



Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

October 2019

President's Welcome

First, many thanks to everyone who responded to our proposals for the playing sessions in 2020 by sending back a survey form. We had 55 responses which is about 30% of our membership.

I know that many of you did not feel affected by the changes proposed and so did not feel the need to respond - which is fine! So, the Committee has assumed that all responses came from people who would like some changes (i.e. who are not completely satisfied with what the Club is currently offering).

We are pleased that so many of you have engaged in this process rather than stay quiet. Thank you! The full outcome is attached to this newsletter - please take a look and let us know of any issues or comments.

During October, the Committee was busy with the Swiss pairs 5A tournament on 12 October and our Club Spring Fling Tournament on 19 October. It was good to see a high turnout from our club at these events. Thanks to the indefatigable Liz Burrows and Lorraine Stachurski, and all the helpers, for both these events. Thanks also to Don MacDonald and Tony Fayerman for liaising with suppliers and for installing the new water cooler in the Club rooms.

And of course, many thanks to the Room Reps, Hosts and all of you who work so hard to support the Club. Thanks to all for your efforts on behalf of the Club.

Now we are into daylight saving, it really feels as if Summer is on its way - our next newsletter will be due out in December so before then, good luck to everyone in the Club Championship Pairs events. May the best woman win!

Denise Servante
President

Money, Money, Money

They say that money makes the world go round. Money also makes the bridge club go round! The 2019 Committee has taken the view that both subscriptions and table money should be increased slightly from 2020, to improve the financial sustainability of the Club.

Here's what's planned for Subscriptions:

- A small increase in the Ordinary subscription rate from \$100 to \$110, with a corresponding increase for Ordinary/Second Club members from \$77 to \$87
- A small increase in the Country subscription rate from \$60 to \$80, with a corresponding increase for Country/Second Club members from \$46 to \$57
- An increase in the Youth rate from \$46 to \$60
- Removal of the Community Services Card membership category and the First Full Year after Lessons membership category
- Members who formerly fit the CSC membership category may, if they wish, apply to the Committee for a reduced subscription rate if financial constraints apply

With regards to **Table Money**, this will increase by \$1 per session. So, if paying with cash, the rate will be \$6. Five session cards will sell for \$25 and ten session cards will sell for \$50, retaining the \$1 per session discount.

Julie Bunnell

News from the rooms

As most of you will be aware Jim Esson, a long-time club member and past president, died recently. Bob Lawrence, another long-time member, has moved to Wellington to be near his daughter (as his health has recently deteriorated) and Dorothy Hodges is also on the move to Snell's beach. Her son has recently retired and she has bought a house two doors away. We shall miss you all.



Volunteer of the month: Don Macdonald is our go to man for jobs that often look too hard for our average handyman skills...from fixing doors, electric light replacements, making gate locks, attaching our new letterbox to the fence (did you know we had one? along with a street address now) ...Don is the man (often ably assisted by Barbara, the ladder holder and 2IC). Thank you both, we do appreciate all that you do for the club.

I guess you will have noticed the new (plumbed in) water cooler and will soon see a new cabinet replacing the old one which holds our bridge supplies. We are also in the process of replacing the tablecloths used for playing with some dark grey ones to better colour coordinate the playing rooms. Thanks to Laura for the successful funding application, to Julie for organising tablecloths and Tony F for organising the water cooler installation.

Tony Clear

Swiss Pairs Tournament

The Club's Open Swiss Pairs tournament was held on Saturday 12th October. A pretty full house of 42 pairs competed for the honour and glory of winning. Play started at 9:30 am and 64 boards were played before the day was over. Our very own Ken Bateman and Jan Whyte were clear victors, winning all their eight matches and achieving a total of 114.66 victory points (VPs).



 **Congratulations Jan and Ken!!**

Second place went to John Davidson (Wellington) and Pam Livingston (New Plymouth) with 105.42 VPs, with Alistair Buchanan (Napier) and Carolyn Yeomans (Taradale) taking out third place with 95.98 VPs.

Three other Club pairs featured in the top ten: Morgan Booker and Zheng Zhang finished in fourth place with 94.60 VPs; Liz Burrows and Jack James were in sixth place with 93.52 VPs; and Elizabeth Kemp and Ray Kemp were in eighth place with 92.01 VPs.

