



### **President's Welcome**

The kowhai blossoms in my garden are bringing back the tuis – a welcome sign that spring is here. If only the weather would recognise it and be a bit more spring-like! The weather in Europe was also extreme but in the opposite direction: record temperatures and water shortages. Such is our world today. Even so, rain and all, for me it is good to be back home.

So, the business of bridge goes on. In Committee, we have been focussing on planning and managing our events, preparing the 2023 playing programme and monitoring our finances. But before I report on these, I would like to advise that Tony Fayerman has given up his role as daytime room rep to pursue his bridge (how can I argue with that?). I want to acknowledge and thank him for his contribution to the Committee. The Club relies upon the voluntary efforts of so many members but Tony's contribution over the past few years has been singular. Annette Scanlan has agreed to undertake the room rep responsibilities for Monday afternoon. Annette will do a marvellous job and I am looking forward to working with her in Committee. We are still looking for a Friday luncheon representative...

So, back to business. Our finances, as always, are precarious. We have had two successful applications for funding: Central Districts contributed \$300 towards the costs of our lessons and Pub Charity Ltd have donated funding for a comprehensive building report, a garden shed and a spot carpet cleaner. The latter two are self-explanatory, but we commissioned the former to enable us to develop a prioritised programme of maintenance and renewal for our Club Rooms. The intention is that we can predict, plan and fundraise for necessary work rather than simply respond to maintenance issues as they arise. My thanks to Grant Elliott for undertaking to co-ordinate this – if you have interest or expertise to offer in support, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Key to our financial success is our membership and table numbers. We know that our membership has been slowly declining and this continues to be an issue. However, we still have enough members who, when playing regularly and often, enable us to maintain the Club coffers. Table numbers have been down a bit over the past couple of months. I

know many of us have begun to travel again and/or been staying home with COVID or COVID-like symptoms. Hopefully as the weather improves, spring gets going and COVID numbers drop, we'll get back to our pre-COVID table numbers. The message from the Committee is definitely "come back to the bridge table as soon as you can". And there's lots to come back for...

The monthly Club competitions continue apace. We also have our 5A Swiss Pairs Open tournament on 24<sup>th</sup> September. This tournament is an open event which attracts players from around New Zealand but it is a good opportunity to improve your bridge in a competitive but non-threatening field. If you don't want to play, we always need volunteers to help make the day a success - watch out for the jobs roster on the Club notice board.

Julia Wallace Village – one of our key partners - is sponsoring this tournament. As part of their sponsorship, Julia Wallace Village will host an Open Day for our members to visit and tour their facilities. This will take place on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October from 1.30 pm – more details will follow shortly. I hear a lot of great things about life at the Village so I am looking forward to seeing with my own eyes.

We have ceased our Sunday evening online social bridge sessions but one of the benefits is that we entered into negotiations with Wellington Bridge Club to run an online event between the two Clubs. This will take place on the evening of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September – the format will be a pairs event using the RealBridge platform with the Club partnerships totalled at the end of the session to give a winning Club. If you would like to enter this event, then please sign up on the list on the Club Rooms noticeboard.

Please also mark the date of the Babich NZ Wide pairs event - Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November. More details will follow in the next newsletter which will also have full details of our end of year/Christmas schedule.

Finally, next month we will be preparing the final proof copy of the playing programme for 2023. Please check your contact details and let Lorraine know of any corrections/changes that need to be made.

Where has the year gone? Stay safe, warm and dry.

**Denise Servante**  
**President**

## Club and Tournaments Results

Congratulations to the following pairs who attained 70% or more in our club since the last newsletter:

Wendy Currie / Carolyn Brodie - 70%

Reuben Leberman / Tony Fayerman - 70%

And here are the players who have done well in recent tournaments.

|                                   |  |                 |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| North Island Teams                | Bob Hurley<br>Wayne Burrows<br>Russell Wilson<br>Claire Miao         | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|                                   | Jack James<br>Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins<br>Blair Fisher<br>Liz Fisher    | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Levin 50th Anniversary Open Pairs | Bob Hurley<br>John Davidson  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Taradale Open Pairs               | Wayne Burrows<br>Blair Fisher  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|                                   | Jack James<br>George Masters   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Hawkes Bay Congress Swiss Pairs   | Jan Whyte<br>Carolyn Yeomans   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Wanganui Open                     | Jack James<br>Pam Livingstone  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Auckland Regional Teams           | Jack James<br>Wayne Burrows<br>Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins<br>Claire Miaow | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| Taradale Intermediate             | Kate Cliff<br>Tony Fayerman  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |

