



## News and Views

The interviews with Jan and Alan in recent newsletters have been very well received so I decided to extend the series. But why restrict it to grand masters? There are many other members of the club who make a significant contribution and who have interesting stories to tell. The interview in this issue is with Tammy Smith who only started playing bridge eighteen months ago.

Since last issue, there has been just one tournament held at the club – the New Zealand Wide Babich Pairs. Congratulations to Lorraine Stachurski partnered by Alister Stuck and to Jan Whyte playing with Ken Bateman who were first NS and EW, respectively.

Some members have been concerned at the recent increase in bar prices and the matter was raised at our last committee meeting. The bar manager said that prices hadn't been raised for several years and that she thought we were running at a loss as a result. There was some discussion about the purpose of the bar. Most committee members felt that it is not there to make a profit but, at the same time, we should endeavour to break even. The problem is that, taking into account other costs such as the liquor licence and storage, it is difficult to determine what the break-even point is. It was decided to reduce the prices to their previous level pending an investigation into the pricing structure.

Entries are closed for the Christmas Cheer although, at the time of writing, we are still looking for one or two 'stand-by' pairs who could play if there were last minute cancellations. Stand-by pairs, of course, get in free, so it is worth considering. We are also short of a few helpers for morning teas and lunches, so please consider giving up a couple of hours to help out.

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December we have the Annual Prize Giving. This will take place at 6pm but there will be nibbles available beforehand, from 5pm onwards, and also a free

drink for each attendee. Also, Wayne Burrows will give a presentation on some hands from the recent world championship and from other competitions. His presentation last year was very popular, so I know many members will look forward to hearing him again.

The AGM has been set for 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009. You may remember that, at the last AGM, it was decided to move the date to enable the treasurer to complete the accounts at the end of each calendar year, before the subs are due. As a result, membership fees will not be due until March next year. Effectively, this means that players are getting an extra three months for their money. That is the good news. The bad news, of course, is that the club has to manage for a longer period without the subs.

For this reason, it was decided that, since members are already getting a bargain, we should not have an early payment reduction but that the membership fee should be \$70 for anyone who pays by the end of March. However, there may be a late fee for anyone who pays after that date.

Associate members pay the normal membership fee minus the NZCBA Levy. We have not been informed, as yet, what the levy will be for next year. It is normally about \$15. Hopefully, we will have that information before the requests for payment are sent out in the new year.

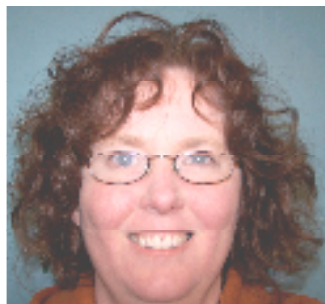
On the subject of membership, could anyone who is not intending to renew their membership for next year, please contact Lorraine as soon as possible.

Summer Bridge starts on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December and runs right through to 27<sup>th</sup> January. Note that all grades are welcome on these mixed nights. It's a great opportunity for Junior and Intermediate players to try their hand(s) against the Senior Reserve and Senior players in a relaxed atmosphere. Why not try a session with someone you haven't played with before? It might be the start of a beautiful friendship.

This will be the last newsletter of the year. Many thanks for the positive feedback from members. Have a safe and happy holiday. See you in the new year!

**Ray Kemp**

## Interview



We are lucky to have a number of new players who are helping to revitalize the club at all levels. One player who has become a familiar face both at our club and at Caccia Birch is Tammy Smith.

*You don't sound like a native New Zealander. Where are you from, Tammy?*

I come originally from Texas but have been in New Zealand for fourteen years and am now a proud Kiwi citizen.

*So you come from Bush country?*

That's right, but please don't hold that against me!

*When did you start playing bridge?*

About eighteen months ago. Barbara Holland persuaded me to go along to the Caccia Birch club to play with her for a month.

*Had you had any experience of the game before that?*

I borrowed a book called "Acol Bridge for Bright Beginners" to get the fundamentals and just learned as I went along. Barbara provided me with a lot of useful advice during our first month of play.