Behind the scenes, there's a large amount of work that takes places to ensure a tournament like this runs successfully. A big round of applause for Lorraine, who capably organised and directed the day's play, calmly managing 84 players, eight rounds of play, and multiple copies of the 64 boards.

Huge thanks also go to Liz Burrows, who acted as chief organiser for the tournament, and to the team of helpers who purchased food, prepared food, cleaned up dishes and kitchen after morning tea/ lunch/ afternoon tea/end of play nibbles, set up the room on Friday evening, and tidied and cleaned the room after play finished.

Julie Bunnell

Rejuvenation project

Following our successful grant application, we have purchased the materials for making new tablecloths. Keep an eye out for a working bee soon to cut to size and hem these, or let Julie know that you are willing to help. Tony Fayerman also organised for the water cooler to be plumbed in, which will make it much easier to maintain.

It's been great to see the beginners enjoying playing bridge in the junior room. If you know of any past members that could be encouraged to return please let me know and I can sort out a playing buddy to help them make the transition, with no expectation that they would need to pay for the first few sessions.

Anne Gordon

Gadgets galore

Gadgets – aren't they annoying? They take away our natural bids, we don't necessarily remember which ones we are playing with our current partner, and half the time our partner forgets them anyway leaving us in a three-two fit at the four level. So why do we continue to use them? Well, occasionally we will be playing some obscure convention that our partner recognises and which will give us a top board. Also, who can resist the buzz of circling a bid and seeing the look of wonder or bewilderment on the opponents' faces when we announce it as Brozel defence to their 1NT opening or a Kantar relay after Jacoby transfers. Sometimes, of course, there will be a corresponding look of panic in partner's eyes when they realize our bidding has gone off the rails.

At the National Bridge Congress last month there were lots of devices on display. Here's a hand where both sides were using artificial bids.

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

North	East	South	West
			Pass
Pass	1NT	2S*	2NT*
Pass	3C*	Pass	Pass
3D	Pass	Pass	Dble*
Pass	3H*	All Pass	

Lots of smudges in the above auction but, as it turns out, all the players have got the conventions right. I open a weak no trump as East. South's 2S overcall shows five spades and at least a four-card minor. My partner's 2NT bid is Lebensohl which tells me that she has something up her sleeve, but I have to bid three clubs to find out what it is. I do what I'm told and she passes, so I infer she has a reasonable club suit but isn't interested in game. After two passes, North reluctantly comes in with her seven-card diamond suit. She probably thinks (incorrectly as it turns out) that her partner's second suit is clubs. This enables my partner to show hearts as well as clubs with a timely takeout double. We seem to have a nice two suit fit, so I'm happy to bid three hearts. After some creative defence, I am allowed to make eleven tricks giving us a top board.

There is a lively post-mortem in which South wants to know why North hasn't opened three diamonds (understandably she doesn't want to pre-empt her partner if they have a heart fit). Less understandably, it isn't clear why South doesn't raise partner's three diamonds. His argument is that he believes they are competing for the part score and is worried about going two down vulnerable. As it turns out, there is an easy diamond slam for NS.

On the next board we used modified Gerber to get to a good slam. The very term "Gerber" can make sensitive souls wince. The top international player, Ron Klinger once famously said that he would suggest Gerber enthusiasts give up the convention for a trial period – maybe twenty-five years. Unless you are an established partnership it is easy to get to ambiguous situations where the bid "four clubs" could be ace asking or could be a club suit. Also, if you employ Gerber it means that four clubs cannot be used as a splinter or to indicate a control in clubs.

If others choose not to use the bid, either because they have had fingers burned or because they want to be thought of as top players then that is fine by me. My experience is that the gain on being able to check for key cards at the four level rather than having to commit to the five level greatly outweighs the occasional disadvantage of not being able to bid a four club splinter or control in the suit.

