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Palmerston North Bridge Club

Newsletter

February 2023

LJ Hooker

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President's Welcome

Welcome to 2023! Starting as we finished 2022 with rain and storms...but our playing sessions have started with the minimum of fussin' and stormin'. It was great to see so many of you playing throughout the Summer Bridge season and table numbers are looking great for the February competitions. Many of us enjoyed a sausage sizzle in the Jubilee Courtyard on the last Monday of Summer Bridge giving rise to calls for a regular end-of-month social on a Monday afternoon. I am sure at the very least we can open the bar for a quiet drink.

There are also several events coming up in the next couple of months. Full details are given further in this newsletter but perhaps particularly, I want to draw your attention to the Intermediate and Junior Tournaments on 25th March and the Club AGM/Quiz night on Friday March 31st. Even if you are not intending to participate in either event, there are lots of jobs to be done – please keep an eye on the noticeboard for the “Jobs Rosters” and sign up to help out if at all possible. Thank you.

This is a busy time of year for the Committee as we head towards the Annual General Meeting. At our meeting this week we approved the Draft Financial Statements for review by our member, Alan Martin. Recent pianolas have outlined the Committee’s concerns about how our finances are tracking and I will not labour the point here but you can be sure it will be a big feature at the AGM! Please come along and support the Club with your ideas and enthusiasm. I have also previously signalled that I am not going to be available to be President again next year so I am busy compiling my last annual report. The Committee is still looking for someone who is prepared to take over as President – it may be that you could fulfill this role with another member as President and vice-President to support each other.

I will be around to provide whatever support in whatever capacity I can. You will also be supported by a great group of people in the Committee – they are a huge resource for the incoming President.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to two other initiatives starting in March. The first is that we will be running lessons for beginners on Monday evenings from 13th March for 12 weeks. We’ve teamed up with Feilding and Hokowhitu Bridge Clubs and Central District Regional Committee to time our lessons and publicity to hopefully get maximum effect for each Club. As a first for us, Central Districts are supporting a social media campaign to reach out to new groups of potential Grandmaster Bridge Players! We are excited to see the results. If you have any family or friends who you think may be interested, please do pass on the details in this newsletter.

The second initiative is a further series of Improver Sessions on the second Friday of each month from 10 March. These will be managed through the year in response to requests from our members from any grade/experience level to support you to grow your game. Our senior players will be on hand to pass on their knowledge – we are very fortunate to have so much talent to draw on – please use them!

And so, in closing my final President’s Welcome, I want to thank everyone who has made my time in the role so rewarding. I have had a lot of fun, made a lot of friends and played a lot of bridge during the past four years. Honestly, what better recommendation could there be for people waiting in the wings for a new challenge?

Denise Servante
President

Dates for your Diary

NOTICE OF PALMERSTON NORTH BRIDGE CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Friday 31st March, 6.30 pm
Club Rooms, corner Cook and Cuba Streets.
Please rsvp to admin@pnbridge.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH JUNIOR (3B) AND
INTERMEDIATE (5B) TOURNAMENTS
Saturday 25th March, Morning tea from 9.30 am,
play commences at 10.00 am
Online Entry: via www.nzbridge.co.nz or email
admin@pnbridge.nz
Entry fee: \$30.00 (includes morning tea and after
play nibbles – please BYO lunch)
Prepay please to 02 0727 0231184 00 quoting
“Tournie” and your Computer No(s).

Denise Servante

Bridge Lessons and Seminars

Beginner lessons will start on Monday 13th March at 7pm, with this year’s tutor, Anne Gordon. These will run for 10 weeks, followed by a couple of weeks practice before joining the Junior room at the beginning of July. The committee have kept the fee at \$60 for the course, materials and workbooks, and this includes membership of the Club for the remainder of the year.

Anne will be asking for helpers to join the lessons and to buddy new players. Please give Anne a call if you can help out occasionally. This year our main focus is online advertising on our Facebook page, with monetary and technical assistance from NZB.

We will be setting up a demonstration table in the Library; they have also agreed to promote on their website and Facebook page. We hope to have 2 or 3 sessions in the Library, so we need willing participants to spend a couple of hours there, dates yet to be confirmed. We’ll also need help with putting up flyers and notices in businesses, schools, supermarkets, and at Massey.

If you can help in any way please contact Maxine. And remember to tell your friends and family! We all know how great our game is and word of mouth is one of the best forms of advertising. Let’s all make this a most successful campaign and grow our Club!

