). South is quite happy to play against 3Cxx and so passes. West then bids 4S based on 6 spade tricks in East's hand, the ace of hearts and any additional club ruffs in dummy. North now feeling as if the contract has been stolen, tries out 5H. Final score 5H -5 EW +500.

### Jack James

## Precision Revisited

As Bob says in his article on Precision, a weakness of the strong one club opener is that intervention by the opponents at a high level can cause real problems. If the bidding is at the three or four level before the Precision pair have had chance to show a suit then they may have trouble working out the best course of action.

Here is a hand from February Monday afternoon bridge where our opponents were playing Precision and where the partner of the one club opener has a difficult high level decision to make.

<b>Board 17</b>	♠ K 4		
North Deals	♥ A J 10 7 6 2		
None Vul	♦ —		
	♣ A K 6 4 3		
♠ Q 10 7 6 5		♠ A	
♥ Q 4 3		♥ 9 8 5	
♦ 8 7		♦ A K Q J 5 4 3	
♣ 10 7 5		♣ J 9	
	♠ J 9 8 3 2		
	♥ K		
	♦ 10 9 6 2		
	♣ Q 8 2		

The bidding at our table was as follows

	South	West	North	East
			1C	3NT
	4S	Pass	5H	All Pass

Sitting East after North's Precision club opener, I take a while to decide what to do. A brave person might bid five diamonds straight away, but I think that would only be profitable as a sacrifice against a slam. I have a great diamond suit but five losing cards which means I could easily go three down doubled. That would be worthwhile if the opponents do have a slam on but I've got two aces so as likely as not the opponents can only make game at most.

A more cautious approach would be to bid one or two diamonds. There is a myth that low-level over-calls against a strong club can put Precision pairs off their stride. In fact, it usually gives them extra bids to exchange information. Higher-level pre-empts are another matter. So what about a three or even four diamond overcall? That would be neither fish nor fowl in my opinion, as well as being boring.

How about three no trumps, though? That is more like it. I could easily make nine tricks if partner has the right cards, and, since South only knows that North has a strong hand but has no idea what his distribution is, this could make life difficult for him. If I get doubled I can take out to four diamonds, of course, but I'm hoping it won't come to that.

Although I put out a stop card after my 3NT bid, South is still squirming after a couple of minutes. You can see his dilemma. He knows nothing of opener's distribution, only that he has a strong hand. Worse, he knows nothing about my hand either. He may guess that I have a long running minor suit, but just how strong is my 3NT overcall?

Any of the available options could be disastrous. He could wimp out and pass with his less than inspiring collection of cards. However, that would put pressure on his partner after such a long hesitation. Also, if I play in 3NT what is he going to lead since he knows nothing about the other hands? Doubling me has similar lead problems since, again, I might have nine tricks off the top if North leaves the double in. Worse, North may respond to a double by bidding four hearts with a four card suit and, although South respects his partner's playing abilities North may have problems bringing in ten tricks with a four-one fit. On a good day NS may have a five-three or better fit in spades, so that is the option he goes for. West quickly passes, of course, looking forward to defending against a four spade contract.

Now, it is North's turn to shuffle around in his seat and eventually opts for a five hearts bid which becomes the final contract. This can make if declarer plays me for the singleton ace of spades. Instead, he just takes the simple hook upto the king, losing two spades as well as the queen of hearts.

Looking at all the scores on this board was quite entertaining. There were a mixture of four and five diamond contracts, all going down, with one unlucky person being doubled at the five level going three away. One other NS pair were in five hearts going away but no North-Souths were in their optimal contract of six clubs. In fact, at none of the eleven tables was any NS pair playing in clubs at all!

**Ray Kemp**

## Don't Panic

Having played bridge for nearly 8 years now, I have played in a lot of poor contracts. Many of these are contracts with no hope and are simply salvage missions. Bridge is not just about bidding to the right contract and making. It is about minimising the damage when you failed to do so. The following hand was played in the weekend at the National Swiss Pairs (IMPs) in Christchurch.

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

EW 2N; NS 3♣; NS 1♠; Par +100; EW 3N×-1

South opens 1H. North responds 1S. South rebids 2D. All Pass

4D lead (the best lead and only lead to take south 2 down.)

First rule of playing a hand; stop and think. "Did the opponents have any contracts on" this should guide one to work out how many tricks they are trying to make. An answer of no (except the impossible to find NT) gives only one line of play. Find 8 tricks. I can see 4 top tricks, a heart ruff in dummy for 5, a potential trick in clubs and potentially 2 spade ruffs if west has 4 or 5 spades. First piece of good news, there is hope.

Now onto timing, if I let the opposition in then they will draw dummy's last trump. Hence, I must take the heart ruff early.

