



Palmerston North Bridge Club

Newsletter

February 2022

President's Welcome

I am writing this on the rainy Saturday of Waitangi weekend. After the heat of the last few weeks, the rain is very welcome. As we kick off our 2022 playing programme, we are, yet again, having to work around the restrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic. At the moment, it looks as if we will have to ride the wave of the Omicron variant – the modelling suggests a steep rise in infections, followed by a steep fall. We can be hopeful that this will achieve the elusive “herd immunity” that will enable New Zealanders to return to a more normal way of life, including opening our borders again. But it is anyone’s guess how it will actually play out. As we move through the next few weeks and months, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or to our room reps if you need anything. For example, if you have to self-isolate and need help with basic essential shopping etc., we will do what we can to support you.

Our best protection remains to ensure we are fully vaccinated and boosted and follow the now familiar protocols with masks and basic hygiene. By doing this, we can continue for the time being with our full face-to-face playing programme. The February competitions are being well supported and the daytime sessions continue to attract great table numbers. Should this change, and our face-to-face sessions are no longer viable, the Committee has a plan to transition to online Club Sessions via Real Bridge. We will continue to keep you up to date with any changes to our schedule via email. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or questions about what we are doing and how we are doing it. This is uncharted territory for all of us and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

And now on to news from the Committee. We have had two major but basically administrative issues to deal with: preparing for our AGM and appointing a new cleaner. The Committee has set the date for the AGM: Saturday 19 March from 6.30 pm. Our team of Ken Bateman, Claire Veltman and Craig Killington will be organising a Quiz Night to follow from 7.00 pm. So, set aside the date and start to recruit the best brains for your team today!

Over the next few weeks, I will be preparing my final annual report as President. Our constitution does not allow me to stand again (having done 3 years) unless no other nominations are forthcoming: if we have someone willing to take over as President, I am very happy to continue on the Committee to support and mentor the new President – if they want me to. I’ve had a lot of fun as President and hopefully, the work our Committee has undertaken during the past three years means that the task will be much easier in the future. So please do think about whether you would enjoy/be able to take on this role. We will also be looking for committed Committee members – we currently meet monthly and expect Committee members to share tasks between meetings.

The Committee has approved the draft accounts which are now with our Reviewer, Alan Martin. Many thanks to Treasurer, Grant Elliott for his work to produce the draft accounts and to Alan for agreeing to act again as the Reviewer. You will know from previous newsletters that the Committee has focussed on achieving a sustainable financial break even and that we have targeted increasing our income through venue hire. Of course, COVID has put all these plans on hold.

Our current venue hire manager, Susan Baty, has done a magnificent job for the past decade or so in managing all our room hire bookings and has regularly secured over \$10,000 per annum in venue hire. This is a phenomenal achievement which has kept the Club financially viable over this time. Susan let the Committee know about two years ago that she needed to step down from this role but that she could stay on until we found the right person to take over. After much consideration, the Committee believes it has found the right person in our very own Maxine Keay. Maxine has also been appointed as our regular cleaner: clearly the vital liaison that Susan has undertaken with our cleaning staff to ensure the rooms are clean before and after hires (and which has been even more important working around COVID restrictions) means that these two roles sit very well together in the one person.

Susan and Maxine have been working together on the handover and are already full of ideas about how we can maximise our venue hire business. Maxine will have the job of implementing these ideas and I have no doubt that she will be very successful. Please support her in any way you can.

On a more minor matter, in early 2021, the Committee developed a "Complaints Policy" when we received a complaint and realised that we had no process to deal with it. In late 2021, we realised that we had not communicated to our members that this policy exists. So, I am now letting you all know about its existence. The policy is also accessible via our website. The policy does not cover complaints at the bridge table which are normally dealt with by the Director at the time.

This newsletter is, as always, full of information. You'll find news celebrating our members' achievements at the bridge table, upcoming events, reports on projects, Ray's extremely popular analysis of challenging hands and Tony's "Joke Corner". We are also giving details of our lessons programme commencing in March. If you have any friends and whanau who you think would enjoy playing the game, please pass on details to them.

Meanwhile, happy bridging!

Denise Servante
President

Further Announcements

**NOTICE OF PALMERSTON NORTH BRIDGE CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
Saturday 19th March, 6.30 pm
Club Rooms, corner Cook and Cuba Streets.
Please rsvp to admin@pnbridge.nz

CHANGES TO THE FRIDAY LUNCHEON SESSIONS
Please note two errors in the playing programme:
Session host phone number (Jenny Kelland) is 06 357 3886.