West Deals
Both Vul

♠ 10 6 3
♥ J 10 3
♦ Q J 6 3
♣ 10 6 5

♠ A K Q J 5 4
♥ 7 5 2
♦ 10 7 4
♣ K



♠ 8 7
♥ A K 9
♦ A K 8
♣ A 8 7 3 2

♠ 9 2
♥ Q 8 6 4
♦ 9 5 2
♣ Q J 9 4

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 9 6 5 4 3
♥ Q 5 2
♦ 10 9 6 4
♣ 5

♠ A K Q 10 2
♥ 10
♦ A 8
♣ A K 6 4 2



♠ 8 7
♥ A 9 7 6
♦ K 5 3 2
♣ Q J 10

♠ J
♥ K J 8 4 3
♦ Q J 7
♣ 9 8 7 3

Here is a case in point. The bidding at our table went:

North	East	South	West
			1S
Pass	2C	Pass	2S
Pass	4C*	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5C*	Pass	5H*
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	Pass	1C*
Pass	1NT	Pass	2S
Pass	2NT	Pass	3C
Pass	4C	Pass	4D*
Pass	4H*	Pass	4S*
Pass	5D*	Pass	7C
All Pass			

Since we play five card majors I know that West's two spade bid shows at least a six-card suit. I also know we are close to a slam and have at least eight spades between us but need to check for key cards with my 4C Gerber bid. Partner shows two key cards (key cards include the four aces and the king of the implied trump suit) plus the queen of spades. The response to five clubs shows the missing king, so I now know we have all the aces and kings and the queen of spades. So why do I chicken out at 6NT? I can count a likely twelve tricks with six spades and all the outside ace-kings but I also know (since we play Precision and my partner did not open one club) that we have a maximum of 33 hcps, which is not usually enough for a grand slam. Annoyingly, EW can make 7S by setting up the club suit for the thirteenth trick. But, never mind, a result of 6NT making twelve tricks got us a score of 75% on the board.

One of the reasons for not using Gerber is that it makes it more difficult to get to a club slam. How do you ask for key cards when the agreed suit is clubs? Simple – you just use four diamonds and five diamonds. Here is a hand from the congress Teams event where a grand slam in clubs can be easily reached if diamonds is used for key card asking.

After the one club opener showing 16 plus points East shows a no-trump hand in the range 8-13. Now West shows a 5+ card spade suit which becomes a game force bid. East doesn't like spades much so rebids no trumps. West shows a strong second suit in clubs which East supports. West is now interested in a slam so bids four diamonds asking about key cards in clubs. East shows one or four. At this point West knows that East has the ace of hearts. The four spades bid asks about kings. The five diamond bid shows one king plus the queen of the agreed trump suit (clubs). With all the bases covered, West doesn't mess about and bids the grand slam in clubs.

The bad news is that the above bidding sequence is of the type "and then I woke up." We could have got to seven clubs using this sequence but sitting East, instead of raising clubs I chickened out in three no trumps. The good news is that seven clubs, although it looks good on paper, is impossible to make with decent defence because of the bad club and spade splits. I still kick myself that we didn't at least get to the small slam using the diamond device.

Ray Kemp

Improvers Corner

In June we talked about the principles of playing suit contracts. Whenever I teach the improvers' classes I ask the audience whether they prefer playing in a suit or in no trumps. Most prefer suit contracts. This mystifies me. There are so many different issues to deal with in suit contracts: whether to take out trumps right away, whether the opponents are going to trump your winners, whether you need to trump your own losers and so on. With no trump contracts, there is usually only one main goal which is to wring out as many tricks as possible from each suit.

Maybe what players worry about is the situation when the opponents open up a suit and start taking trick after trick and there is nothing you can do about it since you can't even trump in. That can happen, but the way to minimize the risk is to concentrate on your own long suits, however flaky they may seem. Most of the time, what you need to do is to establish tricks rather than cashing them. If you have aces, ace-kings, or ace-king-queens in a suit then the temptation is to play them early on. Usually, you are better to resist the urge to do this. Everyone else playing your way is going to make those tricks. To steal a march on your rivals you need to generate tricks with lower cards as well.

In the first week of the Monday evening September pairs there was a no-trump deal where there are twelve tricks to be taken but at five of the eight tables the declarer only made ten of them. I don't know how that happened, but I can guess. I expect each declarer decided to cash all their winners instead of establishing extra tricks in their long suit.