*Had you played any cards at all?*

I used to play a game called Hearts as a kid, so knew the basic idea of the suits and of tricks, and started playing lunchtime bridge with the Mathematicians at Massey at about the same time as when I started at Caccia Birch. I also attended some of Wayne's lessons at Palmerston North.

*Was the Massey bridge useful?*

In some ways, but it was very different from the game played at Caccia Birch. The Massey group have a 16-18 strong no trump, and don't keep score. Each hand is just played separately. The lack of scoring means that the concept of sacrifice bids and some other elements of the bidding can be lost and there is also a temptation to bid just to play a hand. So there is definite potential for the development of bad habits if you are not careful!

*And when did you first play at our club?*

My first club session was on the final night of the Tuesday Championship, last year. Martin Carryer asked if I would be a sub and play with Janice Willoughby.

*So you played with a new partner on the last night of the Senior championships? You must enjoy jumping in at the deep end.*

I don't know about that, but it certainly was daunting. I was relieved that we got 51.5%. The bridge was tighter than I was used to, and it was difficult to get away with mistakes, but I learned a lot from the experience.

*You look relaxed when you are playing. Do you think you have a good temperament for the game?*

I try to avoid dwelling on errors or bad boards and just concentrate on each new hand as it comes along, although that is easier said than done, of course.

I think I got most upset over an incident that had nothing to do with bridge at all. I was at Caccia Birch and playing against someone who is, like me, interested in American Football and who also enjoys giving me a hard time. Before the hand he told me he had heard the coach of my favourite team had just quit. I was so distracted that I messed up the two hands I played at his table. Fortunately, I was phantom at the next table and decided to phone a friend as I couldn't

quite believe it was true. He got onto the internet and found the ‘rumour’ to be false, so I could laugh at having been fooled and go back to my bridge and start concentrating again.

*I guess you haven’t been playing long enough to have made any gross mistakes.*

Don’t you believe it! But, I try to remember the lesson from the error rather than the specific mistake itself.

*Have you got an example for us?*

I had been told about fourth suit forcing<sup>1</sup> and had grasped the basic idea. I knew the principles of when it *should* be used but unfortunately used it when it *wasn’t* appropriate, and misled my partner. It was a costly mistake, but one that has led to me remember its proper use on future boards.

The mix up occurred in the first full month I played in the Senior room. We were doing very well in a teams competition. By the final night, we were in a three-way playoff for first place. We got really thrashed, and one of the swings was on the following hand:

♠ K9764	♠ Q3	♠ J
♥ 54	♥ KQT97	♥ A632
♦ AQ63	♦ 9	♦ K74
♣ AK	♣ T8632	♣ QJ974
	♠ AT852	
	♥ J8	
	♦ JT852	
	♣ 5	

<sup>1</sup> This is a convention that some partnerships use to try to find a fit. When three suits have been bid without agreement then either player may artificially bid the fourth suit. Their partner then describes their hand further: perhaps showing secondary support for partner, rebidding a strong suit, or by bidding no trumps if they have a stopper in that suit.

I was sitting East and the bidding at our table (Dealer North, NS vulnerable) went:

South	West	North	East
		Pass	1C
Pass	1S	Pass	2C
Pass	2D	Pass	2H
Pass	5C	All Pass	

After my partner’s 2D, my 2H bid was pointless. I was meaning to promise a heart suit with stopper. My best bid would have been 2NT which partner would have raised to three. As it was, West took the heart bid as fourth suit forcing, *asking* for a stopper. West didn’t have one and, from my bid, thought I didn’t either. However, he knew we probably had enough points for game so decided to leap to five clubs. This could have worked but went down three because of the bad trump split, whereas at the other table EW made an unbeatable three no trumps.

*You’ve also had success in tournaments this year?*

Some. Martin, Barbara, Sean and myself have played in a couple of teams competitions. It was tough going in the Centre Island Teams in Palmerston North but we managed to get four wins over that weekend, so I earned my first 2.5 A points. I also won an A point this month in the Babich Pairs playing with Gordon Smith at Caccia Birch and have had some success in junior tournaments.