In July 2022, the Individual Ladder competition has been replaced with a regular PAIRS competition.

**PALMERSTON NORTH JUNIOR (3B) AND INTERMEDIATE
(5B) TOURNAMENTS**
Saturday 26th March
Morning tea from 9.30 am
Play commences 10.00 am
Online Entry: via www.nzbridge.co.nz or email
admin@pnbridge.nz
Entry fee: \$25.00 (includes lunch)
Prepay please to 02 0727 0231184 00 quoting "Tournie"
and your Computer No(s).

THE JUBILEE COURTYARD

You are warmly invited to join us for speeches, drinks and nibbles

To celebrate the official opening of our 75th Jubilee Project.

On Monday 21st February (wet day alternate Monday 28th February), 4.45 pm

Denise Servante

They Fought the Law ...

We all play bridge, some of us several times a week, but how much do we know about the laws of the game?

A couple of weeks back during a Monday afternoon game a player made a lead out of turn which was pointed out by another player. I was dummy at the time and attempted to call the director. Both of the opponents became upset by this. They told me in no uncertain terms that as dummy I couldn't call the director during the play of the hand.

Well, here is the actual ruling from the current laws of duplicate bridge:

- 9B. After Attention Is Drawn to an Irregularity
1. (a) The Director should be summoned at once when attention is drawn to an irregularity.
 - (b) Any player, including dummy, may summon the Director after attention has been drawn to an irregularity

So, two points of interest here. First, even if you think you know what the ruling will be, make sure you call the director for all misdemeanours. Even if the director is not readily available or seems to have made a side trip to the local supermarket, make sure you get her (or him) along. Secondly, note that any of the four players including the dummy can call the director once an irregularity has been noted.

Ray Kemp

Club and Tournaments Results

Not many tournaments taking place during these Covid times, although since the national congress is taking place at the moment there should be plenty of results next time. Two results we do have to hand:

Jack James, Wayne Burrows, Annette Henry, Stephen Henry - 2nd - Wellington Regional Teams

Jack James, Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin - 3rd - Canberra Open Matchpoint Swiss

Congratulations to the following pairs who attained 70% or more in the Summer bridge competition.

Anne Gordon & Liz Burrows - 74.15%
Anita Thirtle & George MacLaughlan 70.54%

Gayle Leader

Take Your Pick

What is your favourite bidding system? I suspect that, for most players, it is the one that they first learned. When I first came to the Palmerston North club, my main experience was playing Acol in the UK. Acol was basically the only system that was played there and, to me, it was the 'obvious' way to bid a hand. If you had a four card major, then bid it. It seemed very odd to me to encounter Standard American players who rather than open a perfectly reasonable four card major would open a short minor suit instead. Also why would one need 15-17 points to open 1NT when 12-14 balanced hands are so much more frequent and give a perfect description of one's hand?

In the early 1990s when I joined our club Standard American was taught to beginners and at both the Junior and Intermediate level this was the *lingua franca*. Personally, I found it hard to find partners who played Acol at the intermediate level and Standard American seemed strange to me. Further, for whatever reason, most of the Senior grade players (there were only three grades at that time) played Acol. So together with my background and my initial experience at the club, I got the definite impression that Acol was the system for more experienced players and Standard American was for novices!

If I lived in America, I would have a totally different view. I was recently watching American player, Gavin Wolpert, in a BBO match against a top Norwegian couple and one of the Norwegians opened 1S with a four card suit. Now Wolpert, as well as being a top player, is quite a modest and diplomatic guy but he commented at the end of the hand that he couldn't believe that any advanced players still used four card major openers!

The Precision Club has made some inroads in America, probably due to the stellar success of the 'Meckwell' team (Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell) although the Precision that many of us play at the club is much simpler than their version. Like viruses, all systems mutate as flaws are found and attempts are made to correct them. Sometimes the corrections made the systems worse, or at least more difficult to manage.