|  |  |                 |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Hawkes Bay Congress Open Swiss Pairs   | Jack James<br>Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins                                      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Feilding Charity Pairs                 | Julie Bunnell<br>Tony Clear  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|  | Pat Oyston<br>Martin Oyston  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
|  | Jan Whyte<br>Ken Bateman   | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| Otaki Intermediate                     | Tony Clear<br>Laura Griffin  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|  | Paul Harper<br>Angela Harper   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Havelock North Spec-Savers Swiss Pairs | Jack James<br>Wayne Burrows  | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Fullerton Teams                        | Bob Hurley<br>Michael Ware<br>Pam Livingston<br>Scott Smith              | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| South Island Teams                     | Jack James<br>Jeremy Fraser-Hoskins<br>Samuel Coutts<br>Bradley Johnston | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Napier Open Teams                      | Bob Hurley<br>Grant Jarvis<br>George Masters<br>Scott Smith              | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Hokowhitu Daffodil Day Pairs           | Wayne Burrows<br>Steve Baron   | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|  | Alan Doddridge<br>Alister Stuck  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
|  | Zheng Zhang<br>Morgan Booker   | 5 <sup>th</sup> |

**Gayle Leader**

## Playing Suit Combinations

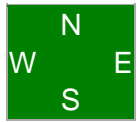
One would think that knowing the best way to play suit combinations would be a crucial weapon in the armory of an ambitious bridge player. Generally, however, I suspect that most players (including myself!) have only a sketchy idea of how to play a suit when some of the key cards are absent. Most of us fall back on the most obvious finesse when we have a missing honour and hope for the best.

Why is this? I think the fact is that working out the optimum likelihood of success when faced with holes in a suit is just too hard in many cases. The massive tome 'The Encyclopedia of Bridge' has over fifty pages totally devoted to how to play combinations with different honour cards missing. Not only does the book cover the most likely ways to deliver the maximum number of tricks, it also highlights safety plays. The volume is in our Bridge Club library. Examine the section on card combinations if you want to scare yourself.

In some cases the difference in success rates of different strategies is only marginal so using a slightly inferior line of play is not going to greatly harm you over a long period of time. However, using a poor line of play which happens to deliver can upset opponents. Occasionally, one will play against a novice who has an AQ combination and instead of finessing the queen will play off the ace and drop the offside singleton king from a disbelieving opponent. At a slightly more subtle level, I remember once when a declarer had the following combination: AKQT in one hand and three low cards in the other. Do you know the 'best' way to play these cards?

I was sitting in front of the sequence of honours with four to the jack of the suit so was hoping that declarer would play for the drop. Instead, she finessed against my jack on the second round. This is roughly a 50% chance whereas playing for the drop is 61%. But the finesse worked for her so will have convinced her that she had the right approach. Exasperatingly, I played against the same lady a couple of weeks later and exactly the same situation arose with my hand containing four to the jack. Again, the finesse secured the four tricks for her.

So, getting something wrong 60 times out of a hundred, rather than forty times is not so crucial. Once it gets to a situation where one result is twice as likely than another, then you must make the right choice but even that can go wrong. One week in the Monday afternoon August pairs I played the following hand:

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>North Deals<br/>E-W Vul</p> <p>♠ 7 5<br/>♥ 9 6 4<br/>♦ K J 9 7 6 4<br/>♣ Q 4</p> |  | <p>♠ K J 10 9<br/>♥ K 10 8 5 2<br/>♦ Q<br/>♣ A 7 3</p> <p>♠ 8 3<br/>♥ Q J<br/>♦ 10 8 5 3<br/>♣ 10 9 8 6 2</p> <p>♠ A Q 6 4 2<br/>♥ A 7 3<br/>♦ A 2<br/>♣ K J 5</p> |
|---|---|--|

I was sitting South and played in the poor contract of 6NT. Like many players before me I was lured by the extra ten points that NTs gives one over a major suit contract. In fact, a suit slam is often easier to play and gives one a better chance of scoring the overtrick. Anyway, be that as it may, I was in a solid contract and I started on the heart suit by playing the king from dummy on which East dropped the queen. Most bridge folk know about 'restricted choice' (if you don't then look it up quick). If you are missing two adjacent honours in a suit and an opponent drops one of them on the first round of the suit then the other opponent is twice as likely to have the other one. So I crossed over to hand and took the finesse, only to lose to the jack. Fortunately, I had twelve other tricks anyway so got a top board (apologies to those players in a suit slam). Several players who were in a game contract made all thirteen tricks so I assume they were unaware of restricted choice and made the right choice for the wrong reason.

Another complicating factor (as if suit combinations aren't complicated enough) is that one does not always have the luxury of being able to switch between hands to carry out the recommended play. How many times has one had an AQ in hand but been unable to get to dummy to take a finesse? Here is a sad story from Monday afternoon bridge again.

First of all, how do you play KT5 of a suit with North and AQ742 with South? In fact, you cannot avoid losing one trick if the suit divides 4-1 unless there is a singleton jack. By the time you have played two rounds and discovered the bad split you are bound to lose one trick in the suit. Since there appears no advantage to playing the cards in a particular order the standard technique would be to play the high card from the short suit first. This is what declarer attempted in the following hand but the approach led to disaster.