Improvers seminars will be held on the 2nd Friday of each month commencing at 7pm. A sign-up sheet will be displayed on the club noticeboard. The first seminar (10th March) will be for experienced players and presented by Anne. The subject matter is Minimum, Invitational and

Game Force bids. The second seminar (14 April) will be for competitive players and presented by Bob. One hour will be spent playing 8 boards (Bidding and opening lead will be shown on each board) followed by discussion and hand records. The rest of the time can be on any bridge matters that are advised on the sign up sheet including Conventions, Signals, Leads, Count, Bidding etc.

Maxine Keay and Bob Hurley

Tips and Conventions

On defence don’t give too much away. Signalling with your first discard is normal but can be very helpful to declarer as is discarding all or many of a bad suit. Some top players just give count and look for opportunities to make suit preference signals (sps). Many of you will know some of the common uses of sps. If you are playing a card for partner to ruff a high card says you have an entry in the higher ranked suit and a low card says your entry is in the lower ranked suit.

Another situation is where partner makes the opening lead against a suit contract and dummy has singleton Ace or say AKQ. If you play a high card you are indicating the higher of the other suits and a low card would indicate the lower of the other suits. With a regular partner you can discuss giving these same signals when declarer is drawing your trumps or if the contract is no trumps when declarer is playing a suit and it can be seen that count is irrelevant.

Have agreements with partner about what honour leads ask of partner. I prefer that A or Q asks for attitude and the lead of a K asks for count (or unblock if NT contract). So, if you hold KQ109 lead the Q (for attitude) and if holding the J partner will know to encourage or even play the J. If your Q wins and partner has discouraged you had better switch to another suit. Declarer will play low on your lead holding AJx hoping you will continue that suit. That play is called the Bath Coup.

A bidding question: what do you bid holding xx, AQ983, x, AKJ82 after your opponent opens 3S? This is quite tricky as if you double and partner bids 4D you should have a better hand to now bid 4H. The answer is to play a convention called Leaping Michaels where a bid of 4 of a minor suit over a major suit pre-empt shows that suit and the other major. So, on the above hand you bid 4C and partner knows you have 5 clubs and 5 hearts. The same bid can be made if the opening bid is 2S, that’s why the convention is called Leaping Michaels.

Bob Hurley

Club and Tournaments Results

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

Wanganui Picnic Pairs	Grant Elliot Terry Young	3 rd
	Debbie Marcroft Steve Baron	6 th
Waikanae Open	Anne Gordon Liz Burrows	5 th
	Jan Whyte Ken Bateman	6 th
New Plymouth Picnic Pairs	Debbie Marcroft Steve Baron	5 th
	Wayne Burrows Pamela Jensen	7 th
Thames Walk-in Pairs	Morgan Booker Laura Griffin	3 rd
	Annette Scanlan Maxine Keay	6 th
Taradale Intermediate	Garry Hodge Paul Orsborn	2 nd
Waikato Bays Pairs	Jack James Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin	5 th
Tauranga Congress Teams	Wayne Burrows Jenny Millington Barry Jones Peter Hall	1 st
	Jack James Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin Rachelle Pelkman Murray Wood	4 th
Feilding Open	Elizabeth Kemp Ray Kemp	2 nd
	Jan Whyte Ken Bateman	4 th
	Debbie Marcroft Garry Hodge	6 th

Great News: Wayne Burrows and Clair Miao have qualified for the New Zealand Mixed Team going to

Morocco in August for the World Bridge Team Championship. Congratulations!

Gayle Leader

Opponents – friends or foe?

There is a tendency at the bridge table to think of the opponents as being unhelpful and therefore to be kept off lead. However, sometimes it can be advantageous to allow them to lead because they may aid your cause. This is not because they are stupid, but because they can only see two hands and also because it is an immutable law of bridge that you can never do better in a suit by playing it yourself than by letting the opponents do so.

For example, a common problem from improvers bridge lessons is how do you ensure you get a trick from the following coupling:

♠ J 6 2

opposite

♠ Q 5 3

The answer is that you cannot always get it right if you play the suit yourself but can *always* do so if the opponents lead the suit. If they lead a low spade then just duck in the second hand and you are bound to score one trick. If they instead lead ace or king of the suit then again they are giving you a trick.

