

President's Patch # 8. December

It's been a long season, with Summer Bridge about to get underway. Significant changes have occurred to the way we operate. Of interest is the governance of NZ Bridge which has come under fire from Clubs, including PNBC. A seriously flawed constitution which gives the members (Clubs) virtually no power and a NZB Board showing an unwillingness to be transparent along with a lack of communication or consultation, has led to a social media uprising of the "rabble" (tune into the Facebook blog, KiwibrIDGE). As expected with any rabble, the messaging so far is uncoordinated with pockets of commentary all over the place on KiwibrIDGE, while many have written direct to NZB but have no effective way of sharing letters with others. How this will translate into effective action is as yet unknown but d-day is 31 March when some of the existing NZB Board come up for re-election. PNBC has written to NZB expressing its concern, while Hokowhitu has also written an excellent letter.

Points Cup

A software bug in the calculation of the points was uncovered shortly before the Thursday night prize giving took place, and accordingly the Points Cup was not awarded at the time. The Monday night prize giving had already been held and presentations made to Garry Hodge and Malcolm Loudon (2nd). Fortunately (phew) these two maintained their positions post bug correction. The Intermediate winner was Anne Gordon and 2nd was Alistair James. The Senior Tuesday night winners were Liz Burrows with Christine Compton in 2nd place. Senior Reserve winner was Christine Compton with Tony Clear in 2nd place. Daytime Points was won by Jenny Wilson with Kay Townsley/Susan Parker in joint 2nd place. There are some issues with way points are awarded, being 54321 from 1st to 5th but only on matchpoint nights (Swiss, Teams, and Butler don't count). This has been changed for 2017 to using C points. The Sessions Subcommittee made a late rule change whereby points awarded on Thursday night when playing with a Senior partner were invalid. The one affected party has been fully consulted and agrees with this rule change.

Champs

Junior Champs was held earlier in the year with winners being Garry Hodge and Sally Mannering and in 2nd place Julia Flavel and Malcom Loudon. Intermediate Champs was won by Alistair and Jack James, with Anne Gordon and Morgan Booker in 2nd place. Senior Reserve Champs was won by Alistair and Jack James with by Morgan Booker and Carolyn Brodie in 2nd place, while Senior was won by Liz and Wayne Burrows with Graeme Thomson and Christine Compton in 2nd place. Winning two Champs in the same year is highly unusual, as is winning a grade above your own grade, so a special congrats to Al and Jack.

2017 Programme Booklet

The 2017 programme booklet is now out and available for collection. If anyone wishes it to be posted to them please send an email to the Club or talk to the Administrator. It should have been out earlier with (lack of) time management responsible. Apologies. Care will be taken to ensure this is not repeated.

I took the opportunity to rewrite some of the sections to make it more informative about the different events we hold, etc, and to make it less "Thou shall not do x" based. One particular piece stated that "...Play shall be conducted under the International laws of Contract Bridge for the time being accepted by the Portland Club of London". First, I didn't think it necessary for anybody to be informed of this, and second, it didn't sound right – our laws under the control of another club? So I googled the oracle of all information, important or otherwise, (Wikipedia) and found that Portland ceded any rule making function in 1948 or 1949 – so long ago that even Wikipedia wasn't sure!! We have probably been regurgitating wrong information for close to 70 years! Which reminds me – our 75th anniversary is fast approaching.

Random Deal generation

Some comments have been received re the proportion of "lively" hands being played. Our current dealer is Dealer4 hand generator (which is the in-house software of the hardware Dealer4 manufacturer). The device has an option to switch to Big Deal generator. This is the deal generator used throughout Europe and only in the last couple of months has been adopted by the American Bridge League. We will switch over to this at the start of the 2017 season.

From the Subcommittees:

Social/Tournament:

The Xmas Cheer on Dec 3rd is the Club's main event of the year and was highly popular with 30 tables of all grades (and ungraded) participating. At least 20 tables were non PNBC members, so it is a little disappointing that PNBC members could only fill 10 tables. This is intended as a fun event, with scrumptious food and many prizes.

In 2017 each night has been allocated two Social nights, one of which will double as prize giving night. The only hint I will give as to what will happen on these nights is that the Bermuda Bowl will be coming to PNBC. Watch this space!