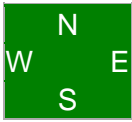
South Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ K Q  
♥ K 8 5 3  
♦ K 10 5  
♣ 8 7 6 3

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

♠ A J 10 8 6 4  
♥ J 6 4  
♦ 8  
♣ K 10 9

♠ 9 7  
♥ A 7  
♦ A Q 7 4 2  
♣ A Q J 5



In a contract of 3NT and the lead of a low spade from East, North is put under pressure immediately. One of the king-queen is going to win but once the opponents get in they are going to take at least five tricks. On the bright side, if the diamonds break there are nine certain tricks to be cashed before losing the lead. It looks as if it is all or nothing with the diamonds so North takes the usual approach and cashes ♦K followed by a low diamond to the ace. But now the bad split is shown and North is stuck. The club finesse can produce the tricks required but, unless East is generous, declarer will require two entries to North's hand to take a repeated finesse. Unlikely as it might seem, the ace and queen of diamonds must be cashed first to preserve a second entry to hand so the club finesse can be taken twice if necessary.

So what do we conclude? Firstly, remembering dozens of suit combination plays is not going to be crucial unless you compete at the international level. What is more important is handling entries between your two hands. This is less a case of memorizing distributions but more of making a detailed plan of the order in which you will play the cards, considering possible bad breaks. Do you feel encouraged or discouraged?

**Ray Kemp**

**Slam Funk**

Here is a hand from the August Monday afternoon pairs that had several tables in a tizzy.

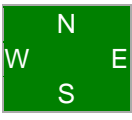
North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

♠ K Q 9 5  
♥ A Q 10 9 7 5 2  
♦ 6  
♣ Q

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



As you may be able to tell from the EW hands there was a trial of strength between the EW pair to decide who was going to play the contract and where. Sitting South I was rubbing my hands in glee at West's persistent club bids and hoped he would win out against East's preference for hearts.

Unfortunately for us, West concluded the bidding at the five club level and I decided not to double in case East returned to the heart suit. Three tables got to six clubs and once dummy went down, West must have wondered why they weren't in the likely grand slam. Because of the bad club break, however, none of the slammers even made 12 tricks whereas our EW pair strolled to an easy eleven tricks benefitting from their cautious approach.

We were all perplexed when looking at the computer analysis to see that six clubs can indeed make. Only by playing through the Deep Finesse guru could I work out how to achieve this unlikely result. It certainly looks like a hand set up by an expert to challenge the card playing ability of West. Although there is a 5-0 trump split South's cards are exactly the ones that West could hope for in order to make the contract.

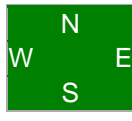
Say, for example, North leads the unhelpful ♦Q. West must take the ace and ruff a diamond. He then takes the ace of hearts, pitching a diamond, and ruffs a heart. Now trumps should be played. When West realizes the bad split he has to keep his nerve and leave the trump suit for now. Three rounds of spades finishing in dummy and pitching the last diamond are followed by another heart ruff leaving the following position:

North Deals  
Both Vul

♠ 10  
♥ K  
♦ J 10  
♣ —

♠ —  
♥ —  
♦ —  
♣ K J 9 6

♠ 9  
♥ Q 10 9  
♦ —  
♣ —



♠ —  
♥ —  
♦ —  
♣ 10 8 7 4

West could lead out trumps from the top but that way he would lose two tricks. Instead, he must play a low trump leaving South on lead. South has no alternative but to return another trump which gives West a free finesse against the ten of clubs. He can now cash the remaining trumps for a top board.

**Ray Kemp**

## **Bits and Pieces**

We have reviewed our bar prices and will be making two changes to the price list.

Firstly, a large port will now set you back \$8 and not \$6 – the measure is 100ml not the previously advertised 75ml, so we have recognised that adjustment needs to be made.

Secondly, our auditor has recommended that we charge a flat \$5 for a glass of wine or a beer. This means that the price of a beer will increase from \$4 to \$5 – this not only reflects the range of beers we now supply but also makes it much, much easier in terms of handling the cash!

In our newsletters, we try and keep track of how well our members have done at external tournaments. This is becoming increasingly challenging as our members play at tournaments far and wide and often online! If you are particularly successful at a tournament outside of Central Districts region, please let Gayle Leader or Ray Kemp know about it so we can share and celebrate in the next newsletter.

We are also so proud and delighted to note the ongoing success of Jack James in being selected as part of the Men's Team representing New Zealand in the upcoming Asia Cup. The event will be held in Jakarta from 19-25 October. The full team is:

- Michael Ware (playing captain)
- Leon Meier
- Jack James
- Jeremy Fraser- Hoskin
- Ashley Bach

**Denise Servante**

## **You Must be Joking**

A married couple are not speaking to each other after a horrible game and are driving home from a distant bridge tournament. They pass by a field where there are many donkeys. The husband breaks the silence by asking the wife "Relations of yours?". "Yes" she replies "In-laws".

(From "Bridge Humour" by Eddie Kantar)

**Ray Kemp**