4D – 2D – 10D – AD  
AH – 3H – 10H – 4H  
5H – 7H – 3D – 6H

Time to try get some spade ruffs.

3S – 9S – AS – 6S  
2S – 8S – 4S – JS

East is now in with the queen of spades.

QS – 6D – 10S – 5S  
10C – AC – 3C – 4C.....

The 10C is a ploy to convince west that I am going to let it run and finesse west for the queen of clubs. If West played low I had intended to rise with the KC and rush the spade ruff. West saw this option and rose with the ace.

West then on lead cashed the queen of hearts.

QH – 5C – JH (a small error) – 8H.....

East can overtake and cash the heart king, but this may set up my 5th heart. West exits a low club. Leaving this position with declarer on 5 tricks:

		♠ 7		
		♥ —		
		♦ —		
		♣ K J 9 8		
♠ K			♠ —	
♥ —			♥ K	
♦ Q 7			♦ 10 8 5	
♣ 6 2			♣ Q	
		♠ —		
		♥ 9 2		
		♦ K 9		
		♣ 7		

This presents an opportunity to finesse West for the club queen as holding the club queen is consistent with both their opening lead and rising with the AC when a club was played through. However, I had a plan at the beginning to make 8 tricks, we cannot assume that the opposition have just let us make the contract and take the finesse. Stick to the original plan.

2C – KC – QC – 7C  
7S – ???

East must ruff this spade to take the contract down. But the problem is, they must ruff high, to force out the KQ and catch South's 9. East ruffed low and the contract is now cold +4.5IMPs. The opposition don't see declarer's problems until after the hand. Even if the contract is going down make every attempt to put the pressure on an opponent. Sometimes they crack, if not, nothing is wasted.

**Jack James**

## Improvers Corner

In the last newsletter I discussed the use of conventional bids to expand your bidding repertoire, particularly if you have a very strong hand. Hand 15 from the first week of Novice Plus February Pairs gave those who read the article a chance to try out the strong two clubs bid and also the Blackwood ace-asking bid.

**Board 15**

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ K Q J 6		♠ 10 7 5 4
♥ 10 9 8 6 2		♥ K Q 5 3
♦ 10 8 6		♦ J 4 2
♣ 6		♣ 7 3

♠ A 8 3 2

♥ J 4

♦ K Q 9 7 5 3

♣ 2

Look at North's hand! There are only 18 card points but this is the kind of hand where you should count tricks rather than points. If you do that, you know that you have eleven tricks with clubs as trumps, enough for game without any help from partner. It might be tempting to open with a five club bid, but that would be foolish, unless you are worried about opponents outbidding you in one of the other suits. There is a good chance that you have a slam on your hands. In order to investigate this, a perfectly good bidding sequence might go as follows:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	2C	Pass
3D	Pass	4NT	Pass
5D	Pass	5NT	Pass
6D	Pass	6NT	All Pass

Remember that the two club opener does not show clubs or any other suit. It says "partner, I have a monster hand here so don't you dare pass". South has got a pretty good hand and has the choice of bidding diamonds or spades. Often your first response should be no trumps or a five card or better suit so South bids 3D. Why not 2D? Well, you may remember that 2D is also a conventional bid which says nothing about diamonds but which usually suggests that you have a poor hand.

With the positive response from South, North may wish to find out whether partner has the missing ace. If so, then a slam should be a laydown. Consequently, North bids 4NT, another artificial bid that does not show no trumps but asks partner how many aces they have. A response of 5C would show no ace, but South has one and therefore responds 5D.

North gets really excited now. If South has a couple of kings then the grand slam may be there and a chance to get into Liz Burrows' pantheon of grand slammers. So North now ventures 5NT asking for kings. South shows one king and North chickens out at 6NT.

In fact, 6NT is a bit of an underbid. North knows South has one ace and one king, so in most circumstances there will be thirteen tricks to be made. With such a brilliant hand, there is a good case for North to cut out the low-level bidding altogether and open with a 4NT bid:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	4NT	Pass
5D	Pass	5NT	Pass
6D	Pass	6NT	All Pass

As with all artificial bids it may not be advisable to use this unless you are sure partner won't misunderstand it. In the above case, you may otherwise end up in a 4NT contract.

So sitting North how will you play this contract? Unless you are unlucky enough to get a spade lead from East you have thirteen tricks, but you must cash the ace of diamonds before using your only entry into dummy (the ace of spades) to cash another diamond and throw away the losing heart.

### Ray Kemp

#### You must be joking

For a while you can be a senior, and then you're just old.

Forgive your enemies, but not until you have beaten them hollow.

A friend is someone who you can partner at bridge, and likes you nevertheless.

### Tony Fayerman