I have noticed that experts often lose a seemingly unnecessary trick near the beginning of their play of a contract in the hope that the opponents will deliver some good news down the line. I had this thought in mind when playing 3NT as South in the following Monday afternoon hand:

Board 11

South Deals

None Vul

♠ J 6 2
♥ A 10 7 5
♦ Q J 10 6
♣ J 10

♠ 9 4

♥ 9 6

♦ A K 3

♣ A K Q 8 6 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 10 8 5 3

♥ K 4 3 2

♦ 9 8 4

♣ 7

♠ A Q 7

♥ Q J 8

♦ 7 5 2

♣ 9 4 3 2

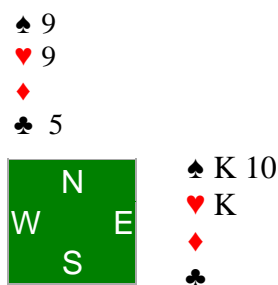
The lead by West is the seemingly unhelpful ♦Q. I can see nine tricks already and realize that anyone else in 3NT is going to make at least that number which will not be impressive in match point pairs. If I can make ten or eleven then that will be a bonus.

Prescience

There is a temptation to take the trick and lead off all the clubs hoping that someone will throw a useful card but I don't think that is going to help as yet. For one thing it takes out a safe way of communicating between the two hands, so I duck the first trick. West is encouraged by this and so leads another diamond. This time I play ♦A and take a spade finesse leading up to my queen. As you can see this succeeds. Now I have a guaranteed ten tricks in the bag.

Should I just run for home? I don't think so. Again, I probably will not be the only player to make ten tricks. How can I make more? I decide to let the opponents in again by playing on hearts. Double dummy this looks pointless, but the opponents aren't playing double dummy. I cross over via the clubs to dummy and lead a low heart. East ducks and I put up the queen which is overtaken by West's ace.

West later admits that he should have led a heart back but that isn't obvious since it might give away a heart trick. So, he takes the safe route of leading a third diamond. I take this in dummy and now start running the clubs. By trick eleven this is the position as East sees it:



As I play ♣5 East has a big decision to make. He assumes I have ♠A but do I have ♠J as well or ♥J? He throws ♥K. I throw a spade and now have the winning ♠A and ♥J.

OK, under the cold light of day it should be clear to East that I have ♥J in hand. Why else would I have led up to ♥Q earlier on? If I have ♠J as well then he is squeezed and there is nothing he can do about it. So he should pitch ♠10 hoping his partner has ♠J. So East made a mistake. Humans make mistakes, though, and under pressure with two kings to protect it is easy to sympathize. But notice that if I had not ducked a diamond then East would not be left with this dilemma. He could have played his third diamond on my last club with no worries. So, when in doubt, lose a trick and hope the opponents give you some help.

Ray Kemp

I have previously mentioned a couple of bridge experts (Pete Hollands and Gavin Wolpert) who comment on and play hands online. Each has his own style. Hollands is a boisterous Aussie and Wolpert is a thoughtful and polite Canadian – stereotypes of course, but accurate descriptions. Another couple of contenders have popped up recently who are both worth checking out.

There is a bearded English guy called John Stell who has a distinctive Northern twang. Whilst he is playing he says such things as "I think I'll chuck a spade" and "'ang on, what's goin' on 'ere". Although he gives the impression of being very laid back and can sometimes be seen with a bottle of beer in his hand, Stell is quite a thoughtful player.

A fourth candidate for you to try out is a prickly American called Rob Brady (nicknamed "Bradybot"). It is perhaps unkind to call him prickly, maybe 'sensitive' would be a better term. Like the others he is good value and articulates all his alternatives as he is bidding and playing which can be very illuminating. I would like to say that one could learn a lot from watching these players but I suspect it is a little like hoping to improve one's golf by watching top players in an American Open tournament. It can be impressive seeing how bridge experts manage to navigate their way through difficult contracts but applying their techniques to one's own game can be problematic. Still, it is fun.

Bradybot will also tell interesting stories about previous hands he has played and others he has heard of. One of my favourites emphasizes an aspect of bidding that many of us (including myself) don't consider sufficiently – that is not just to be concerned about the bidding process as a means of getting to the best contract but using it to influence how the resultant play might pan out. The following deal, supposedly from the Bermuda Bowl finals, shows the brilliant anticipation of a South player during the bidding of a hand.

So, we are watching a teams match, where two teams of four play the same boards in opposite directions. Let's take a look at South's hand, with South the dealer and both sides vulnerable:

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

Now you may not believe that such a hand could be dealt to anyone but Brady assures us that he received this story on very good authority so let's go along with that. Anyway, stop playing for time – what are you going to bid?