When I started playing Precision about twenty five years ago it seemed smart to me to be able to open 1 diamond with 11 points but not necessarily a diamond suit. It took me a couple of years to realize that the advantages of such a scheme (ensuring every 11 point hand can be opened and keeping the opponents guessing) were outweighed by the disadvantages (opening a ropey eleven point hand and

keeping partner guessing). As a result I tried to convince Precision partners that it was better to open a 'natural' diamond opener of four plus cards and open 1NT with a balanced 12-15 points. When I mention this to other Precision players the immediate response is "what do you do with eleven point flat hands without a four card diamond suit?". To which I reply "I pass! Who wants to open with a rubbish hand that tells partner very little, gives them no lead information and may get you into trouble?"

So do as I say, not as I do. Here is a deal from a couple of weeks back that led to a deserved bottom board.

Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A J 6 5 4
♥ A Q 9 7
♦ —
♣ K Q J 10

♠ K
♥ K 4 3
♦ A J 9 8 7 6
♣ 9 7 2



♠ Q 7 2
♥ 10 5 2
♦ K Q 10
♣ A 6 5 4

♠ 10 9 8 3
♥ J 8 6
♦ 5 4 3 2
♣ 8 3

So, I was sitting East and instead of seeing an indifferent eleven point hand, in my rose coloured spectacles I viewed a nice diamond collection and balanced set of useful cards. At favourable vulnerability this seemed like the kind of hand that I could upgrade to a weak 1NT. Doom! I won't go over all the mirky details but who could blame West with her beautiful collection from going stratospheric after my initial bid. With our 5-3 spade fit, we zoomed up to a six spades slam. I played the contract after a transfer from partner but stood no chance of making.

Anyway, that has taught me two lessons – don't open uninspiring eleven point hands even at favourable vulnerability, but more importantly listen to my own advice!

Ray Kemp

Lessons 2022

Beginners

This year the Club will run two sets of Beginner Lessons, daytime and evening. Each course runs for 10 weeks and uses the NZ Bridge teaching modules. Evening sessions start Monday 14 March at 7pm and the daytime course on Wednesday 16 March at 1.30pm. The cost for each course is \$60 which includes Club membership for the rest of the year.

We need your help to pass the word around. Do you know anyone interested in learning? Have you talked to friends and family about this fascinating game? Give them the details. There are flyers in the Clubrooms. Please take some and pin them up at your workplace, kids school, Gym, other clubs, or anywhere they can be seen. New players are the lifeblood of our club and we all can help find them and encourage them along.

Many thanks to Ken Bateman and Anne Gordon for their willingness to be the tutors, they also need helpers so if you can come along to lend a hand please let them, or me, know.

Improvers

Improvers Seminars will be held at the Club on the third Tuesday of every month, starting 15 March. These are specifically aimed at players with 2-3 years' experience, but anyone is welcome to attend. Topics are in your Playing Programme. Check them out and come along to all, or any. Cost is \$6, or use your table card, no partners required.

Maxine Key

Thursday Night is Handicap Night

Many, especially amateur golfers, are familiar with the concept of handicapping. This is a mathematical procedure whereby players of varying abilities can compete against one another on an equal footing.

We all learn more by playing against those more experienced, but it is easy to become a little discouraged by our results. Making Thursday night a Handicap night gives encouragement to players new to Thursday night, without disadvantaging more experienced players competing for "C" points. This helps the movement of players from one playing level to another.

We have decided to use the XG Grades programme, adapted from a grading system used by the English Bridge Union and adopted by many Bridge Clubs across New Zealand. For every table played, a handicap calculation is made using the player's scores, their partner's scores and the scores of their opposition, enabling the calculation of a handicap to be applied for this particular Thursday's session.

For more information on the XG system, see:

<https://www.mount-maunganui.bridge-club.org/node/821>.

For every evening's play, two scores are reported. One, the "raw score" is used for the allocation of "C points", while the "handicap score" is displayed alongside. If you play well compared to your handicap, your score for the night will reflect this.

We have only started handicapping this month, but it is already apparent that there are quite a number of participants from Monday nights – well done! Please keep coming, as both your bridge and your enjoyment will improve. And there is usually a small group of Thursday regulars who like to discuss the hands over a glass of something following play.

Tony Fayerman

Stop Press

Congratulations to the winners of the Central Districts Intermediate and Junior Leagues for 2021. As the CD coordinator said our club did "amazing".

Intermediate:

Tony Clear	Laura Griffin	(First Equal)
Debbie Marcroft	Garry Hodge	(Third Equal)

Junior

Terry Young	(First)
Grant Elliott	(Second)
Maxine Key	(Fifth)

Denise Servante

You must be joking



Tony Fayerman