*So it’s onwards and upwards. You have already won your first A points. What is your next goal?*

No immediate goals other than to generally improve my level of play. I really appreciate the helpful advice from people like Sean and Barbara. I have been playing on Bridge Base Online as well as a couple club nights in the week, and occasional tournaments at weekends. My main concern at the moment is to try to make sure bridge doesn’t take over my life!

**Ray Kemp**

## False Leads

What are your leads like to opponents' contracts? You may think they are fine, but what do your partners think? Some people get anxious when they are on lead, and, no wonder. That first card you place on the table can often make or break the contract right there at trick one. Unfortunately, you cannot even see dummy to give you some assistance. There have been suggestions over the years that the rules should be changed so that dummy goes down before the lead is made. This could make things simpler for the defence but would take some fun out of the game.

Most people have their own guidelines which they follow whatever the bidding, and whatever the perceived strength of the opponents' hands. Some folks always lead singletons to suit contracts on principle. I remember a former player at the club who made it clear to everyone when she had a singleton because she would have her lead down on the table about half a second after the bidding finished. Others never lead away from kings (although what they do when they have four of them, I am not quite sure.) Others choose trumps if they are stuck for a lead, and still others play off aces (particularly if they have a doubleton). Another player was telling me recently that he had led a singleton in an unbid suit to a no trump contract the previous week and caught his partner with six of the suit. I suggested that leading singletons to no trump contracts sounded like a great idea, but could he restrict this tactic to when he was playing against me rather than with me.

Of course, leading is a complicated business, and many books have been written on the subject, so even a summary of the basic principles could take several pages. I would advise anyone who worries about being on lead to read Mike Lawrence's book *Opening Leads* which tells you most of what you need to know. He gives the assurance near the beginning that even experts can only guarantee making the best lead about 70% of the time but getting up to that

percentage requires an ear for the bidding and the ability to imagine what each of the other players might have. For example, how many points has your partner got and where are they likely to be? On most hands you can work this out pretty accurately, even if they haven't bid.

The most dangerous leads, of course, are the ones that are just plain wrong, but happen to work once (like leading singletons to no trump contracts.) The successful player is likely to be so rapt with their audacity that they keep this in their repertoire of strategies even when it is destined not to work most of the time.

Here are a couple of hands where the most bizarre leads are the ones that happen to be the most effective, but, as the saying goes, please don't try this at home.

In the Tuesday October teams competition we were playing against a pair who appeared to have come to rest in a poor contract. You are going to be East and are non-vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. Here is your hand:

♠ 987  
♥ 65  
♦ A9764  
♣ Q53

The bidding is lively:

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

You know this is a poor contract, not because you are a brilliant player who can see through the backs of the cards, but because, after the 5S bid by North, South utters a rude word and apologizes to her partner before reluctantly writing down six hearts.

So what is going on here? You ascertain that the 4NT is Key Card Blackwood. The response shows that North has two key cards (where the key cards are the four aces and the king of hearts) and he also has the queen of that suit. Now we come to the interesting bit. South is

obviously unhappy at the final contract. This implies that she has been forced to bid up to six hearts not because she wants to but because they have gone past five hearts. It looks as if they have two key cards missing. This could be a good board for the defence if partner has another ace to accompany yours. So, what are you going to lead?

OK, let's treat it like one of those Listener quizzes. You can have ten marks if you lead the ace of diamonds and five marks if you lead a spade. No other lead gets any points.

However, I am now going to provide you with twenty-twenty hindsight (a facility that some of my ex-partners had but which I have never managed to acquire.) I am going to tell you that the contract is solid. Unfortunately for you, your partner doesn't have the ace of spades but the king of hearts which is finessable by declarer. Declarer needs another finesse and, being a lucky guy, this also works. Having this valuable information, I will now allow you to change your lead. Any ideas?

Desperate times call for desperate measures. Your best chance of taking the contract off is to lead a low diamond! Here is the full deal.