Recruitment and Retention:

Planning for next season's lessons is underway with discussions with possible tutors being held.

Finance, H&S, Legal:

Subscriptions for 2017 are now ready. They will initially be handed out during Summer Bridge, and then by (e)mail. If you feel you have been placed in the wrong subscription category please send an email to the Club.

Sessions:

Summer Bridge will be played on Monday afternoons and Tuesday evenings thru' December and January. Note that this is a change to the 2016 Programme booklet. Depending on demand Summer Bridge nights should continue thru' February and March. A panel of Seniors (Platinums) and Senior Reserves (Gold) has been established to assist and play with developing Juniors (Bronze) and Intermediates (Silver) using the Tuesday Summer Bridge nights in February and March. Any player wanting to develop should take advantage of this offer of time from the panel. Please send an email to the Club expressing interest and which dates you are available.

Maintenance/Upgrade:

The main summer exterior job of an exterior repaint of the stucco has already been completed.

Technology:

A grant application was made to replace the 'red devils', with generic Huawei tablets and associated bridge licencing software. This involves \$5.8k. This was awarded in full and some of the 24 tablets received their first outing at the Xmas Cheer. It is likely that the red devils will continue in use in certain sessions until they reach end of life. The office door is now being locked as a precaution. If you require a key and haven't been contacted please email the Club.

Incidentally, if anyone is using the result analysis function on the Pianola web site care needs to be taken if a Howell movement has been used. The software only records your starting position, let's say East. When you shift to being NS, it assumes you have moved anti-clockwise, in this case to North. So to get meaningful individual results you also have to shift anti-clockwise.

Conduct:

Nothing to report (good!).

The what's been new in the year review:

Committee:

- A significantly altered operating structure was put in place with much decision making now devolved to subcommittees which can include non committee members, while the main Committee has quarterly meets focussed on governance/strategy.
- A President's Patch was introduced to inform people of what is being planned, what we are doing, and what we have done. This allows plenty of opportunity for feedback.

Maintenance:

- New security fence – paid for by neighbour;
- Wheel stops – fully paid for by \$2k grant from Mainland Foundation;
- Chair backs and seats – part paid for by \$5k grant from NZ Community Trust
- Stucco painted;
- Small room interior light replacement.

Technology:

- Projector acquired;
- New mixer amp and microphone acquired;
- 24 tablets, licences and 2 multi UBS chargers – fully paid by \$5.8k grant from Pub Charity ;
- New web site, with improved member communication functionality and partner finder functionality;

Recruitment and Retention:

- The first set of NZB Improvers lessons were held, in addition to the NZB Beginners lessons.

Finance, HR, Legal:

- Subscription categories have been increased to allow for more flex in discounting and this is being rolled out now for 2017.
- A major revamp of the Constitution was approved.

Social/Tournaments:

- The inaugural in-house tournament (Mad Hatter) was held, replacing the Charity Pairs.
- A couple of edu-social nights were held (one in the Open room, the other in Novice Plus).
- A Social Sunday session was introduced on roughly a monthly basis, using manual scoring.

Sessions:

- The Monday night room had a mid-season make over to more closely align with the needs of lesson graduates, along with an improved buddy system.
- Grading was more objective with criteria established, while Handicapping had a simplified understandable structure put in place which worked well with a compression of the range of handicapped scores, and coped with players from different grades being present. New final night formats to add more sizzle to some events were trialled successfully.
- Nights have been renamed Novice Plus, Multi-Grade, Open. Cosmetic but better reflects the intent of the evening.
- Grades have been renamed Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum. Again cosmetic, but significant confusion resulted from using the same names as NZB does but to mean different things.
- Significant changes for 2017 have occurred with a shortened Tuesday night programme, including one All Comers event. Minor tweaks have occurred to the Thursday night programme, with Gold players now eligible for events provided they play with a lesser graded player (ex Champs). All night sessions now have two social nights. Over all nights there has been a reduction in teams events, which are a nightmare for Hosts.

What's on the horizon?

- The "biggie" is the carpet replacement. This could potentially cost \$25k. We will probably aim for this to be installed during the 2017/18 summer break.
- Banking arrangements will be a given a close look.

And to all volunteers – a big thank you.