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

North's hand merits an Acol 2NT opener, showing 20-22 points balanced. If South is brave NS may get to 6NT but this only happened at one table. The two hands have 32 points between them which is not usually

enough for the no trump slam and most North-Souths wisely stayed in 3NT.

Generally, when leading into a very strong hand it is not a good idea to give anything away so I would expect East to lead a spade rather than a heart, although, as it happens, it shouldn't make much difference to the final result. At most tables, a low spade was led.

At the tables where NS are in 3NT, North could be forgiven for thinking this is an easy contract to make particularly if a spade is led. If North does her maths, which she should do, she can count two club tricks, two heart tricks, four diamonds and two spades, for a total of ten tricks. Which makes for an overtrick in three no trumps. Unfortunately for declarer, every other North is going to be thinking the same way. Making only ten tricks will get you a poor result. Look what happens if North starts by cashing the ten tricks. As soon as she loses the lead the defence has three tricks set up in clubs, hearts and spades.

Smart declarers will realize that they must work on the longest suit, in this case clubs, to generate more than those top ten tricks. Leave those high cards in the other suits for later. Lead off the ace and king of clubs. On a good day, the clubs will split 2-2, but not today. Even so, continue with the suit driving out the queen and the rest of the suit is set up. West can win her queen but since, you still have guards in the other three suits she can't make any other tricks. Now you have two precious low clubs to add to your tally of ten top tricks.

So, remember, when playing in no trumps always check out your longest suit to see if you can establish tricks with lower cards even if it means losing one or two tricks in the suit to start with. Resist the temptation to cash your high cards early on, particularly in short suits.

Ray Kemp

You must be joking

Words of wisdom from Tony's collection:

If two heads are better than one, why don't partners do better at bridge?

If a player's bridge prowess is to be abused, there's nobody like a partner to do it.

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it is obvious that you are a kibitzer.

Tony Fayerman

Palmerston North Bridge Club Feedback Questionnaire: Results and Outcomes

Here is a summary of our analysis of the survey results and the Committee's subsequent decisions.

1. Do you agree the number of playing sessions (currently 5/week) should be retained?

50% of responses agreed with this statement. The comments indicated support for retaining a competitive Senior night and moving it to Monday evenings to share a Director with the Junior room. The Committee is confirming this change.

2. Would you play club bridge more often if there were suitable opportunities for you?

Most people said no (53%). However, 36% said yes and these people generally liked the idea of more social events. The Committee is proposing to offer evening social events on the first and third Tuesday of each month. If these are well supported, frequency can increase (and conversely, if not well supported, can be dropped back).

3. And/or what combination/additional options can you suggest?

There were lots of comments about the "multigrade" on Thursday evening. Several comments displayed disquiet about senior players playing in the same room as intermediate, whilst other comments suggested that it was good to have senior players in the room to support the development of other players. The Committee is proposing to implement a handicapping system (as envisaged several years ago when the "multigrade" evening was introduced). The proposal is for a crude handicapping system – where Bronze players get a +4 handicap, Silvers get no handicap, Gold players get a -4 handicap, and Platinum players get a -8 handicap.

4. Evening Start Time

Perhaps predictably, there was no consensus on this one! Here's the raw data - what would you do?

Preferred Time	7.00	7.15	7.30
Monday	19	9	6
Tuesday	7	13	6
Thursday	12	11	14
Times can make			
Monday	16	23	17
Tuesday	13	17	14
Thursday	19	30	28

The Committee is proposing to move the start time for ALL evening sessions to 7.15 as best meeting the preferences of players.

The playing programmes for 2020 are being developed based on this years' programme. One suggestion was to hold a championship event for Monday and Friday daytime sessions - the Committee felt that this would be difficult to incorporate in the 2020 programme but would welcome feedback from those who regularly play in those sessions. The room reps will seek views in the coming months.

The room reps will also be interested in your feedback on any aspect of the Club's programme and how sessions are managed. If you have any issues, comments or suggestions, please raise them with your room reps or directly with me, as President. This is your Club - please help us make it what you want it to be 😊.

Denise Servante

President