<p>♠ A ♥ AQJT432 ♦ 82 ♣ 984</p>	<p>♠ 987 ♥ 65 ♦ A9764 ♣ Q53</p>
<p>♠ QJT542 ♥ K9 ♦ QT5 ♣ T2</p>	<p>♠ K63 ♥ 87 ♦ KJ3 ♣ AKJ76</p>

Given the opportunity, declarer can take the club finesse and, since it works, doesn't have to worry about the diamonds. However, if you lead a low diamond to the contract you put him on the spot at trick one. Who would underlead an ace against a suit slam? Mike Lawrence says it

is right to underlead an ace against a suit contract once every five years. Any sensible declarer would play the jack, hoping that West has led away from the queen. If this is what happens you get to cash two quick diamonds and gain 13 IMPS.

So what occurred in practice? My partner, quite understandably, led the ace of diamonds and we lost 13 IMPS instead. Good choice, bad result.

The second hand is from the Tuesday November pairs. This time you are West and have to lead against the contract of five clubs by South. This time I am not going to bother you with the auction. Instead you can see all four hands before deciding how to proceed. This should make things easy.

<p>♠ K2 ♥ K5 ♦ J9542 ♣ QJT2</p>	<p>♠ AQ543 ♥ T983 ♦ QT86 ♣ -</p>	<p>♠ T9876 ♥ A62 ♦ 7 ♣ 7653</p>
<p>♠ J ♥ QJ74 ♦ AK3 ♣ AK984</p>		

We were sitting East-West and played this hand early on in the evening. In fact, my brave partner (sitting West at equal vulnerability) bid five spades over South's five clubs. This was doubled and went two away. We weren't too worried about this score since a quick look at the hands suggested North South would make five clubs comfortably. Our opponents have 28 points between them. Surely, they can make a game somewhere.

However, looking at the hand records at the end of the evening, we weren't so confident. According to the computer analysis, North-South cannot make *any* game against perfect defence. It is easy to see how three no trumps

and five diamonds fail but how can five clubs be taken down? What possible lead could West make to defeat this contract? Over to you.

It didn't look to us that any lead could take down the club game. If West leads a low diamond then North can try the jack and that takes care of the diamond loser. Instead, if they lead a heart then declarer just ducks in dummy. If East then takes the ace of hearts then this sets up the hearts. If East ducks then South can get a heart ruff later. A spade lead doesn't help. Leading off the ace just sets up the king in dummy to discard a diamond.

I have to admit we had to cheat to find out the answer. Putting the hand into Deep Finesse at home we found the only lead that is guaranteed to take off the contract. Have you guessed it yet?

If you chose a low diamond then go to the top of the class. This is the only lead that works. Declarer can make the jack of diamonds but must take out trumps before setting up hearts, otherwise West can get in with a spade and give East a ruff to go with the spade and heart aces. However, taking out all the trumps before playing on the majors doesn't work either. As long as the defence is careful, South is left with a second heart loser to go with the major suit aces.

So what is the *right* lead? Assuming you and your partner have bid up to four spades, then the ace of spades looks like the obvious card to play. Good choice, bad result.

Ray Kemp

## Postscript (What the Deuce?)

While looking through some old notes I came across the following bridge puzzle:

The deuce (two) of a suit can obviously take a trick in certain circumstances. If it is led and is the only card left in a suit then it may win the trick (as long as no one ruffs in, of course.) Alternatively, in a suit contract, the two of trumps can be used to ruff a trick when another suit is led.

The question arises: is it possible to set up a deal in which each of the four deuces wins a trick? Note that we are not requiring *declarer* to win all four deuces, just that during the course of the playing of the deal, each of the four deuces takes a trick.

You may like to consider this problem and email me ([r.kemp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:r.kemp@xtra.co.nz)) if you come up with a solution. It may be possible in one type of contract, of course, but not in another, so you might like to look at alternatives. For example, can anyone make a slam or an undoubled game contract in which each of the deuces takes a trick?

If you decide that it is possible then you need to produce one or more hands in which this could happen. It doesn't require the hand to be played sensibly, but you must ensure the laws of the game are followed. If you think it is impossible then you need to explain why.

The best solution will win the sender a free session of bridge and also gain the admiration of the rest of our readers.

Ray Kemp